American political scientists once again recognize the importance of religion in accounting for political attitudes and behavior. Both the size and vigor of the religious right in the conservative coalition since the 1980s has directed attention particularly to the politics of evangelical Protestants.

Since 1987 the Times-Mirror organization has used a typology to describe the constellation of values held by groups at the core of each party (Ornstein, Kohut, and McCarthy 1988). In the late 1980s "Moralists" and "Enterprisers" were of equal size in the core of the Republican party; by 1994 Moralists outnumbered Enterprisers nearly two to one, and constituted one-fifth of the registered electorate (Times-Mirror 1994). Religious values are also embedded in groups in the core of the Democratic party, but no single group is so evident as the Moralists within the Republicans. Even if the nature of measurement error has not yet been assessed in the Times-Mirror typology, separate studies of the 1992 elections by Leege (1993) and by Kellstedt, Green, Guth and Smidt (1993) find similar patterns of values, size, participation rates, and direction of partisanship from both NES and special purpose surveys.

The recognition that religion is important in voting behavior is recapturing an earlier theme in America political history. Ethnoreligious historians have found cultural differences more important than economic interests in the political conflicts of most stages of American history, but particularly in the mid to late 19th century (cf. Benson 1961; Kleppner 1970, 1979; Jensen 1971; McCormick 1986; Swierenga 1990). But not all measures of religiosity are equally useful to understanding any given election. In a chapter of The American Voter devoted to group effects, the authors limit themselves to only the bluntest measure of religious group—Protestant, Catholic, and Jew—and to affinity, a "closeness to" item. In his later analysis of the 1960 election, Converse (1966) showed high partisan defections of both Catholics and Protestants. But frequency of church

*Opinions offered in this paper are the author's alone or represent a composite of scholars working in the fields of religion and politics and the sociology of religion. In no way do they represent official positions of the National Election Studies and its Board of Overseers.
attendance was a less important predictor of high defection among Catholic Republicans than was a sense of communal identity with other Catholics, as well as being from an Irish Catholic rather than Polish or Italian Catholic family. Reflecting the influence of comparative politiical sociologists under the umbrella of the International Sociological Association, Converse (1968) wrote a classic think-piece on face-sheet items for comparative electoral research, including several measures of the relevance of religion: nominal affiliation, frequency of church attendance and other associational items, communal involvement, and negative outgroup feelings. Most research based on NES religion variable since that time has limited itself to affiliation, attendance, and, more rarely, the salience of religion or a report of a born-again experience.

In recent surveys, the National Election Studies have offered a wider range of items tapping aspects of religiosity. These include measures of both believing and belonging (For elaboration of the significance of the distinction see Wald and Smidt 1993). Furthermore, careful assessments of their measurement properties have been conducted through the help of the 1989 Pilot Study and the 1990 Congressional Study (see Leege, Kellstedt, and Wald 1990 and Leege and Kellstedt 1993a). Based on these studies this paper attempts to serve as a guide to the strengths and weaknesses of each measure, and what to expect when measures are combined into indexes of religiosity.

General and Specific Measurement Error

Since the 1989 Pilot Study, NES has introduced several controls for measurement error in the most frequently used religiosity measures. One of these involves an elaborate branching scheme with several sequences of prompts to the interviewer to gain very precise information about denominational affiliation. For example, a respondent may say she is a "Christian" when asked either "Do you mostly attend a place of worship that is Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish or what?" or "Do you consider yourself Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, or what?" In days gone past such respondents could have been referring to the faith--"Christian" (as opposed to Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist)--or to three distinct denominations--Disciples of Christ, Church of Christ, United Church of Christ--or even a variety of other religious bodies with the name "Christian" in their title. Now the interviewer has a set of three question options to isolate the specific denomination from the faith. Or, for example, in days gone past, respondents may have said they were
"Lutheran," as are 5.2 million Americans. Yet, the larger Evangelical Lutheran Church of America has rather different doctrinal and ethical positions and ethnic histories from the smaller Missouri Synod and Wisconsin Synod Lutherans. New probes capture the specific denomination. The sequence, like the employment items, takes a lot of space in the questionnaire but is relative brief in administration.

Specificity in denominational affiliation matters because mainline Protestants and evangelical Protestants come from different religious traditions—beliefs, practices, interests, regional experiences, and social statues—all of which make sharp political differences. This point is developed later. Specificity also matters because the fastest growing—and perhaps politically most important—portions of the religious landscape are the non-denominational Protestant churches. At one time such churches were largely creedal, with little difference from other community or eleemosynary institutions. Nowadays, however, such local churches are very large, 5,000 to 25,000 members are not uncommon, and growing especially among baby boomers and x-generation young people, offer wide networks of activities, programs, and ministries that instill higher activity levels than mainline Protestant churches, and are disproportionately on the evangelical, pentecostal, and sometimes fundamentalist end of the religious spectrum and the conservative end of the political spectrum. The post-1989 measures allow analysts to classify such people into an appropriate religious tradition and, thus, to generate more precise and robust coefficients that link different types of religiosity to politics.

The 1989 Pilot used a panel of 1988 respondents, permitting comparisons between old and new measures on a variable that should not change swiftly. Analyses (Leege, Kellstedt, and Wald 1990) show that there had been a 25% undercount of pentecostals based simply on misallocation by denomination, about 25% of all Lutherans were miscast between a mainline and an evangelical tradition, and overall an estimated 14% of Protestants were misclassified as a result of the pre-1990 measures. In short, analyses based on a denominational family or religious tradition measure post-1990 are less contaminated by measurement error, are more valid, and are generally more robust. Disjunctions can be expected to appear in time-series using the cumulative file.

The disjuncture will be even more evident on the church attendance item. For several decades, the Gallup organization has shown about 40% of the churched population (all but seven percent of American adults)
attending church "the last Sunday." Yet actual attendance counts in local churches reported sharp drops in the late sixties with only modest increases in the 1980s. Both GSS and NES have also generated suspiciously high attendance rates. Religious service attendance, like election turnout and voting for winners, particularly in Congressional and Senatorial contests, all suffer from over-reporting.

In 1989, NES tested a four-question filter that made it quite socially respectable to report infrequent attendance. The sequence included statements that excused non-involvement ("Lots of things come up that keep people from attending religious services even if they want to."). cued respondents that occasional attendance at family rites of passage like weddings, baptisms, or funerals did not constitute church attendance, and screened on self-identification for those who do not attend services. The consequences were two-fold. In 1988, 8% of all respondents expressed no religious affiliation; in 1989 18% of the same sample held no religious affiliation. Furthermore, the proportion of the sample never attending church grew from 14% in 1988 to 33% in 1990 and 34% in 1992.

In 1990 and thereafter, NES abbreviated the filters to two questions: the sympathetic excuse for non-involvement ("Lots of things come up") and self identification with a religious body despite lack of attendance. The consequence of these controls for overreporting is that 13% in 1990 and 15% in 1992 reported neither religious involvement nor psychological identification and have been classified by analysts as "seculars" (Leege 1993; Wald, Kellstedt, and Luege 1993; Kellstedt, Green, Guth, and Smidt 1993). These filters have also depressed reported church attendance at the infrequent levels but have left the figures for more frequent attenders virtually undisturbed.

Table 1 shows a longer time series on church attendance among the total adult sample. For the sake of space limitations, the table reports only the presidential years, but the same pattern is virtually identical in the bi-election years. Further, the table shows the effects of a change in response categories in 1970 from "regularly, often, seldom, never" to "every week, almost every week, 1-2 times a month, few times a year, never," and in 1992 with the filters.
Table 1
Attendance at Religious Services
(% of total adult sample is reported in each category)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regularly</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Every Week</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Almost Every Week</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1-2 Times a month</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Few times a year</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>Never</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>14</td>
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Source: NES Cumulative File

Inferences from the table are quite evident. The 1970 change from vagueness to precision reduced the proportion of regular/weekly attenders from the low forties to the high twenties. Probably the pre 1970s "regulars" included both the "every week" and "almost every week" respondents, and the "often" were the "1-2 times a month" respondents. A modest increase in the "nevers" is also evident, but that may have been reflective of social change, not a change in measurement. The 1990s change in wording shows stability in the upper and mid-reaches of attendance but a massive increase in the "nevers." Clearly occasional attendance at rites of passage had been qualifying people in their own minds for church attendance, albeit seldom.

As Flanigan and Zingale (1994) have observed, NES is opting for reliability/validity on the attendance variable, rather than an unbroken time-series laden with measurement error. The net effect of this measurement change is to increase the robustness of relationships between religion and politics in equations utilizing attendance at religious services. Whatever happens at religious services--socialization to doctrinal/ethical precepts, reinforcement of group identity, exposure to contagious group values, exposure to political cues--is better captured by an accurate rather than over-report of attendance.
Still there is room for improvement. Although NES's report of 27% is more accurate than Gallup's 40%, it is still higher than actual church service censuses would permit (Hadaway, Marler, and Chaves 1994). The NES improvements have cleaned up the lower end of the scale but the measure is still contaminated on the upper end. It is quite likely that the "good" citizens who habitually do something—vote, attend church—miss more frequently than they recall. They may interpret the question as a report of their usual behavior, not of their behavior in this election year or last month. To overcome this error the objective of measurement, then, should be to help the respondent re-create as near as possible the things associated with voting or non-voting the last time or the most recent instances of attendance or non-attendance.

Because the voter validation studies are both costly and have a wide variety of endemic errors, the NES Board has authorized an experiment on a limited sample on the 1994 election. Conducted by Belli, S. Traugott, and Rosenstone, the treatment groups receive either the standard turnout question or a question sequence that offers a series of memory-joggers of things associated with voting. To confirm the psychological mechanism responsible for over-reporting, a similar set of treatments is used for church attendance. In the near future, the Board hopes to learn not only how to design a more valid measure of voter turnout in a given year but also perhaps attendance at religious services. We suspect the post-1990 parameters are accurate for evangelical Protestant, modestly overreported for Catholics, and grossly overreported for mainline Protestants.

As sensitive and demanding questions, the affiliation/attendance batteries come late in the interview. There are other religiosity dimensions tapped earlier in the interview—salience (importance of religion, guidance), devotional practices (private prayer, Bible reading), orthodox doctrine (biblical literalism), and experience (born again). These have not been controlled for social-desirability response sets and there is good reason to believe that parameter estimates on salience, devotional practice, and doctrine are unduly high. Again this point will be elaborated later. On the other hand, a religious group identification measure (beyond denominational affinity) since 1990 and a political mobilization measure in 1994 appear in the same section of the questionnaire that has the filters designed to reduce overreporting. These items are probably less suspect, although it is too early to devise reliable estimates of error for them.
Analytical Use of the Dimensions of Religiosity

Beyond denominational affiliation/affinity with a religious tradition, the various dimensions of religiosity appearing on NES can be thought of as measures of religious intensification. In most instances it matters little for politics that a person thinks of himself as a Catholic. How often does he go to mass or practice private devotions? How important is (Catholic) religion as a guide in daily life? How binding are the ethical maxims of sacred scripture, certainly more if they are divine revelation. Has God "converted" him through a special experience? Do his religious compatriots suffer unfair or demeaning treatment at the hands of others, cultural or political elites? What worldviews regarding human nature and potential, social order, and the role of the state are embedded in his religious values? All of these are what makes religion salient in American politics. Many of them can be inferred from NES religiosity items or batteries.

Religious Affiliation/Affinity. By themselves, categories such as "Protestant-Catholic-Jew-other-none" or denominational family from the NES religion mastercode (Presbyterian, Lutheran, Episcopalian, Methodist, Pentecostal, Baptist, etc.) are analytically boring. Yet some variant of those, typically only the former, is what commonly appears in introductory American government textbooks, nearly all public opinion/political behavior texts, and until recently, models of partisanship, vote choice, or voter defection in important monographs or journal articles. The post-1990 NES branching scheme (V152) and religion mastercode provide the level of specificity necessary for politically relevant religious classifications. While the mastercode will stay relatively stable, modest changes will occur over decades as new religious bodies emerge and grow, schisms occur, mergers are accomplished, and new immigration alters the religious landscape.

Probably the most promising scheme for combining religious families (denominations, fellowships) into religious traditions that have political consequences has evolved from the work of Kellstedt, Green, Guth, and Smidt (cf. Kellstedt and Green 1993). The scheme is reproduced as Appendix A and the recode program is available from any of them or from the author. The scheme sometimes divides denominational families because of internal differences in doctrine, practice, ethical norms, regional or ethnic base; for example, member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America are mainline (despite the label "evangelical") while members of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (which is nationwide despite the "Missouri" modifier) are evangelical;
members of the Presbyterian Church in the USA are mainline but members of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church in America are evangelical. In some respects politically, Missouri Lutherans and Cumberland Presbyterians have more in common with Southern Baptists than with other Lutherans or Presbyterians, respectively. But ya gotta know the territory!

These schemes do, and any analysis using religious family/religious tradition must also separate bodies having a racial basis. For example, the National Baptist Convention in the U.S.A. and the AME Zion are historically Black churches; they should not be included in models using "Baptists" or "Methodists." For members of white churches, deeper religious involvement tends to be associated with conservatism on both social and economic issues, while for Blacks their evangelicalism inclines them toward conservative positions on many traditional values but liberal positions on economic questions. And in turn, white Baptists will be more conservative on social issues than white Methodists. Leege has transformed the Kellstedt et al. recode into an *ethnoreligious tradition* classification scheme so that differences in Latino religiosity are also reflected (Leege 1993).

Analysts using some variant of religious tradition find rather different political histories as well as current explanations for partisanship and voting behavior and attitudes (cf. Leege 1993.; Kellstedt, Green, Guth, and Smidt 1993). Mainline white Protestants have declined in size but remained at the core of the Republican party throughout the century, are moderately conservative on economic issues and moderately liberal on social questions, both reflecting their higher income and educational statuses. Evangelical white Protestants have grown considerably both in church affiliation and political mobilization over the last three decades, are very conservative on social issues but moderately conservative on economic issues, and more than any other religious group have led the realignment into the core of the Republican party; as a proportion of the active religious universe and the active electorate they outnumber mainline Protestants by more than a 2-1 ratio. White Catholics have a profile similar to the recent partisan and attitudinal shifts of the county as a whole; their historic Democratic partisanship is tugged in a conservative Republican direction by church teaching on some social issues, in a liberal Democratic direction by church teaching on economic issues, and in predictable directions from their occupancy of higher income and educational statuses than all but a few of the mainline
Protestant bodies. Jews, black Christians, and Latino Christians (except for Cubans) embrace the Democratic party and liberal positions on most matters of interest to voting behavior specialists. Seculars have grown in size in recent decades (both in reality and as a product of improved measurement), are regularly on the Democratic side of the aisle, liberal on social issues, but sometimes conservative, sometimes liberal on economic issues. Evangelical Protestants and seculars have replaced mainline Protestants and Catholics as the religious poles for anchoring political differences at the current time.

This scheme has been used effectively in multiple regression, logistic regression, and a variety of analysis of variance models. Two words of caution are in order. The principal effects of religious tradition are evident in partisanship; in equations where they are entered simultaneously with, for example, party identification, economic outlook, retrospective economic voting, etc., their effects will be muted. They are distal, not proximate explanations. On the other hand, both religious denomination and religious tradition are sometimes proximate when a co-religionist heads the ticket, e.g., Kennedy and Catholics in 1960, Carter and Southern Baptists in 1976 (but not 1980), Bush and Episcopalians in 1988 (but not 1992). Denominational affiliations anchor party identifications.

The second caveat concerns the classification of "General Protestants" in the NES Religion Mastercode. As mentioned before, the greatest growth across the America religious spectrum has been in the non-denominational megachurches. Many of these are evangelical in orientation; yet some of the non-denominational community churches remain on the "liberal" end of the church spectrum. Kellstedt and his collaborators have conducted many analyses of other religiosity items so that it is possible to infer these respondents' orientation from other types of religious involvement. Respondents listing a non-denominational preference are classified as evangelical if they embrace a literal view on scripture and report a born-again status (Kellstedt and Green 1993); the others are treated as mainline Protestant. About 6-7% of the total sample is classified this way. Analytically this procedure constitutes no problem if the model does not also use the NES measures of literalism or born-again status. For example, if attendance or salience is used alongside religious tradition as a measure of religious intensification, results are not contaminated by autocorrelation. However, if an analysis of variance model partials evangelicals and mainliners on biblical literalism, it "double-counts" the
effects of literalism on a small portion of each class. On most general equations of vote choice or partisanship this problem is trivial; on within-class analysis it becomes modestly problematic.

The precise level of NES's denominational data can be used in whatever scheme the investigator finds defensible. For example, based on earlier NES data, Lopatto (1985) effectively employed the Stark-Glock (1968) scheme of "liberal, moderate, and conservative" Protestant denominations. Scholars familiar with General Social Survey data are accustomed to their "liberal, moderate, and fundamentalist" classification, and may want to treat NES data in a comparable manner. That is possible. In fact, it is even more defensible with NES data because GSS lacks necessary details on denominational families and nondenominational churches.

As these caveats suggest, most models that take religiosity seriously as an explanation for partisanship or the vote would do well to add some other measure of religious intensification. It would be doubly encouraging if textbook writers would even present tables based on religious or ethnoreligious tradition, rather than their current obfuscating classification.

Attendance. Since attendance at religious services was already discussed in the section on measurement error, what is left here is to discuss the utility of attendance in models of the vote. Analyzing the 1992 NES data with its improved measures of affiliation and attendance, Leege (1993) shows vividly what to expect in equations linking denomination to a wide range of political orientations. Some analysts have argued that affiliation alone creates a relevant political variable, regardless of the extent to which it is renewed by regular involvement with the group. In Turner's (1982) terms this would mean that social identification outweighs social cohesion. In 1992 and perhaps other years it clearly did not. Leege first partials each ethnoreligious tradition into regular attenders and never-attending group members. Using a series of one-way analyses of variance to see whether the never-attenders differ from co-religionists and do not differ from seculars, he finds that never-attending Catholics, for example, are politically far more like seculars than Catholics on ideology, retrospective economic assessment, abortion, school prayer, moral traditionalism, civil religion and women's role; yet they are similar to each other on party identification. Less pronounced differences are found within other traditions. The differences are substantial enough that including religious tradition in a model without controls for attendance would be a highly suspect practice, a practice assured of reducing religious effects.
At the same time, denominations/traditions differ in the extent to which frequent attendance in a
normative measure of good standing. In the evangelical churches, attendance at Sunday services is taken for
 granted but the real norm of faithfulness is attendance at mid-week services. In Catholic parishes, church
teaching sets a "legal" norm of mass attendance on all Sundays and designated festivals. In mainline Protestant
churches, ministers encourage regular attendance. For Jews, attendance at weekly synagogue or temple rites
may at times be less significant than involvement with Jewish community organizations or household practices.
Thus, the threshold for a "good member" of the religious community differs substantially by religious tradition.

Models that use attendance (and many other measure of religious intensification) are inherently biased toward
the discovery of stronger religious effects among evangelicals than among other religious traditions. It is
instructive to note that political differences between never-and regular-attending mainline Protestants and Black
Christians were minimal. (The n for temple-active Jews is too small in a normal NES sample to sustain a
similar analysis).

Religious Involvement. In the 1989 Pilot study there were also questions about "membership" in a
church/religious body, and about involvement with other non-worship activities sponsored by the church body
(e.g., church leadership, social service, social justice, religious discussion, etc.). Wald, Leege, and Kellstedt
(1993) developed an index combining these with the affiliation/attendance items; the index showed very
attractive properties. It had the effect of muting some of the evangelical bias in the attendance measure; for
example, Catholics were nearly as involved as evangelicals, and the connection between attendance and
ideological and social issue conservatism was substantially reduced. Religious involvement became a predictor
of turnout far stronger than most demographic factors such as income and education, but it did not predict other
forms of political participation as well as did education.

Equations involving interaction terms between religious tradition and religious involvement yielded the
strongest predictors of social policy positions. For example, simply being a Catholic is associated with a
prochoice position on abortion; scoring high on the religious involvement index, however, moves Catholics to
the prolife position. Simply being a white mainline Protestant is associated with negative feelings toward civil
rights leaders; however, being a religiously involved mainliner pushes a member to a positive assessment of
civil rights leaders.

Unfortunately, the 1990 and succeeding production studies did not include the two additional items
needed for the religious involvement index, so we are left with the evangelical bias of the church attendance
measures.

In all equations using the intensification items, of course, the analyst should control for region, race,
gender, age, and the components of SES, if interested in effects intrinsically related to religiosity.

*Religious Identification.* For a variety of family, regional, or business reasons some people remain affiliated
with a local church that does not represent their own beliefs, practices, and moral positions. Membership in
that body would be a poor predictor of political orientations.

Partly in an effort to develop more precise information for classifying religious traditions and partly to
deal with the respondent who has "dual religious reference groups" (cf. Welch and Leege 1991), NES tested a
number of religious self-identification items in 1989 and included the most promising ones in 1990 and
thereafter. The effort is well grounded in the psychology of group attachment (Conover 1984, 1986) and the
tendency for voters to be cognitive misers who use groups as organizing principles to conduct efficient
information searches (Brady and Sniderman 1985; Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1991). The question of the
political effects of religious self-identity became increasingly important in the 1980s as schisms on the right
among fundamentalists, pentecostals, and evangelicals became apparent. (See Wilcox, Jelen, and Leege 1993
for a discussion of this literature and the special purpose surveys on which it is based.)

The first thing to note about the NES religious self-identification item--"Which one of these words best
describes your kind of Christianity--fundamentalist, evangelical, charismatic or spirit-filled, moderate to liberal"
(asked only of Protestants, Catholics, or other Christians)--is that it is a difficult question. About 12% of all
appropriate respondents are missing on the religious identity question, a figure that compares not unfavorably
with those unable to use the ideological self-placement item on NES.

The second point is that analyses of the 1989 Pilot data show substantial overlap among the first three
choices, even though the NES option is now forced choice. From the perspective of social heuristics theory,
then, we might expect many charismatics or fundamentalists to respond favorably to evangelical cues, or vice versa.

Thirdly, the identifications "fundamentalist," "evangelical," and "charismatic" are all effective predictors of partisanship, political ideology, and anti-communism, many social issues and even economic issues, and affects toward other groups and individuals, both positive toward in-groups and negative for outgroups.

Finally, the religious self-placement item might be thought of as one imperfect measure of a latent concept of religious affinity that is also tapped imperfectly by the denominational affiliation measure. Thus, inclusion of religious self-placement along with denomination in equations dealing with political orientations would be tapping additional information. (In 1989 there were sufficient multiple indicators to sustain LISREL analysis of that latent concept, but in the 1990 and succeeding production studies, space limitations warrant only the two types of variables.) Again, religious self-placement will not have the strength of party identification and political ideology in vote equations, because it likely is prior to and therefore mediated in party ID and liberal-conservative self-placement. At a minimum, it is part of a constellation of orientations to politics that are coherent. Like the other two, it has the advantage of pointing to definable groups and thus to be amendable to manipulation in elite strategies that appeal to cultural differences.

**Private Devotionalism.** Episodically, NES has included items that tap private devotional practices. In 1989, five items were tested but three were practices performed primarily by evangelicals and were thus redundant. The remaining two--prayer and Bible reading--form a useful scale of private devotionalism. While it overlaps with church involvement (.65) and religious salience (.57), it is sufficiently different from Biblical literalism (.48) and mobilization/cue-giving (.20) to be treated as a dimension of religiosity in its own right (Leege, Wald, and Kellerstedt 1993). It appears especially in composite models of religiosity.

Based on the 1990 date, in multiple regression models with a wide variety of controls, devotionalism is the strongest or second strongest predictor among all the religiosity dimensions for party identification, vote choice, moral traditionalism, and abortion position; it also predicts effectively to political ideology. Contrasted with the demographic controls, it is typically less powerful only than race. In fact, there is a curious interaction
between race and devotionalism. Highly devotional whites are more likely to be Republicans and choose Republicans, to call themselves conservatives, and to take conservative positions across the board, including opposition to affirmative action. Highly devotional African-Americans are more likely to be Democrats and choose Democrats, to call themselves liberals, to take liberal positions on economic issues but not necessarily social issues, and to support affirmative action.

We suspect that private devotionalism is an intrinsic "way of life" measure. It probably indicates the extent to which the extrinsic practices and affiliations of Christians are fully integrated into their private lives. It captures a separable dimension of religiosity. In its two-item form it has less of the evangelical bias than in its five-item form. It can properly be included in models of the vote as a measure of religious intensification, but again the controls are essential.

**Doctrinal Beliefs.** Doctrinal beliefs are considered vital to understanding the linkage between religion and politics by virtually all scholars in the field, but it is a dimension represented in NES by only one item—views of the Bible. Through the years since 1964, various versions have been tried—infallible, inerrant and literal (Kellstedt and Smidt 1993). Findings are somewhat sensitive to alternate wordings but remain in the same direction. NES has opted for the literalism measure since 1990.

Social desirability response bias is particularly evident on this question as only 10-15% of respondents are willing to select the weakest version of Biblical authority. Two-thirds of those who profess no religious preference still give a positive view of scriptural authority. Females, southerners, nonwhites, and those with the lowest levels of education opt for the most authoritative responses. Because of the suspected high level of response bias, scores on literalism should never enter equations without an adjustment for frequency of Bible reading. Better yet, NES would do well to test response categories that discriminate more effectively.

Evangelicals have remained the most biblically-centered Christian tradition. While there is a resurgence of Bible reading both among post-Vatican II Catholics and within some sectors of mainline Protestantism, these traditions are more likely to find authority in the sacraments and conciliar statements within the church's history, while evangelicals or more likely to direct members to the Bible as the sole source and norm for faith and life. As a result, this single measure of doctrinal beliefs taps a strong evangelical bias. Its
use, particularly in models of the vote that add several biased dimensions of religiosity, tends to limit high levels of religiosity to faithful evangelicals.

Even with all of these caveats, the biblical literalism measure is a powerful independent predictor of political orientations. In analysis of variances and multiple regression models that control for other measures of religiosity and the usual demographic factors, literalism is the strongest or second strongest predictor of party ID, ideology, position on school prayer, abortion, assistance to the poor, civil rights and affirmative action, all in the conservative direction (Kellstedt and Smidt 1993; Lege, Wald, and Kellstedt 1993), but the Republican partisan pattern is just the reverse for mainline Protestants, i.e., those with a less authoritative view of scripture are more Republican.

NES may wish to expand the range of doctrinal items. Better yet, it should put R & D effort into a measure of religious worldviews, a point developed in a moment.

_Religious Experience: Born Again._ The 1980 presidential election, where all three candidates claimed to be "born-again," called political scientist's attention to the political relevance of this religious experience. While Pres. Carter could stake the most valid claim to the experience, the fact that Reagan and Anderson saw political positives in the label led polling organizations to add items asking whether the respondent had had a born-again experience or considered herself a born-again Christian.

The phenomenon, while central in Christian tradition, carries many meanings. Sometimes it is a sudden conversion experience, sometimes a personal "acceptance of God," sometimes a public confession of faith, sometimes a reference to baptism, even as an infant with no volition, but common to all there is a notion that the life of the born-again person is transformed ever thereafter by the claims of the faith (Jelen, Smidt, and Kellstedt 1993).

Since the late 1980s, NES has used two wordings—one referencing the _experience_ and the other the _status_. Both generate substantially equivalent data, although the proportion of respondents reacting favorably (35 to 40%) is likely to be grossly inflated. There is some reason to believe that explanatory modifiers in the question wording—"Christian," "Jesus Christ"—inflate reports of being born again.
In models that exercise controls over other dimensions of religiosity and the usual demographic characteristics, the born-again item enters few significant relationships. Abortion, party ID, and capital punishment are the only political variables that gain a boost in explanatory power from the use of the born-again item. Curiously, it is the interaction between born-again and Northern residence that accounts for improved prediction of party ID. Born-again appears to be politically distinctive in its effects in the North, where it is less common, than in the South, where it is common (Jelen, Smidt, and Kellstedt 1993). Republican leaders used "born again" language frequently in the 1980s and that may have had differential effects regionally. The born-again item also interacted significantly with the biblical literalism item to produce affect more favorable to Pat Robertson, stronger opposition to abortion, and a call for increased defense spending.

Again this is a religiosity item where there is legitimate question about trade-offs in explanatory power. NES may wish to conduct R & D on an expanded range of response categories so that it can clarify what is being measured. If it is retained in future studies, it will be primarily because (1) it assists judgments about the classification of non-denominational Protestants, and (2) it provides a vehicle for comparing NES data with commercial polls, such as the exit polls, where their born-again item is about the only measure of affinity with the religious right. The experience of placing the born-again item head-to-head with other religiosity items should alert political scientists who write textbooks that NES religiosity data yield far more comprehensive explanations of voting than do exit polls and other commercial surveys.

Religious Salience: The Scale and Composite Measures. Since 1980, scholars have used two NES items--V846 and V847, dealing with the importance of religion in one's life and the guidance religion provides for daily living--as a measure of religious salience. Salience is intended to capture the centrality, the importance of religion to the respondent. It is unclear whether the items measure the general salience of religion or whether they can be stretched to a measure of the political salience of religion.

The two items form a scale with four values ranging from 37% at the highest level of guidance, 22% quite a bit, 21% some, and 21% claiming that religion is unimportant in their lives (Guth and Green 1993). There are modest intransitivities in the middle ranges, suggesting that collapsing the two internal categories might be in order. As expected, the scale correlates highly with other dimensions of religiosity, particularly
prayer, church attendance, and Bible reading; the weaker correlations are with Biblical literalism and born again. Typically the highest intercorrelations of the dimensions are recorded by evangelicals. With appropriate controls for other dimensions of religiosity and demographic traits, salience among whites is a significant and often powerful predictor of civil rights, social security, and abortion attitudes, a host of nationalism measures including detente with USSR, patriotism, and flag burning, tax reductions, and political ideology. In all instances, whites for whom religion is salient are more conservative. Only attitudes on the death penalty are on the liberal side but these do not quite attain statistical significance in the controlled model (Guth and Green 1993).

Because of the overlap in many dimensions of religiosity, Guth and Green prefer to call this one a guidance measure and to construct a composite salience or religiosity measure from standardized scores for guidance, church attendance, and private devotionalism. The components are not so highly intercorrelated that multicollinearity is a severe problem, and the resulting coefficient alpha is .84 (Guth and Green 1993, 168). Kellstedt (1993) also constructs a composite measure from affiliation, attendance, prayer, salience, and an authoritative view of scripture; he labels it an index of religious commitment. It too has attractive scale and construct validation properties.

These composite measures of religious salience show powerful capacities to predict conservative attitudes on moral traditionalism, abortion, affect toward the women’s movement, taxes, AIDS spending, child care, the environment, unions, and political ideology, Republicans vote for President, interest in politics, turnout, and to a lesser extent, Republican party ID and House vote, again with appropriate demographic controls. Their models are limited to the white subsample. Kellstedt further suggests that religious commitment was a stronger factor in party ID and candidate choice than was prospective economic outlook in the 1988 election (Kellstedt 1993, 299). There were no hard tests, however, with a battery of other economic indicators.

Both of these demonstrate the power of scales that combine multiple dimensions of religiosity. Each is somewhat limited as a general measure of religious effects because of its evangelical bias. But both help voting behavior specialists realize that much of the action in American politics nowadays is based in various ways that people are religious, and that dimensions of religiosity have a place both in vote equations and in path models
that explain more distant forces leading to choice. Further, religious-based political mobilization has been concentrated heavily among evangelicals, a phenomenon to which these measures attest.

*Mobilization and Cue-Giving.* NES has made first efforts at measuring the process of political mobilization by churches and religious institutions. There is good reason to believe that in the vacuum left by the demise of neighborhood party organizations and labor unions, churches have developed their own ways of cuing and mobilizing the faithful.

One approach is religious television. The substance of many televangelists' messages is implicitly and explicitly political. Religious TV personalities such as Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson have become players in the Republican party. NES has tried a measure of religious television viewing but it tends to correlate highly with other indicators of evangelical religiosity and there is little variance in it—most do not watch it. Still, it is a force that seems to pull the outlooks of some mainline Protestants and Catholics in a conservative direction (Jelen and Wilcox 1993). It has lost out in the competition for scarce space on the NES questionnaire.

Another approach is to give cues from the pulpit, in bulletins, in flyers, and in other ways at the house of worship. In the 1989 Pilot, a lengthy battery was devised to track the types of issues where cues were perceived, as well as the legitimacy the faithful attached to such cues. Depending on the issue and the church body, anywhere from 83% to 9% of the congregants perceived that cues were given and about 50% felt it was appropriate for their religious leaders to provide guidance on moral/political issues (Welch, Leege, Wald, and Kellstedt 1993). The cues have a differential effect on their listeners depending on the level of political interest, the salience of the issue, and their religious involvement. Unfortunately the cue-giving items take up too much space to be included in future NES instruments.

Instead a more modest approach in 1994 asks churchgoers whether political information was made available at their place of worship and whether clergy encouraged them to vote and for whom. Elsewhere in the political mobilization section of the instrument, all respondents are asked whether any groups concerned with moral or religious issues tried to encourage voting a certain way. The Christian Coalition claims to have distributed forty-four million endorsement slates in 1992 and to have blanketed the country even further in 1994.
We must await the release of the 94 data to analyze the extent to which these items captured religious-based mobilization.

**Religious Worldviews.** There is considerable reason to believe that religious values contribute to shaping an entire outlook on life—religious, familial, economic, political, cultural (Leege and Kellstedt 1993b). Religious creeds and doctrines make assumptions or rationalize notions of the nature of humanity, of the divine, of the social order, of economic propriety, of the purpose of the state and nation. In the minds of some, the poor deserve to remain poor because of their sloth and immorality. In the minds of others, the poor are victims of power relationships and deserve the preferential attention of both church and state. Abortion is a lesser of evils to some, murder to others. Individuals, while all created by God, may in the minds of many, require equality but, in the minds of others, fulfill social roles that are admittedly unequal. Embedded in ideology are notions of a moral order. Social change often upsets a moral order, and the state is an agency for either restoring a moral order or fostering further change.

In its values and predispositions measures, NES has developed items that tap individualism, race-related arrangements, gender roles, the treatment of gays, and others. NES has not yet attempted to integrate these into overarching pictures of moral order or religious worldviews. Leege and Kellstedt (1993) describe modest efforts. Suggestive items may be drawn from McClosky and Zaller (1984), Hochschild (1981), and others. Despite the burgeoning exchange of arguments on the "culture wars" theme (Wuthnow 1988; Hunter 1991), there is a dearth of empirical studies that measure precisely what is at stake in the minds of the rank-and-file. Current directions in American politics suggest that it is time for the research community utilizing NES to get a handle on the problem.
References


## APPENDIX

### MAJOR DENOMINATIONS ORGANIZED BY RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS AND DENOMINATIONAL FAMILIES

#### RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHITE EVANGELICAL PROTESTANTS</th>
<th>WHITE MAINLINE PROTESTANTS</th>
<th>BLACK PROTESTANTS*</th>
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*Black denominations only are mentioned

A more complete listing of denominations is available from the authors.