D R A F T

The Religious Left in the 2004 Election: A Mighty Wind or a Gentle Breeze?

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Over the past several decades, the Christian Right has been on the radar screen of pundits, journalists, and social scientists. When the Christian Right appeared on the national scene in the late 1970s (Wilcox 1992), its presence surprised many observers. Subsequent assessments of its strength and vitality have fluctuated as the political fortunes of different candidates and parties wax and wane (Smidt and Penning 1997, ix). Frequently dismissed, the continued presence of the Christian Right over several decades has prompted considerable research (e.g., Hill and Owen 1982; Bruce 1988; Himmelstein 1990; Moen 1992; Lienesch 1993; Rozell and Wilcox 1995; Oldfield, 1996; Rozell and Wilcox, 1997; Green, Rozell, and Wilcox 2000). Scholars have examined the attitudes and activities of leaders of the Christian Right (e.g., Fairbanks 1989; Smidt and Penning 1990; Hertzke 1993; Farley 2005), as well as the social characteristics of the core and constituency of the movement. (Guth and Green 1990; Green, Smidt, Kellstedt, and Guth 1997; Appleby 1997; Calhoun-Brown 1997; Wald and Sigelman 1997). Consequently, we know a lot about the Christian Right.[1]

On the other hand, we know very little about the Religious Left. Despite occasional journalistic coverage of various efforts to launch organizations to counter the Religious Right, there have been few, if any, scholarly attempts to assess the Religious

[1] Throughout this paper, we refer to the "Religious Right" and not the "Christian Right." The movement includes individuals beyond the Christian faith. This is also the case for the Religious Left.

Left.[2] This paper seeks to fill this void by examining the role of the "Religious Left" in the 2004 election.

However, such an examination must address a prior question: Is there a Religious Left? Although it is far from clear how to define and measure the Religious Left, we will make an effort to do so. And we will conclude that there is such an animal. This allows us to assess the size of the Religious Left and to compare it with the Religious Right. The paper then examines the social-demographic, religious, and political characteristics of the movement and, in each case, makes comparisons with the Religious Right. The paper concludes with an examination of the turnout rates and vote choices for the two groups, in an attempt to explain these choices. All this is done to answer the question posed above—what was the role of the Religious Left in the 2004 campaign?

Historical Context

Before addressing the issues raised above, we attempt to place the emergence of the Religious Left in its historical context. But, first, we introduce a caveat. We are talking here about movements with an explicit **electoral** focus. For example, the civil rights movement had its roots in the black church, and its political goals were "liberal" in direction. Therefore, it could be labeled "religious left." Yet, the movement did not concentrate on electoral politics. Hence, in this section, we attempt to explain the emergence of the Religious Right in the 1970s as a movement with an electoral focus. We begin with the "Right" because it preceded the rise of the Religious Left.

Movements like the Religious Left or Right spring forth when conditions are ripe. The emergence of the latter resulted from factors that are explicitly religious, some that are overtly political, and others that are more broadly societal. We begin with the

[2] For an exception, see Hall 1997.

societal and the political. In the period following World War II, educational opportunities expanded for many Americans who came from families that had been denied such opportunities in the past. With education came civic skills that could be put to use in electoral politics. On the whole, these new "potential activists" were motivated by public policy concerns and not by material rewards that had historically attracted people to politics. These "amateurs" or "purists" brought a different type of participant to electoral politics (Cf. Wilson 1962; Wildavsky 1965). And they created a new set of advocacy groups across the political spectrum (Schlozman and Tierney 1986; Walker 1991). Yet, few, if any, of these groups were religious and electoral in focus.

These advocacy groups might not have burst on the scene, however, despite a highly skilled pool of potential activists, if it were not for the dramatic expansion in the scope of government. Government entered into what had been the "private sector." Some individuals entered politics to counter this development (the Goldwater activists) and others to push liberal causes (civil rights, the environment, the expansion of individual rights), but the electoral involvement of these groups and individuals was tangential. With the 1970s, however, came dramatic changes in nomination politics, and the associated creation of political action committees, which encouraged the creation of new organizations with an explicit electoral focus.

Changes in American religion were critical to the development of religious based advocacy groups as well. The pool of highly educated potential activists, noted above, was also present in American religious groups. Government had also impinged on matters of concern to these groups. But changes in the religious landscape were critical. The denominational society of Will Herberg (1955) was disintegrating. Religious elites

began communicating across denominational barriers, and organizations that crossed such lines, like the National Council of Churches and the fledgling National Association of Evangelicals, were becoming more prominent. In addition, non-denominational Protestantism, and the associated mega-church phenomenon, was attracting large numbers. Para-church organizations that cut across denominational lines also increased dialogue among denominations and local churches that had been rare in times past.

These changes in American religion led to a change in the way religious groups related to the electoral process. Historically, denominations and religious traditions tended to vote alike (Cf. Kleppner 1979) pitting "pietists" versus "liturgicals" in the 19th century and Protestants versus Catholics in the 20th. In the 1972 presidential election, we see the first signs of breakdown in the historic "ethno-religious" model and the appearance of a "restructuring" model.[3] The "orthodox" within Protestant denominations and the Catholic Church supported Nixon, while the more "progressive" factions voted for McGovern. Later in the decade, the Moral Majority was founded, a group whose base of support was in the religious community and a group with an explicit electoral focus.[4]

The societal, political, and religious transformations, discussed above, could have led to the creation of religious based groups on the left (religious progressives if you will), but it did not, at least initially. Instead, it was the religious right that came to the forefront following a series of precipitating events that moved people from the sidelines to the front lines, so to speak. These included the Supreme Court's prayer decisions of

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[3] The ethno-religious model assumes that denominations and religious traditions vote alike based on religious, ethnic and racial identities. In contrast, the restructuring model, assumes that theological differences **within** denominations and traditions are the driving forces structuring vote choice.

[4] Although the base of the Moral Majority came from Baptists, and fundamentalist Baptists at that, the potential was there for recruitment of "orthodox" believers outside this base, and even outside the evangelical religious tradition.

the 1960s, the perception that moral values no longer had a place in public education, the growth of the drug culture, permissive sexual mores, Roe v Wade, and even the perceived threat to the tax status of churches.

Shortly after its founding, The Moral Majority was credited with having an impact on the 1980 elections (Wilcox 1986). Pat Robertson's campaign for president in 1988 produced another group of religious activists (mainly charismatics and Pentecostals) and led to the creation of the Christian Coalition in the wake of his failed effort. The Christian Coalition recruited "orthodox" believers across the evangelical tradition and beyond. Finally, in the 1990s, the religious left responded. Perhaps it was the increasing conservatism of the Supreme Court, negative reaction to the Republican National Convention of 1992, the takeover of Congress by the Republicans in 1994 and, finally, the realization that their "ox was being gored" that led to the creation of religious left groups with an electoral focus in the mid 1990s.

Analytical Issues

With this historical backdrop behind us, a variety of analytical issues need to be addressed. First of all, should the analysis focus on the organizations of the Religious Left, or concentrate on the mass base of the movement? If the latter, then what religious and political criteria should be used to identify the "Left"? We attempt to answer these questions in this section.

Where to Look?

Part of the difficulty in assessing the potency of the Religious Left is that its organizational nucleus is small and receives little media attention. Probably the best

known of the organizations are the Interfaith Alliance and the Call to Renewal,[5] each of which were founded in the period prior to the 1996 election[6] and were created in reaction to the Religious Right. Jim Wallis, author and leader of the Sojourners community in Washington, was a key figure in the founding of both organizations. The website of the Interfaith Alliance (www.interfaithalliance.org) claims 150,000 members, representing diverse religious and spiritual communities.

Despite these claims, we know of no evidence that the Alliance or the Call to Renewal have had a major impact on election results since their founding. In recent years, other smaller Religious Left organizations have come on the scene, some local or statewide and others seeking a broader national constituency. Still none have exhibited any major influence in shaping national, or even state, electoral politics.

As a result we have chosen to focus on the mass base of the Religious Left. Despite what appears to be organizational weakness, there may well be a "Religious Left" constituency present in the American electorate that such organizations could potentially mobilize.

To What Extent Religious Left?

Initially, it is important to note that this paper deals with the Religious Left rather than the Political Left, as there are those in the mass public who fall within the parameters of the latter but who are not, in any way, religious. But, what constitutes a

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[5] We acknowledge the help of numerous Calvin College students in a newspaper and website search for information about Religious Left organizations.

[6] A Religious Left political action committee—JustLife—was formed in 1986 promoting a "seamless garment of life" perspective (Smidt, Kellstedt, Green, and Guth 1994, 139), but the PAC had disbanded by the mid-1990s (Guth, et. al. 1995: 60-61). There are other "left" oriented interest groups out there with a predominantly religious base of support—like Bread for the World, Habitat for Humanity, and the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice—but they are interested primarily in issues and not in contesting elections.

"religious" Left? Certainly, individuals who report no religious preference and attach no importance to religion do not qualify.

But such minimal religious qualifications do not make a person "religious left." Certain beliefs and practices must be added to the mix. Those who have doubts about, or reject, beliefs in God, life after death, the devil, and an inerrant Bible and, in addition, believe that evolution is the best explanation for the origin of life and consider all the world's religions to be valid hold what we call "heterodox" beliefs. Certain scholars have argued that beliefs of this sort are defining characteristics of what they call religious liberals or progressives (Cf. Wuthnow 1988; Hunter 1991) and what we label "religious left." On the other side are individuals who hold "orthodox" beliefs, which serve to define the religious right. A religious center falls between the orthodox and heterodox.[7]

However, such beliefs must be coupled with some level of religious practice. Hence, our Religious Left category is composed of individuals with heterodox beliefs and a sizable number of religious practices.[8] The Religious Right is composed of orthodox believers with at least a modicum of religious practices as well. Individuals with a religious affiliation and who regard religion as important but who do not meet the stringent "left" and "right" criteria are placed in a center category--"all other religious." The "non-religious" lack both a religious affiliation and religious salience.

<u>In What Manner "Political Left"?</u>

No one doubts the presence of a Political Left in American politics, but there is no consensus about its defining characteristics or how best to measure it. A number of

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[7] See James L. Guth et. al. "Religious Mobilization in the 2004 Presidential Election," Paper prepared for delivery at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, D.C., September 1-4, 2005 for the belief measures used in this paper.

[8] For the measure of religious practices, see the paper cited in footnote 4.

possibilities arise. One could simply employ a measure of ideological self-classification, with those who label themselves "liberal" treated as the political left. This approach, while convenient, results in a significant level of measurement error, as many individuals in the mass public appear confused by "liberal-conservative" terminology.

Despite its widespread use, liberal self-identification alone is not ideal to establish a "political left" classification. It is reasonable to expect a certain level of constraint in issue positions as well. We developed three issue scales for "moral," "social welfare," and foreign policy.[9] Individuals who gave "liberal" responses on all three of these scales (or on two of the three with "moderate" responses on the third) were considered to be "left" on the issues. We combined "left" issue positions with Democratic partisan identity and some minimal level of political involvement[10] to produce a "Political Left" category. The mirror image of the above led to a "Political Right" classification.

From the above we created a Religious Left category that combines the previous Religious Left classification with the Political Left with this combination accounting for just under 5 percent of the sample. Similar procedures led to a figure of about 17 percent for the Religious Right. Clearly, one of the difficulties faced by the Religious Left is its relatively small size when compared to the much larger Religious Right. The almost four

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[9] The five-item moral issue attitude measure (abortion, gay rights, display of the 10 Commandments, same-sex marriage and stem-cell research) had a coefficient alpha of .71. The five-item social welfare measure (big or small role for government, government fight poverty by taxing the middle class, government assist minorities, death penalty, and government fight poverty by taxing the wealthy) had a coefficient alpha of .64. The seven-item foreign policy measure (isolation versus involvement, support for Israel or Palestinians, support for preemptive action abroad, Iraq war justified or unjustified, U.S. has a special role internationally, U.S. should take lead to maintain world peace or cooperate with others, and an assessment of the Bush foreign policy) had a coefficient alpha of .75.

[10] An index of "non involvement" was created from the following variables: non-voting in 2000; no plans to vote in 2004 from the pre-election survey; "seldom" or "never" talking politics; and no interest in the 2004 campaign. Non involvement on two or more of these variables removed an individual from the ranks of the Religious Left and Right even if they passed the issue and partisan criteria. This procedure dropped only two from the ranks of the Left, while 44 were removed from the larger Religious Right.

to one ratio provides a major advantage for the latter, making them a much bigger potential voting bloc, and a larger target for electoral mobilization efforts.

How to Proceed?

After describing the data used for this study, our analysis begins with a comparison of the Left and Right in terms of religious, political, and social-demographic variables. We then examine the religious bases of support for both Left and Right. We then analyze the turnout rates and votes for president for the two groups and attempt to explain the bases of these choices. All this is done to enable us to answer the initial question posed above—what was the role of the Religious Left in the 2004 campaign?

Data Source

As a data source for this paper, we use the Fourth National Survey of Religion and Politics, with phone interviews conducted by the Survey Research Center at the University of Akron, and co-sponsored by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life.[11] The survey's advantages for a study of the Religious Left are numerous. First, it has a large sample that permits an examination of religious subgroups with considerable confidence. This study initially polled a random sample of 4,000 adults between February and April 2004; after the election, 2,730 respondents were re-interviewed. Second, the survey employs numerous religious belief and practice questions that permit a rigorous establishment of religious criteria in the creation of a core religion category. In addition, the survey includes numerous questions related to political issues, ideological orientation, and partisan identification. Finally, the presence of additional religious and

[11] Additional support for the post-election part of the survey was provided by the Paul B. Henry Institute for the Study of Christianity and Politics at Calvin College and the William R. Kenan, Jr. Endowment at Furman University.

political questions (beyond those employed in the construction of the Religious Left and Religious Right categories) allows us to test for factors that shape the influence of the Religious Left (and Right).

Data Analysis

Differences between the Religious Left and Right.

Table 1 compares the Religious Left and Right with the "other religious" and the non-religious. On the two religious variables included in the table, the Left and Right are very different with the former attaching less importance to religion. The Left is also less likely to agree that "Jesus is the only way to salvation." The "other religious" fall in between. The political variables differentiate Left and Right even more than the religious measures included in the table. The Left gives Bush low job ratings, feels close to Kerry, and far from the Christian Right. The Right takes opposing positions with, again, the "other religious" in the middle. The non-religious resemble the "other religious" on the Bush and Kerry evaluations but look like the Religious Left when it comes to evaluating the Christian Right. In terms of social-demographic variables, the Religious Left is more highly educated and has higher income levels than the Right, an advantage that might help overcome the Left's size deficit. In comparison to the Right, the Left is less likely to be married and male, and somewhat more likely to be older. The Left tend to reside in the Northeast, while the Right is more likely to come from the Midwest and, particularly, the South.

In sum, the results in Table 1 give us confidence that our measures of the Religious Left and Right are valid. We expected the Right to regard religion as more important than the Left and to believe that Jesus is the only way. We also expected the

political gulf between the two groups to be a large one. And, finally, the social-demographic findings fit our expectations as well.

How similar are the Religious Left and Right in regard to religious composition? This is an appropriate place to begin because the adjective "religious" is central to who they are. The differences between the two groups are striking (see Table 2). The Religious Left is dominated by Mainline Protestants and Roman Catholics. Given the historic links of the former with the Republican Party, it is ironic that the mainline provides the largest source of recruits to the Religious Left.

Still, it is not surprising given the liberal tendencies of most mainline denominational leadership and its umbrella organization, the National Council of Churches. In addition, recent evidence shows that the mainline pastorate has become increasingly liberal as well (James L. Guth et. al. 1997; Smidt et al., 2003; Smidt 2004). Hence, liberal cues are commonplace in mainline churches.

The members of the Religious Left located within mainline Protestantism are scattered throughout a number of denominations and denominational families like Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Lutheran, and Congregational (data not shown). This diversity within the mainline is paralleled by a similar religious diversity throughout the ranks of the Religious Left. As noted above, there is a sizeable segment of Roman Catholics. The "All Other Religions" category is also fairly large and very disparate (the largest group being "American Indian religions," but with Unitarians and New Age religions represented as well). It seems improbable, but we find more Religious Left members from American Indian religions than from evangelical Protestant denominations.

Possibly the most surprising finding in Table 2 for the Religious Left is the small percentage of Black Protestants in the mix. Although both very religious and very Democratic, only a few Black Protestants meet both core religious and political criteria. Hence, the contribution of this group to the Religious Left is much smaller than the contribution they make to the electoral coalition of the Democrats (Guth, et. al. 2005).

When we examine the religious sources of support for the Religious Right, a very different picture emerges. Two thirds of its "members" are evangelical. In addition, three quarters of these evangelicals come from non-denominational, Baptist, or Pentecostal churches (data not shown). Most of the rest come from such evangelical strongholds as Churches of Christ or from Holiness denominations like the Nazarene Church. The segment of non-denominational Protestants includes a large number of self-identified "charismatics," "evangelicals," and "fundamentalists," groups assumed to be associated with the Religious Right. The large group of Baptists is not surprising given that this religious family served as the base for recruiting for the Moral Majority (Wilcox 1986), while the Pentecostal presence has its roots in the campaign for president by Pat Robertson in 1988 (Smidt and Penning 1990). The mainline and Catholic members of the Religious Right are likely products of the culture war struggles within mainline denominations and the deep divisions between "traditionalist" and "modernist" Catholics. In sum, the Religious Left is not only smaller, but it is composed of a more highly diverse religious component, than its Religious Right counterpart—making both recruitment to its ranks and mobilization in campaigns more difficult.

Table 3 reaches beyond religious affiliations to examine political, religious, and personal factors that divide the Religious Left and Right. The coefficients in the table

allow us to rank the importance of the various factors from the most, to the least, important. Not surprisingly, two political variables related to partisan evaluations—Bush presidential job ratings and Bush versus Kerry candidate evaluations—have the greatest impact in differentiating Religious Left or Right membership.

On the other hand, a variety of religious variables (11 of the next 12) are in line in terms of importance. These discriminating factors include: religious beliefs (Jesus is the only way to salvation); social theology (whether the respondent favors a large role for religion in American society—the Religious Right does so); proximity toward religio-political groups (feelings related to the "Christian" Right); the salience of religious faith to the individual (both the importance of religious faith in voting decisions and in political thinking more generally—the Left attaches less importance to faith); religious identifications (identifications with sectarian, as opposed to non-sectarian, religious movements); and religious affiliations (note the coefficients for the dummy variables in the table).

Political "involvement" variables rank next, but their discriminating power tends to be much lower than the two partisan-related items and the religious measures. Social-demographic variables do little to explain the composition of the Religious Left and Right. In sum, the Religious Left and Right are strongly divided in their attitudes toward the Bush performance as president and to the two candidates in 2004, but they are also divided in terms of numerous religious measures. Given that their assignment to the Religious Left and Religious Right categories was determined by rather stringent religious AND political criteria, the findings in Table 3 are not that surprising.

Turnout and Vote Choice in 2004

If we have valid measures of the Religious Left and Right, we should find differences in political behavior between both groups and between them and other religious individuals, as well as with those who are non-religious. As highly politicized groups, the Religious Left and Right should have higher rates of turnout than the comparison groups just noted. In addition, the Left should vote overwhelmingly for Kerry, while the Right should do the same for Bush. These expectations are addressed in Table 4. These data reveal that the turnout rate found among the Religious Left is somewhat higher than that found among the Religious Right, compensating somewhat for the Religious Left's smaller size.[12] Yet, the Religious Right has very high turnout rates as well. Both Left and Right voted at much higher levels than either the "other religious" respondents or the "non-religious" respondents. Turning to vote choice, we find that the Bush vote was a very high 97 percent for the Religious Right but plummeted to only 1 percent for the Religious Left. The non-religious gave less than 30 percent of their vote to Bush, while the religious respondents who were not part of either Religious Left or Right gave the president a modest 45 percent of their vote. Bush won because his core supporters, the Religious Right, were much larger than the core supporters for Kerry. In sum, Table 4 shows a Religious Left and Right with extremely high turnout rates and even higher levels of support for their favored presidential candidate.

Efforts to Explain Turnout

There is little variation to explain in presidential voting for either the Religious Left or Religious Right. However, there is some variation in turnout rates, and so we

[12] Like all voting studies, our survey is characterized by over-reporting of turnout by respondents. We develop a statistical routine to correct this problem using variables like reports of past voting, political involvement measures and education levels. Details are available from the authors.

examine factors mostly developed by political scientists to account for differences. These factors include: 1) personal resources; 2) political involvement; 3) political mobilization; and 4) contextual effects.

Personal Resources. Numerous studies have shown that highly educated and wealthy individuals are more likely to vote than those in lesser circumstances (Verba and Nie 1972; Verba, Nie, and Kim 1978; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba, Scholzman, and Brady 1995; Leighley 2001). These expectations are confirmed in Table 5 which shows that fully 100 percent of the Religious Left who had graduated from college voted in 2004, while the corresponding figure for the Religious Right was 96 percent. Likewise, high income was also associated with increased turnout in 2004 for both groups.

Among the Religious Left, female vote turnout exceeded that of males, but gender differences were not apparent in the Religious Right. Married respondents were more likely to vote than singles in both groups. While the young in the Religious Left were less likely to vote than their elderly compatriots, age had no impact on voting on the Right. Differences between the Religious Left and the Religious Right were also apparent in terms of race and regional location. Whites in the Religious Left were more likely to vote than minorities, though this pattern did not hold for the Religious Right; residence in the Northeast and the South enhanced turnout for the Left, but diminished it slightly for the Right. In sum, personal resources had an impact on turnout particularly for the Religious Left.[13]

[13] For the other religious respondents, occupying the center column in the table, turnout is much lower than for either Religious Left or Right. Personal resources have a large impact for this "center" group, particularly education and income.

Political Involvement. Political involvement variables should increase turnout rates, and they do, as we see in Table 5. Those with high levels of political information, that talk politics regularly, follow the campaign closely, participate in politics beyond voting, and were certain that they would vote (based on a pre-election question) go to the polls at levels much higher than the groups as a whole. This consistent pattern confirms results from numerous previous studies (e.g., Rosenstone and Hansen 1993).

Political Mobilization. In order to assess the extent to which members of the Religious Left and Right were mobilized to participate, a multiple-item composite measure of reported contacts with voters in the 2004 campaign was created. Previous studies show that contacts make a difference in turnout (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). Both the Left and Right received more contacts than the "centrist" group, but the Right led the way (data not shown). The data in Table 5 reveal that contacts had a significant impact for the Religious Left and Right, as well as for the remaining religious respondents. And, at each level of contact reported, the Religious Left had a turnout lead over the Religious Right. At the high end (6 to 14 contacts), however, the Right closed the gap.

Political Context. Clearly, the 2004 election was decided in the so-called "Battleground" states.[14] In these states, the stakes were high and the competition fierce. Surprisingly, turnout for the Religious Left was actually 11 percentage points lower in the battleground states than it was in the remainder of the country, and even among the Religious Right, turnout was one point below the national average. However, such turnout levels for the Religious Left and Right increased when members received three or

[14] These states include Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin

more contacts. Remarkably, more than three out of every four Religious Right adherents in the battleground states received three or more contacts, and for these individuals turnout on election day reached 90 percent. Voting also increased slightly (to 91 percent turnout) among the Religious Left who were contacted three or more times, but a smaller proportion of its "membership" (61 percent) reported receiving three or more contacts. Clearly, turnout in the battleground states among both the Religious Left and Religious Right was linked to political contacts.

There were a number of states that had gay issues on the ballot in 2004.[15] For the Religious Left, turnout decreased significantly in those states. For the Religious Right, however, there was a slight increase in turnout in these gay amendment states. This slight growth jumped to 91 percent when three or more contacts were reported. No such increase was present with the Religious Left. In sum, turnout increased in battleground states for both Left and Right when sizable numbers of contacts were experienced, and this relationship was particularly strong for the Right. A similar pattern existed in the gay amendment states for the Right. The mobilization efforts of the Bush campaign, the Republican Party, and their secular and religious allies appear to have paid off.

Political Attitudes. Negative attitudes toward the job performance of President Bush should lead to greater turnout on the part of adherents of the Religious Left. Conversely, positive attitudes by the Religious Right could have the same impact. Similarly, in candidate evaluations, the Left is likely to have greater turnout if their attitudes toward Kerry are more positive than their attitudes toward Bush, while the Right

[15] The states are as follows: Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Michigan, Mississippi, Montana, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Utah. Michigan was the only one of these states to vote for Kerry, and, of the remainder, only Ohio was close.

is more likely to vote at higher rates if they like the president more than his challenger. These expectations are also upheld in Table 5.

Religious Variables. Do religious variables impact turnout rates for the Religious Left and Right? There is some evidence in prior studies that high levels of church attendance do just that for the mass public (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). However, given that religious practice items were used in our "Core Religion" measure, we cannot replicate this past finding. However, we do have a number of other religious measures that can be examined (see Table 6).

On the whole, the results do not look as promising as those related to the political involvement variables examined in the previous table. However, some things should be noted. On the Religious Left, those in mainline Protestant denominations voted at significantly higher rates than the Left as a whole as did those who believe religion should play only a very small role in the political process, feel "far" from the Christian Right, and identify with liberal-progressive religious movements. There was less variation around the mean for the Religious Right when these same religious factors are examined. Catholics within the Religious Right voted at higher rates than did the Religious Right as a whole, as did those who identified with sectarian movements (evangelical, fundamentalist, charismatic and Pentecostal). In addition, the number of contacts accentuated these trends for both Left and Right (data not shown).

Which of the factors from Tables 5 and 6 are the best predictors of turnout for both the Religious Left and Right? We provide answers in Table 7. For the Religious Left, three variables have the greatest impact—education levels, the frequency of talking politics, and how closely the individual followed the campaign. All three variables have

served as predictors of turnout in numerous previous studies. For the Religious Right, however, the mix is different with pre-election vote plans, the importance of religion to political thinking, and Bush job ratings joining the three variables that had the most impact for the Left. What is surprising in this multivariate analysis, however, is that political contacts "wash out," even though they were a potent source of high turnout in our initial analysis.

Pre-Election Preferences and Electoral Choice

As noted in Table 4, the Religious Left gave 99 percent of their vote to Kerry, while the Religious Right provided Bush with 97 percent of their vote. This makes it impossible to look for factors impacting vote choice. However, we can look at pre-election preferences and see how they translated into post-election choices (see Table 8).

Within the Religious Left, more than four out of five voters (82 percent) could be labeled as "Kerry Standpatters," in that they favored Kerry in the pre-election period and stuck with him. Another 7 percent of Religious Left voters ended up switching to Kerry from their pre-election preference. The remainder of the Religious Left was scattered among other possibilities, with only one respondent switching from Kerry to Bush.

Within the Religious Right, a similar four of five voters (79 percent) are "Bush Standpatters," while another 4 percent switched to Bush over the course of the campaign. However, a fairly sizable number—13 percent—moved from a Bush preference in the pre-election survey to "no vote" in the post-election interview. One Religious Right adherent was a Kerry standpatter (no doubt a Cub fan with a strong death wish), while only two switched from Bush to Kerry. The strongest finding in the table is that the Left

voted overwhelmingly for Kerry, while the Right did so for Bush. Thus, there are no real surprises here.

Kerry did a bit better than Bush among the "All other Religious" category, but non-voting was much more prominent with this group than for either the Religious Left or Right. In sum, our analysis reveals a very homogeneous Left and Right making polar opposite decisions, and a "centrist" group bitterly divided between voting for either Kerry or Bush or choosing not to vote at all. Kerry did better than Bush among Americans who passed the minimal test of religion but who were not adherents of either the Religious Left or Right, and he also did much better than Bush among the non-religious (see Table 4). But, despite his success with these groups, it was not enough for Kerry to win the presidency.

In Table 9 we break up the Religious Left and Right into two groups—those who switched to the Left (or Right) or were standpatters versus those who did not vote or switched to the opposition candidate or were opposition standpatters. We then look at these four groups (the columns in Table 9) and how they stand on political involvement, political attitude and religious variables.[16] The Kerry standpatters/Switched to Kerry group in the Religious Left and their Religious Right counterparts are far more politicized, have more polarized political attitudes, have stronger views on the role for religion in American politics, and more intense attitudes toward the Christian Right than do the groups occupying the two middle columns of the table. Thus, those Religious Left supporters who either voted for Bush or did not vote, and, conversely, those Religious Right adherents who either cast a ballot for Kerry or abstained from voting were "out of

[16] The Religious Left group that either voted for Bush or did not vote has a small N of 14 making the percentages for this group quite unstable.

sink" with the dominant groups in both Left and Right. The partisan identification data in the table are particularly telling. By definition, all Religious Left are Democrats, and all Religious Right are Republicans, but the Kerry Standpatters and those that switched to Kerry tend to be *stronger* Democrats, while the Bush Standpatters and those that switched to Bush are *stronger* Republicans.

Conclusions

Currently there are no conventionally accepted definitions of either the Religious Left or the Religious Right. In attempting to address this definitional issue, we have made the case for basing "membership" in each of these two movements on rigorous religious <u>and</u> political criteria. When employing these criteria, slightly less than one in twenty Americans (4.8 percent) can be classified as Religious Left, while over one in six (17.2 percent) can be categorized as Religious Right.

Not only is the Religious Right far larger than the Religious Left, it is also much more concentrated religiously, with two-thirds of the Religious Right's membership ensconced within the evangelical Protestant tradition. Thus, despite the higher turnout rates of the Religious Left, linked to greater personal resources and higher levels of political involvement, the much larger size of the Religious Right and its far greater religious homogeneity helped it to overcome the political influence of the smaller and more heterogeneous Religious Left.

So, while the Religious Left is a potential source to be reckoned with in American politics, its current strength is a far cry from that of the Religious Right. Can the Religious Left broaden its base? It could appeal for support in the non-religious community, but, in doing so, it would lose its religious flavor and run the risk of being

labeled anti-religious—not a very favorable nor advantageous image in a highly religious society like the United States.

A second option would be to appeal to the large part of American society that is at least nominally religious but not currently a part of either the Left or Right. While this second option is more promising than the first, it remains mostly untried. Moreover, within the current environment, the Religious Left operates without the organizational base needed to get its message out and to increase the likelihood of its success.

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TABLE 1. THE RELIGIOUS LEFT AND RIGHT COMPARED WITH OTHER RELIGIOUS AND THE NON-RELIGIOUS

	Religious Left	Other Religious	Religious Right	Non Religious
Size →	4.8%	61.3%	17.2%	16.7%
Religion				
Highest Salience	26	46	72	0
Jesus Only Way	8	48	88	2
Political				
High Bush Job Rating	4	39	91	29
Close to Kerry	74	36	3	45
Close to Christian Right	2	24	58	3
Socio-Demographic				
GE College Graduate	45	20	27	37
High Income	36	19	29	33
Married	52	49	73	45
Male	49	44	54	59
Age:				
Under 40	31	39	32	42
Greater than 55	36	31	31	20
Region:				
Northeast	33	23	14	28
West	22	19	19	29
Midwest	24	24	29	24
South	21	35	38	19

TABLE 2. RELIGIOUS TRADITION COMPONENTS OF THE RELIGIOUS LEFT AND RIGHT

Religious Groups:	Religious Left	Religious Right
Evangelical Protestant	4%	66%
Mainline Protestant	34	10
Latino Protestant	2	5
Black Protestant	4	3
White Catholic	29	11
Latino Catholic	7	1
Mormon	2	4
Jewish	7	0.2
All Other Religions:	13	1

TABLE 3. VARIABLES THAT DISTINGUISH THE RELIGIOUS LEFT FROM THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT (DISCRIMINANT FUNCTION ANALYSIS)

Variables:	Coefficients
Overall Bush Job Rating	.599
Bush Evaluations over Kerry Evaluations	.595
Jesus is the Only Way to Salvation	.471
Big versus Small Role for Religion in American Society	.407
Attitudes toward the Christian Right	.366
Faith Very Important versus of No Importance in Voting Decision	.324
Religion Very Important to Political Thinking versus of No Importance	.278
Evangelical Dummy Variable	.277
Religious Salience—High to Low	.276
Identification with Sectarian versus Liberal/Progressive Religious Movements	.242
Mainline Dummy Variable	-.129
Low versus High Political Knowledge	-.098
Jewish Dummy Variable	-.096
Catholic Dummy Variable	-.096
Residence in Northeast	-.094
Low versus High Political Participation	-.093
Low to High Frequency of Talking Politics	-.089
Married versus Single	.087
Residence in South	.079
Low versus High Education Levels	-.077
Closeness of Following Campaign	-.072
Low to High Political Contacts	-.070

99.0% of cases correctly assigned by the above variables
Variables with insignificant coefficients under .05: race, age, gender, pre-election vote intention, and residence in battleground or gay amendment states.

TABLE 4. TURNOUT AND BUSH VOTE FOR THE RELIGIOUS GROUPS

	Religious Left	All Other Religious	Religious Right	Non Religious
Size	5%	62%	17%	17%
Turnout	89	55	85	58
Bush Vote	1	45	97	29

TABLE 5. THE IMPACT OF SELECTED VARIABLES ON TURNOUT

	Religious Left	All Other Religious	Religious Right
Turnout:	**89%**	**55%**	**85%**
Personal Resources:			
College Grad +	100	83	96
High Income	97	79	90
Male	82	56	85
Married	96	65	88
Young	80	43	85
White	94	59	85
Northeast	98	57	83
South	100	52	83
Political Involvement:			
Follow campaign closely	98	80	93
Highest political participation	100	90	96
High information	99	82	96
Talk politics Regularly	96	74	94
Highest Pre-Election Vote Intention	95	77	90
Political Mobilization:			
Zero Contacts	66	34	58
One Contact	88	50	67
Two Contacts	92	63	79
3 to 5 Contacts	95	68	82
6 to 14 Contacts	97	75	96
Contextual Variables:			
Battleground States	78	61	84
Gay Amendment States	68	55	87
Political Attitudes:			
Bush Job Rating:			
Excellent	NA	84	92
Very Poor	97	73	NA
Candidate Preference:			
Pro Bush	NA	73	86
Pro Kerry	94	74	75

NA= Not applicable due to low N

TABLE 6. THE IMPACT OF RELIGIOUS VARIABLES ON TURNOUT

	Religious Left	All Other Religious	Religious Right
Turnout:	**89%**	**55%**	**85%**
Religious Tradition:			
Evangelical	**NA**	**50**	**82**
Mainline	**96**	**64**	**87**
Catholic	**89**	**62**	**92**
Religion Very Important to Political Thinking	**100 N=9**	**56**	**85**
Faith More Important to Vote than Other Factors	**95**	**46**	**85**
Faith Less Important to Vote than Other Factors	**87**	**55**	**79**
Sees Very Large Role for Religion in Politics	**28**	**49**	**88**
Sees Very Small Role for Religion in Politics	**95**	**63**	**83**
Close to Christian Right	**NA**	**52**	**87**
Neutral to Christian Right	**36**	**56**	**86**
Far from Christian Right	**94**	**61**	**78**
Highest Religious Salience	**88**	**54**	**85**
ID with Sectarian Movements	**66**	**62**	**89**
ID with Liberal-Progressive Movements	**98**	**56**	**86**

NA = Not Applicable due to low N

TABLE 7. BEST PREDICTORS OF TURNOUT FOR THE RELIGIOUS LEFT AND RIGHT

	Religious Left			Religious Right		
Variables:	**B**	**S.E.**	**Sig.**	**B**	**S.E.**	**Sig.**
Education	**4.227**	**1.507**	**.005**	**1.154**	**.234**	**.000**
Talk Politics	**-3.909**	**1.388**	**.005**	**-1.072**	**.205**	**.000**
Follow Campaign Closely	**-3.455**	**1.584**	**.029**	**-1.537**	**.328**	**.000**
Pre Election Plan to Vote			**NS**	**.783**	**.152**	**.000**
Religion Important to Political Thinking			**NS**	**-.380**	**.121**	**.002**
Bush Job Rating			**NS**	**-.479**	**.252**	**.058**
Constant	**3.929**	**3.668**	**.284**	**-2.680**	**1.740**	**.124**

98.8% correctly predicted based on above variables   93.4% correctly predicted
Nagelkerke R Square .868   NS=Non Significant   Nagelkerke R Square .581

TABLE 8. PRE-ELECTION PREFERENCE TO POST-ELECTION VOTE DECISION

	Religious Left	All Other Religious	Religious Right
Bush Standpatter	**0**	**26%**	**79%**
Switch to Bush	**1** **N=1**	**5**	**4**
Bush to No Vote	**2** **N=2**	**9**	**13**
Neutral to No Vote	**4** **N=5**	**12**	**2**
Kerry to No Vote	**4** **N=5**	**11**	**1** **N=4**
Switch to Kerry	**7** **N=9**	**10**	**2** **N=7**
Kerry Standpatter	**82**	**28**	**1** **N=3**

TABLE 9. PRE TO POST ELECTION VOTE DECISIONS BY EXTERNAL VARIABLES BY RELIGIOUS LEFT AND RIGHT GROUPS

	Religious Left		Religious Right	
Pre to Post Election Decision →	Kerry Standpat or Switch to Kerry	Vote for Bush or No Vote	Vote for Kerry or No Vote	Bush Standpat or Switch to Bush
External Variables:				
Follow Campaign Closely	86%	21%	33%	64%
Active Beyond Voting	86	36	59	81
Two or More Political Contacts	68	22	64	76
Partisan Idenfication:				
Strong Partisans	56	39	44	67
Not Very Strong Partisans	13	39	31	19
Independent Leaning Partisans	30	23	25	14
Kerry-Bush Comparisons:				
Pro Bush or Lean Bush	0	8	73	97
Pro Kerry or Lean Kerry	95	46	14	0
Bush Job Excellent or Good	3	15	74	95
Bush Job Poor or Very Poor	80	62	6	1
Sees Small Role for Religion	87	46	17	11
Sees Large Role for Religion	5	54	63	77
Close to the Christian Right	2	0	47	61
Far from the Christian Right	95	54	29	12
Total Number in Columns	111	14	83	376