

**RACE/ETHNICITY AND GOD:
RELIGIOUS CONSERVATIVES AND RACIAL POLITICS***

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ABSTRACT

In depth interviews with whites between the ages of 25-55 in three areas of the country regarding attitudes toward racial and economic inequality reveal a close link between religious identity and conservative political attitudes for both working and middle class interviewees. While previous studies have examined this issue and come to contradictory conclusions, this study has the advantage of drawing on semi-structured interviews in which the interviewees could explain their opinions in more detail. By comparing the attitudes of religious conservatives with nonreligious conservatives, we show how the policy attitudes of religious conservatives have been culturally constructed and mobilized to attack those public institutions that incorporated blacks as part of the Civil Rights Movement. At the same time, religious conservatives (like nonreligious conservatives) have reluctantly accepted the premise of the Civil Rights Movement, and so their rhetoric uses moral rather than racial terminology.

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The role of the religious right in recent politics has caused both concern and consternation among scholars. Through organizations such as the Moral Majority and the Christian Coalition, it appears to many that a new political force is at work and that it is influencing public policy in ways that do not serve the broader interests of the U.S. citizenry (Bolce and De Maio 1999; Servin-Gonzalez and Torres-Reyna 1999; Billings and Scott 1994; Olson and Carroll 1992). Especially given concerns about fundamentalist religious movements around the world and evidence in the U.S. of party realignment, with the majority of Southern whites now affiliating with the Republican Party, concern has grown about the implications of these movements for U.S. policy. Recent research on the religious right, however, has come to different conclusions about its import and influence on national and local politics.

Wuthnow (1988) and Hunter (1991) have both argued that there has been an increasing polarization of religious views in the country, and recent research provides some evidence for this claim (Bolce and De Maio, 1999). Wuthnow (1988), for example, finds that major religious denominations have been split along educational lines into conservative and liberal groups. Hunter (1991) sees a fissure developing between the orthodox and the progressives, and he believes it has substantial implications, because it goes beyond traditional political divisions. As he notes (Hunter 1991:46), "On political matters one can compromise; on matters of ultimate moral truth, one cannot."

Woodberry and Smith (1998:48) argue, however, that the likely political influence of the religious right is limited. They argue that members of such organizations have a limited constituency, are internally divided, are isolated from "the mainstream culture-shaping institutions," and confront an anti-political bias among most conservative Protestants. Yet, they acknowledge that the religious right has "veto power" over the Republican Party and does have significant influence in the South and in Utah. Davis and Robinson (1996) argue, however, that the influence, to the extent that it exists, is topic specific. They find that religious orthodoxy affects attitudes regarding gender and family, but that the religiously orthodox are either no different or actually more liberal than the

non-orthodox on racial and economic issues. They further argue (Davis and Robinson 1996:783): "The label 'Religious Right' implies a broad-based, monolithic conservatism among the religiously orthodox that simply does not exist."

The differences in interpretation of the relationship between religion and politics, especially with regard to economic and racial inequality, are, of course, affected by the conceptualization and measurement of religious identity, the sampling used in the research, and the complexity of the relationships between religious identity and various policy attitudes. Both Davis and Robinson (1996) and Hunter (1991) include in their analyses people of all races and religions. Woodberry and Smith (1998) primarily focus on conservative Protestants and Emerson and Smith (2000) on "evangelicals." Others have differentiated various segments of conservative Christians (Laythe, Finkel, and Kirkpatrick 2001; Olson and Carroll 1992; McFarland 1989; Wilcox 1989).

The purpose of this paper is to provide insight into the content and structure of the political views regarding racial and economic inequality of people with a strong sense of identity regarding their religion and who also identify themselves as politically conservative. The sample for this study, however, includes only U.S. born, non-Hispanic whites, between the ages of 25-55. Given that the controversy about the political views of the religiously identified is primarily about their attitudes regarding racial and economic inequality, that is also the main focus of this paper. Like Davis and Robinson (1996:756), we find that the religiously identified hold very explicit views regarding "schooling, sexuality, reproductive rights, and the gendered division of labor," but unlike Davis and Robinson, we find that the religiously identified hold more conservative views on racial and economic inequality as well.

The study is based on semi-structured interviews with randomly sampled participants. We limited the age of the interviewees, because we were especially interested in the "post-Civil Rights" generation, i.e., those who were born during or after the Civil Rights Movement and those who were, for the most part, finished with their education and still in the labor force. Further, research evidence shows that there are cohort differences between the pre- and post-civil rights populations (Schuman, et al. 1997).

The original purpose of the study was to understand the absence of an "American dilemma" (Myrdal, 1944), i.e., why whites are not particularly concerned about the existence of racial inequality. While the study was not intended to study religious identity, the close link in the interviews between religious identity and conservative political views regarding racial and economic inequality was so striking that it seemed important to explore these views more fully through the data. In that sense, the study is grounded in the data, with the purpose of exploring meanings and sense-making among the interviewees, more so than to generalize the findings to the population as a whole.

RELIGIOUS IDENTITY AND RACIAL POLITICS

Despite the overall decline in the effects of denominationalism in the U.S., antagonism toward religious fundamentalists has emerged among some segments of the population because of their presumed intolerance (Bolce and De Maio 1999). The research evidence about religion and intolerance, however, is mixed. Laythe, et al. (2001: 1) argue that "decades of research have demonstrated an empirical relationship between religion and prejudice." Hunsberger (1995) has also found that religious fundamentalism is correlated with prejudice. Davis and Robinson, however, argue in both U.S. (1996) and cross-national (1999) studies that religious orthodoxy is associated with neutral or even more liberal attitudes toward racial and economic inequality, although more conservative views on gender and family issues. They cite other studies that similarly find a lack of correlation between religious attitudes toward social issues (gender and family) and religious attitudes toward racial and economic (inequality, peace, justice) issues (Fleishman 1988; Hart 1992; Olson and Carroll, 1992; Johnson, Tamney and Halebsky 1986).

An article by Laythe, Finkel and Kirkpatrick (2001) provides a potential explanation for the seemingly counter-intuitive findings, given the image of Christian fundamentalists in the popular press (Bolce and De Maio, 1999a; Servin-Gonzalez & Torres-Reyna, 1999), that religion is not associated with more conservative views of racial and economic inequality. Using data from a student sample, Laythe, et al. (2001: 7-8) found that "Christian fundamentalism" includes two dimensions that have opposite associations with prejudice (and presumably with attitudes toward policies regarding

racial and economic inequality): right wing authoritarianism (RWA) and the content of Christian beliefs. They explain:

“If RWA is statistically controlled (as in our studies here), RF [religious fundamentalism] becomes a negative predictor of racism because the part of RF ‘left over’ once RWA is partialled out is the ‘pure’ Christian-belief component, which predicts racism inversely. If instead CO [Christian orthodoxy] is statistically controlled (as in Kirkpatrick, 1993), RF becomes a positive predictor of racism because the part of RF ‘left over’ after partially out orthodoxy is the ‘pure’ RWA component, which is positively related to racism.”

Davis and Robinson controlled in both of their studies (1996, 1999) for a number of variables that may have the effect of partialling out that aspect of religious orthodoxy that is negatively associated with more liberal economic and political attitudes.

Given the qualitative nature of this study, it was not intended and is not possible to separate out the intricacies of religious belief. We are interested, rather, in exploring the meaning that people with strong religious identification give to issues of racial and economic inequality, and importantly, to suggest a framework for understanding the context in which such meaning has come to be understood in the U.S. In contrast to Davis and Robinson, we do not find that religiously identified people among our interviewees are neutral or more liberal on racial and economic issues. On the contrary, they were among the most conservative interviewees in this study, and they identified themselves as such. Yet, they did not talk in racial terms. Like everyone else in the study, they seemed to have accepted the general premises of the Civil Rights Movement. Their comments, instead, were about moral issues, but these were moral issues addressed to public institutions, namely, the public institutions most affected by the Civil Rights Movement.

Figure 1 presents a suggested explanation for the role of such moral rhetoric addressed to public policy issues. As indicated in the figure, we argue that the effects of the Civil Rights Movement, in conjunction with the socio-economic changes underway in the economy in the post-war period, led to changes in the structure of social institutions, that were intended to incorporate blacks into the moral community of whites. Legislation and court rulings during the Civil Rights Movement promised the opportunity for blacks to participate politically, to attend integrated schools, to obtain resources from the state, and to live in integrated communities. Those, however, who resisted the changes wrought by the Civil Rights Movement, began to withdraw from or try to transform these same

public institutions through a process that Reich (1991) calls “the politics of secession.” In the post-Civil Rights Period, the U.S. experienced the realignment of political parties, the creation (especially in the South) of private, “Christian” academies, a general attack on the welfare state, and white flight from cities. Religious rhetoric has increasingly been used to justify these reactions and to put pressure on the government to undo some of the outcomes of the Civil Rights Movement. Some have labeled such rhetoric the “culture war,” which we argue has had the purpose of rolling back or cutting back on the availability of public institutions to blacks and other minorities.

[Figure 1 about here]

In the rest of this paper, we develop these ideas by exploring the way that religiously identified people talk about racial and economic inequality. We specifically focus on religious conservatives, both because this is the largest group of the religiously identified in this study and because these are the ones about which there has been controversy in the research literature. In describing the political role of and the content of the policy views of religiously identified conservatives, we hope to make the following theoretical points. First, we show the use of religion in this context as ideology. We do this by showing the patterns that suggest that religion shapes the political views of the adherents, rather than the other way around. We also compare religiously identified conservatives with nonreligious conservatives, which should provide a stringent test of the effects of religion as ideology. Second, we show the influence of the Civil Rights Movement on religiously identified conservatives, which we believe reflects their recognition of the need for legitimacy on the issues of race and racial inequality. The evidence for this is that the views of the Civil Rights Movement with reference to blacks does not differ much between religiously identified conservatives and nonreligious conservatives, whereas their views on other policy issues do differ. Both groups begrudgingly accept the premises of the Civil Rights Movement—the legitimacy of equal rights and the need for access to equal opportunity—although both also complain about the unfairness of affirmative action and both question the capabilities and work ethic of blacks.

Third, we argue that the policy views of religious conservatives reflect aversive racism (Gaertner and Dovidio 1986), in that these interviewees use moral language to talk

about racially coded policy views. In other words, by discussing their policy views in moral terms, they provide themselves with a nonracial explanation for their opposition to policies that would reduce racial inequality. We take it as significant that the targets of their moral opprobrium are those institutions that were transformed by the Civil Rights Movement. In this regard, we again compare the political views of religiously identified conservatives with nonreligious conservatives. We find not only that religious conservatives are much more likely than other conservatives to frame their policy views in moral terms, but they are also less likely to acknowledge or recognize—even in comparison to other conservatives—more structural issues with regard to racial inequality.

We examine the content of the policy views of religiously identified conservatives with regard to schools, welfare, and the inner city, all of which are significant arenas with regard to the Civil Rights Movement. Each of these areas also shows the evidence of the politics of secession described by Reich (1991). Schools are additionally important, because it was the decision by the Carter Administration to deny tax exemption to “Christian academies” that led to the formation of the Moral Majority “to defend the political interest of the Christian academies” and “to advance the entire social agenda of conservative evangelicals” (Reichley 1986:26). The expansion of welfare, of course, provided a safety net for African Americans that has provided some with an alternative to exploitative jobs, and hence, welfare has taken on a special symbolic role in the rhetoric of the right wing. The white flight from cities, the growing political influence of blacks in urban areas, and the ineffectual but symbolic role of housing desegregation policies have also made the inner city of special significance in conservative imagery. On each of these topics, we find that the religious conservatives stand out in their views, even in comparison to other conservatives.

Fourth, we argue that the political beliefs of religiously identified interviewees form a coherent worldview that is reinforced by their everyday experiences. As Lakoff (1996:19) notes, “Conservatives know that politics is not just about policy and interest groups and issue-by-issue debate. They have learned that politics is about family and morality, about myth and metaphor and emotional identification.” Lakoff (1996) argues that conservatives frame their political views around the image of a “Strict Father

model,” with emphasis on authority, discipline, and tough love. These images are especially evident in the political views of religiously identified conservatives, and it is significant, again, that they are consistent in these images across the three areas of the country among the religiously identified and that these images are much more firmly part of the rhetoric of the religiously identified than of nonreligious conservatives.

Fifth, we reinforce previous research that suggests that the political views of these religiously identified interviewees are culturally constructed through the active engagement in religiously oriented media and in religious communities that foster these political interpretations of their religious beliefs. Our evidence includes the consistency of the political views of religiously identified interviewees and their distinction from nonreligious conservatives, plus the comments from interviewees themselves about their immersion in their churches and with church people.

Finally, we discuss the relevance of these views to the resistance to incorporating blacks into the moral community of whites. Specifically, we argue that sharing public institutions with blacks also limits them as targets of exploitation by giving them citizenship rights, and that apparently is what many religious conservatives resist in these public policies. We briefly discuss how the political role of the South in contemporary politics reinforces these policy objectives.

The qualitative nature of this study provides a unique advantage, because it allows us to go beyond the fixed response questions of most surveys. At the same time, because of the thousands of pages of transcripts, it also presents a challenge for an efficient presentation of the interview content. We have chosen three strategies for reducing the qualitative content of the interviews to manageable form for the development of these theoretical points. First, we quantify some of the interview content to make it easier to see the patterns in the data, and we use some of these “variables” to analyze survey data that was collected in conjunction with the interview. Second, we reduce the interview content to summary tables that show in greatly truncated form the content of the interview responses. These tables were constructed by initially extracting the interview responses in total, marking the key ideas in each passage, then constructing an initial table with the key ideas from the interviews classified by region, gender, and class. Subsequently, these key ideas were reduced further into a topical summary of the main

themes in the interview responses. The interpretation of this content is drawn from the full interview material, and not only from the summary tables that can be presented in this paper. In these tables, we compare religious conservatives with nonreligious conservatives and classify their responses by class and gender. Third, we provide illustrative comments from the interviews to help readers understand how the interviewees talk about these policy issues.

METHODOLOGY

The larger study of which this paper is a part addressed two primary questions: (a) how is racial inequality reproduced through access to and use of social structure (social and cultural capital and economic resources) and (b) how do whites construct meaning about racial inequality. Interviews were conducted with 246 randomly selected whites from three areas of the country: New Jersey, Ohio, and Tennessee. Using the methodology outlined by Lamont (2000), four zip codes were identified in each region (two predominantly working class and two predominantly middle class) from which addresses were randomly selected from criss-cross phone directories. Potential participants were sent a letter, followed by a phone call, explaining that the purpose of the study was to write a book on how people develop their goals in life regarding education and jobs and their views of public policy issues. About a third of the participants in each region who were reached by phone agreed to participate in the study. Tables 1a and 1b provide information on the demographic characteristics of the areas from which the interviews were drawn and the distribution of respondents by religion and politics.

[Tables 1a and 1b about here]

Because this is a qualitative study intended to develop a greater understanding of the processes and the meanings given to views on racial and economic inequality, the three areas were chosen because of the different structure of race relations, not just in the specific zip code, but in the larger geographical regions. New Jersey is heterogeneous, with substantial racial and ethnic diversity. Ohio is relatively homogeneous, at least in the area where the interviews were conducted. Tennessee is a southern/border state where racial issues have different symbolic meaning than in either Ohio or New Jersey. (Those living in Tennessee speak of themselves as "Southerners.") While we limited the age

range of the interviewees, we did not restrict the sample only to those who were currently employed or in the labor force. The sample included approximately equal numbers of men and women and working class and middle class respondents in each area, although reflecting the composition of the areas, there are more middle class interviewees in New Jersey and more working class interviewees in Ohio than in the other areas. Class was defined by education, with those having a college education or more being defined as middle class or above and those with less than a four-year college degree being defined as working class (McCall, 2001).

Most of the interviews (all done by the first author in the last three years) were conducted in the participant's home, or occasionally at a public place or nearby university. The questions for the interview were developed from a careful review of the race relations literatures across several disciplines and also included some questions used on national surveys. Although each interviewee was asked the same set of questions, the responses were open-ended, and there was ample opportunity for follow-up and probing of meaning. The interview included a detailed life history of the respondent starting with high school to the present regarding education and jobs, plus questions about self identity, family, intergroup relations, and views of public policy.

The interviews averaged about two hours each and were transcribed verbatim. The thousands of pages of transcripts were entered into a computer program for analyzing qualitative data (Atlas.ti) and coded both by question and with reference to the topics and issues that emerged from the interviews themselves. The first author developed an initial list of coding categories, and then two research assistants helped refine the list based on their review of the interview transcripts. Inter-rater reliability among three researchers was 85%, with discrepancies resolved through discussion.

This paper draws both on the interview content and on the results of previous research literature. The purpose of reporting on what the interviewees said is to look for themes or meaning content. The entire interview creates the meaning, although it is possible to discuss only a small portion of it in this paper.

Measurement of Religious Identification

Because the purpose of this study was not specifically to address the issue of religious orthodoxy, we did not include any specific questions about denomination,

beliefs, or religiosity. The importance of religious identification was evident, however, in a large number of interviews, as was its influence over the way the interviewees constructed meaning about their lives and public policy. Hence, our measure of religious identification is less direct than studies for which this is the main focus, but it also provides a research advantage because it is unobtrusive. We labeled as religiously identified anyone who specifically talked about the importance of their faith, their involvement in their church, their beliefs in God (or more specifically Christ), and the influence of such beliefs or involvement on their lives.

The profile of those we label as religiously identified in this study is very similar to the characterization used in other studies of religious fundamentalism and religious orthodoxy (Davis & Robinson 1996; Woodbury and Smith 1998; Bolce and De Maio 1999; Olson and Carroll 1992). In general, the religiously identified in our sample were very involved in their churches and organized their lives around church involvement, believed in the inerrancy of the Bible and saw it as a guide for faith and practice, believed their faith to be the true and only way to moral justification, felt very strongly that they wanted their children to share the same beliefs, and saw the need to isolate themselves from the influences of the larger society, which many thought to be corrupted and in the midst of moral decline. We included in the sample as religiously identified anyone who spoke about these issues with reference to themselves, even if they did not express the whole range of beliefs. While we did not specifically choose or exclude by denomination, those categorized as religiously identified did not include anyone Jewish, but did include several interviewees who grew up Catholic who were currently attending Protestant churches. Some of the religiously identified attended mainline Protestant churches, but many attended churches that have been labeled as evangelical or fundamentalist. We cannot from the data available from these interviews presume that other interviewees did not hold strong religious values, but whatever religious values they might have held were apparently not salient enough to mention in the context of this interview about their life and views of themselves and others.

Those we label as religiously identified in this study spoke of their religion in various ways. For example, a middle class woman from Tennessee said, "I can't separate what I am, what I have from my relationship with the Lord." Another upper middle class

Tennessee woman said, "I look at, in my personal study, at what God says and base how I live my life on that." A middle class male from Tennessee said, "I would consider myself religious . . . my primary group of friends is my church group." A middle class male in New Jersey talked about "accepting the Lord" and about praying about life decisions. After growing up Catholic, he said that books by Normal Vincent Peale influenced him: "Peale got me to the Bible and the Bible really was the answer." A middle class fellow in Ohio said, "I'm part of the Christian community. I'm part of the right to life." He further said that the Christian community realized "the moral decay in our country . . . and how it's not getting any better and by getting worse, it only leads to worse things." A working class woman in Ohio who worked as a practical nurse said that she often thought of former patients: "I just lift them up to the Lord and pray that the Lord's with them for whatever reason it is." A working class woman in Tennessee said: "I'm not satisfied with the schools [because] God and the Bible has been taken out, thanks to Madelyn Murray O'Hare . . . the Christians went to sleep and let her do it." Despite the variability in the comments about religion, these interviewees stand apart from the other interviewees who did not mention religious beliefs in their responses to the interview questions. Using this very broad measure of religious identification, 22.8% of the sample of 246 interviewees were classified as religiously identified, which compares very closely with the 21.9% found in the General Social Survey data used by Davis and Robinson (1996).

Political Identification

We specifically asked the interviewees about whether they would classify their political views as liberal, moderate, or conservative. While most interviewees indicated one of these three categories, some indicated uncertainty about what such labels mean. In that case, they were asked whether they voted and if they were more likely to vote Democratic (classified as liberal) or Republican (classified as conservative). Given that the overwhelming majority in Tennessee identified themselves readily as either conservative or moderate, this procedure did not create much distortion in the classification. If the interviewees could not identify their politics and claimed that they did not vote, they were asked whether they found themselves more persuaded by the Democrats or the Republicans when they hear them (during the 2000 political campaign). If the interviewee further claimed that they "vote for the person, not the party," then they

were classified as moderate. This measure of political affiliation is independent of the classification regarding religious identity.

Attitudes Toward Racial and Economic Inequality

In addition to the detailed educational and job history, the interviewees were asked a series of questions to elicit their understanding of political and social issues, as well as of their own lives. The questions were purposely phrased so as not to invoke images of specific policies, on the assumption that questions without immediate symbolic meaning would extract fewer socially desirable responses and come closer to representing the real views of the respondents. For the purpose of this paper, we discuss four of the questions that addressed various dimensions of racial and economic inequality. Specifically the interviewees were asked their opinion of: (a) the changes that have occurred in the access to education and jobs over the last several decades for African Americans; (b) whether they would like to see changes in public schools in the U.S.; (c) whether it is fair for people who have less economically than others to expect the government to help them; (d) and the reasons for the "deterioration of life" for people who live in the inner cities of large urban areas.

Interviewees were also asked to fill out a short survey with questions taken from the National Election Studies, including items regarding the role that government should play in bringing about fairness for women and African Americans. In addition, we created dummy variables for religious identification (1=yes, 0=no) and for politics (conservative, moderate, and liberal, each coded 1 and 0). Class (working class=1, 0=middle class or above) is also constructed as a dummy variable.

RELIGIOUS IDENTIFICATION AND VIEWS OF RACIAL AND ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

The Role of Religion in Conservative Politics

Table 2 provides a cross tabulation of the religious identification of the interviewees and their political affiliation (liberal, moderate, or conservative). The Chi Square test suggests a significant relationship. As indicated, 22.8% of the interviewees express strong identification with their religion (compared to 21.9% from the General Social Survey). Of these 22.8%, 80.4% report conservative politics, but only 49.5% of conservatives report religious identification. Only 14.3% of the religiously identified

report moderate politics and even fewer, 5.4%, report being liberal. Clearly, having a strong identification with religion as part of one's personal identity has an effect on the political views that one holds, but there is less impact the other way around, namely, politics on religion. The overall political views of this sample (23% liberal, 40% moderate, and 37% conservative) are very similar to the distribution of mainline Protestants (25% liberal, 39% moderate, and 36% conservative) found in the General Social Survey (Wuthnow 2002). It appears that the effect of religious identification on support for conservative politics is critical to the ability of conservative candidates to win elections, which is undoubtedly why the Republican Party has been so solicitous of religious groups and why it has fostered issue politics around subjects of concern to the religiously identified.

[Table 2 about here]

Table 3 provides further analysis of the political views of the religiously identified by including class identification as well. As noted, the working class was defined as those in the sample without a four-year college degree, whereas the middle class and above were defined as those with at least a four-year college degree. As can be seen in the table, among those who hold conservative political views, the middle or upper middle class are more likely to report religious identification (71.1% for the middle or upper middle class versus 28.9% for the working class). This is contrary to the claim made by Davis and Robinson (1996) with regard to national samples of the religiously orthodox. The fact that working class people are less likely to report religious identification, even among those with conservative politics, suggests that class trumps religion in this sample, further suggesting that religious identification functions as an ideology to support the status quo, and specifically the privileges of the middle and upper middle class. In contrast, among those who are moderate or liberal, the overwhelming majority of both working and middle class interviewees report no religious identification (92.9%). These differences can be seen in the Chi Square statistics, which suggest that there is a significant relationship between class and religious identification among those who define themselves as conservative, but not among those who are moderate or liberal.

[Table 3 about here]

Table 4 regresses on various demographic characteristics of the interviewees two items from the National Election Studies survey that interviewees filled out as part of this study. The first question asks the interviewee whether "the government in Washington should see to it that women get fair treatment in jobs or is this not the government's business." A second question asks the same thing about African Americans. Both items are on a 7-point scale; a higher score indicates that it is not the government's business, while a lower score indicates that the interviewee believes the government should see to it. In the first model for each dependent variable, we control for age, gender (male = 1), education (on a six point scale), family income (on a six point scale, ranging from less than \$30,000 to over \$200,000), and religious identification (1 = religiously identified). In the second model for each dependent variable, we add conservative politics (1 = conservative) to the equation. We find in this sample, that neither age (restricted to 25-55) nor gender has any effect on the view of the role of government. We also find, as have others, that those with more education are likely to believe that the government should see to fair treatment and that the higher the income (net of education), the more likely the interviewee is to believe that it is not the government's business to ensure fair treatment.

[Table 4 about here]

Religious identification is strongly predictive in this sample of the belief that it is not the government's business to ensure fair treatment. Furthermore, when we add conservative politics to the equation, the effect of religious identification is reduced, but not eliminated, while conservative politics does not itself have a significant effect. Hence, in this sample of U.S. born, and prime working age whites, religious identification is associated with even more conservative views of the role government should play in assuring fairness in the job market than the views of nonreligious conservatives, who do not differ from those with more moderate or liberal politics, once religious identification is controlled. (The dummy variable for religion includes all of the religiously identified; presumably the effect would be stronger if we had included only religious conservatives here.)

It appears that religion drives the political views of the interviewees rather than the other way around. Given that there are more religious people who are conservative

than there are conservative people who are religious, this suggests to us that religion functions like an ideology that reinforces and supports conservative politics for this sample. Furthermore, in this sample religious identification is a strong predictor of conservative policy views, whereas conservative politics, net of religious identification, is not. As we will see subsequently, we also find that religious identification contributes to a worldview that is distinctive, presumably because it is fostered through the Christian media and conservative Christian leaders (Johnson, et al. 1989; Wilcox 1989).

Conservative Politics and the Boundaries of Race

Table 5 provides a summary of the comments made about the changes that have occurred in the access to education and jobs for African Americans over the last several decades. (The numbers of interviewees in each category, which is shown in parentheses, vary, and hence the set of comments have to be seen in comparison to the number of interviewees in that category.) This table, like the others in this section, compares religious with nonreligious conservatives, and on this question, the responses between the two groups are very similar. While there are some positive and supportive comments about the greater access that African Americans have to education and jobs as a result of the Civil Rights Movement, the conservative interviewees were more likely to qualify their support by raising questions about the qualifications or effort of African Americans, and they were likely to mention the presumed harm to whites because of these changes. The comments of the middle class conservatives are somewhat more positive than those of the working class conservatives, with the working class conservatives expressing more concern about the issue of entitlement. This summary, however, does not suggest a differentiation on the basis of religious identification. The religious and the nonreligious conservatives expressed the same general range of views and with about the same intensity within class.

[Table 5 about here]

The seemingly grudging support for the Civil Rights Movement, we believe, reflects the normative acceptance of these views among whites, and even among conservatives. While they raise questions about how the policies have been applied and about who is deserving, they do not, for the most part, challenge the Civil Rights

Movement itself. On the contrary, they give lip service to it as desirable and good for everyone, although they question its implementation.

It is presumably because the tenets of the Civil Rights Movement have become normative in the country that religious conservatives do not use racial terms to challenge the institutional outcomes of the Civil Rights Movement. On other policy issues, however, those with strong religious identification express a form of "aversive racism" (Gaertner and Dovidio 1986). Negative views about blacks are not expressed directly, but instead are discussed in moral terms. For the religiously identified, the moral language of their attack on public institutions provides a nonracial basis for resisting the incorporation of blacks into their moral community.

Probably the most animated views expressed by the religiously identified interviewees are those about the need for changes in public schools. The context of these views is important to recognize, because it underlines the racial content of these political attitudes that are otherwise presented as nonracial. Across the South, there has grown up a network of very well funded and impressive private "Christian" schools or academies, and these have taken the place of public schools for most of the middle and upper middle class whites in the South who can afford to send their children to them. This is less true in Ohio, although Catholic schools play somewhat of the same role in the area where our interviews were conducted. Despite the greater multi-racial and multi-ethnic composition of New Jersey, the suburbs are highly segregated, and there has long been an extensive network of "independent" (i.e., nonreligious) private schools. Hence, the issue of public schools is much more salient in Tennessee than in Ohio or NJ, but interestingly, the religious conservatives in Ohio and NJ addressed some of the same issues as the Tennessee interviews in their comments about schools.

[Table 6 about here]

While there is substantial overlap in the comments between religious and nonreligious conservatives, there are also differences. The comments of religious conservatives give more attention than nonreligious conservatives to the need for discipline (including spanking), for prayer in schools, for going "back to basics," for making both teachers and students work harder, and for eliminating curriculum content that addresses social issues. The comments of nonreligious conservatives give more

attention than religious conservatives to more general educational issues, such as higher teacher salaries, over use of proficiency tests, concern about program cuts, and the wish for a more enriched curriculum, such as an earlier introduction of foreign languages.

Given the age range for the study, a number of the Tennessee interviewees talked about their having moved to newly created private, "Christian" schools with the advent of busing in the South. Yet, most denied that their reason for sending their children to such schools was to avoid contact with blacks. Instead, they all maintained that they or their parents were primarily motivated by the wish to have their children brought up in a "Christian" atmosphere and their concern for the unsavory nature of the public schools and the people who attend them. For example, one of the interviewees was the head master of one of these Christian academies. He said:

"...integration had an effect on the Christian school movement. Now that's a negative. But I think God has turned it into a positive. I think, especially in the deep south, there were lots of, in the early '70s, maybe late '60s, a lot of schools that were established, I think, primarily as part of white flight, to get away from the integration and the problems that busing, forced busing, brought onto communities. Now that was not good, however, it did give rise to some very fine schools who do take a stand when it comes to expressing their Christian beliefs and training children. . . . And although we are a Christian school, we don't discriminate against non-believers as well. Now we do tell our parents when they come that we are an evangelical Christian school and part of our mission is to see boys and girls come to know Jesus as their personal savior. And if they don't want that, then they shouldn't come here, because we are going to do everything we can to introduce them to the Lord."

Interestingly, a public school administrator also showed up in the interview sample. He said in contrast,

"Oh, that's a racist issue. The ... Christian schools, I think they ought to...at one of the Christian academies they ought to draw a line through Christian and put racist, as far as I'm concerned. I just think they were fleeing integration. And they couch it in a lot of other terms and maybe don't even realize it themselves."

Because of the growing costs of attending the best of these "Christian" schools, the adherents of these private schools have also been at the forefront of other political movements: a strong anti-tax sentiment which further erodes the financial support of public schools, growing support for and demand for a voucher program or tax relief for the tuition being paid to send kids to these private schools, and in some cases, where parents cannot afford the rising tuitions, especially for several children, a movement

toward home schooling. The religiously identified interviewees in this study discussed all of these issues.

Table 7 reports on the comments of religiously identified interviewees regarding government help for those who "have less economically." On this question, the religious conservatives are quite different in their responses from the nonreligious conservatives. Most of the religious conservatives gave very individualist responses to this question. They argued that government help is debilitating, that people should help themselves, that it is not the government's job to provide jobs or economic assistance, that there should not be a sense of entitlement about what the government will provide, and that those who receive government help are lazy or don't want to work. Furthermore, the religious conservatives were concerned about making sure that the undeserving do not get government help. While the nonreligious conservatives raise some of the same issues, especially among the working class interviewees, they were much more likely to also say that government help was warranted under some circumstances at least until the person can "get back on their feet."

[Table 7 about here]

For example, the following are remarks made by religious conservatives. One working class woman in Ohio said, "A lot of them get the headset or whatever you want to say, the thinking pattern going that as long as it's given to me, what the heck, why should I try. And you see generation after generation of that going on." A working class New Jersey woman said when asked whether the government should help those who have less, "No, because I think that you should help yourself, even if it's a hard life." A middle class male in Tennessee said,

"I personally don't believe that's the role of government to redistribute wealth. . . . People who have tended to inherit that mindset from previous generations, and unfortunately have politicians who play to that mindset and continue that dependency, if you will. The great social programs, in my opinion, have been a disaster. They have not been successful at all. All they've done is created more people socially dependent upon the government."

Some nonreligious conservatives were also harsh in their judgment about who is and isn't deserving, but they were more likely to acknowledge that there may be exceptions to a general rule and that sometimes people need help. For example, a working class male

from Ohio said, “Not on a permanent basis, no. Now on a limited basis, like give them the training they need to make a living in today’s world...but to see second and third generation people...no. Go take a job you don’t like. I had to.” A working class male from NJ said, “No. I can say no...but if they can’t possibly live, I’m not sure I’m ready to exclude them out of the ball game.” A middle class male from Tennessee said, “Yes and no . . . I don’t know about expect . . . If there’s a real reason...that you can’t help yourself, then yeah... not just the government, but people.”

Table 8 provides the responses regarding the reasons for the problems of the inner city. This question specifically indicated that there was a "deterioration of life in the inner cities of large urban areas," and asked the interviewees to provide an explanation for why they felt this may be the case. Here the views were overwhelmingly individualist, with attention called to personal responsibility or profligacy as the main sources of problems by both religious and nonreligious conservatives. There are differences, though, in the responses. Religious conservatives were even more likely than the nonreligious conservatives to call attention to moral failings and blameworthiness on the part of inner city residents, although nonreligious conservatives mentioned such issues as well. Nonreligious conservatives, however, were much more likely to recognize structural issues as possible reasons for problems in the inner city. They mentioned things like poverty, unemployment, decline of manufacturing and businesses closing down, as well as issues of power and politics. These issues were much less likely to be mentioned by religious conservatives.

[Table 8 about here]

In general, the discussion of these policy issues was framed by conservatives, whether religious or not, in terms of individual responsibility and willful intention. Yet, religious conservatives added the moral dimension, and gave even less attention than nonreligious conservatives, to the contingencies that might account for problems with schools, welfare, or the inner city. There is a fair amount of overlap in these responses, and the common conservative outlook of the two groups is easy to see. Even so, the responses of the religious conservatives are distinctive because they are consistent both within and between interviewees in terms of the imagery evoked by their comments.

The Coherence of Beliefs Among the Religiously Identified

The strong conservative bent of the religiously identified is striking in this sample, in part because of the consistency in their views across the three regions of the country. While a larger proportion of the Tennessee sample talked about the importance of religion in their lives (48.2%), a large proportion of the Ohio interviewees did so as well (39.3%). Among those who are both religious and conservative in this sample, the Ohio and Tennessee interviewees contribute exactly the same proportion and number, in part, because a larger proportion of the religiously identified from Ohio were also conservative in their politics. New Jersey is distinctive, in this regard, in being more liberal politically and also having many fewer religiously identified interviewees (12.5%). Even so, those in the sample who were religiously identified expressed very similar political views in all three regions. The "Strict Father model," as described by Lakoff (1996), provides a good summary of the views expressed by those who were religiously identified and also conservative:

"This model posits a traditional nuclear family, with the father having primary responsibility for supporting and protecting the family as well as the authority to set overall policy, to set strict rules for the behavior of children, and to enforce the rules. The mother has the day-to-day responsibility for the care of the house, raising the children, and upholding the father's authority. Children must respect and obey their parents; by doing so they build character, that is, self-discipline and self-reliance. Love and nurturance are, of course, a vital part of family life but can never outweigh parental authority, which is itself an expression of love and nurturance--tough love. Self-discipline, self-reliance, and respect for legitimate authority are the crucial things that children must learn.

"Once children are mature, they are on their own and must depend on their acquired self-discipline to survive. Their self-reliance gives them authority over their own destinies, and parents are not to meddle in their lives." (Lakoff 1996:33)

The religiously identified interviewees frequently talked about family issues with this sort of nuclear family as an image, but they also frequently talked about the need for discipline, for self-reliance, and for tough love. For example, a middle class male in New Jersey was opposed to the government helping people who have less because:

"Well, again, it depends if they want to become somebody. . . You know, to be given things, you're really debilitating people. Again, it goes to a biblical perspective, you know, that instead of giving them fish, teach them how to fish. . . You know, I don't think Christ ever envisioned doing it . . . he envisioned people being the charitable causes, not the government being the charitable cause."

A middle class Tennessee woman used similar logic in her opposition to government help for those who have less:

“You know, I go to church. I read my Bible, and I study and you know, the Bible says that you work, not just men, but the woman in Proverbs who worked and sold her fields and managed her household. She worked. And that is what God expects of all of us to do. And to expect the government to give you something for which you haven’t worked is ridiculous.”

A middle class male in Ohio was also supportive of tough love:

“Well, I mean, there’s definitely groups that make too many demands. I guess as far as economically, if you’re . . . if you show the ability to achieve something, say college education or . . . then I think some funding should be made available, whether it’s through low interest loans. I don’t think it should be just given. I think you should be required to work while you’re in school. If you make the mistake of having kids, too bad; it was your choice. You know, you should have thought about that; you should have sacrificed that to try to stay on that path, you know, and that sort of thing, I guess.

Many of the words Lakoff identifies as part of the conservative discourse are readily found in the comments by the religiously identified interviewees, and this discourse, for the most part, is much less prevalent among the other interviewees in the study, and is especially distinct from the interviews with those who identified themselves as liberal. For example, as reported by Lakoff (1996:30), one often sees words such as: discipline, tough it out, self-reliance, individual responsibility, standards, authority, hard work, freedom, human nature, dependency, self-indulgence, quotas, breakdown, corruption, decay, deviant, lifestyle, and so on.

The Incorporation of Blacks into the Moral Community of Whites

What further sets the religiously identified apart, however, is their very negative view of the government, their even stronger than usual opposition to government policies on civil or economic rights, and the Christian or moral lens through which they framed their opposition. By arguing, as a number of them did, that their views represented God's will or plan for the world makes their views less accessible and less likely to be influenced by public opinion or historical events.

The hostility of the religiously identified interviewees was especially strong toward the federal government, which was perceived as the main perpetrator of policies that these interviewees felt were contrary to the will of God. They talked about the

government as having done nothing for them; as taking on a role larger than they should, as interfering with the expression of religious values in schools, for example; as being incompetent to administer large social programs; as subject to corruption; and as creating dependency or "oppression," by offering social benefits in exchange for votes. These sentiments were very strongly expressed by the Tennessee interviewees, but were expressed as well by those religiously identified in Ohio and New Jersey.

For example, one middle class male in Ohio said, ". . .the government surely didn't help me . . . I mean they can't help anybody . . ." A working class male in Ohio said, "The government is expected to be our watchdog, our parent, our safety advisor, and I think it's just too much . . . we can think for ourselves." A middle class New Jersey woman said that government help, "keeps people dependent on it; it doesn't give them encouragement to climb out of the system." Of course, these sorts of views were expressed even more strongly by the Tennessee interviewees. For example, a middle class male (who defined himself as a moderate) said,

"I don't see it ever changing, because the government's trying to oppress people and keep them . . . The government has since, over the years, through liberalism gotten to the point where instead of having America with opportunity, we've got America the welfare state. Here, let me take your money and we'll give it to somebody over here who we're paying free housing, paying them not to work, we don't care whether they go out and fornicate and do all kinds of sin and reproduce kids what they can't take care of . . . We don't want to know that those people are out here working jobs that are paying them cash, and at the same time out here selling dope or whatever . . . The government doesn't care . . . just as long as we can get votes that perpetuate our ideas. And that's sad. That's sad."

These interviewees said that they did not want the government in "the employment business," or the charity business, or the regulating business, or apparently from the view of many of these interviewees, in the education business either. They often said that the role of government is protecting the borders and not much else.

These comments were made in the context, of course, of legislation that extended civil and economic rights to those who had been previously excluded, namely, blacks. While the interviewees did not actively oppose the Civil Rights Movement, and indeed, claimed that they believed in "equal opportunity," they did actively oppose the government actions which attempted to implement the Civil Rights or anti-poverty legislation: school integration, busing, affirmative action (which most of the interviewees

could not specifically name), and welfare. While interviewees without strong religious identification expressed similar sentiments, they were less likely than those who were religiously identified to withdraw (or to threaten to withdraw) from public institutions, to complain so strongly about tax burdens, and to rail against the government's incompetence or duplicity.

It is important to note that the religiously identified were more concerned with government programs that extended citizenship rights to blacks (or to women) than to policies regarding immigrants. In this regard, some interviewees explicitly stated that they were opposed to the government giving too much attention to "rights." For example, one upper middle class interviewee from Ohio said: "I think in a lot of ways we've lowered our standards and lowered our expectations, because of rights here and rights there." Similarly, a working class woman from Tennessee said,

"And I think one of the problems is that the kids have rights. When my kids went to school and when I went to school, I didn't have rights. I did what I was told to do when I was told to do it. And there's no discipline in the classrooms today. The teachers are afraid of the students. And you know what, there's no reason why they can't gain it back. Gain the respect back. Because it existed before and kids have too much freedoms and think they have rights."

And this we argue is the point, namely, restricting the rights of groups to whom rights were extended through the Civil Rights Movement, and thereby restricting as well the legal protection and access to public resources that those with rights can demand. This interpretation is supported, in part, by the fact that the religiously identified interviewees did not have the same concerns about Hispanic immigrants, as long as they are willing to work for low wages and do not draw too heavily on public services. For example, an upper middle class woman from Tennessee was one of the most vocal about her opposition to government. She said that never before "has the middle class been so tax burdened." With regard to the changes that have occurred for African Americans, she said, "I also think that they have . . . are given jobs based on their color whether they are the best qualified or not." Yet, with regard to Hispanic immigrants and why some employers may be more likely to hire them than U.S. born blacks, she said:

"I know when we lived in Texas, there are a lot of immigrants, and it didn't matter. They came in, they did their thing, they fit within the economy, they worked, they raised families, and they just . . . they just became part of us. . . They

come to work everyday on time and work hard. Our arena, or our stadium downtown got in trouble . . . for having Hispanic people without their green cards working. But when they interviewed the owner of the contracting company who was building it, the first things out of his mouth, they show up, they work hard, they give me an honest days labor for pay. Instead of not knowing when they are going to show up, if they are going to work that day or if they are going to whine and complain. I know when we lived in Texas, you know some of my best friends, their parents were the first generation, came across the border, and they worked their tails off."

The issue of rights, therefore, is salient, primarily because it makes blacks part of the moral community of whites, and in that regard, it removes them from those who can be exploited. A number of the interviewees in this study who expressed similarly negative views about public policies like affirmative action and welfare were similarly positive or at least neutral with regard to immigrants who work hard for little money.

The Politics of the South

Given that the Tennessee interviews were done during the summer of 2000 and in the midst of the presidential election, it was quite salient that the views we heard expressed, especially among the religiously identified were so prevalent in the campaign rhetoric of the Republican Party. The discussion about schools was not about increasing funding or improving quality, but about school vouchers, tax breaks for those paying private school tuition, and testing. The discussion about taxes was not to make them more equitable or to eliminate tax loopholes, but rather to reduce taxes and government "waste." The discussion about welfare was that it should be eliminated in preference for "faith based initiatives." The interviewees in this study also frequently mentioned the kinds of "gender and family" issues often heard during the campaigns, such as abortion, homosexuality, and out of wedlock births. As Lakoff (1996) argued, the framework of conservative thinking is both coherent and reinforcing, and among those who are religiously identified, is also regularly reaffirmed, strengthened, and buttressed by active involvement in church groups, Bible studies, and worship services.

The fact that the same set of issues were discussed by the religiously identified in all three areas of the country, even though they were more emphatic and somewhat more elaborated in the interviews in the South, suggests that these issues are regularly discussed through the institutions surrounding the church groups that the interviewees

attend. Some of the interviewees discussed music, literature, conferences, study groups, and other forms of media through which they developed and expanded their views. The effect, therefore, on the Republican Party need not come only through groups like the Christian Coalition or the Moral Majority. The political support of conservative politics can be fostered and facilitated by the church organizations to which 20% or more of the population belong. While one might hope that the values that people hold support and inform their political views, it seems clear in the association between these particular religious interpretations and the specific political agenda that they support that religion functions in this context as an ideology to reinforce existing structures of power. In a sense, then, these churches and these people with strong religious identification have been captured by a political agenda, and they have partly constituted or created a political agenda that serves their interests through the mechanisms of their churches and church groups. As the interviewee who was convinced that the Bible told him to teach a man to fish, but not give him a fish, many of the interviewees have come to believe that their faith mandates their conservative political views.

This is not, however, the only way to link politics and religion, nor is it necessarily the way these particular religious groups have done so in the past. For example, Emerson and Smith (2000) cite the work of Hart (1992) to explain that American Christians have used their religion to support a wide range of political views at various times in the past:

"He found that people use religion to come to every conceivable position on economic inequality--from extremely conservative to extremely liberal. . . . Although most attempt to apply their faith, American Christians, even within the same race, run the gamut of possible positions on economic inequality. Thus, religious people, in such a context, compete ideologically against each other, fragmenting the religious voice. and given the relative equality of power, the different religious voices negate one another. . . . at least in race relations, the dominant white religious voices, amid the vast variety, are nearly always those that are least prophetic, most supportive of the status quo. It is not just that the prophetic voice is fragmented, the prophetic voices that call for overcoming group divisions and inequalities typically are ghettoized." (Emerson and Smith 2000:63-64)

The close link between conservative politics and strong religious belief among whites in the U.S. at this time in history is clearly associated with efforts to resist or turn

back what the Civil Rights Movement has done to "overcome group divisions and inequalities." In a sense, this particular link between conservative politics and religious belief gives more weight to the "right wing authoritarianism" and less to the "Christian orthodoxy" of religious fundamentalist beliefs (Laythe, et al., 2001). Emerson and Smith (2000) attribute this outcome to the pluralist structure of American churches, which they believe have to compete in a "marketplace" for congregants and support, and to the homogeneous composition of most church congregations, which they believe are a result of the marketplace mechanisms.

But religion serves this purpose, as Emerson and Smith (2000, Ch. 8) note, only when it gives up the "prophetic" voice, in preference for a "priestly" voice of maintaining the existing structure of power and the status quo. As they note (Emerson and Smith, 2000:170):

"Despite devoting considerable time and energy to solving the problems of racial division, white evangelicalism likely does more to perpetuate the racialized society than to reduce it. . . . Our examination . . . suggest[s] that many race issues that white evangelicals want to see solved are generated in part by the way that they themselves do religion, interpret their world, and live their own lives. These factors range from the ways evangelicals and others organize into internally similar congregations, and the segregation and inequality such congregations help produce; to theologically rooted evangelical cultural tools, which tend to (1) minimize and individualize the race problem, (2) assign blame to blacks themselves for racial inequality, (3) obscure inequality as part of racial division, and (4) suggest unidimensional solutions to racial division."

The Cultural Production of Religious Identification

The religiously identified interviewees in this study were guilty of using each of these "evangelical cultural tools." They individualized the problems of inequality, blamed those who had less for their own misfortune, and argued that the government made things worse instead of better. They expressed a strong sentiment about the moral decay of the society, the erosion of values and standards, and the irresponsible or immoral behaviors of much of the rest of the country. Rather than these views being challenged by their churches, instead, their association with church and church people strengthened their views. For most of the religiously identified, church and friends from church played a central role in their lives. Many of the interviewees volunteered that they spent most of their time in church activities or with church people. When asked whether they did

anything to make sure that their children were around the "right kind of people," most mentioned that they sent them to church and encouraged their friendships with other church members.

A number of the interviewees described Bible study groups or fellowship groups that they regularly attended, and several mentioned community service projects that they engaged in through the church. Perhaps most important, most of the interviewees with strong religious identification described an active effort on their part to study, learn, and develop a deepened understanding of their religious beliefs and of how their beliefs should be applied to their everyday lives. Also of importance, is that many of those with strong religious identification reported that when they were looking for jobs, they often found them through contacts with people at their church, which is consistent with the evidence that 47% of white conservative Protestants work in all white workplaces, compared to 27% of other whites (Emerson & Smith 2000:162, from 1996 General Social Survey).

Further, many of the religiously identified interviewees who attended college almost inevitably went to religiously affiliated schools, which are likely also to be highly segregated and where their interpretation of their faith and politics is likely to be reinforced rather than challenged. This is unlike the interviewees who did not identify themselves by their religion, where many indicated the importance of their college experiences for broadening their views and helping them to see the world from other points of view. This does not mean, of course, that the others are necessarily liberal, but only that they are more likely to have been exposed to such ideas at this stage of their lives, and many mentioned the importance of this for changing their views, for example, from conservative to moderate or liberal. In contrast, in the Tennessee interviews, there were a number of people who had moved to Nashville from elsewhere in the country, who were more likely to describe a change in political views from liberal or moderate to more conservative the longer they lived in the South.

Thus, the link between the religious beliefs of these interviewees and their conservative politics has been fostered through "cultural production" at various and sundry levels through church and quasi-church organizations and institutions to bring these particular interpretations of Christian theology into the service of the political right.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, we have endeavored to explore the content and structure of thinking about issues of racial and economic inequality among U.S. born, white, prime working age, interviewees in three parts of the country. We have found that there is a close link between the religious views held by these interviewees and their identification with conservative politics, and that this link does not exist to the same extent even among those who share conservative views but who are not religious in their personal sense of self. We found that the religious identification of the interviewees is more important than their political identification in their opposition to government assurance of fairness in employment for women and African Americans. We also found that the coherence of the political views of these religiously identified interviewees was similar in content and structure for those interviewees in each of the three areas of the country.

We have argued that these political views have come to be associated with the religious faith of these interviewees through processes of cultural production, in which the interviewees actively engage in experiences that foster and encourage their interpretation of their faith in these political terms. We have also found that the metaphor or worldview that defines the political views of these religiously identified interviewees is that of the "Strict Father" as suggested by Lakoff (1996). Finally, and most importantly, we have argued that the content of these political views are largely about the strong boundaries drawn against African Americans in the post-Civil Rights period, to limit the role of government in fostering their civil and economic rights. Similarly strong boundaries are expressed in this metaphor against the economic and civil rights of women, but that issue is not in dispute in the research literature.

Because religious beliefs, almost by definition, are thought to be true and right, and hence, beyond compromise or modification (Hunt 1991), those with more progressive political views have been at a loss to grasp and to challenge the role of the religious right in their support of the Republican Party and the cultural wars that have contributed to the erosion of the civil rights gains of the last several decades. Given the relatively large number of people who share such views and their disproportionate identification with right wing politics, they will continue to have substantial influence on both local and national politics, whether or not they organize themselves into

organizations like the Moral Majority, and whether or not they even vote. It would take someone to help them see that their interpretation of their faith is not necessarily "God's will" to redirect them politically. Because religiously identified people have tended to isolate themselves from the larger society and to protect themselves from exposure to views they think of as ungodly, such a task will undoubtedly be even more challenging than it otherwise would be. Especially given the role of fundamentalist movements around the world, these issues seem to be especially salient and important over the coming decades in the U.S. To make progress toward racial equality and to prevent further erosion of the legal and cultural supports for civil and economic rights, however, seems to require substantial attention to these concerns. Even from within the religious movement, these have been difficult and challenging issues. As Emerson and Smith (2000:167-168) explain:

"The radical message of the early racial reconciliation leaders, by the time it got to white, grassroots evangelicals, was minimized to little more than having respect for people of other races, or having a cross-race friendship. When a more radical message is pushed, as the leader of Promise Keepers, Bill McCartney, observed, the walls go up, and those in his conservative Christian subculture tune him out."

The challenge, therefore, is at the level of a culture war. It cannot take place through the public schools, if such people are not in them. The impact through the media is limited, because conservative Christians have their own. And, it apparently cannot take place through the churches either, because those that have attempted to address racial reconciliation are ghettoized (Emerson and Smith 2000:164). Hence, it seems that a transformation of the current close link between religious identification and right wing politics among whites must come from "prophetic voice," which most likely must come from a new social movement. Such a future is difficult to envision, but then prophets always are.

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TABLE 1a. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF INTERVIEW AREAS

	New Jersey	Ohio	Tennessee
Median Family Income			
Middle Class Area 1	\$74,745	\$38,326	\$49,385
Middle Class Area 2	\$67,950	\$36,660	\$50,744
Working Class Area 1	\$40,015	\$23,513	\$33,701
Working Class Area 2	\$41,098	\$27,658	\$38,911
% White Non-Hispanic			
Middle Class Area 1	90%	97%	98%
Middle Class Area 2	86%	98%	98%
Working Class Area 1	91%	94%	95%
Working Class Area 2	98%	92%	90%
% Non-Managerial Jobs			
Middle Class Area 1	50%	60%	47%
Middle Class Area 2	51%	66%	53%
Working Class Area 1	78%	89%	71%
Working Class Area 2	76%	86%	77%
% Bachelor's Degree+			
Middle Class Area 1	56%	31%	60%
Middle Class Area 2	44%	29%	49%
Working Class Area 1	12%	5%	22%
Working Class Area 2	15%	7%	22%

TABLE 1b. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF INTERVIEWEES
(% by rows)

	NJ	OH	TN	Total	% Total Sample
Total Interviews	93 (37.8%)	91 (37%)	62 (25%)	246 (100%)	100%
Total Nonconservatives	72 (46.5%)	51 (32.9%)	32 (33%)	155 (100%)	63%
Total Conservatives	21 (23.1%)	40 (44%)	30 (33%)	91 (100%)	37%
Total Religiously Identified	7 (12.5%)	22 (39.3%)	27 (48.2%)	56 (100%)	22.8%
Total Religious Conservatives	5 (11.1%)	20 (44.4%)	20 (44.4%)	45 (100%)	18.3%
Total Nonreligious Conservatives	16 (34.8%)	20 (43.5%)	10 (21.7%)	46 (100%)	18.7%
Total Religious Nonconservatives	2 (18.2%)	2 (18.2%)	7 (63.6%)	11 (100%)	4.5%

Table 2. CROSS TABULATION OF RELIGIOUS IDENTITY AND POLITICAL ORIENTATION

Crosstabs

religion * politics Crosstabulation

			politics			Total
			liberal	moderate	conservative	
religion 0	Count	54	90	46	190	
	% within religion	28.4%	47.4%	24.2%	100.0%	
	% within politics	94.7%	91.8%	50.5%	77.2%	
	% of Total	22.0%	36.6%	18.7%	77.2%	
1	Count	3	8	45	56	
	% within religion	5.4%	14.3%	80.4%	100.0%	
	% within politics	5.3%	8.2%	49.5%	22.8%	
	% of Total	1.2%	3.3%	18.3%	22.8%	
Total	Count	57	98	91	246	
	% within religion	23.2%	39.8%	37.0%	100.0%	
	% within politics	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	23.2%	39.8%	37.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	58.672 ^a	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	58.850	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	46.397	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	246		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 12.98.

Directional Measures

			Value
Nominal by Interval	Eta	religion Dependent	.488
		politics Dependent	.435

Table 3. CROSS TABULATION OF RELIGIOUS IDENTITY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS BY POLITICAL CONSERVATISM

religion * wc * conservative Crosstabulation

conservative				wc		Total
				0	1	
0	religion	0	Count	76	68	144
			% within religion	52.8%	47.2%	100.0%
			% within wc	91.6%	94.4%	92.9%
			% of Total	49.0%	43.9%	92.9%
	1	Count	7	4	11	
		% within religion	63.6%	36.4%	100.0%	
		% within wc	8.4%	5.6%	7.1%	
	Total	Count	83	72	155	
		% within religion	53.5%	46.5%	100.0%	
		% within wc	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
% of Total		53.5%	46.5%	100.0%		
1	religion	0	Count	15	31	46
			% within religion	32.6%	67.4%	100.0%
			% within wc	31.9%	70.5%	50.5%
			% of Total	16.5%	34.1%	50.5%
	1	Count	32	13	45	
		% within religion	71.1%	28.9%	100.0%	
		% within wc	68.1%	29.5%	49.5%	
	Total	Count	47	44	91	
		% within religion	51.6%	48.4%	100.0%	
		% within wc	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
% of Total		51.6%	48.4%	100.0%		

Chi-Square Tests

conservative		Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
0	Pearson Chi-Square	.484 ^b	1	.486		
	Continuity Correction ^a	.146	1	.702		
	Likelihood Ratio	.492	1	.483		
	Fisher's Exact Test				.546	.354
	Linear-by-Linear Association	.481	1	.488		
	N of Valid Cases	155				
1	Pearson Chi-Square	13.503 ^c	1	.000		
	Continuity Correction ^a	12.005	1	.001		
	Likelihood Ratio	13.864	1	.000		
	Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
	Linear-by-Linear Association	13.355	1	.000		
	N of Valid Cases	91				

a. Computed only for a 2x2 table

b. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.11.

c. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 21.76.

Directional Measures

conservative				Value
0	Nominal by Interval	Eta	religion Dependent	.056
			wc Dependent	.056
1	Nominal by Interval	Eta	religion Dependent	.385
			wc Dependent	.385

Table 4. REGRESSION OF SUPPORT FOR GOVERNMENT HELP ON RELIGIOUS IDENTITY AND OTHER VARIABLES.

	Govt. Help for Women^a		Govt. Help for Blacks^a	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Constant	3.67***	3.60***	4.19***	4.08***
Age	-.0006	-.0005	.0005	.0006
Gender	.22	.19	.18	.14
Education	-.33***	-.32***	-.44***	-.43***
Income	.17+	.17+	.20*	.20*
Religious Identity	.87**	.73*	.75**	.55+
Conservative Politics	--	.24	--	.31
Adj. R²	.062	.061	.086	.088
N	246	246	246	246

^aPositive coefficients mean that the "government should stay out of it," while negative coefficients mean,"the government should do it."

Table 5. Attitude Comparisons Between *Religiously Identified Conservatives* and *Nonreligious Conservatives* on Changes for African Americans in Last Several Decades

Topics	Middle Class Conservatives			
	Religiously Identified		Nonreligious	
	Males (N=21)	Females (N=14)	Males (N=9)	Females (N=6)
Favorability	Tremendous; it's good; great	Wonderful (2 people); good	Great; good	Wonderful; great
Current discrimination	Everybody looks at you; still lot of prejudice; still old boy system	Still some discrimination; hasn't been change; not solved yet	Some blacks do OK, others complain all the time	Wish things were more even; prejudice still there
Current opportunity	Less discrimination; Opportunities increased; opportunities are there; seen real change; always been that way	World should be open; much easier; shouldn't discriminate	Opportunity is there; education easier	Affirmative action is positive
Concern about qualifications	If qualified	If qualified; don't lower standards; given jobs whether qualified or not	A lot are not qualified; whatever they deserve	If qualified; heritage holds them back
Affirmative action	--	No quotas (2 people); no preferential treatment	--	--
Other	Breakdown of family		--	--
Overall effect	White people are discriminated against; somebody has good jobs	Gone overboard; bend over backwards; white people suffer	Gone overboard; causes friction; can be exceptional or horrible; better opportunity than me	Blacks have an advantage
Summary of Middle Class Conservative Attitudes: Very similar views about the effects of the Civil Rights movement; hesitant approval, some expressed concern about qualifications of blacks, some concern about whites being harmed				
Topics	Working Class Conservatives			
	Religiously Identified		Nonreligious	
	Males (N=7)	Females (N=8)	Males (N=19)	Females (N=7)
Favorability	Good; good for them	Great, wonderful, good; gotten used to it	It's OK; better off (even if forced)	--
Current discrimination	Still stigmatism	--	Need lot of improvement; still discrimination	Long way to go

Topics	Working Class Conservatives			
	Religiously Identified		Nonreligious	
	Males (N=7)	Females (N=8)	Males (N=19)	Females (N=7)
Current opportunity	Now a level playing field	Should have opportunity; more doors are open	All for education; have open opportunity	Progressed, probably better
Concern about qualifications	If capable; don't have a work ethic	Just like everybody else	If good at job; as long as do the job; we have lowered standards; same as you and me	Hard to fire them (2 people)
Affirmative action	--	Affirmative action abused	Affirmative action is not fair; against quotas; flat-out reverse discrimination; minorities get the work	Affirmative action is not fair; why all black colleges; problem with affirmative action; lot hired to meet percentage
Other issues	--	Look on the inside	They think we owe them	Some ruin it for others; don't want daughter with black person
Overall effect	Heightens prejudice; going other way around	Been abused; gone the other way	Whites left behind; seen it abused; NAACP keeps racism alive	They would be selected before me; they will never be equal; govt got carried away
Summary of Working Class Conservative Attitudes: Similar views about the effects of the Civil Rights movement; hesitant approval, some expressed concern about qualifications of blacks, but probably somewhat less favorable than among the middle class and more concern about lack of fairness, entitlement attitudes among blacks, and harm to whites				

Table 6. Attitude Comparisons Between *Religiously Identified Conservatives* and *Nonreligious Conservatives* on Changes Needed in Schools

Topics	Middle Class Conservatives			
	Religiously Identified		Nonreligious	
	Males (N=21)	Females (N=14)	Males (N=9)	Females (N=6)
Need for discipline	Strong emphasis on need for discipline	Strong emphasis on need for discipline; wear uniforms; give teachers more authority	A "little bit" more discipline mentioned	Need for discipline mentioned
Need for prayer; teaching morals	Put prayer back in schools; teach creationism	Teach morals; problem with breakdown of family; teach creationism	--	--
Back to basics	Back to basics; less attention so social issues	Less attention to social issues	Gotten away from basics; not so much social issues; teach math the way we used to	--
Students and teachers should work harder	Teachers should work harder; kids unmotivated	--	--	--
Make schools like businesses	Make schools like businesses; make school year longer	--	--	Make schools like businesses
More hands on education	Too theoretical, More hands on	More hands on	--	--
Other changes in curriculum	No outcome based education; don't teach about homosexuality	More arts education	--	--
Less pressure on students	Less pressure	Too many requirements; more play time	Too much pressure	--
More money for schools	More money; smaller classes	More money for schools; less money for special education	Higher salaries	Hire good, qualified teachers and pay them more
Other issues	--	We have lowered standards because of affirmative action; Speak English; too much testing	Don't mainstream disabled students	Proficiency tests distort education (mentioned by several people)
I'm satisfied	I'm satisfied	--	I'm happy with schools	I'm satisfied

Summary of Middle Class Conservative Attitudes: Religiously identified more critical of schools, more emphasis on discipline, morals, working harder, more critical of attention to social issues, less expression of satisfaction				
Topics	Working Class Conservatives			
	Religiously Identified		Nonreligious	
	Males (N=7)	Females (N=8)	Males (N=19)	Females (N=7)
Need for discipline	Need for discipline mentioned; not just detention; use spanking	Need for discipline mentioned; too many rights	Need for discipline mentioned; teachers are afraid; Teach them to fish; too much free time	Need for more discipline mentioned; use paddling
Need for prayer; teaching morals	Teach morals; put prayer back in schools	Put prayer back in schools	Decline in morals; Put prayer back in	--
Back to basics	Less attention to social issues	--	--	Less attention to social issues
Students and teachers should work harder	End tenure; test teachers	--	End tenure; end teacher's union; teaching out of date	Higher expectations of students; kids graduate without skills
Make schools like businesses	--	--	Make schools like businesses	--
More hands on education	--	--	Teach job skills	--
Other changes in curriculum	Don't teach about homosexuality	--	More foreign language; teach kids about personal finance	More foreign language
Less pressure on students	--	--	--	--
More money for schools	Schools waste money; improve facilities; smaller classes	Schools waste money; smaller classes; higher salaries; but no more taxes	More money; free college; use of vouchers; pay teachers more	Concern about school budgets and program cuts
Other issues	U.S. kids falling behind other countries	End busing; problem of cronyism; violence in schools	U.S. kids falling behind other countries; raise standards	Test results falling; too much competition over clothes and such
I'm satisfied	--	--	Schools are doing more than they used to; doing the best they can; I'm satisfied	
Summary of Working Class Conservative Attitudes: Religiously identified are more concerned with waste, lower taxes, and putting more pressure on students and teachers; Nonreligious are concerned with some of these issues, but give more attention to broadening the curriculum, program cuts, and need for providing their kids with more educational resources. The nonreligious also express more satisfaction with schools				

Table 7. Attitude Comparisons Between *Religiously Identified Conservatives* and *Nonreligious Conservatives* on Whether Government Should Help Those Who Have Less

Topics	Middle Class Conservatives			
	Religiously Identified		Nonreligious	
	Males (N=21)	Females (N=14)	Males (N=9)	Females (N=6)
Help is debilitating	Help is debilitating; teach them to fish; takes away incentive	Bible says to work; welfare generates welfare; if govt hands things, we won't get anywhere	--	--
Should help themselves	Should help themselves; need to overcome obstacles; anybody can do it if they want; people have opportunity (3 people)	Can always find a job; should do it yourself; pride is important; have to put forth effort; should have to work; should help themselves	--	Give them opportunity to help themselves; should make some effort; start with helping yourself
Not government's job	Govt shouldn't be in employment business; churches and charity, not govt	Why depend tax dollars; govt to protect not provide jobs	Govt should give fair playing field	--
No entitlement	No free ride, govt doesn't owe you; best person should get the job; social programs a disaster; no socialism	Get undeserving off of welfare; don't really need it; shouldn't have bunch of babies on welfare; spend more effort to get a job; think we owe them; no preferential treatment	--	Problem with chronic ones
People don't want to work	Some on welfare are lazy; parasites	People don't want to work; not if too lazy	--	--
I didn't have help	Nobody helped me	--	--	--
Opportunity is there	Opportunity is there	--	There is help	--

Topics	Middle Class			
	Religiously Identified		Nonreligious	
	Males (N=21)	Females (N=14)	Males (N=9)	Females (N=6)
If there is a true need	If there is a true need; safety net is needed	Has to be monitored; govt should help; it's fair	Should get a fair chance; If can't live, a little help, It depends (natural disaster; deprivation; below a certain line; if doing the best they can); To get them on their feet; help with training; for a certain time; if a real reason	It depends (give health coverage), there are obstacles, Should be given some help; should be given a chance; entitled to some help
Summary of Middle Class Conservative Attitudes: Religiously identified are much less willing to agree that government should provide help and are more concerned with keeping help from those who don't need it or don't deserve it; nonreligious are willing to consider that some people need help sometimes, at least for a time and if they also help themselves				
Topics	Working Class Conservatives			
	Religiously Identified		Nonreligious	
	Males (N=7)	Females (N=8)	Males (N=19)	Females (N=7)
Help is debilitating	Govt enables people so they don't dig deeper	--	If govt provides, you don't have to do it yourself	Insulting to say you can't do it on your own
Should help themselves	Put 'em to work; Get out and make something of yourself	Should help yourself even if hard; get job like everybody else	--	Should help yourself (3 people; if you really try; can do what you want; help to do for yourself)
Not government's job	--	--	Not fair (3 people: it's ridiculous; no reason why they can't do it)	Not fair
No entitlement	Should be stipulations	No free rides for those who are lazy; affirmative action was abused	--	People who work hard deserve more
People don't want to work	They don't deserve it; as long as they work; need to put forth effort; people exploit the system	Generation after generation don't try; not if sitting on rear	Why provide help if they won't work	--
I didn't have help	--	--	Not my fault Susie's dad took off	White males are the minority

Topics	Working Class Conservatives			
	Religiously Identified		Nonreligious	
	Males (N=7)	Females (N=8)	Males (N=19)	Females (N=7)
Opportunity is there	--	Should be more opportunity but no dole	--	There is help
If there is a true need	If they can't help themselves	Should be given some help for a time; until they get back on their feet	Should get some help; if they can't live (4 people); It depends (6 people: if bad break; natural disaster; give training; educational help warranted; as long as payback system; if something traumatic happens; if for health reasons)	It depends; should get some help (3 people; if situations they can't control; because of illness; maybe some training); fair in short term
Summary of Working Class Conservative Attitudes: Religiously identified are much less willing to agree that government should provide help and are more concerned with keeping help from those who don't need it or don't deserve it; nonreligious are willing to consider that some people need help sometimes, at least for a time and if they also help themselves				

Table 8. Attitude Comparisons Between *Religiously Identified Conservatives* and *Nonreligious Conservatives* on Reasons for Problems in the Inner City

Topics	Middle Class Conservatives			
	Religiously Identified		Nonreligious	
	Males (N=21)	Females (N=14)	Males (N=9)	Females (N=6)
Collapse of the family	Collapse of family (4 people)	Collapse of family	Collapse of family	--
No moral values	No moral values	Lack of God; not taught values	--	--
Their fault	Poor parenting	Need to help themselves; good people left; parents working or gone; need to invest something themselves	Neighborhood promotes it; hop on a bus and leave	--
Drugs and crime	Drugs pay more; alcoholism	Drugs and crime (3 people)	Crime	Govt should address drug problem
No pride	Comes from handing things out	No pride; lack of self respect	--	--
Hopelessness	Lack of hope	--	Impossible to pull selves up	Hopelessness
Vicious cycle	Vicious cycle; no role models	--	Born into a lifestyle; no role models	Perpetual cycle; duplicates itself
Government role	Govt creates dependency; Can't throw money at it; taxes too high	--	Let corporations do it	Govt should clean up the area
Concentration of poverty	Lack of opportunity	Large number of people; too crowded; putting all poor people together	Over population	Poverty
Lack of education	Don't have valuable skills	Lack of education	Lack of education	--
Lack of jobs	--	--	Unemployment; eroding manufacturing base	--
Other	Learn to get along; blacks have tough time in all countries; people who work there don't live there	Graft, politics; high costs	--	People not powerful enough
Summary of Middle Class Conservative Attitudes: Religiously identified focus more on the inadequacies of the people in the inner city, while the nonreligious give some attention to the poverty of the circumstances				

Topics	Working Class Conservatives			
	Religiously Identified		Nonreligious	
	Males (N=7)	Females (N=8)	Males (N=19)	Females (N=7)
Collapse of the family	Parents don't pay attention to children	Dysfunctional families	Collapse of family	--
No moral values	--	Kids have too much time, Devil's workshop)	--	--
Their fault	Laziness; no work ethic	Don't want to work; choose not to use education available	Won't work; too many kids	Too many kids
Drugs and crime	Drugs pay more; crime and drugs	Drugs; gangs	Gangs and violence	Drugs
No pride	--	--	Don't own it	No pride
Hopelessness	--	Hopelessness	Hopelessness; depressing environment	--
Vicious cycle	Lifestyle	Can't see beyond it; lifestyle	Lifestyle (2 people)	Cycle continues; lifestyle of parents
Government role	Welfare system caused it (2 people); govt doesn't have track record	Welfare generation; govt hasn't done favors	Welfare	Welfare shouldn't be so easy (2 people)
Concentration of poverty	--	--	--	Too many people
Lack of education	--	--	Lack of education; lack of qualifications	Improve the schools
Lack of jobs	--	--	Lack of jobs	Businesses left; low income
Other	--	--	Politics	--
Summary of Working Class Conservative Attitudes: Religiously identified focus more on the inadequacies of the people in the inner city, while the nonreligious give some attention to the poverty of the circumstances				

FIGURE 1. THE SOCIAL EFFECTS OF RELIGIOUS ORTHODOXY AND POLITICAL CONSERVATISM

