

zations are active on all sides. Identical polls in 1977 and 1986 found that young Catholics (18-29) during this period increased Bible reading, attendance at Catholic social functions, and attendance at prayer meetings. The rate of church attendance has been level for the past 10 years. So the future will see not so much secularization as a *transformed* church and an Americanized laity. Church leaders can expect strong pressures from the laity for reforms — especially more lay participation in decision-making (including choice of bishops), financial accountability and openness at all levels, less patriarchy and sexism, and creation of more supportive community life in parishes.

Politically, young Catholics are not very distinct from other Americans in their age and income groups. The last decade has seen a swing to the Republican Party. Young Catholics support restrictions on abortion, though less fervidly than their elders.

Young Women

A Catholic feminist movement continues to grow, and it will probably be a major player in the next decade. Its ultimate goal is ordination of women priests, but this goal is seen as too far-off and visionary by many in the movement, who stress intermediate goals of empowerment and respect for women. This movement will gain from the thousands of lay leaders (about 80% women) who will be hired by parishes in the next decade to cover for the vanishing priests. Young Catholic women are fully represented in the movement.

In spite of the feminist movement, Catholic women as a whole are not more progressive in church issues than Catholic men. For example, more Catholic men favor ordination of women priests than do women; in 1985 the figure was 51% for men, 44% for women. So the feminist movement is only a minority.

Convergence

The future will see pressure on the institutional Church from an educated laity who have come to think for themselves. They will ask for more lay participation, more open debate about moral teachings on sexual topics, and more accountability of leaders to followers. The overall result will be a gradual movement in the direction of convergence with Protestant-permeated middle class culture. Possibly the result will be a renewed and rejuvenated church.

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RELIGION AND THE U.S. PARTY SYSTEM

By Lyman A. Kellstedt

Questions about religious commitments are typically not included in election surveys. Though the Christian Right has thrust religion to the forefront of public debate, the development of survey measures to monitor linkages between religion and politics on the general public level has not kept pace with events. The only information regularly obtained marks respondents as Protestant, Catholic, or Jew. As a result, the role of religion gets poorly handled in explanations of contemporary political behavior. This situation needs to change. We need to ask about the specific denominations to which Protestants belong — permitting us to classify them into religious families that in fact behave quite differently politically, such as the establishment Congregationalists and the “new breed” Pentecostals. The many religious families can then be categorized into broader religious traditions — mainline and evangelical Protestant. More generally, we need measures of church attendance, religious salience, and doctrinal concerns, if we are to explore properly the impact of religious commitments on political behavior.

Here, I want to review briefly what we know about the relationship between religion and politics, using data from the National Election Studies (NES), University of Michigan. The NES have asked specific denominational preference since 1956. Other religion measures were added in the 1980s to permit examination of relationships between religious commitments and political behavior. Beginning with this year's congressional election study, an even more complete set of religious measures will be available through the NES.

Religious Group Politics

Table 1 compares religious groups in terms of their party identification and presidential vote. Jews identify as Democrats and vote accordingly. Catholic identification with the Democratic party has declined, from the high level it occupied throughout most of US history, but it remains substantial. When it comes to voting, though, Catholics have gone Republican in the last three presidential contests. Mainline Protestants, the old Republican core, still show strong Republican support.¹ Evangelical Protestants maintained their historical identification with the Democratic party through 1980, even though they voted for the Republican candidate in every presidential election since 1956, except 1964. In recent years, evangelicals have changed partisan preferences as well and joined the Republican coalition. This swing of

Notes

evangelicals to the GOP is not just a southern phenomenon; it took place among northerners, and among both younger and older voters. Much of the recent persistent talk about realignment centers on younger voters and southerners. It should also focus on the change among evangelicals.

Religious Commitment and Political Choice

Did religiosity remain an important political variable in the 1988 election? Many thought not. Ronald Reagan, who had galvanized evangelicals, was no longer on the ticket. Pat Robertson had lost badly in the primaries. The Moral Majority had disappeared. But analysis of the data indicates that, in fact, religiosity was still a key determinant. Table 2 shows white Protestants broken into those of high and low religious commitment according to an index which is a composite of frequency of church attendance, the perceived importance of religion, and a measure of evangelical identification.² We see that for both mainline and evangelical Protestants, Republican identification and the Bush vote were significantly greater for persons of high religious commitment.

Evangelicals of high commitment were a key component of the Republican coalition. It's not surprising that the Bush campaign made strong efforts to recruit leading evangelicals (such as Jerry Falwell) even before the primary season in 1988 and to court the group as a whole in the fall campaign.

The "Religious Factor" in Policy Differences

Both evangelical and mainline Protestants are significant components of the Republican coalition. Reagan and Bush united the two behind their presidential candidacies in the 1980s. Can the two groups continue to coexist, or will intra-party wrangling between them become intense? The 1988 NES survey results indicate that the coalition is indeed fragile. Mainline and evangelical Protestant Republicans both identify as conservatives (the latter much more so if their religious commitments are high), and have similar views on government's role in economic life. They part company, however, on attitudes toward social issues — notably on abortion. Evangelicals are more favorable to a social issue agenda and to a pro-life position than mainliners (Table 3). Highly religiously committed respondents within both evangelical and mainline groups take these positions — though highly committed evangelicals are more decisively inclined to them. The more salient social issues become, the harder it will likely be for the GOP to bridge its evangelical-mainline split.

¹ Mainline Protestants include most Presbyterians and Methodists, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, Lutherans, and assorted other denominations. Evangelical Protestants include Baptists, Pentecostals (e.g., Assemblies of God), Holiness denominations (Nazarenes, Salvation Army), Anabaptists, Reformed and most non-denominational Protestants. Coding details are available from the author.

² A high score on the church attendance item is given to respondents who attend on a greater than weekly basis. A high score on the measure of religious salience was assigned to those who attach a "great deal" of importance to their faith. High scorers on the evangelical identification measure are those who believe in an "inerrant" Bible and identify as born-again Christians. To be placed in the "high" religious commitment category, respondents must meet two or more of the above criteria — a demanding test of religious commitment.

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Table 1
Party Preference and Presidential Vote of Religious Groups, 1980-88 (whites only)

	PARTISANSHIP			
	Jews	Catholics	Mainline Protest.	Evang. Protest.
1980	1.25*	2.46	3.24	2.46
1984	1.73	2.58	3.37	3.12
1988	2.26	2.89	3.40	3.16
PERCENT REPUBLICAN VOTE				
1980	44	57	68	63
1984	31	57	71	75
1988	27	54	64	70

Source: Surveys conducted by the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan for their National Election Studies series.

*Party identification scores are means for the groups. Scores for individuals range from zero (strong Democrat) to six (strong Republican). A score of 3.0 would place a group equally between the two poles; scores above 3.0 show that the group leans Republican, scores below 3.0 that it is Democratically inclined.

Table 2

Religiosity and Political Behavior in 1988
(White Protestants Only)

	Mainline Protestants		Evangelical Protestants	
	Religious Commitment		Religious Commitment	
	Low	High	Low	High
Partisan Identification	3.37	3.86	2.97	3.51
Percent Vote for Bush	63	75	65	78

Source: 1988 NES Survey.

*The means and percentages are adjusted to control for the effects of region, age, sex, and education. Differences between evangelicals and mainliners and between high and low religious commitments shown in the table are "real" differences, not the result of the aforementioned variables.

Table 3

Religiosity and Issue Stands Among White Protestant Republicans

	Mainline Protestant Republicans			Evangelical Protestant Republicans		
	Low Relig. Commitment	High Relig. Commitment	Total Group	Low Relig. Commitment	High Relig. Commitment	Total Group
		%			%	
Identify as "Conservative"	54	58	55	43	74	56
Favor Government as Guarantor of Jobs	12	4	11	11	8	10
"High" Scores on Social Issues' Index+	17	49	22	28	72	46
Abortion: Pro-Life*	29	66	35	55	87	68
Pro-Choice	41	14	37	26	7	18

Source: 1988 NES Survey

+High scores on the social issues' index include negative attitudes toward homosexuals and feminists, traditionalist stands on women's issues, opposition to a law protecting homosexuals, and favorable attitudes toward anti-abortionists and school prayer.

*Pro-life includes those who oppose abortion in all circumstances, or support only where the mother's health is endangered or where rape is involved. "Pro-choice" favors abortion without restrictions.