

**How the Faithful Voted:
Religious Communities and the Presidential Vote in 2004**

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It is widely recognized that religion played a major role in the 2004 presidential election and this recognition enlivened the debate over its meaning, ranging from the role of “moral values” to the effect of religious mobilization and the impact of particular religious communities (see Muirhead et al. 2005). It is on the latter point that there is perhaps the most confusion. How did the faithful vote? How were the many kinds of religious people connected to partisan politics? How did their politics differ from previous elections?

This essay addresses these basic questions with a description of the voting behavior of the most important religious communities in the 2004 election and in the three previous contests. Drawing on a set of special surveys with extensive measures of religion, this description largely confirms recent scholarship on religion and American politics, adding some new details. In 2004, President Bush solidified a coalition of Evangelical Protestants and religious traditionalists, improving his standing among Catholics and adding crucial votes from ethnic and religious minorities. At the same time, Senator Kerry presided over a complex coalition of ethnic and religious minorities, the unaffiliated and nontraditional Christians, to which he added gains among Mainline Protestants while breaking even among religious centrists. To fully appreciate these patterns, a description of the American religious landscape and its relevance to national politics is essential, and that is where we will begin.

The American Religious Landscape and National Politics

Describing the American religious landscape with survey research is a daunting task, let alone identifying its relevance to national politics. However, a quarter century of research has produced two powerful conceptual tools for these purposes: *religious tradition* and *religious traditionalism* (Leege and Kellstedt 1993; Green et al. 1996; Kohut et al. 2000; Layman 2001).

A religious tradition is a group of religious denominations, movements and congregations with similar beliefs, behaviors, and origins (Kellstedt et al. 1996). At root this concept taps the belonging aspect of religion: the religious communities to which individuals are affiliated. Such communities have often been defined in part by ethnicity and race, other social identities closely associated with religious perspectives (Kellstedt and Green 1993). By definition, religious traditions are characterized by foundational doctrines and normative practices—or in shorthand, some kind of “traditional” belief and behavior (Green 2000). Members of a religious tradition who hold such beliefs and engage in such behaviors can be described as “traditionalists.” This term is particularly appropriate for individuals who self-consciously seek to preserve their tradition against the encroachments of the modern world.

However, not all members of a religious tradition adhere as firmly to such traditional beliefs and practices. Some members can be called “modernists” because they have adapted traditional beliefs and behaviors to the modern world; this term is especially appropriate for individuals who self-consciously seek to advance such adaptations. Other members retain the beliefs and practices central to their tradition, but with less consistency and commitment than the traditionalists. Still others are simply nominal members of the tradition, belonging but not believing or behaving. Of course, members who reject the basic tenets of the tradition can switch to another more congenial one—or choose not to affiliate with any tradition at all. In any event,

there is likely to be diversity within religious traditions based on the degree of traditionalism on the believing and behaving aspects of religion.

Both membership in religious traditions (including the lack of affiliation) and the degree of traditionalism can connect religious people to politics, jointly and separately (see Layman and Green 2005). Throughout most of American history, religious traditions were apparently the primary means by which this political connection occurred (Jensen 1971; Kleppner 1979). The distinctive religious perspectives of the many traditions in the United States regularly translated into characteristic politics, often stressing particular issues and concerns. For example, American party coalitions were in large measure alliances of “ethno-religious” groups, with some traditions identifying with the Democrats and others with the Whigs and Republicans (McCormick 1974). It appears that traditionalism reinforced the effects of religion tradition, so that the traditionalists within each tradition partook most fully of its characteristic politics, while the various kinds of less traditional members did so less (Lenski 1961; Petrocik 2005).

This pattern clearly changed in the late Twentieth Century, when the extent of traditionalism began to display strong independent effects on the politics of religious people. In fact, this effect was so strong that some scholars spoke of a “restructuring” of American religion: across most (if not all) religious traditions, traditionalists increasingly differed from non-traditionalists, especially the modernists, and some observers saw the growing ranks of the unaffiliated population as part of this new structure (Wuthnow 1988 and 1989; Hunter 1990). These differences in traditional belief and behavior had important political implications. For example, traditionalists of all sorts turned toward the Republicans, while the modernists and the unaffiliated shifted toward the Democrats (Layman 2001). As a consequence, the religious traditions developed less characteristic political profiles. Indeed, some scholars argued that if

these trends continued to their logical conclusion, contemporary religious traditions would eventually cease to be relevant politically (Hunter 1990).

It may well be that current “restructuring” of American religion is an example of a class of structural changes that have occurred in religious communities previously and perhaps regularly (Cimino 2001). Indeed, the periodic appearance of new denominations and new religious traditions in American history could have resulted from just this kind of dispute. However, the lack of survey data makes it difficult to assess the role of traditional beliefs and behaviors in those previous transformations. But even if the present restructuring is an example of a broader phenomenon, it may well have unique features (Wuthnow 1988; Hunter 1990). For instance, it has been argued that present day disputes are more consistent and widespread because they feature critical questions that are inherent in most forms of traditionalism. For example, basic matters such as belief in God, the efficacy of religious practice, and value of religion itself are now in dispute. Certainly these disagreements focus on one set of political issues across religious traditions, namely, questions of sexual morality, where traditionalist take strongly conservative views and non-traditionalist more moderate or liberal ones (Leege et al. 2002).

Whatever the ultimate character of the restructuring of American religion, it does strongly suggest that religious tradition and traditionalism are both useful concepts with which to describe the American religious landscape and its relevance to national politics.

The American Religious Landscape in 2004

Table 1 provides a picture of the American religious landscape in 2004 using both membership in religious traditions and the degree of traditionalism within them. It is based on data from the Fourth National Survey of Religion and Politics, and the categories are calculated

so as to be comparable with the previous surveys in this series, dating back to 1992 (see appendix for details on the surveys). This over time data can help put the 2004 results in context.

[Table 1 about here]

The major religious traditions in the United States are defined by a precise measure of religious affiliation and provide the basic structure to the table. Among the details are four categories within these traditions derived from a traditionalism scale, constructed from measures of beliefs and behaviors. As the category labels suggest, the “traditionalist” scored highest on this scale, followed by the “centrists” and “modernists,” with the “nominal” scoring lowest (see appendix on how all these categories were calculated).

The first column in Table 1 lists the size of each category as a percent of the adult population. The remaining three columns report religious measures used to construct the categories: belief that God is a person (as opposed to an impersonal force of some kind), weekly worship attendance (or greater), and the highest level of religious salience (religion is important to the respondent and offers a great deal of guidance). These patterns fit well with the existing scholarship on religion and politics, offering a bit more detail (see Kohut et al. 2000; Smidt et al. 2003; Green 2000).

In the 2004 survey (non-minority) Evangelical Protestants were the largest religious tradition, with one-quarter of the adult population, and the traditionalists were the single largest group of evangelicals (and the largest category in the entire table). But note that the centrists were nearly as numerous and about one-fifth of all evangelicals were modernists or nominals. Overall, Evangelicals were the most traditional: more than two-thirds believed that God was a person, three-fifths reported attending worship weekly or more often, and nearly three-fifths claimed that religion was highly salient in their lives. However, there were also striking

differences among Evangelicals on all these measures. For instance, nearly all of the traditionalists reported weekly worship attendance compared to just two percent of the nominals.

(Non-Minority) Mainline Protestants made up a little more than one-sixth of the adult population, but unlike evangelicals, they were more evenly divided internally, with about equal numbers of traditionalists and modernists, and centrists the largest single group. Each of these groups were roughly one-half the size of the centrists among evangelicals, and there was a small group of nominals. Overall, Mainliners were markedly less traditional than Evangelicals, having roughly one-half the level of the acceptance of the items in Table 1. But here, too, note the internal differences: traditionalists approached their counterparts among Evangelicals in this regard, while the centrists and modernists scored below theirs. Perhaps not surprisingly, the nominals looked about the same in both traditions.

The remaining Protestant categories represent ethnic and racial divisions. Latino Protestants, drawn for the most part from Evangelical denominations, are best thought of as a sub-tradition, comparable to ethnic European Protestants in the 19th century. Although small (a bit larger than Nominal Mainliners), they are rapidly growing and of considerable interest politically. Black Protestants are best thought of as a separate religious tradition, with special beliefs and behaviors generated from the experience of slavery and segregation. One of the larger categories in the table, Black Protestants was about the size of Centrist Evangelicals. Both Latino and Black Protestants have relatively high levels of religious traditionalism, roughly comparable to Centrist Evangelicals. (Table 1 does not report differences based on traditionalism within these groups partly because of their small size and partly because the political effects are modest. Although traditionalists tend to be more conservative, ethnic and racial identity was the dominant factor.)

Overall, Roman Catholics were the second largest tradition in Table 1. Non-Latino Catholics made up a little more than one sixth of the adult population--about the size of Mainline Protestants. Here the internal divisions resembled Mainliners in form and relative size. Overall, non-Latino Catholics also showed relatively low levels of traditionalism, with traditionalists much more traditional and the nominals hardly at all. And also like their Protestant counterparts, Latino Catholics are separated out in the table. They were about the size of traditionalist Catholics and resembled Centrist Catholics in religious terms.

Three categories cover other religious traditions, two of which are composites. The largest was the Other Christians, which includes the Latter Day Saints and Orthodox churches; this grouping was fairly traditional in belief and behavior. The Other Faiths category was made up of non-Christians except Jews (such as Muslims and Buddhists). This group and the Jewish community were not especially traditional in religious terms, a pattern that may reflect in part the particular questions asked with have something of a Christian bias.

The final three categories were unaffiliated with a religious tradition. Taken together, the unaffiliated accounted for more than one-sixth of the adult population, rivaling the size of Mainline Protestants and Non-Latino Catholics. As the name implies, the Unaffiliated Believers reported some religious beliefs, although only rarely traditional ones. Self-identified Atheists and Agnostics largely lack religious beliefs as such, but they do have an affirmative posture on these matters. The Seculars were one of the largest categories in the table, and were defined by a general lack of religion—affiliation, belief, or behavior.

Religious Communities and the 2004 Election

Table 2 reports the two-party presidential vote and estimated turnout in 2004 across the religious landscape (see appendix for details). Before turning to a more detailed discussion of

these patterns, a few basic features consistent with the literature are worth noting (Kohut et al. 2000). First, there are important differences between the major religious traditions. Compare, for instance, the Bush vote from Evangelicals to Mainline and Black Protestants—and note the difference between the Kerry vote between the Unaffiliated and Catholics. Second, there are systematic political differences within the major religious traditions: traditionalists always voted more for Bush, while modernists and nominals were always less voted less for Bush. This pattern holds to some extent among the unaffiliated, with the Atheists/Agnostics markedly more Democratic than the Unaffiliated Believers. Finally, note the enormous variation in voter turnout across religious traditions. Traditionalists outpolled the modernists, but in 2004 at least, the nominals outpolled the modernists as well. In a similar vein, turnout among the Unaffiliated was relatively low and it was even lower among the ethnic minorities. But some religious minorities, such as Jews, voted at very high rates.

[Table 2 about here]

Table 3 reorders these religious communities according to the 2004 presidential vote with communities that voted for Bush toward the top, those that voted for Kerry at the bottom, and the more closely divided groups in the middle. As a point of reference, the overall two-party vote and turnout is located in the middle of the table (in bold). By itself, this table presents something of a challenge to the conventional wisdom on religion and politics: it shows that both the Republicans and Democrats had strong religious constituencies in 2004. More importantly, this arrangement facilitates a discussion of complex connections between religion and politics.

[Table 3 about here]

It is fitting to begin with the winner in this very close, high turnout election (51 percent for the winner and 60 percent turnout). Bush's strongest constituency was Traditionalist Evangelicals, with 88 percent of the vote and a turnout of 70 percent. Bush's second strongest

category was the Other Christians, buoyed by a strong Republican vote from the Latter Day Saints. However, this composite group turned out at a rate just under the national figure.

Traditionalist Catholics were the next most supportive, giving Bush almost three-quarters of their ballots and with more than a three-quarters turnout. These top Bush groups accounted for 17.7 percent of the adult population in 2004.

The next three groups supported the president with more than three-fifths of their ballots. They include Centrist Evangelicals, Traditionalist Mainline Protestants, and Latino Protestants. Turnout varied substantially here, with more than three-quarters of Traditionalist Mainliners voting (much like Traditionalist Catholics), but with the other two groups lagging behind the national figures, especially Latino Protestants. These three groups made up 16.8 percent of the adult population in 2004.

The next five categories were “swing groups” in political parlance, having been won by small margins. Three went for Bush: the Modernist and Nominal Evangelicals and the Centrist Catholics. Here the level of turnout varied, with Modernist and Nominal Evangelicals voting below or at the national figure, while Centrist Catholic turnout was above it. Centrist Catholics were strongly pursued by both campaigns, and Bush’s slight edge was emblematic of the close contest.

Kerry won the remaining two swing groups: Centrist and Modernist Mainline Protestants. Here, too, the level of turnout was the reverse of vote choice, with Modernist Mainliners voting less than the nation as a whole and Centrist Mainliners turning out at a higher rate (about like Traditionalist Evangelicals). Kerry’s narrow margin among Centrist Mainliners was also emblematic of the election results. All told, these five swing groups made up 22 percent of the adult population in 2004.

The remaining religious communities strongly backed Kerry. The next two groups in the table gave him more than a three-fifths majority, Modernist Catholics and the Unaffiliated Believers. However, both groups voted less than the nation as a whole. The next four groups voted Democratic by two-thirds or more, including Latino Catholics, Nominal Mainline Protestants, Seculars, and Nominal Catholics. Here turnout varied as well: Latino Catholics and Seculars had relatively low turnout, Nominal Catholics voted at about the national rate, and Nominal Mainline Protestants had a very high level of balloting. Taken together, these six groups accounted for 26.8 percent of the adult population in 2004 (about 10 percentage points larger than the Bush counterpart groups).

The final religious communities in the table were Kerry's strongest supporters, voting nearly three-quarters or more Democratic. These groups include Jews, Other Faiths, Atheists/Agnostics, and Black Protestants. Jews had the highest turnout rate overall, and the other groups voted at the national level, but Black Protestants turned out at a significantly lower rate. Taken together, these groups made up 17.3 of the adult population in 2004 (about the same as Bush's top constituencies).

Table 4 reports the two-party vote in another way: the relative importance of the religious communities to the total Bush and Kerry vote, thus bringing together the groups' vote choice, turnout, and size in the adult population. In essence, this table describes the religious aspect of the major party coalitions in 2004.

[Table 4 about here]

The single largest religious group in the Bush coalition was Traditionalist Evangelicals, accounting for just under one-quarter of all his ballots. And the second largest group was Centrist Evangelicals, at more than one-tenth. Taken together, the two largest Evangelical groups made

up more than one-third of the Bush vote. If Modernist and Nominal Evangelicals were added in, then the Evangelical tradition provided the president with two-fifths of his support at the polls.

Bush received another 19 percent of his vote from other traditionalist groups (among Catholics, Mainliners and Other Christians). All the traditionalist groups accounted for more than two-fifths of all Bush ballots. Other centrist groups provided Bush with another 14.5 percent of his vote, and all centrist groups combined accounted for one-quarter of all Bush's ballots. High turnout among the traditionalist groups and Centrist Catholics helped the president, but the relatively low support among non-traditionalist Evangelicals was problematic.

So, Bush was re-elected with strong support from non-minority Christian traditions, especially Evangelicals and traditionalists, but with significant backing from Catholics and centrists. However, all these groups accounted for only about three-quarters of the total Bush vote. Hence Bush's slim margin of victory required a broader coalition. One source of the extra votes was ethnic minorities. Led by Latino Protestants, these groups provided 7 percent of the Republican vote. Another source of support came from Mainline and Catholic modernists and nominals, at 9 percent. Meanwhile, the three unaffiliated groups and the non-Christian categories provided more than one-tenth of the Bush vote. In sum, Bush received more than one-quarter of his ballots from religious communities that gave strong majorities to Kerry.

What about the Democratic coalition? Kerry's single most important group was Black Protestants, at 13.2 percent of his total vote. Adding in Latinos brings the total from ethnic minorities to just under one-fifth of all Kerry ballots. The non-Christian categories added another 8 percent, bringing his total from "religious minorities" to more than one-quarter of the Kerry vote. However, the second most important source of Democratic votes was the Seculars, at 11.6 percent. Combining all the unaffiliated groups accounted for just over one-fifth of all of Kerry's support. Finally, adding up all the modernist and nominal groups (including the Evangelicals)

produced another one-fifth of all Kerry's ballots. The high turnout among Nominal Mainliners and Jews clearly helped Kerry, but he also suffered from lower turnout among Black Protestants, Seculars, and Unaffiliated Believers.

So, Kerry's coalition was more diverse than Bush's in religious terms, drawing heavily from minority groups broadly defined, the unaffiliated, modernist and nominal Christians. But as with Bush, Kerry needed broader support to render the election a toss-up. One source of those extra votes was the centrist categories. Although Kerry did not dominate any of these groups, he nonetheless obtained one-fifth of his votes from among them. Finally, Kerry received more than one-tenth of his ballots from traditionalists of various kinds. All told, Kerry obtained more than one-quarter of his ballots from religious communities that gave majority support to Bush (about what Bush received from strong Kerry groups).

The 2004 Results in Temporal Perspective

The close and complex 2004 results invite speculation about "what might have been" if the presidential campaigns had been waged even a bit differently. In this regard, the results of the last several elections are especially relevant. Table 5 presents presidential vote choice by the religious categories from 2004 back to 1992. For ease of presentation, the categories are kept in the 2004 order, and the percent change 2004-1992 is listed in the final column. This table reports the Republican portion of the two-party vote, but since the Democratic portion is its reciprocal, the patterns can be used to discuss both parties. Table 6 presents the turnout in the same fashion and both tables will be discussed together. (The religious groups remained about the same proportion of the population over this period.)

[Tables 5 and 6 about here]

Traditionalist Evangelicals were a strong Republican constituency throughout the period under study, voting more than 80 percent for Republican candidates. The GOP did, however, improve its support by some four percentage points and increased turnout by almost five percentage points over the period (see entries in Tables 5 and 6). The GOP made bigger gains among other traditionalist constituencies. For instance, the Other Christians increased their Republican vote by more than one-quarter over the period, and although their overall turnout was down slightly since 1992, it jumped substantially between 2000 and 2004. Another Republican success story was Latino Protestants, who dramatically increased both their GOP vote and turnout over the period, with the biggest gains on both counts occurring between 2000 and 2004.

A more important change occurred among Traditionalist Catholics, who became 20 percentage points more Republican over the period. Although their overall turnout was up marginally since 1992, it also jumped quite substantially between 2000 and 2004. Centrist Catholics also moved in Republican direction, but in a slow steady fashion. This group's turnout also expanded sharply between 2000 and 2004, although it declined modestly over the entire period. The net result was that Bush obtained a majority of this group in 2004. Indeed, John Kerry's Catholicism appears not to have helped much with these groups, and his nontraditional religiosity may even have been a hindrance.

A more complex pattern appears among other Evangelical and Mainline Protestant categories. Centrist Evangelicals increased their GOP vote slightly over the period, although their turnout expanded considerably, mostly between 2000 and 2004. Modernist and Nominal Evangelicals increased on both counts, especially the latter, with big gains also occurring between 2000 and 2004. Indeed, by this measure Modernist and Nominal Evangelicals gave majority support to a Republican presidential candidate in 2004 for the first time since 1992. These changes may reflect the nature of the various campaigns: in the 1990s the Democratic

presidential ticket contained Southerners with Evangelical backgrounds of a less traditional sort (Clinton and Gore) and thus may have had some appeal to less traditional Evangelicals. The 2004 Democratic ticket had no such appeal and the Bush campaign deployed a full court press on behalf of Evangelical votes.

Something of an opposite pattern occurred among Mainline Protestants. Traditionalist Mainliners increased their GOP vote over the period, but the high-water mark was in 2000, with the Republican vote declining by ten percentage points between 2000 and 2004. Republican support declined sharply for Centrist, Modernist, and Nominal Mainliners over the entire period (by about 8, 11, and 9 percentage points, respectively), but these trends were arrested in 2000. Perhaps George W. Bush's family background and membership in the United Methodist Church had special appeal to Mainliners of all sorts in 2000. However, this connection certainly did not work in 2004, when all the Mainline groups voted sharply less Republican. At the same time, Mainline turnout increased, often sharply. For example, turnout among Nominal Mainliners grew by more than 12 percentage points between 2000 and 2004.

These largely opposite trajectories for Evangelical and Mainline Protestants may well be related. The consolidation of Evangelicals in the Republican coalition may have had the effect of pushing away Mainline Protestants. While this pattern may have something to do with "moral issues," about which traditionalists and modernists sharply disagree, this argument would not explain the Republican drift of Modernist and Nominal Evangelicals in 2000--or the Democratic drift of Traditionalist Mainliners in 2004. Instead, it may be other issues associated with the Bush administration in 2004, such as the war in Iraq. In any event, these data show the continuing importance of religious traditions in understanding the politics of religious people.

Thus, the Democratic presidential candidates made gains among Mainline Protestants over the period, and especially in 2004. The net result was that the Protestant Mainline was

evenly divided between the major parties in 2004. The Democrats also made gains among a collection of other groups in 2004, including Modernist Catholics (the group where Kerry himself may belong), Seculars, Nominal Catholics, and Atheists/Agnostics. Interestingly, Kerry lost significant ground among the Unaffiliated Believers. The over time trajectories of all these groups were complicated by the Perot campaigns in 1992 and 1996. Perot had considerable appeal to groups with nontraditional religiosity, apparently drawing votes away from the Democratic presidential candidates. Several of these groups showed sizeable increases in turnout over the period (Seculars, Unaffiliated Believers, Nominal Catholics), but Modernist Catholics showed little change, while Atheists/Agnostics balloting declined, especially between 2000 and 2004.

Despite strong Democratic support among ethnic and religious minorities, the party steadily lost ground over the period among Latino Catholics, Jews, and Black Protestants. All three groups showed increased turnout as well, although Black Protestants voted less in 2004 than in 2000. Republican gains among Black Protestants in 2004 were large—but because the GOP performance in 2000 was so abysmal. A similar pattern of Republican growth and increasing turnout held among the Other Faiths—until 2004, when both the GOP vote and turnout declined. It is possible that this pattern reflects the Bush administration’s conduct of the war on terrorism.

Tables 7a and 7b show the religious composition of major party presidential coalitions from 1992 to 2004 (using the two-party vote). Despite the complex changes in vote choice and turnout reported in the pervious tables, the relative shape of these coalitions was remarkably stable over the period. And because these are relative measures, any gain requires an equal decline elsewhere. Still, there have been some shifts in the religious character of the major party coalitions worth noting.

The Republicans made relative gains among their top three groups in 2004, so that such traditionalists made up 7.8 percent more of George W. Bush's coalition in 2004 than his father's coalition in 1992 (see Table 7a). Over the period, the GOP also made slight advances among ethnic minorities, mostly between 2000 and 2004, and some very modest long term gains among Seculars and Jews.

[Table 7a about here]

In contrast, the Democrats made relative gains among the unaffiliated groups, so that the Democratic coalition became 8.5 percentage points "less affiliated" over the period (see Table 7b). They also made a long-term gain among Mainline Protestants, up for a total of 3.7 percentage points, and posted a 2.5 percentage point gain among Nominal Catholics. They also made very modest gains among Latino Catholics, Nominal Evangelicals, and interestingly, Traditionalist Evangelicals.

[Table 7b about here]

How the Faithful Voted

The questions posed at the outset of this essay can now be answered. Both the Republican and Democratic parties had strong religious constituencies in 2004. For the GOP and President Bush, Traditionalist Evangelicals was the single most important constituency, serving as the backbone of a coalition dominated by other Evangelicals and traditionalists. This pattern developed steadily throughout the 1990s and has reached its fullest expression in 2004. However, Bush's narrow victory rested on a broader coalition that included winning centrist Catholics and making modest but crucial gains among ethnic and religious minorities.

For the Democrats and Senator Kerry, the two most important constituencies were Black Protestants and Seculars. Indeed, Kerry assembled a complex coalition drawn in roughly equal parts from ethnic and religious minorities, the unaffiliated, and modernist and nominal

Christians. This pattern also developed in the 1990s and was in full flower in 2004. In this regard, the Democrats made significant gains among Mainline Protestants between 2000 and 2004. But like his rival, Kerry had a broader coalition that included crucial votes from centrists and traditionalists.

Taken together, these findings reveal the great diversity of the American religious landscape, containing a wide variety of distinctive religious communities defined by membership in religious traditions and the degree of traditionalism within traditions. In 2004, religious affiliation, beliefs and practices all had an impact on presidential voting behavior.

Although beyond the scope of this essay, it is worth speculating on the causes of these patterns. Other socio-demographic factors influenced the 2004 vote as well and taking them into account reveals considerable nuance in the politics of particular religious communities. However, such factors do not eliminate the underlying connections between religion and politics. Issue priorities and attitudes were also important, but in a complicated fashion. The much debated “moral values” were crucial for some religious communities, but foreign policy and economic issues mattered more for others. And finally, the campaign itself was a factor in the final results, including intense efforts to mobilize particular religious communities for the rival campaigns, some of which bore fruit and some of which did not.

Given the development of the religious elements of the Republican and Democratic presidential coalitions over the last several elections, there is every reason to expect these basic patterns to continue into the future. However, because these coalitions were nearly evenly balanced, it is difficult to predict the outcome of the next several elections with any accuracy. After all, even modest changes in the voting behavior of small religious communities could swing the results one way or another. In addition, each party’s religious coalitions contain contradictions that may be difficult to manage in the rough and tumble of politics. For the

Republicans, the tensions among Christian traditionalists, centrists and ethnic minorities could prove problematic. And for the Democrats, tensions between its unaffiliated and nontraditional followings and its supporters among religious minorities and centrists could be every bit as daunting.

Appendix: Surveys and Categories

The Surveys. This essay is primarily based on the Fourth National Survey of Religion and Politics, conducted by the Bliss Institute at the University of Akron in collaboration with the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life (Green 2004; Green et al. 2005). The survey was a national random sample of adult Americans (18 years or older), conducted in the spring of 2004 (N=4,000). The initial sample was then re-interviewed after the 2004 election (N=2730). This survey is the fourth in a series of surveys conducted since 1992, using the same pre-post design (1992 pre-election N=4000 and post-election N=2265; 1996 pre-election N=4034 and post-election N=2350; 2000 pre-election N=6000 and post-election N=3000).

Religions Tradition. All the National Surveys of Religion and Politics contain an extensive series of questions and probes to determine as closely as possible the specific religious affiliation of respondents. Despite the precision of this measure, there are some ambiguous responses, which are coded with the aid of other religious variables, including “born again” status, religious identifies, religious salience, and worship attendance. These affiliations were then recoded into the eight major religious traditions in Table 1. This increasingly standard classification is based on the formal beliefs, behaviors and histories of the denominations or churches involved, with the most detail dedicated to sorting out the many kinds of Protestants in the United States (see Kellstedt and Green 1993; Layman 2001; Layman and Green 2005; Guth et al. 2005). Black Protestants and Latinos were separated on the basis of race and ethnicity.

Traditionalism. The National Surveys of Religion and Politics contained extensive measures of religious belief and behavior. Five belief items were found in all four surveys (view of the Bible; belief in God; belief in the afterlife; view of the Devil and evolution) and so were five behavior items (frequency of worship attendance; frequency of prayer; frequency of Bible reading; frequency of participation in small groups; and level of financial contribution to a congregation). In most cases, these items had the same question wording across surveys. However, in a few cases improvements in question wording over time produced some differences. In order to maintain the same conceptual basis for the traditionalism scale, these items to have the same range and frequency as the items that were identical across the surveys were adjusted using other religious measures not in the analysis.

The final belief and behavior items were then subjected to separate factor analyses in each of the surveys. The factor loadings were very similar on all these analyses. A belief and behavior factor score was then generated and these scores were subject to a second factor analysis to reveal the underlying traditionalism. This analysis also generated a factor score, which was adjusted to the

mean score for all four surveys for each religious tradition. This adjustment was very modest but correct for the peculiarities of each survey.

In the final step, the adjusted traditionalism scale was divided into four categories within the three largest religious traditions. The cut-points were the mean traditionalism scores of four levels of religious salience (measured by identically in all the surveys). These cut-points were chosen because they were specific to the religious traditions, unambiguous, and consistent across surveys. Also, traditional religiosity stresses the importance of religion over other aspects of life (Guth and Green 1993). The Unaffiliated Believers were defined by scoring in the top two-thirds of the belief factor score in each survey.

Although this categorization process is complex, it was remarkably robust, with a wide range of alternative measures, methods, and cut-points producing essentially the same results (for other versions of these categories, see Guth et al. 2005; Green 2004; Green and Waldman 2005).

Turnout Estimate. Like other surveys, voting behavior was over-reported in the National Surveys of Religion and Politics. A more accurate estimate of turnout was calculated using likely voter screens, reports of past voting behavior, interest in politics, and demographic factors. Reported turnout was adjusted to the actual national turnout. The unadjusted results produced very similar results.

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Table 1 American Religious Landscape in 2004

	% Adult Population	Believe God is a Person	Weekly Worship Attender	Highest Religious Salience
PROTESTANTS				
Evangelical	25.1	69.9	62.7	57.7
<i>Traditionalist</i>	10.7	93.0	95.8	80.2
<i>Centrist</i>	9.7	69.3	50.3	51.4
<i>Modernist</i>	3.3	27.3	19.1	26.7
<i>Nominal</i>	1.5	0.0	1.7	6.7
Mainline	16.4	34.7	33.3	31.3
<i>Traditionalist</i>	4.5	73.2	75.8	60.3
<i>Centrist</i>	5.5	32.4	28.1	36.4
<i>Modernist</i>	4.4	13.1	11.4	8.0
<i>Nominal</i>	2	1.3	1.2	3.7
<i>Latino</i>	2.6	61.0	65.7	67.0
Black	9.3	54.0	59.0	67.2
CATHOLICS				
Non-Latino Catholic	17.5	31.8	49.2	33.9
<i>Traditionalist</i>	4.2	64.5	92.3	72.8
<i>Centrist</i>	7.4	31.3	53.2	32.2
<i>Modernist</i>	3.8	13.6	20.9	12.3
<i>Nominal</i>	2.1	1.2	0.0	0.0
<i>Latino Catholic</i>	4.5	34.4	46.9	51.1
OTHER TRADITIONS				
Other Christians	2.8	57.7	70.3	62.2
Other Faiths	2.6	7.7	33.0	35.6
Jews	1.9	10.5	23.7	25.7
Unaffiliated	17.3	6.1	3.6	11.2
Unaffiliated Believers	4.8	18.8	8.9	28.1
Seculars	9	1.7	1.9	6.1
Atheist Agnostic	3.5	0.0	1.4	1.4
Entire Sample	100.0	40.0	43.1	41.0

Source: Fourth National Survey of Religion and Politics, Bliss Institute University of Akron, March-May 2004 (N=4000)

Table 2 The American Religious Landscape and the 2004 Presidential Election:
The Two-Party Vote and Voters Turnout

	% Adult Population	% Bush	% Kerry	% Voted
PROTESTANTS				
Evangelical	25.1	77.5	22.5	63.2
<i>Traditionalist</i>	10.7	87.9	12.1	70.8
<i>Centrist</i>	9.7	70.4	29.6	56.3
<i>Modernist</i>	3.3	57.1	42.9	54.5
<i>Nominal</i>	1.5	56.5	43.5	62.2
Mainline	16.4	50.0	50.0	69.2
<i>Traditionalist</i>	4.5	65.6	34.4	77.8
<i>Centrist</i>	5.5	49.1	50.9	70.6
<i>Modernist</i>	4.4	43.1	56.9	55.6
<i>Nominal</i>	2.0	31.0	69.0	76.4
<i>Latino</i>	2.6	62.9	37.1	49.3
Black	9.3	17.2	82.8	50.4
CATHOLICS				
Non-Latino Catholic	17.5	52.7	47.3	66.9
<i>Traditionalist</i>	4.2	73.9	26.1	77.6
<i>Centrist</i>	7.4	52.3	47.7	68.4
<i>Modernist</i>	3.8	38.1	61.9	54.8
<i>Nominal</i>	2.1	28.9	71.1	63.9
<i>Latino Catholic</i>	4.5	31.4	68.6	43.1
OTHER TRADITIONS				
Other Christians	2.8	80.0	20.0	59.2
Other Faiths	2.6	22.0	78.0	60.6
Jews	1.9	26.7	73.3	86.5
Unaffiliated	17.3	28.1	71.9	52.4
Unaffiliated Believers	4.8	37.0	63.0	42.7
Seculars	9.0	29.5	70.5	52.6
Atheist Agnostic	3.5	20.0	80.0	60.9
Entire Sample	100.0	51.2	48.8	60.8

Source: Fourth National Survey of Religion and Politics, Post-Election Sample (N=2730, November-December 2004, University of Akron)

Table 3 Religious Communities and the 2004 Presidential Election
(arranged by Bush vote percentage)

	% Adult Population	% Bush	% Kerry	% Voted
Traditionalist Evangelical	10.7	87.9	12.1	70.8
Other Christians	2.8	80.0	20.0	59.2
Traditionalist Catholic	4.2	73.9	26.1	77.6
Centrist Evangelical	9.7	70.4	29.6	56.3
Traditionalist Mainline	4.5	65.6	34.4	77.8
Latino Protestants	2.6	62.9	37.1	49.3
Modernist Evangelical	3.3	57.1	42.9	55.5
Nominal Evangelical	1.5	56.6	43.4	62.2
Centrist Catholic	7.4	52.3	47.7	68.4
Entire Electorate	100	51.2	48.8	60.8
Centrist Mainline	5.5	49.1	50.9	70.6
Modernist Mainline	4.4	43.1	56.9	55.6
Modernist Catholic	3.8	38.1	61.9	54.8
Unaffiliated Believers	4.8	37.0	63.0	42.7
Latino Catholic	4.5	31.4	68.6	43.1
Nominal Mainline	2.0	31.0	69.0	76.4
Seculars	9.0	29.5	70.5	52.6
Nominal Catholic	2.1	28.9	71.1	63.9
Jews	1.9	26.7	73.3	86.5
Other Faiths	2.6	22.0	78.0	60.6
Atheist Agnostic	3.5	20.0	80.0	60.9
Black Protestants	9.3	17.2	82.8	50.4

Source: Fourth National Survey of Religion and Politics, Post-Election Sample (N=2730, November-December 2004, University of Akron)

Table 4 Religious Communities and Major Party Coalitions in 2004

	Bush	Kerry	ALL
Traditionalist Evangelical	23.4	3.4	13.6
Other Christians	4.3	1.1	2.7
Traditionalist Catholic	7.7	2.9	5.3
Centrist Evangelical	11.9	5.2	8.6
Traditionalist Mainline	7.0	3.9	5.5
Latino Protestants	2.6	1.6	2.1
Modernist Evangelical	2.9	2.2	2.6
Nominal Evangelical	1.5	1.2	1.4
Centrist Catholic	8.0	7.6	7.8
Centrist Mainline	6.5	7.1	6.8
Modernist Mainline	3.3	4.6	3.9
Modernist Catholic	2.9	4.9	3.8
Unaffiliated Believers	2.0	3.6	2.8
Latino Catholic	1.9	4.4	3.1
Nominal Mainline	1.5	3.6	2.6
Seculars	4.6	11.6	8.0
Nominal Catholic	1.3	3.4	2.3
Jews	1.4	4.1	2.7
Other Faiths	1.1	4.0	2.5
Atheist Agnostic	1.5	6.5	3.9
Black Protestants	2.6	13.2	7.8
Entire Sample	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Fourth National Survey of Religion and Politics, Post-Election Sample (N=2730, November-December 2004, University of Akron)

Table 5 Religious Communities and Presidential Choice Vote, 2004-1992
(percent of the two-party vote)

	Bush 2004	Bush 2000	Dole 1996	Bush 1992	Change 2004- 1992
Traditionalist Evangelical	87.9	87.3	81.7	83.5	4.4
Other Christians	80.0	70.6	65.0	54.2	25.8
Traditionalist Catholic	73.9	60.7	54.0	53.3	20.6
Centrist Evangelical	70.4	63.2	57.9	68.1	2.3
Traditionalist Mainline	65.6	75.9	65.6	64.3	1.3
Latino Protestants	62.9	28.6	24.2	38.1	24.8
Modernist Evangelical	58.2	42.4	35.3	48.1	10.1
Nominal Evangelical	55.2	44.0	47.8	20.0	35.2
Centrist Catholic	52.3	49.6	48.8	46.6	5.7
Entire Sample	51.2	49.5	46.8	47.3	3.9
Centrist Mainline	49.1	51.5	52.9	57.1	-8.0
Modernist Mainline	43.1	55.7	46.3	54.0	-10.9
Modernist Catholic	38.1	40.0	34.0	33.9	4.2
Unaffiliated Believers	37.0	28.0	35.0	60.0	-23.0
Latino Catholic	31.4	28.6	26.3	25.0	6.4
Nominal Mainline	31.0	51.2	45.5	40.0	-9.0
Seculars	29.5	42.2	46.5	25.9	3.6
Nominal Catholic	28.9	37.5	44.4	61.5	32.6
Jews	26.7	23.3	18.4	17.9	8.8
Other Faiths	22.0	26.0	14.3	17.6	4.4
Atheist Agnostic	20.0	30.6	40.6	32.1	-12.1
Black Protestants	17.2	3.5	11.2	9.5	7.7

Source: National Surveys of Religion and Politics, Bliss Institute of Applied Politics 1992 (n=2265); 1996 (n=2350); 2000 (n=3000); 2004 (n=2730)

Table 6 Religious Communities and Turnout, 2004-1992
(percent voted)

	Voted 2004	Voted 2000	Voted 1996	Voted 1992	Change 2004- 1992
Traditionalist Evangelical	70.8	64.7	63.7	65.9	4.9
Other Christians	59.2	51.4	34.5	60.8	-1.6
Traditionalist Catholic	77.6	63.8	62.3	75.0	2.6
Centrist Evangelical	56.3	47.6	45.3	46.8	9.5
Traditionalist Mainline	77.8	62.8	67.0	75.6	2.2
Latino Protestants	49.3	38.5	50.0	36.8	12.5
Modernist Evangelical	61.8	42.7	40.0	56.7	5.1
Nominal Evangelical	69.0	44.3	39.7	40.0	29.0
Centrist Catholic	68.4	59.1	57.1	72.4	-4.0
Entire Sample	60.8	54.3	51.9	54.6	6.2
Centrist Mainline	70.6	50.8	58.5	62.2	8.4
Modernist Mainline	55.6	54.3	54.0	60.5	-4.9
Modernist Catholic	54.8	56.3	57.1	55.5	-0.7
Unaffiliated Believers	42.7	42.3	32.9	32.1	10.6
Latino Catholic	43.1	36.3	47.6	36.6	6.5
Nominal Mainline	76.4	63.8	61.5	60.5	15.9
Seculars	52.6	46.3	40.2	37.0	15.6
Nominal Catholic	63.9	39.4	56.9	55.8	8.1
Jews	86.5	72.6	47.6	69.8	16.7
Other Faiths	60.6	69.7	61.5	63.8	-3.2
Atheist Agnostic	60.9	70.3	40.2	65.5	4.6
Black Protestants	50.4	53.9	56.9	40.9	9.5

Source: National Surveys of Religion and Politics, Bliss Institute of Applied Politics 1992 (n=2265); 1996 (n=2350); 2000 (n=3000); 2004 (n=2730)

Table 7a Religious Communities and Republican Presidential Coalitions, 2004-1992

	Bush 2004	Bush 2000	Dole 1996	Bush 1992	Change 2004- 1992
Traditionalist Evangelical	23.4	24.9	20.7	18.1	5.3
Other Christians	4.3	3.1	2.5	2.7	1.6
Traditionalist Catholic	7.7	8.4	6.6	6.8	0.9
Centrist Evangelical	11.9	9.5	10.7	13.5	-1.6
Traditionalist Mainline	7.0	8.5	8.1	7.6	-0.6
Latino Protestants	2.6	1.0	1.6	1.7	0.9
Modernist Evangelical	2.9	1.8	1.2	5.3	-2.4
Nominal Evangelical	1.5	1.4	2.1	0.2	1.3
Centrist Catholic	8.0	7.6	7.9	10.1	-2.1
Centrist Mainline	6.5	6.5	10.5	7.6	-1.1
Modernist Mainline	3.3	4.4	3.7	5.7	-2.4
Modernist Catholic	2.9	3.6	3.5	4.2	-1.3
Unaffiliated Believers	2.0	1.8	1.4	2.5	-0.5
Latino Catholic	1.9	1.8	1.9	1.5	0.4
Nominal Mainline	1.5	2.8	1.9	1.7	-0.2
Seculars	4.6	5.5	6.4	3.2	1.4
Nominal Catholic	1.3	1.2	2.3	1.7	-0.4
Jews	1.4	1.3	1.7	1.1	0.3
Other Faiths	1.1	1.7	0.8	1.3	-0.2
Atheist Agnostic	1.5	2.5	2.5	1.9	-0.4
Black Protestants	2.6	0.6	1.9	1.7	0.9
Entire Sample	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	

Source: National Surveys of Religion and Politics, Bliss Institute of Applied Politics 1992 (n=2265); 1996 (n=2350); 2000 (n=3000); 2004 (n=2730)

Table 7b Religious Communities and Democratic Presidential Coalitions, 2004-1992

	Kerry 2004	Gore 2000	Clinton 1996	Clinton 1992	Change 2004- 1992
Traditionalist Evangelical	3.4	3.5	4.1	3.2	0.2
Other Christians	1.1	1.3	1.2	2.1	-1.0
Traditionalist Catholic	2.9	5.3	4.9	5.3	-2.4
Centrist Evangelical	5.2	5.4	6.8	5.7	-0.5
Traditionalist Mainline	3.9	2.7	3.8	3.8	0.1
Latino Protestants	1.6	2.5	4.3	2.5	-0.9
Modernist Evangelical	2.2	2.4	1.9	5.1	-2.9
Nominal Evangelical	1.2	1.8	2.0	0.8	0.4
Centrist Catholic	7.6	7.6	7.3	10.4	-2.8
Centrist Mainline	7.1	5.9	8.2	5.1	2.0
Modernist Mainline	4.6	3.4	3.8	4.3	0.3
Modernist Catholic	4.9	5.3	6.0	7.4	-2.5
Unaffiliated Believers	3.6	4.6	2.2	1.5	2.1
Latino Catholic	4.4	4.4	4.8	4.0	0.4
Nominal Mainline	3.6	2.7	2.0	2.3	1.3
Seculars	11.6	7.5	6.5	8.1	3.5
Nominal Catholic	3.4	1.9	2.6	0.9	2.5
Jews	4.1	4.2	6.8	4.3	-0.2
Other Faiths	4.0	4.7	4.1	5.3	-1.3
Atheist Agnostic	6.5	5.4	3.2	3.6	2.9
Black Protestants	13.2	17.6	13.5	14.4	-1.2
Entire Electorate	100	100	100	100.0	

Source: National Surveys of Religion and Politics, Bliss Institute of Applied Politics 1992 (n=2265); 1996 (n=2350); 2000 (n=3000); 2004 (n=2730)