

The American Religious Landscape and Political Attitudes: A Baseline for 2004

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Recent presidential campaigns have aroused considerable interest in the connections between the diverse religious landscape and politics in the United States. In response, this report provides a baseline for analyzing the underlying impact of religion during and after the 2004 campaign.

Based on the 2004 Fourth National Survey of Religion and Politics, this report describes the political attitudes of eighteen religious groups over a wide variety of issues at the beginning of the 2004 presidential campaign. These religious categories include groups not usually identified in surveys, such as traditionalists (strongly orthodox belief and high level of religious engagement), centrists (moderate belief and engagement), and modernists (strongly heterodox belief and lower levels of engagement) among white Protestants and Catholics. In addition, the report looks at differences among those unaffiliated with a religion.

When appropriate, the 2004 findings are compared to the results of the three previous National Surveys of Religion and Politics conducted in 1992, 1996, and 2000. Thus, the report provides information on the relationship between religion and politics from the re-election bid of the first President Bush in 1992 to the re-election campaign of the second President Bush in 2004. (For survey details, see the Appendix.)

The political relevance of religion varies from issue to issue. Some issues sharply divide the religious landscape, reflecting—and perhaps contributing to—political polarization. But on other issues there is a consensus, with only modest differences among religious groups.

The issue areas covered and the salient findings are as follows:

Partisanship. Both major parties had strong religious constituencies at the beginning of the 2004 election. Traditionalist Christians and Centrist Protestants tended to be Republican, while Modernist Christians, minority religious groups, non-Christians, and the Unaffiliated were largely Democratic. And some groups were more evenly divided between the two major parties, with large numbers of independents.

Religious Expression in Politics. Overall, there was strong support across the religious landscape for political expression by candidates and religious organizations. However, there were also sharp divisions over the political activity of religious organizations and the extent to which religion influences individuals' political thinking. Overall traditionalist Christians and minority religious groups reported a closer connection between religion and politics, while Modernists, non-Christians, and the Unaffiliated groups showed a looser connection.

Issue Priorities. Overall, economic issues were given the highest priority across the religious landscape in 2004, followed by foreign policy, with cultural issues a distant third. There were, however, subtle variations among key religious communities, with Traditionalists and minority groups giving cultural issues somewhat more emphasis than Modernists, non-Christians, and the Unaffiliated.

Economic Issues. The religious landscape was divided over the level of government spending and the desirability of large tax cuts. Traditionalist groups tended to take conservative views on these matters, while Modernists and Non-Christians took more liberal views. In contrast, the diverse religious communities showed widespread skepticism about free trade, strong backing for environmental regulation, and considerable support for expanded anti-poverty programs and assistance to the disadvantaged.

Foreign Policy Issues. Post 9/11, the religious landscape tilted away from isolationism and toward greater engagement abroad. There was majority support for the U.S. having a special role in world affairs, international cooperation as the best means to maintain world peace, and the goals of American foreign policy (principally support for human rights and humanitarian assistance). In addition, there was strong support for the doctrine of a preemptive war and a division over U.S. support for Israel. Although these patterns were often complex, Traditionalist groups tended toward a more aggressive foreign policy, while Modernists, non-Christians, and the Unaffiliated often opted for a less aggressive policy.

Cultural Issues. Abortion continues to sharply divide the religious landscape, with Traditionalists tending to hold pro-life positions, while the Modernists, Non-Christians, and the Unaffiliated tend to have pro-choice positions. However, these religious divisions were less evident on other life issues, such as embryonic stem cell research and the death penalty. There were similar divisions on the legal status of marriage, but considerable support for gay rights more broadly defined. Here African American Protestants revealed relatively low support for gay rights, a pattern that appears to be of recent vintage. Opinion varied considerably on the role of religion in public life, with a close division on school vouchers, more support for faith-based programs, and strong support for the public display of religious symbols.

Ideology. Traditionalists were the most conservative, while Modernists, non-Christians, and the Unaffiliated tended to be more liberal. Centrist and minority religious groups were characterized by moderation.

The American Religious Landscape 2004

In 2004, the American religious landscape was remarkably diverse, and that diversity is represented here by eighteen religious groups that were large and distinctive enough to matter in the presidential election (see first column of Table 1).

Table 1. The Religious Landscape and Self-Identified Partisanship, Spring 2004

	Percent Population	Partisanship*		
		<i>Republican</i>	<i>Independent</i>	<i>Democratic</i>
ALL	100.0%	38%	20	42 = 100%
Evangelical Protestant	26.3	56%	17	27
<i>Traditionalist Evangelical</i>	<i>12.6</i>	<i>70%</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Centrist Evangelical</i>	<i>10.8</i>	<i>47%</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Modernist Evangelical</i>	<i>2.9</i>	<i>30%</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>44</i>
Mainline Protestant	16.0	44%	18	38
<i>Traditionalist Mainline</i>	<i>4.3</i>	<i>59%</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Centrist Mainline</i>	<i>7.0</i>	<i>46%</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>Modernist Mainline</i>	<i>4.7</i>	<i>26%</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>54</i>
Latino Protestants	2.8	37%	20	43
Black Protestants	9.6	11%	18	71
Catholic	17.5	41%	15	44
<i>Traditionalist Catholic</i>	<i>4.4</i>	<i>57%</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Centrist Catholic</i>	<i>8.1</i>	<i>34%</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>47</i>
<i>Modernist Catholic</i>	<i>5.0</i>	<i>38%</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>51</i>
Latino Catholic	4.5	15%	24	61
Other Christian	2.7	42%	36	22
Other Faiths	2.7	12%	33	55
Jewish	1.9	21%	11	68
Unaffiliated	16.0	27%	30	43
<i>Unaffiliated Believers</i>	<i>5.3</i>	<i>28%</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>35</i>
<i>Secular</i>	<i>7.5</i>	<i>29%</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>44</i>
<i>Atheist, Agnostic</i>	<i>3.2</i>	<i>19%</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>54</i>

* Partisan “leaners” included with Republicans and Democrats; minor party affiliation included with independents.

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

Based on the Fourth Survey of Religion and Politics, these groups were defined primarily by religious affiliation. The four largest categories (Evangelical and Mainline Protestants, Catholics, and the Unaffiliated) were then divided in two ways: by religious beliefs/practices and by ethnicity/race. (For more details, see the Appendix).

The eighteen religious groups were as follows:

Evangelical Protestants. Individuals affiliated with historically white denominations and congregations in the Evangelical Protestant tradition are one of the largest religious groups in the United States, typically accounting for one-quarter of the adult population (Table 1 shows 26 percent in the 2004 survey).

This broad definition of Evangelical Protestantism includes the Southern Baptist Convention (the largest Protestant denomination), the Assemblies of God, the Presbyterian Church in America, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, and a large number of smaller denominations. Also included are nondenominational churches identified with evangelical religious movements (such as fundamentalism). (For ease of presentation, the text will refer to white and non-Latino Evangelical Protestants simply as “Evangelical Protestants.”)

Evangelical Protestants have considerable internal diversity, and to capture this diversity, they were subdivided into “traditionalists,” “centrists,” and “modernists” (see Appendix for more details).

Traditionalists were characterized by a high level of orthodox belief (such as a high view of the authority of the Bible) and high religious engagement (such as regular worship attendance), and also a desire to preserve such traditional beliefs and practices in a changing world.

In contrast, Modernists were characterized by a high level of heterodox belief and a lower level of religious engagement, and also evidence of a desire to adopt modern beliefs and practices in a changing world.

Centrists were neither traditionalists nor modernists. Characterized by a mix of orthodox and heterodox beliefs and moderate levels of religious engagement, most Centrists were willing to adapt their traditions in a changing world.

By these definitions, Traditionalist Evangelical Protestants were the largest category in Table 1 (12.6% of the 2004 sample). This group comes closest to the “religious right” widely discussed in the media.

However, most Evangelical Protestants were not Traditionalists by this measure: Centrist Evangelical Protestants were nearly as numerous as the Traditionalists (10.8 percent of the 2004 sample). Modernist evangelicals were less numerous, but still of significant size (2.9%). The widely discussed “freestyle evangelicals” include all of the Modernists and a substantial portion of the Centrists.

Mainline Protestants. Members of historically white denominations in the Mainline Protestant tradition were another large group, typically accounting for a little more than one-sixth of the adult population (16.0 percent in the 2004 Survey).

This broad definition of Mainline Protestantism includes the best-known Protestant denominations, such as the United Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church in the USA, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Episcopal Church, the United Church of Christ, and the Reformed Church in America. (For ease of presentation, the text will refer to white and non-Latino Mainline Protestants simply as “Mainline Protestants” in the text below.)

Mainline Protestants were also internally diverse, including traditionalists, centrists, and modernists. However, Traditionalist and Modernist Mainline Protestants were about the same size (4.3 and 4.7 percent, respectively), with Centrist Mainline Protestants the largest group (7.0 percent). Traditionalist Mainliners are sometimes referred to as “evangelicals” in common parlance; Modernist Mainliners are typically called “liberals” or “progressives.”

Latino and Black Protestants. Historically, ethnicity and race have been critical factors in defining religious identity. Two of the most important contemporary examples of this tendency are Latino and Black Protestantism.

Some of Latino and Black Protestants belong to denominations within the Evangelical and Mainline traditions. However, even these individuals overwhelmingly belong to congregations that are ethnically or racially homogenous. Indeed, integrated churches are still rare among American Protestants. For this reason, and because Latino and Black Protestants have distinctive religious and political perspectives, each was placed in a separate category. Thus, no Latino or Black Protestants are included in the evangelical and mainline Protestant categories in this report. This strategy not only highlights the special features of these important religious minorities, it also highlights the special characteristics of white Christians.

Latino Protestants typically account for two to three percent of the adult population (2.8 percent in the 2004 sample) and they represent a rapidly growing part of the religious landscape. Black Protestants typically account for nine percent of the adult population (9.6 percent in the 2004 sample). (For ease of presentation, the text will often refer to Latinos and Black Protestants as “minority” religious groups.)

Catholics. The Roman Catholic Church is the single largest denomination in the United States. Estimates of its size range from a little over one-fifth to one-quarter of adult Americans. Non-Latino Catholics (mostly white) typically make up a little less than one-fifth of the adult population (17.5 percent of the 2004 sample). (For ease of presentation, the text will refer to white and non-Latino Catholics simply as “Catholics” in the text below.)

Like Evangelical and Mainline Protestants, Catholics are also internally diverse, and accordingly, they were also divided into traditionalists, centrists, and modernists. Like Mainline Protestants, the Traditionalist and Modernist Catholics were about the same size (4.4 and 5.0 percent, respectively), with Centrist Catholics the largest group (8.1 percent).

Traditionalist Catholics are often called “conservative Catholics” in common parlance and Modernists “liberal Catholics.”

Latino Catholics. Following the same logic as with Protestants, Latino Catholics were placed in a separate category. Typically, Latino Catholics make up between four and five percent of the adult population (4.5 percent of the 2004 sample). (Black Catholics were not numerous enough to form a separate category in this sample.)

Other Christians. Because of their small numbers, all the other Christian denominations were combined into a single category (2.7 percent in 2004 sample). This mixed group includes denominations as diverse as the Latter Day Saints, Christian Scientists, and Orthodox Churches. Overall, these diverse denominations tend to resemble each other on basic political orientations.

Other Faiths. Because of their small numbers, all non-Christian groups except Jews were also combined (2.7 percent in the 2004 sample). This mixed group includes Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus, but also liberal faiths such as the Unitarian-Universalist Association, and New Age advocates. Overall, these diverse denominations tend to resemble each other on basic political orientations.

Jewish. Although Jews were a very small group—typically two percent of the adult population (1.9 percent of the 2004 sample)--they were kept as a separate category because of their distinctive politics.

Due the small number of cases, the results for these small categories must be viewed with caution. They were included for sake of completeness.

Unaffiliated. Individuals who claim to have no religious affiliation have become an important “religious” group, typically making up one-sixth of the adult population (16 percent in the 2004 sample). Commonly referred to as “seculars,” this large group is also internally diverse. Three sub-groups help capture this diversity:

The “Unaffiliated Believers” claimed no religious affiliation but nonetheless reported a high level of religious belief (5.3 percent).

The “Seculars” (properly so called) claimed no affiliation and reported only modest religious beliefs or practices (7.5 percent).

The “Atheists” and “Agnostics” reported an affirmative non-theistic perspective (no God or no way of knowing about God) as opposed to an absence of religiosity (3.2 percent).

Where appropriate we will use the three previous National Surveys of Religion and Politics to compare the major religious traditions overtime. Because of slight variations in the religious questions asked, we cannot directly compare the Traditionalists, Centrists, and Modernists to each other across surveys. But where appropriate, we will note what estimates of these sub-categories in the previous surveys suggest about change over time.

The Religious Landscape and Self-Identified Partisanship

The usefulness of this definition of the religious landscape is illustrated by the self-identified partisanship (second part of Table 1). Both major parties have strong religious constituencies. Traditionalist Christians and Centrist Protestants tended to be Republican, while the Modernist, minority, non-Christian, and unaffiliated groups tended to be Democratic. Some groups were more evenly divided between the two major parties, with large numbers of independents. Although overall partisanship has remained stable since 1992, there has been a modest realignment of Traditionalists into the Republican camp and other groups into the Democratic camp.

Overall, a little less than two-fifths of the entire sample in 2004 claimed to be “Republican,” a bit more than two-fifths “Democratic,” and the remaining one-fifth “Independent.” (For ease of presentation, independent “leaners” were included as partisans and minor party adherents as independents.)

Taken as a whole, Evangelical Protestants were the most Republican of the major religious traditions, with more than one-half identifying with the GOP and a little more than one-quarter with the Democrats. In contrast, Mainline Protestants and Catholics were more evenly divided, with roughly two-fifths identifying with each of the major parties. Mainliners tilted slightly Republican and Catholics slightly Democratic. The Unaffiliated were more than two-fifth Democratic, roughly one-quarter Republican, and nearly one-third independent.

There were, however, sharp differences *within* the three largest Christian traditions. For example, seven of ten Traditionalist Evangelicals were Republicans, compared to just three of ten Modernist Evangelicals. A similar division occurred between Traditionalists and Modernists among Mainliners and Catholics.

Nearly one-half of the Centrist Evangelical and Mainline Protestants were Republicans, and the Other Christians showed a two-fifths GOP plurality. In contrast, nearly one-half of Centrist Catholics were Democrats.

The minority groups tended to be Democratic, usually by large margins. For instance, seven of ten Black Protestants were Democratic, followed by three-fifths of Latino Catholics—but only two-fifths of Latino Protestants. In addition, more than one-half of the Other Faiths and two-thirds of Jews were Democrats as well.

Overall, there was internal diversity among the Unaffiliated as well: The Unaffiliated Believers were the most evenly divided of the religious categories (with only a slight Democratic advantage). The Seculars were two-fifths Democratic as were more than one-half of the Atheists/Agnostics.

It is worth noting that none of these religious groups were monolithic in terms of partisanship, with most religious groups containing many independents and a substantial minority from the other party.

Table 2. The Religious Landscape by Partisanship, Spring 2004*

	Republican	Independent	Democratic	
		<u>Majority Republican</u>		
Traditionalist Evangelical	70%	10	20	
Traditionalist Mainline	59%	10	31	
Traditionalist Catholic	57%	13	30	
<i>Evangelical Protestants</i>	56%	17	27	
		<u>Plurality Republican</u>		
Centrist Evangelical	48%	22	30	
Centrist Mainline	47%	20	33	
<i>Mainline Protestants</i>	44%	18	38	
Other Christians	42%	36	22	
		<u>Plurality Democratic</u>		
<i>Catholic</i>	41%	15	44	
ENTIRE SAMPLE	38%	20	42	=100%
Unaffiliated Believers	28%	37	35	
<i>Unaffiliated</i>	27%	30	43	
Latino Protestants	37%	20	43	
Modernist Evangelical	32%	24	44	
Seculars	29%	27	44	
Centrist Catholic	35%	19	46	
		<u>Majority Democratic</u>		
Modernist Catholic	37	11	52	
Atheist, Agnostic	19	27	54	
Other Faiths	12	33	55	
Modernist Mainline	23	21	56	
Latino Catholic	15	24	61	
Jewish	21	11	68	
Black Protestants	11	18	71	

* For ease of presentation, the groups are listed in order of Republican identification and then the order of Democratic identification.

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

Table 2 reports these findings in a different fashion, listing the religious groups in order from the most Republican to the most Democratic.

- Three religious groups were majority Republican (the three sets of Traditionalists) and three groups were plurality Republican (the Centrist Protestants and Other Christians).
- Seven religious groups were majority Democratic, including Modernist Christians, Atheist/Agnostics, and minority religious groups.
- The remaining five groups were more even divided, but with a Democratic plurality. These groups were drawn from across the religious landscape.

Trend Analysis. Table 3 looks at partisanship between 1992 and 2004. Overall, partisanship has remained remarkably stable over this period, with a slight advantage for the Democrats. But behind this stability there have been some modest but important changes among the religious groups.

Table 3. Major Religious Traditions and Partisanship, 1992-2004*

	2004		2000		1996		1992		1992-2004 Net Change	
	Rep	Dem	Rep	Dem	Rep	Dem	Rep	Dem	Rep	Dem
ENTIRE SAMPLES	38	42	39	42	41	42	37	41	+ 1	+ 1
Evangelical Protestant	56	27	51	33	53	33	48	32	+ 8	- 5
Mainline Protestant	44	39	50	33	49	34	50	32	- 6	+ 7
Black Protestant	11	71	12	74	15	80	10	77	+ 1	- 6
Roman Catholic	41	44	37	43	39	44	38	43	+ 3	- 1
Latino Catholic	15	61	25	57	29	52	22	49	- 7	+12
Jewish	21	68	24	47	29	51	18	45	+ 3	+23
Unaffiliated	27	43	32	41	37	40	30	41	- 3	+ 2

*Independents omitted for ease of presentation; independents equal to 100 minus the sum of each pairs of numbers in a single year.

Source: National Surveys of Religion and Politics, Bliss Institute of Applied Politics 1992 (n=4001); 1996 (n=4034); 2000 (n=6000); 2004 (n=4000)

As a group, Evangelical Protestants have become steady more Republican since 1992, gaining a net of eight percentage points. Meanwhile, Mainline Protestants have moved in

the opposite direction, shifting seven percentage point shift toward the Democrats. In effect, Evangelicals and Mainliners are in the process of trading places in the Republican coalition.

Differences within these Protestant traditions appear to reinforce these trends. For example, estimates from the previous surveys suggest that Traditionalist Evangelicals have experienced a steady Republican shift. Traditionalist Mainliners showed a parallel but smaller move toward the GOP.

But after 2000, estimates of the Modernist Evangelical and Mainline Protestants showed a very sharp shift away from the GOP and into the Democratic camp. For example, Modernist Mainliners appear to have fallen from 50 percent Republican to 26 percent.

Overall, Catholics showed a very small Republican shift, apparently led by a slow and steady movement of Traditional Catholics toward the GOP—and an opposite shift toward the Democrats among the Modernist Catholics.

Latino Catholics became steadily more Democratic over the period, and interestingly, Jews moved dramatically in a Democratic direction between 2000 and 2004 (this finding must be viewed with caution due to the small number of cases). Yet another change was a six percentage point decline in Democratic affiliation among Black Protestants over the period—but this group still remained the strongest Democratic constituency in 2004.

Connecting the Religious Landscape to Politics

How were religious groups connected to politics? Three strands of evidence help answer this question: attitudes toward religious expression by candidates, political activity by religious organizations, and the relevance of religion to individuals' political thinking.

Overall, there was strong support across the religious landscape for religious expression by candidates and religious organizations. However, the landscape was sharply divided over the political activity of religious organizations and the extent to which religion influences respondents' political thinking. Traditionalist and minority religious groups display a closer connection between religion and politics, while Modernist, non-Christian, and the Unaffiliated groups show looser connections.

Religious Expression by Candidates. One of the most immediate ways that religious groups can be connected to politics is by the religious expression of candidates, a matter that is often quite controversial. Table 4 reports on attitudes about the legitimacy of such expressions by candidates and it shows widespread acceptance.

Overall, almost two-fifths of the entire sample in 2004 agreed with the statement “It makes me uncomfortable when politicians talk about their personal religious beliefs,” and a little over three-fifths disagreed.

Table 4. The Religious Landscape and Religious Expression by Candidates, Spring 2004*

	Uncomfortable When Candidates Discuss Faith		Important that President have Strong Religious Beliefs	
	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>
ENTIRE SAMPLE	37%	63	68%	32
Evangelical Protestant	24%	76	87%	13
<i>Traditionalist Evangelical</i>	14%	86	97%	3
<i>Centrist Evangelical</i>	30%	70	83%	17
<i>Modernist Evangelical</i>	45%	55	60%	40
Mainline Protestant	35%	65	71%	29
<i>Traditionalist Mainline</i>	22%	78	94%	6
<i>Centrist Mainline</i>	30%	70	76%	24
<i>Modernist Mainline</i>	53%	47	40%	60
Latino Protestants	31%	69	82%	18
Black Protestants	28%	72	85%	15
Catholic	40%	60	70%	30
<i>Traditionalist Catholic</i>	25%	75	93%	7
<i>Centrist Catholic</i>	39%	61	74%	26
<i>Modernist Catholic</i>	54%	46	43%	57
Latino Catholic	40%	60	73%	27
Other Christian	26%	74	78%	22
Other Faiths	61%	39	47%	53
Jewish	67%	33	25%	75
Unaffiliated	54%	46	28%	72
<i>Unaffiliated Believers</i>	40%	60	48%	52
<i>Secular</i>	56%	44	24%	76
<i>Atheist, Agnostic</i>	72%	28	6%	94

*All rows sum to 100%. Agree=agree, strongly agree; disagree=disagree, strongly disagree; no opinion omitted for ease of presentation.

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

A majority of the major religious traditions disagreed with this statement, suggesting a degree of comfort with candidates speaking about their faith. All the Traditionalist and Centrist groups felt this way, as did Black Protestants, Other Christians, the Latino groups, Modernist Evangelicals, and the Unaffiliated Believers.

Other groups were uncomfortable with candidates speaking about their faith: Atheists/Agnostics, Jews, and the Other Faiths, followed by the Seculars, Modernist Catholics and Mainline Protestants.

Presidential Religious Beliefs. The second item in Table 4 asked a related question about the importance of President's personal beliefs. Here, too, there was widespread agreement.

Overall, two-thirds of the entire sample in 2004 agreed with the statement "It is important to me that a president has strong religious beliefs," and one-third disagreed.

All the major religious traditions strongly agreed with this statement, and especially the Traditionalist and Centrist groups among them. Indeed, agreement was almost universal among the Traditionalist groups.

However, some religious groups assigned little or no importance to the President having strong religious beliefs: Atheists/Agnostics, Seculars, Jews, Modernist Mainline Protestants and Catholics, the Other Faiths, and Unaffiliated Believers.

Religious Groups Standing Up for Beliefs. What about the political participation by religious groups? The first column of Table 5 reports on a question that stresses freedom of expression, and from this perspective, there is widespread support for political participation by religious groups.

Overall, three-quarters of the entire sample in 2004 agreed with the statement "Organized religious groups should stand up for their beliefs in politics," and just one-quarter disagreed.

All eighteen religious groups agreed with this statement, with only modest variation. The Traditionalist groups and Black Protestants showed the strongest support, while Atheists/Agnostics and Seculars showed the least.

Political Activity by Religious Organizations. The second item in Table 5 reports the results of a question that stressed political activity by religious organizations and the responses reveal a sharp division across the religious landscape.

Overall, just under one-half of the entire sample in 2004 agreed with the statement "Organized religious groups of all kinds should stay out of politics," and just over one-half disagreed.

As a whole, Evangelical Protestants strongly disagreed with this statement, favoring political activity by religious organizations. Latinos and Black Protestants also disagreed with the statement.

Table 5. The Religious Landscape and Political Activity by Religious Groups, Spring 2004*

ENTIRE SAMPLE	Organized Religious Groups Should Stand up for Beliefs		Organized Religious Groups Should Stay out of Politics	
	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>
ENTIRE SAMPLE	76%	24	47%	53
Evangelical Protestant	84%	16	35%	65
<i>Traditionalist Evangelical</i>	90%	10	25%	75
<i>Centrist Evangelical</i>	81%	19	43%	57
<i>Modernist Evangelical</i>	73%	27	53%	47
Mainline Protestant	76%	24	48%	52
<i>Traditionalist Mainline</i>	87%	13	35%	65
<i>Centrist Mainline</i>	77%	23	49%	51
<i>Modernist Mainline</i>	63%	37	61%	39
Latino Protestants	78%	22	40%	60
Black Protestants	89%	11	35%	65
Catholic	74%	26	52%	48
<i>Traditionalist Catholic</i>	88%	12	38%	62
<i>Centrist Catholic</i>	73%	27	53%	47
<i>Modernist Catholic</i>	63%	37	64%	36
Latino Catholic	76%	24	40%	60
Other Christian	63%	37	57%	43
Other Faiths	70%	30	60%	40
Jewish	63%	37	57%	43
Unaffiliated	63%	37	64%	36
<i>Unaffiliated Believer</i>	72%	28	53%	47
<i>Secular</i>	59%	41	68%	32
<i>Atheist, Agnostic</i>	57%	43	74%	26

*All rows sum to 100%. Agree=agree, strongly agree; disagree=disagree, strongly disagree; no opinion omitted for ease of presentation.

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

Meanwhile, Mainline Protestants and Catholics were divided, with the former marginally disagreeing and the latter marginally agreeing that religious organizations should stay out of politics.

Within the two white Protestant traditions, the Traditionalists and Centrists disagreed with the statement that religious organizations should stay out of politics, while the Modernists agreed. Here traditionalist Catholic resembled their Protestant counterparts, but the Centrists and Modernist favored keeping organized religion out of politics.

All the remaining groups, from the Other Christians to the Atheists/Agnostics, agreed that religious organizations should stay out of politics.

At first glance, the responses to the two questions in Table 5 may appear to be contradictory. After all, “standing up for beliefs” would hardly amount to “staying out of politics.” However, there is a sense in which these findings can fit together logically: many respondents may oppose the involvement of religious organizations in the business of seeking political power, but at the same time they may support an expression of conscience on issues.

Trend Analysis. There appears to have been little change in opinions about the political activity by religious organizations over time. Although the versions of this item asked in previous surveys are not strictly comparable, they show the same basic division overall and across the religious landscape: Traditionalists and minority faiths have been consistently more sympathetic to the political involvement of religious organizations in politics, while Modernists, non-Christians, and the Unaffiliated have been unsympathetic.

The Relevance of Religion to Political Thinking. What about the connection of religion to politics among the respondents? Table 6 reports the results of a direct answer to this question, and reveals strong differences across the religious landscape. Traditionalists and minority groups were the most likely to report these cognitive connections, while Modernists, non-Christians, and the Unaffiliated were less likely to note them.

Overall, just under two-fifths of the entire sample in 2004 claimed that their religion was important to their political thinking, and nearly as many claimed the opposite, namely that their religion was *not* important to their political thinking. The remaining one-fifth fell in between, reporting that their religion was somewhat important to their political thinking.

Taken as a whole, nearly three-fifths of all Evangelical Protestants reported that their religion was important to their political thinking. Black Protestants held similar views as did a majority of Other Christians and Latino Protestants.

In contrast, less than one-third of all Mainline Protestants and about one-quarter of all Catholics reported this kind of connection between their faith and politics, and two-fifths of both groups claimed that the religion was not important to their political thinking.

And there were sharp contrasts within the three largest Christian traditions: Traditionalist Evangelicals reported the highest figures on the relevance of religion to their political thinking, and a majority of Traditionalist Mainliners and Catholics agreed as well.

Table 6. The Religious Landscape, Religion and Political Thinking, Spring 2004

Importance of religion to political thinking

	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	
ENTIRE SAMPLE	39%	24	37	= 100%
Evangelical Protestant	58%	21	21	
<i>Traditionalist Evangelical</i>	<i>81%</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>9</i>	
<i>Centrist Evangelical</i>	<i>41%</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>27</i>	
<i>Modernist Evangelical</i>	<i>21%</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>52</i>	
Mainline Protestant	32%	28	40	
<i>Traditionalist Mainline</i>	<i>56%</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>17</i>	
<i>Centrist Mainline</i>	<i>29%</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>41</i>	
<i>Modernist Mainline</i>	<i>15%</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>59</i>	
Latino Protestants	51%	25	24	
Black Protestants	57%	24	19	
Catholic	26%	34	40	
<i>Traditionalist Catholic</i>	<i>50%</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>19</i>	
<i>Centrist Catholic</i>	<i>22%</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>41</i>	
<i>Modernist Catholic</i>	<i>12%</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>56</i>	
Latino Catholic	40%	28	32	
Other Christian	54%	15	32	
Other Faiths	33%	17	50	
Jewish	33%	20	47	
Unaffiliated	13%	14	73	
<i>Unaffiliated Believers</i>	<i>23%</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>56</i>	
<i>Secular</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>81</i>	
<i>Atheist, Agnostic</i>	<i>8%</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>83</i>	

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

Less than a majority of Latino Catholics, all the Centrist groups, Other Faiths and Jews regarded religion as important to their political thinking. But for all these groups, the “important” and “somewhat important” categories combined for a majority.

In contrast, a majority of all the Modernist groups reported religion as not important to their thinking.

Overall, nearly three-quarters of the Unaffiliated claimed that religion was not important to their political thinking. Here Atheists/Agnostics reported the highest figures (four-fifths) and the Unaffiliated Believers the lowest (more than one-half).

Thus, most Americans do not regard their religion as a dominant factor in their political thinking, but just one of many factors.

These patterns may reflect in part the underlying salience of religion to the respondents. For example, Traditionalists of all sorts tend to regard religion as more central to their lives than other groups, and perhaps not surprisingly, they report greater relevance to their political thinking. However, this pattern suggests that Traditionalists and minority groups may be easier to mobilize politically on the basis of religious appeals.

Trend Analysis. Table 7 reports the answers to this question from 1992 to 2004. Overall, there was a modest change in the importance of religion to political thinking. In 1992, the “not important” category was a small plurality, a pattern that reversed itself in 1996 and 2000, and settled back toward parity in 2004.

Table 7. Major Religious Traditions, Religion and Political Thinking, 1992-2004*

Importance of religion to political thinking

	2004		2000		1996		1992		1992-2004 Net Change	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
ENTIRE SAMPLES	39	37	42	36	42	36	37	42	+ 2	- 5
Evangelical Protestant	58	21	59	20	59	23	51	25	+ 7	- 4
Mainline Protestant	32	40	37	37	37	36	30	42	+ 2	- 2
Black Protestant	57	19	64	19	66	13	58	24	- 1	- 5
Catholic	26	40	34	39	32	39	26	49	0	- 9
Latino Catholic	39	31	39	35	46	29	37	45	+ 2	-14
Jewish	33	40	37	48	44	37	48	39	-15	+ 1
Unaffiliated	13	73	17	66	19	63	22	71	- 9	+2

Legend: Yes=Religion important to political thinking; No=Religion not important to political thinking; “Somewhat important” omitted for ease of presentation but equal to 100 minus the sum of each pairs of numbers in a single year.

Source: National Surveys of Religion and Politics, Bliss Institute of Applied Politics 1992 (n=4001); 1996 (n=4034); 2000 (n=6000); 2004 (n=4000)

Most of the major religious traditions showed relatively little change over the period. Evangelical Protestants were an exception, with a large increase in the political importance of religion after 1992. Here changes among Traditionalist Evangelicals appear to be especially important. Other exceptions were Latino Catholics (a large decline in the “not important” category after 1992), and also Jews and Seculars (with a steady decline in the “important” category since 1992).

Table 8. The Religious Landscape and Issue Priorities, Spring 2004

	Economic, Welfare Issues	Foreign Policy	Cultural Issues	Political Process
ENTIRE SAMPLE	43%	30	20	7 =100%
Evangelical Protestant	35%	30	29	6
<i>Traditionalist Evangelical</i>	27%	27	40	6
<i>Centrist Evangelical</i>	40%	32	22	6
<i>Modernist Evangelical</i>	55%	29	11	5
Mainline Protestant	46%	33	13	8
<i>Traditionalist Mainline</i>	38%	34	22	6
<i>Centrist Mainline</i>	50%	35	9	6
<i>Modernist Mainline</i>	46%	30	11	13
Latino Protestants	35%	31	27	7
Black Protestants	46%	26	24	4
Catholic	47%	31	15	7
<i>Traditionalist Catholic</i>	39%	29	25	7
<i>Centrist Catholic</i>	51%	29	14	6
<i>Modernist Catholic</i>	50%	35	6	9
Latino Catholic	50%	26	19	5
Other Christian	35%	24	29	12
Other Faiths	52%	26	10	12
Jewish	42%	45	4	9
Unaffiliated	44%	30	15	11
<i>Unaffiliated Believers</i>	42%	31	20	7
<i>Secular</i>	46%	28	15	11
<i>Atheist, Agnostic</i>	43%	32	10	15

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

The Religious Landscape and Issue Priorities

How did issue priorities vary across the religious landscape? In 2004, economic issues were given the highest priority, followed by foreign policy, with cultural issues a distant third. There was, however, a subtle variation across the religious landscape, with Traditionalists and minority groups giving cultural issues somewhat more emphasis than Modernists, non-Christians, and the Unaffiliated.

Table 8 looks at the respondents' answers to the following questions: "What do you feel is the most important problem facing America today?" The open-ended answers were coded into four major categories. For the entire sample in 2004, more than two-fifths mentioned an economic issue (such as unemployment, poverty or health care), a little less than one-third mentioned a foreign policy issue (Iraq, terrorism, the United Nations), one-fifth mentioned a cultural issue (abortion, crime, public disorder), and less than one-tenth a political process issue (media bias, campaign finance reform).

In 2004, economic issues ranked first for all the major religious traditions, with foreign policy usually ranking second.

Cultural issues were less likely to receive top priority. In fact, only Traditionalist Evangelicals ranked cultural matters first (at two-fifths). However, all the Traditionalist groups were more concerned with cultural issues than their Modernist counterparts, who rarely mentioned cultural matters at all. Other Christians, Latino and Black Protestants, Centrist Evangelicals, and Unaffiliated Believers also showed somewhat greater interest in cultural issues (at one-fifth or more).

A few groups laid more stress on political process problems than the sample as a whole: Atheists/Agnostics, Other Christians, Other Faiths, Seculars, and Modernist Mainline Protestants.

Trend Analysis. Issue priorities vary enormously from election to election. The major change has been the rise of foreign policy concerns. For example, in the 1992, 1996, and 2000 surveys, never more than two percent of the entire samples mentioned foreign policy. Due to 9/11 and the Iraq war, foreign policy was some fifteen times more salient in 2004 than in the previous elections.

Another important factor is the state of the economy. In the 1992 survey, nearly two-thirds of the sample mentioned economic issues, surely due to the poor economic performance at that time. Indeed, a majority of all the religious groups gave priority to economic matters in 1992. But in 1996 and 2000, concern with the economy dropped to less than one-half, in step with the improved economic conditions.

Cultural issue priorities tended to vary inversely with the salience of the economy. In 1992, just over one-quarter of the mentioned a cultural issue, but in 2000 the figure rose to about one-half. Across the years, the relative importance of economic and cultural issues followed the same basic pattern as in 2004.

The Religious Landscape and Economic Issues

Because economic issues have top priority in the 2004 survey, it makes sense to consider their relationship to the religious landscape first. Here we will review attitudes toward government spending, taxes, free trade, environmental regulation, and social welfare policies.

Overall, the religious landscape was divided over the preferred level of government spending and the desirability of large tax cuts. Traditionalist groups tended to take conservative views on these matters, while Modernists and Non-Christians took more liberal views. In contrast, there was widespread skepticism about free trade and strong support for environmental regulation. In addition, there was considerable support for expanded anti-poverty programs and assistance to the disadvantaged.

Government Spending. Table 9 looks at levels of government spending and taxation. The basic pattern resembles self-identified partisanship: the Traditionalists favored less government spending, while Modernists, minority groups, and non-Christians favored increased public spending.

Overall, about one-quarter of the entire sample in 2004 opted for less government spending (and lower taxes), two-fifths were content with the current level of spending (and taxation), and about one-third wanted an increase in public spending (and higher taxes).

Overall, the two white Protestant traditions were fairly evenly divided over increasingly or decreasing government spending. For example, 30 percent of all Evangelical Protestants favor less government spending and 29 percent more.

But there were clear divisions among Evangelicals and Mainline Protestants: in both traditions, the Traditionalists were more likely to want less public spending, and the Modernists were more likely to want more. In fact, these differences were largely symmetrical. For example, 40 percent of Traditionalist Evangelicals advocated a decrease in government spending while 41 of Modernist Evangelicals supported an increase.

On balance, Catholics and the Other Christians favored more government spending. A milder version of this Traditionalist/Modernist division occurred among Catholics.

The Latino groups, Black Protestants, Other Faiths, and Jews all favored more government spending (by two-fifths or more).

Overall, the Unaffiliated also had a mild preference for more public spending. However, this pattern was largely the product of the Unaffiliated Believers, who favored public spending. In contrast, the Seculars and the Atheists/Agnostics were almost evenly divided between more and less spending.

Table 9 The Religious Landscape, Government Spending, and Tax Cuts, Spring 2004

	Govt. Spending:			Big Tax Cuts*		
	<i>Less</i>	<i>Same</i>	<i>More</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>No Op</i>	<i>Bad</i>
ENTIRE SAMPLE	26%	40	34	48%	7	45
Evangelical Protestant	30%	41	29	57%	10	33
<i>Traditionalist Evangelical</i>	40%	39	21	67%	8	25
<i>Centrist Evangelical</i>	21%	44	35	50%	12	38
<i>Modernist Evangelical</i>	22%	37	41	41%	8	51
Mainline Protestant	28%	43	29	45%	8	47
<i>Traditionalist Mainline</i>	36%	41	23	44%	8	48
<i>Centrist Mainline</i>	30%	44	26	51%	9	40
<i>Modernist Mainline</i>	20%	43	37	37%	6	57
Latino Protestants	24%	36	40	52%	11	37
Black Protestants	19%	36	45	49%	6	45
Catholic	25%	40	35	46%	5	49
<i>Traditionalist Catholic</i>	30%	37	33	56%	3	41
<i>Centrist Catholic</i>	25%	37	38	49%	7	44
<i>Modernist Catholic</i>	22%	46	32	34%	4	62
Latino Catholic	16%	36	48	50%	8	42
Other Christian	28%	40	32	48%	7	45
Other Faiths	12%	43	45	31%	7	62
Jewish	19%	38	43	33%	5	62
Unaffiliated	25%	42	33	39%	6	55
<i>Unaffiliated Believers</i>	22%	36	42	45%	9	46
<i>Secular</i>	25%	47	28	39%	4	57
<i>Atheist, Agnostic</i>	32%	40	28	31%	6	63

*All rows sum to 100%. Agree=agree, strongly agree; disagree=disagree, strongly disagree; No Op=no opinion.

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

Large Tax Cuts. The second section of Table 9 taps opinion on large tax cuts, the signature economic program of the Bush administration. Here the patterns tend to resemble attitudes on government spending, but with deeper and more complex divisions.

Overall, about one-half of the entire sample in 2004 chose the statement “Large tax cuts are good for the economy because they encourage necessary investment and create jobs,”

and a little less than one-half choose an opposite statement “Large tax cuts are bad for the economy because they cause budget deficits and prevent necessary government spending.” Less than one-tenth expressed no opinion on this issue.

The religious landscape was more deeply divided on large tax cuts than government spending, but the general pattern was similar. For example, almost three-fifths of all Evangelical Protestants favored large tax cuts, Mainline Protestants and Catholics were split almost evenly, and the Unaffiliated were majority opposed.

Beneath these figures there were some sharp differences between Traditionalists and Modernists. For example, two-thirds of Traditionalist Evangelicals favored large taxes cuts, compared to two-fifths of the Modernist Evangelicals.

Similar divisions occurred among Catholics, and a much milder version appeared among Mainline Protestants. One important exception was Traditionalist Mainliners, who opposed large tax cuts by a small margin. In fact, it was the Centrist Mainliners that were most in favor of large tax cuts.

Interestingly, Latino Protestants on balance favored large tax cuts, and to a lesser extent, so did Latino Catholics, Black Protestants, and the Other Christians.

The Other Faiths, Jews, Seculars, and Atheists/Agnostics strongly opposed larger tax cuts. Here the Unaffiliated Believers were something of an exception, being evenly divided.

These findings are interesting in light of the findings on government spending. Some religious groups, such as the minority groups, favored increased government spending and also favored large tax cuts. Meanwhile, other groups wanted less spending and opposed large tax cuts, such as Traditionalist Mainliners and Atheists/Agnostics. These complex patterns may reflect the particular mix of religious values and economic interests within these religious groups.

Free Trade. The first topic in Table 10 is free trade. The religious landscape was not as divided on this issue as government spending and large tax cuts.

Overall, a little less than one-third of the entire in 2004 sample agreed with the statement “Free trade is good for the economy even if it means the loss of some U.S. jobs,” and one-half disagreed. About one-sixth expressed no opinion.

Given the poor state of the nation’s economy and the controversy over the out-sourcing of jobs, this negative reaction may not be surprising. But it is important to note that this item poses a tough trade-off between trade and jobs.

The three largest Christian traditions showed similar patterns, with about one-half opposing free trade if it costs jobs; the Unaffiliated were even more opposed (at almost three-fifths). The Traditionalist-Modernist division was less evident in these results, although it does appear in a mild form among Evangelical Protestants.

Table 10. The Religious Landscape, Free Trade, and Environmental Regulation, Spring 2004

	Free Trade*			Environmental Regulation*		
	Agree	No Op	Disagree	Agree	No Op	Disagree
ENTIRE SAMPLE	30%	17	53	55%	18	27
Evangelical Protestant	34%	15	51	52%	17	31
<i>Traditionalist Evangelical</i>	41%	12	47	52%	14	34
<i>Centrist Evangelical</i>	29%	17	54	52%	18	30
<i>Modernist Evangelical</i>	21%	15	64	57%	21	22
Mainline Protestant	33%	20	47	61%	19	20
<i>Traditionalist Mainline</i>	35%	17	48	62%	15	23
<i>Centrist Mainline</i>	30%	22	48	56%	20	24
<i>Modernist Mainline</i>	35%	20	45	66%	20	14
Latino Protestants	21%	25	54	43%	24	33
Black Protestants	16%	15	69	39%	22	39
Catholic	32%	17	51	60%	18	22
<i>Traditionalist Catholic</i>	37%	17	46	53%	21	26
<i>Centrist Catholic</i>	29%	14	57	59%	18	23
<i>Modernist Catholic</i>	33%	22	45	69%	15	16
Latino Catholic	26%	18	56	47%	17	36
Other Christian	25%	25	50	58%	21	21
Other Faiths	26%	17	57	62%	18	20
Jewish	48%	19	33	67%	13	20
Unaffiliated	28%	14	58	56%	20	24
<i>Unaffiliated Believers</i>	17%	16	67	46%	20	34
<i>Secular</i>	30%	12	58	59%	18	23
<i>Atheist, Agnostic</i>	44%	14	42	66%	23	11

*All rows sum to 100%. Agree=agree, strongly agree; disagree=disagree, strongly disagree; No Op=no opinion.

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

The minority groups, Other Christians, Other Faiths, the Unaffiliated Believers, and Seculars all were majority opposed to this measure of free trade.

There were two important groups that were more favorable toward this measure of free trade: nearly a majority of Jews agreed and Atheists/Agnostics were evenly divided.

Environmental Protection. The second topic in Table 10 is environmental protection. There was a consensus in favor of strict regulation with only modest variation across the religious landscape.

Overall, a majority of the entire sample in 2004 agreed with the statement “Strict rules to protect the environment are necessary even if they cost jobs or result in higher prices,” and about one-quarter disagreed. Less than one-fifth expressed no opinion.

Nearly all the major religious traditions favored strict environmental protection. In fact, almost all of the religious groups agreed with the statement.

One exception was Black Protestants, who were evenly divided on the question of environmental Protection. The Latino groups and the Unaffiliated Believers were also a bit less supportive than the sample as a whole.

Within the three largest Christian traditions, the Traditionalists tended to be less supportive of environmental protections than their Modernist counterparts. Indeed, the Modernists were among the most supportive of this statement across the religious landscape.

These results are striking when compared to the free trade measure, suggesting that some level of job loss is acceptable in the service of a worthy goal. It is worth noting that the minority groups were among the most opposed to job loss from *both* trade and environmental protection.

Overall, support for reducing government expenditures has declined since 1996, and support for increased government spending has increased. These changes have occurred across the board. For example, more than one-half of the Evangelical and Mainline Protestants favored less spending (and lower taxes) in 1996, and this figure has fallen to below one-third by 2004. And a plurality of Catholics and the Unaffiliated favored less spending in 1996, a pattern that reversed itself by 2004.

Estimates for the Traditionalist and Modernist groups from the previous years suggest the same pattern. Similar but opposite changes occurred among Modernists.

It is important to remember what happened during this period of time. The 1996 survey was taken in the midst of Ross Perot’s third party insurgency, and after the Republican takeover of the U.S. Congress and President Clinton’s declaration that “the era of big government is over.” But in the years since then, there has been restraint in government spending, rapid economic growth, and major tax reductions. These changes may well account for the decline in the desire to reduce government spending further—and revived interest in expanded government spending.

Trend Analysis. Table 11 looks at changes overtime for two of these economic questions, government spending (since 1996) and environmental protection (since 1992).

Table 11. Major Religious Traditions and Economic Policies, 1996-2004

*Percent supporting less and more government spending**

	2004		2000		1996		1996-2004 Net Change	
	<i>Less</i>	<i>More</i>	<i>Less</i>	<i>More</i>	<i>Less</i>	<i>More</i>	<i>Less</i>	<i>More</i>
ENTIRE SAMPLE	26	36	32	20	45	17	- 19	+19%
Evangelical Protestant	30	30	40	20	53	12	- 23	+18%
Mainline Protestant	28	29	40	17	53	10	- 25	+19%
Black Protestant	19	45	25	33	34	38	- 15	+ 7%
Catholic	25	35	29	22	43	17	- 18	+18%
Latino Catholic	16	48	26	33	34	25	- 18	+23%
Jews	19	43	29	25	37	22	- 18	+21%
Unaffiliated	25	33	29	25	42	19	- 17	+14%

** The "same" level of government spending has been omitted for ease of presentation; this figure equals 100% minus the sum of the pairs of figures for each year.*

Percent agree, strict environmental regulations

	2004		2000		1996		1992		1992-2004 Net Change	
ENTIRE SAMPLE	55%	55%	52%	52%	54%	54%	54%	54%	+ 1%	
Evangelical Protestant	52%	52%	45%	45%	50%	50%	50%	50%	+ 2%	
Mainline Protestant	61%	61%	59%	59%	57%	57%	57%	57%	+ 4%	
Black Protestant	39%	39%	43%	43%	43%	43%	43%	43%	- 4%	
Catholic	60%	60%	54%	54%	56%	56%	56%	56%	+ 4%	
Latino Catholic	47%	47%	51%	51%	50%	50%	50%	50%	- 3%	
Jews	67%	67%	66%	66%	71%	71%	71%	71%	- 4%	
Unaffiliated	56%	56%	55%	55%	60%	60%	60%	60%	- 4%	

Source: National Surveys of Religion and Politics, Bliss Institute of Applied Politics 1992 (n=4001); 1996 (n=4034); 2000 (n=6000); 2004 (n=4000)

The second part of Table 11 looks at changes in support for environmental protection. Overall, the level of support remained high over the period. The three largest Christian traditions showed gains in support for strict environmental protection, with modest declines among the other groups. Thus, a general consensus for environmental regulation across the religious landscape has held since 1992.

Anti-Poverty Programs. What about support for expanding government programs to alleviate poverty? Table 12 reviews the responses to two questions on anti-poverty programs and finds considerable support across the religious landscape.

First, one-half of the entire sample in 2004 agreed with the statement “The government should spend more to fight hunger and poverty even if it means higher taxes on the middle class,” and roughly one-third disagreed. One-sixth of the sample had no opinion. This is a strong statement because it requires many respondents to be willing to raise their *own* taxes to help the poor.

All the major religious traditions favored increased anti-poverty programs even if paid for by the middle-class. As a group, Evangelical Protestants were the least supportive (with a bit over two-fifths) and the Unaffiliated the most supportive (almost three-fifths).

In fact, just one of the religious groups, Traditionalist Evangelicals, failed to agree with this strong statement (and only by a small margin). Traditionalist Mainliners and Catholics had lower levels of support than their Centrist and Modernist counterparts, but still on balanced supported this tough anti-poverty measure. Other groups with modest support for the statement were Latino Protestants and Other Christians (more than two-fifths each); all the Centrist groups gave plurality support for this statement.

Latino Catholics, Black Protestants, the Other Faiths, the Modernist groups, and Jews were all gave majority support for this statement. All the Unaffiliated groups also had majorities in favor, with Atheists/Agnostics the most supportive.

The second question in Table 12 changes the source of funds to help the poor. Overall, some three-fifths of the entire sample in 2004 agreed with the statement “The government should spend more to fight hunger and poverty even if it means higher taxes on the wealthy,” and only one-fifth disagreed. About one-fifth had no opinion. Clearly having the wealthy pay for increased anti-poverty programs was a more attractive option, perhaps for reasons of self-interest as well as a sense of fairness.

Shifting the burden to the wealthy dramatically increased the support for expanded anti-poverty programs all across the religious landscape. But the basic patterns remained within the three largest Christian traditions: Traditionalists were always the least supportive and the Modernist the most. All the minority, non-Christian, and Unaffiliated groups strongly agreed with this statement as well.

Table 12. The Religious Landscape and Social Welfare Policy, Spring 2004*

	Fight Poverty, Tax Middle Class			Fight Poverty Tax Wealthy		
	<i>Agree</i>	<i>No Op</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>No Op</i>	<i>Disagree</i>
ENTIRE SAMPLE	50%	15	35	62%	18	20
Evangelical Protestant	43%	17	40	55%	20	25
<i>Traditionalist Evangelical</i>	<i>40%</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>46%</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>Centrist Evangelical</i>	<i>45%</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>39</i>	<i>61%</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Modernist Evangelical</i>	<i>54%</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>69%</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>11</i>
Mainline Protestant	52%	17	31	59%	17	24
<i>Traditionalist Mainline</i>	<i>51%</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>50%</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Centrist Mainline</i>	<i>47%</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>57%</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Modernist Mainline</i>	<i>61%</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>71%</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>
Latino Protestants	43%	20	37	57%	19	24
Black Protestants	53%	16	31	68%	18	14
Catholic	51%	15	34	63%	18	19
<i>Traditionalist Catholic</i>	<i>46%</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>52%</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Centrist Catholic</i>	<i>49%</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>64%</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Modernist Catholic</i>	<i>58%</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>70%</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>16</i>
Latino Catholic	50%	14	36	64%	16	20
Other Christian	41%	27	32	56%	23	21
Other Faiths	58%	5	37	73%	10	17
Jewish	65%	8	27	80%	11	9
Unaffiliated	57%	11	32	67%	15	18
<i>Unaffiliated Believers</i>	<i>54%</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>62%</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Secular</i>	<i>57%</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>66%</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Atheist, Agnostic</i>	<i>64%</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>78%</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>16</i>

*All rows sum to 100%. Agree=agree, strongly agree; disagree=disagree, strongly disagree; No Op=no opinion.

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

These results were especially interesting given the previous evidence on public spending and large tax cuts. The moral imperative to aid the poor appears to be widely distributed across the religious landscape, but this is not necessarily an imperative to increase government spending in general.

Affirmative Action. A pair of questions in Table 13 concerns different approaches to affirmative action. Here there was a dramatic change from one question to another: the religious landscape is sharply divided on affirmative action for “minorities,” but there is a strong consensus to aid the “disadvantaged.”

Overall, just under two-fifths of the entire sample in 2004 agreed with the statement: “Minorities need governmental assistance to obtain their rightful place in America,” and slightly more than two-fifths disagreed. A little less than one-fifth expressed no opinion.

Not surprisingly, the minority religious groups were most likely to support affirmative action, with Latinos and Black Protestants showing support by large majorities. Jews and the Other Faiths, which are small religious minorities, also agreed with this statement as well.

But nearly all the white Christian and Unaffiliated groups on balanced disagreed with affirmative action for minorities, although the differences were often small. The one exception was Modernist Mainline Protestants, who were evenly divided. There were only modest patterns within the three largest Christian traditions. For example, Traditionalist Evangelicals and Mainline Protestants were modestly less supportive than their Modernist counterparts.

The second question in Table 13 changes the beneficiaries of the government assistance from “minorities” to the “disadvantaged.” Over all, almost three-fifths of the respondents in the entire sample in 2004 agreed with the statement “The disadvantaged need government assistance to obtain their rightful place in America,” and less than one-quarter disagreed. About one-fifth had no opinion. Clearly, the “disadvantaged” were more popular than “minorities.”

The level of agreement increased dramatically across the board from the first to the second item, with all the religious groups expressing more support for the second statement.

Just one pattern of opposition persists: although strongly supportive of helping the disadvantaged, Traditionalist Evangelicals were less so than their Modernist counterparts.

Table 13. The Religious Landscape and Social Welfare Policy, Spring 2004*

	Government Help Minorities			Government Help Disadvantaged		
	<i>Agree</i>	<i>No Op</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>No Op</i>	<i>Disagree</i>
ENTIRE SAMPLE	39%	18	43%	57%	19	24
Evangelical Protestant	31%	19	50	55%	18	27
<i>Traditionalist Evangelical</i>	<i>28%</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>52%</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>Centrist Evangelical</i>	<i>33%</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>48</i>	<i>57%</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Modernist Evangelical</i>	<i>33%</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>47</i>	<i>62%</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>20</i>
Mainline Protestant	32%	21	47	52%	22	26
<i>Traditionalist Mainline</i>	<i>29%</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>48</i>	<i>56%</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Centrist Mainline</i>	<i>29%</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>47%</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Modernist Mainline</i>	<i>40%</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>55%</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>24</i>
Latino Protestants	58%	18	24	65%	14	21
Black Protestants	58%	16	26	60%	21	19
Catholic	37%	18	45	55%	19	26
<i>Traditionalist Catholic</i>	<i>36%</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>52%</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Centrist Catholic</i>	<i>38%</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>59%</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Modernist Catholic</i>	<i>34%</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>53%</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>25</i>
Latino Catholic	62%	18	20	60%	20	20
Other Christian	33%	21	46	52%	23	25
Other Faiths	49%	12	39	67%	12	21
Jewish	56%	9	35	72%	5	23
Unaffiliated	40%	17	43	62%	16	22
<i>Unaffiliated Believers</i>	<i>40%</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>62%</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Secular</i>	<i>41%</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>42</i>	<i>62%</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Atheist, Agnostic</i>	<i>38%</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>42</i>	<i>64%</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>17</i>

*All rows sum to 100%. Agree=agree, strongly agree; disagree=disagree, strongly disagree; No Op=no opinion.

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

Trend Analysis. Table 14 reports on changes in opinion on support for expanded anti-poverty programs paid for by middle class and on affirmative action for minorities since 1992.

Table 14. Major Religious Traditions and Social Welfare Programs, 1992-2004

Percent Agree, Fight Poverty and Tax Middle Class

	2004	2000	1996	1992	1992-2004 Net Change
ENTIRE SAMPLE	50%	47%	51%	58%	- 8%
Evangelical Protestant	43%	42%	46%	54%	-11%
Mainline Protestant	52%	43%	43%	55%	- 3%
Black Protestant	53%	58%	70%	72%	-19%
Catholic	51%	48%	49%	60%	- 9%
Latino Catholic	50%	52%	66%	61%	-11%
Jews	65%	56%	62%	61%	+ 4%
Unaffiliated	57%	46%	54%	55%	+ 2%

Percent Agree, Government Help Minorities

	2004	2000	1996	1992	1992-2004 Net Change
ENTIRE SAMPLE	39%	38%	37%	43%	- 4%
Evangelical Protestant	31%	32%	30%	35%	- 4%
Mainline Protestant	32%	31%	30%	40%	- 8%
Black Protestant	58%	58%	67%	70%	- 12%
Catholic	37%	35%	34%	40%	- 3%
Latino Catholic	62%	58%	57%	63%	- 1%
Jews	56%	45%	53%	67%	-11%
Unaffiliated	40%	39%	34%	38%	+ 2%

Source: National Surveys of Religion and Politics, Bliss Institute of Applied Politics 1992 (n=4001); 1996 (n=4034); 2000 (n=6000); 2004 (n=4000)

Overall, the support for expanded anti-poverty programs paid for by the middle class has declined since 1992. The biggest declines occurred among Evangelical, Black Protestants, and Latino Catholics. Smaller declines occurred among Mainline Protestants

and Catholics. Modest increases occurred among Jews and the Unaffiliated. This shift may reflect a decline in support for expanding the welfare state, but given the overall support for increased anti-poverty spending, it is more likely that this decline represents a resistance to increasing the middle-class tax burden.

Overall, the support for affirmative action programs for minorities declined modestly after 1992. Here Evangelicals and Mainline Protestants, Catholics and Jews all showed declines. More surprisingly, so did Black Protestants, who posted a 12 percentage point decline between 1992 and 2000—but remained constant between 2000 and 2004.

The Religious Landscape and Foreign Policy

The terrorist attacks of 9/11 brought foreign policy back on to the political agenda, so that it ranked second among issue priorities in the 2004 survey. Here we look at three elements of foreign policy: America's role in the world, contemporary conflicts, and the basic goals of American policy. Because of the recent emergence of foreign policy as a major part of the political agenda, these patterns must be viewed with considerable caution.

Post 9/11, the religious landscape tilted away from isolationism and toward engagement abroad. There was majority support for the U.S. having a special role in world affairs, for international cooperation as the best means to maintain world peace, and on goals of American foreign policy (principally support for human rights and humanitarian assistance). In addition, there was strong support for the doctrine of a preemptive war and a division over U.S. support for Israel. Although these patterns were often complex, Traditionalist groups tended toward a more aggressive foreign policy, while Modernists, non-Christians, and the Unaffiliated often opted for a less aggressive policy.

U.S. Engagement Abroad. The first topic in Table 15 concerns the degree of American engagement abroad. With a few notable exceptions, the religious landscape rejected isolationism.

Overall, about two-fifths of the entire sample in 2004 agreed with the statement “The U.S. should mind its own business internationally and let other countries get along as best they can on their own,” and almost one-half disagreed. One-sixth had no opinion.

Most religious groups disagreed with this statement and the isolationist approach to foreign policy it implies. Only Unaffiliated Believers showed a majority and Black Protestants a plurality in agreement.

Jews were the most opposed to a lack of American engagement abroad and were joined by a varied collection of other religious groups: Traditionalist Evangelicals, Modernist Mainliners, Traditional Catholics, Atheists/Agnostics, and Other Christians.

Some groups were more evenly divided on the question of American engagement, including Centrist Evangelicals and Catholics, Modernist Evangelicals, Latino Protestants and Seculars.

Table 15. The Religious Landscape and Foreign Policy, Spring 2004

	U.S. Mind Own Business*			U.S. has Special Role*			To Keep the Peace, US:	
	Agree	No Op	Disagree	Yes	No Op	No	Take the Lead	Cooperate Intl Orgns.
ENTIRE SAMPLE	37%	15	48	54%	4	42	26%	74
Evangelical Protestant	34%	14	52	60%	5	35	35%	65
<i>Traditionalist Evangelical</i>	26%	13	61	69%	4	27	44%	56
<i>Centrist Evangelical</i>	40%	16	44	53%	5	42	30%	70
<i>Modernist Evangelical</i>	43%	12	45	45%	6	49	18%	82
Mainline Protestant	35%	17	48	53%	4	43	23%	77
<i>Traditionalist Mainline</i>	35%	17	48	59%	3	38	29%	71
<i>Centrist Mainline</i>	38%	16	46	52%	5	43	23%	77
<i>Modernist Mainline</i>	30%	19	51	48%	4	48	16%	84
Latino Protestants	41%	14	45	48%	6	46	31%	69
Black Protestants	43%	20	37	51%	5	44	23%	77
Catholic	35%	15	50	54%	3	43	23%	77
<i>Traditionalist Catholic</i>	32%	11	57	58%	2	40	30%	70
<i>Centrist Catholic</i>	40%	15	45	48%	4	48	25%	75
<i>Modernist Catholic</i>	31%	16	53	60%	2	38	15%	85
Latino Catholic	39%	15	46	57%	4	39	28%	72
Other Christian	26%	30	44	52%	10	38	22%	78
Other Faiths	40%	12	48	50%	4	46	14%	86
Jewish	17%	7	76	68%	5	27	27%	73
Unaffiliated	43%	13	44	45%	2	53	19%	81
<i>Unaffiliated Believers</i>	55%	11	34	43%	2	55	29%	71
<i>Secular</i>	41%	13	46	45%	1	54	16%	84
<i>Atheist, Agnostic</i>	30%	17	53	49%	2	49	11%	89

*All rows sum to 100%. Agree=agree, strongly agree; disagree=disagree, strongly disagree; No Op=no opinion.

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

A Special Role for the U.S. in World Affairs. The second item of Table 15 concerns American exceptionalism, a question over which the religious landscape was more divided.

Overall, a majority of the entire sample in 2004 agreed with the statement “The U.S. has a special role to play in world affairs and should behave differently than other nations,” and more than two-fifths agreed with the opposite statement: “The U.S. has no special role and should behave like any other nation.” The remaining four percent expressed no opinion.

A majority of the three largest Christian traditions agreed with a special American role in world affairs, with Evangelical Protestants as a whole more supportive than Mainliners or Catholics. Meanwhile, the Unaffiliated were majority opposed.

Within the two white Protestant traditions, there were sharp differences between the Traditionalists on the one hand, and the Modernists on the other. For example, almost seven of ten Traditionalist Evangelicals viewed the U.S. as having a special role, compared to and less than one-half of the Modernists. Here the Centrist groups looked more like the modernists.

However, no such distinction occurred among Catholics: both the Traditionalists and Modernists agreed with a special American role, and the Centrists were evenly divided. Latino Catholics resembled Traditional Catholics in support for this proposition.

Other groups agreeing with a special American role included Jews and Other Christians; Latino and Black Protestants and Other Faiths agreed by a smaller margin.

The Unaffiliated were the most consistently opposed to a special role for America in world affairs. Overall, nearly three-fifths disagreed with the idea, led by the Unaffiliated Believers and Seculars. However, Atheists/Agnostics were evenly divided.

Maintaining World Peace. The final topic in Table 15 concerns the means of maintaining world peace. Here there was a consensus across the religious landscape in favor of the U.S. working with international organizations to keep the peace.

Overall, just one-quarter of the entire sample in 2004 agreed with the statement “The U.S. should take the lead in maintaining world peace, using military force if necessary,” and three-quarters agreed with a rival statement “The U.S. should primarily cooperate with international organizations to maintain world peace.”

None of the religious groups favored the U.S. taking the lead in maintaining world peace. Indeed, all of the religious groups preferred international cooperation, usually by substantial margins.

Traditionalist Evangelicals were the most in agreement with a lead role for the U.S. (just over two-fifths), significantly more than the Modernist Evangelicals (less than one-fifth). Although their level of support was much lower, Traditionalist Mainliners and Catholics also gave more support to this proposition than their Modernist counterparts.

All the Modernist groups were among the strongest proponents of working with international organizations, joined by the Other Faiths, Seculars, and Atheists/Agnostics.

The Latino groups, Unaffiliated Believers, Jews, Black Protestants and Other Christians also strongly backed cooperation with international organizations.

Trend Analysis. Table 16 reports changes in opinion on American engagement in the world between 2000 and 2004. These results demonstrate the effect of 9/11 on the religious landscape: opinion shifted away from a net isolationist position by seven percentage points. All the major religious traditions experienced this change, with Jews, Evangelical Protestants, and Latino Catholics moving the farthest. Estimates from the previous surveys suggest that the Traditionalist Evangelicals changed the most between 2000 and 2004.

Table 16. Major Religious Traditions and Isolationism, 2000-2004

Percent agree, U.S. should mind own business abroad

	2004	2000	2000-2004 Net Change
ENTIRE SAMPLE	37%	44%	- 7%
Evangelical Protestant	34%	46%	-12%
Mainline Protestant	35%	39%	- 4%
Black Protestant	43%	48%	- 5%
Catholic	35%	39%	- 4%
Latino Catholic	39%	50%	-11%
Jews	17%	46%	-29%
Unaffiliated	43%	46%	- 3%

Source: National Surveys of Religion and Politics, Bliss Institute of Applied Politics 2000 (n=6000); 2004 (n=4000)

The Doctrine of a Preemptive War. Table 17 reports on opinion regarding to two pressing questions in U.S. foreign policy. The first topic is President Bush’s doctrine of a preemptive (or preventative) war, a new question on the nation’s political agenda. There was a consensus in favor of this doctrine across the religious landscape. However, given the newness of this doctrine and the on-going war in Iraq, these findings should be viewed with great caution.

Table 17. The Religious Landscape, Preemptive War, and Israel, Spring 2004*

	U.S. Can Engage in Preemptive War			U.S. Support Israel over Palestinians		
	<i>Agree</i>	<i>No Op</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>No Op</i>	<i>Disagree</i>
ENTIRE SAMPLE	62%	16	22	35%	27	38
Evangelical Protestant	72%	15	13	52%	23	25
<i>Traditionalist Evangelical</i>	78%	12	10	64%	18	18
<i>Centrist Evangelical</i>	70%	15	15	45%	26	29
<i>Modernist Evangelical</i>	50%	24	26	28%	37	35
Mainline Protestant	62%	16	22	33%	30	37
<i>Traditionalist Mainline</i>	70%	14	16	43%	28	29
<i>Centrist Mainline</i>	68%	16	16	34%	34	32
<i>Modernist Mainline</i>	47%	19	34	22%	26	52
Latino Protestants	63%	12	25	37%	30	33
Black Protestants	54%	24	22	24%	32	44
Catholic	63%	15	22	31%	26	43
<i>Traditionalist Catholic</i>	65%	15	20	43%	26	31
<i>Centrist Catholic</i>	66%	15	19	30%	24	46
<i>Modernist Catholic</i>	57%	15	28	23%	29	48
Latino Catholic	59%	20	21	25%	36	39
Other Christian	52%	21	27	33%	27	40
Other Faiths	51%	9	40	22%	8	70
Jewish	57%	11	32	75%	13	12
Unaffiliated	57%	12	31	20%	27	53
<i>Unaffiliated Believers</i>	65%	11	24	19%	30	51
<i>Secular</i>	59%	12	29	23%	26	51
<i>Atheist, Agnostic</i>	40%	15	45	15%	23	62

*All rows sum to 100%. Agree=agree, strongly agree; disagree=disagree, strongly disagree; No Op=no opinion.

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

Overall, more than three-fifths of the entire sample in 2004 agreed with the statement “Given the threat of terrorism, the U.S. must be able to take preemptive military action against other countries,” and just one-quarter disagreed. One-sixth had no opinion.

All of the major traditions agreed with the preemptive war doctrine, ranging from almost four-fifths of all Evangelical Protestants to nearly three-fifths of the Unaffiliated.

The strongest backers of the preemptive war doctrine were Traditionalist Evangelical and Mainline Protestants, followed by Traditional Catholics. Here the Centrist groups tended to resemble the Traditionalists.

Jews, Other Christians, the minority groups, Unaffiliated Believers and Seculars also supported the doctrine of preemptive war.

Just one religious group, the Atheists/Agnostics, failed to have a majority in support of this statement. The Other Faiths were the next least supportive of the doctrine, but with a slim majority in favor. However, all the Modernist groups were less supportive than their Traditionalist and Centrist counterparts.

In some ways, these results are at odds with the support for international cooperation to maintaining world peace, and this disjunction reveals important nuances in foreign policy attitudes. Most religious groups preferred international cooperation as a way to maintain world peace, but were willing for the U.S. to engage in a preemptive war if the nation were threatened.

The doctrine of the preventative war raises the issue of support for the war in Iraq. Respondents were asked such a question, but because so much has happened since the conclusion of the survey in the spring of 2004 that these attitudes are likely to have changed substantially. For the record, a brief mention of these findings is in order. In the spring of 2004, a majority of the sample believed the Iraq war was either “fully justified” or “probably justified.” There was, however, considerable variation across the religious landscape. These patterns tended to resemble the results for the doctrine of the preemptive war, but with deeper divisions. Such relative levels of support among the religious groups may have persisted even if the overall popularity of the Iraq war has waned, but perhaps not.

U.S. Support for Israel over the Palestinians. The second topic in Table 17 is the longstanding question of question of American policy toward the Israel-Palestinian conflict. The religious landscape was sharply divided on this particular question.

Overall, just under one-half of the entire sample in 2004 agreed with the statement “The U.S. should support Israel over the Palestinians in the Middle East,” and a slim majority disagreed. More than one-quarter expressed no opinion.

This item presents a tough choice since it asks the respondent about the U.S. supporting Israel over the Palestinians, rather than a variety of the options, such protecting the security of Israel or wanting even handed treatment for both nations. While it is tempting to assume that the “no opinion” responses reflect a desire for an even-handed approach and that the “disagree” responses signify support for the Palestinians, it is not clear that this is the case (some who disagree with the statement may sympathize with Israel rather

than the Palestinians, but oppose U.S. policy that favors Israel). This item is specifically about the U.S. taking Israel's side in the dispute with the Palestinians.

As one might expect, Jews were most likely to agree with this strong statement, and by a large margin (three-quarters). Traditionalist Evangelicals were the next most supportive, (almost two-thirds).

Other groups showed plurality support for Israel over the Palestinians, including Centrist Evangelicals, Traditionalist Mainliners and Catholics. And still other groups were more evenly divided, such as Centrist Mainliners and Latino Protestants.

The Other Faiths (which includes Muslims) strongly disagreed with supporting Israel over the Palestinians (seven of ten) as did Atheists/Agnostics (better than three-fifths). Other opponents of supporting Israel over the Palestinians included Unaffiliated Believers, Seculars, Black Protestants, Latino Catholics, Other Christians, and all the Modernists groups.

Trend Analysis. Table 18 reports changes in this measure of U.S. support for Israel over the Palestinians back to 1992. Overall, there has been a seven percentage point increase in agreement, but a two percent increase in disagreement.

Evangelical Protestants showed a double digit increase in the agreement column and a decline in the disagreement column. Both Mainline Protestants and Catholics also showed increased agreement with a policy favoring Israel over the Palestinians and at the same time an increase in the disagreement column. The largest portion of this change came after 2000. Estimates from previous surveys suggest that most of the increased agreement occurred among the Traditionalists; and that most of the increased disagreement has come from the Modernists.

The most interesting pattern is for Jews, who showed an eight percentage point decline in agreement with the statement that the U.S. should back Israel over the Palestinians over the period. The low point in this series actually came in 2000, representing a 17 percentage point decline. While interesting, these patterns must be viewed with considerable caution: there are only a small number of Jewish respondents in each of these surveys, and in any event, Jews remained the strongest supporters of Israel over the entire period.

It is worth noting that the Unaffiliated increased their disagreement with supporting Israel over the Palestinians between 1992 and 2004.

Table 18 Major Religious Traditions and Support for Israel over Palestinians, 1992-2004

Percent agree and disagree, U.S. support Israel over the Palestinians

	2004		2000		1996		1992		1992-2004 Net Change	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
ENTIRE SAMPLES	35	39	29	33	31	38	28	37	+ 7	+ 2
Evangelical Protestant	52	25	38	27	37	35	39	29	+13	- 4
Mainline Protestant	33	38	27	32	30	36	24	36	+ 9	+ 2
Black Protestant	24	44	22	38	25	47	21	47	+ 3	- 3
Catholic	31	43	22	35	29	38	21	39	+10	+ 4
Latino Catholic	25	39	24	42	27	40	26	39	- 1	0
Jewish	75	12	66	22	82	3	83	7	- 8	+ 5
Unaffiliated	20	53	24	38	23	44	21	45	- 1	+ 8

Legend: Yes=agree U.S. should support Israel over the Palestinians; No=disagree U.S. should support Israel over the Palestinians; no opinion excluded for ease of presentation; no opinion equal to 100 minus the sum of each pairs of numbers in a single year.

Source: National Surveys of Religion and Politics, Bliss Institute of Applied Politics 1992 (n=4001); 1996 (n=4034); 2000 (n=6000); 2004 (n=4000)

Foreign Policy Goals. Table 19 reports opinion concerning the goals of American foreign policy. Although there was strong agreement on goals, some religious differences were evident as well.

Overall, almost one-half of the entire sample in 2004 chose “promoting human rights in other countries” as the top goal beyond maintaining peace. The remaining responses were roughly equally divided between “promoting economic development in other countries” and “promoting democracy in other countries,” with about one-quarter.

The preference for promoting human rights extends across the religious landscape, with the highest response (Latino Protestants at 57 percent) and the lowest response (Centrist Catholics at 40 percent) covering a fairly narrow range of opinion.

In fact, clearer patterns can be seen in the other goals, especially promoting democracy. In the three largest Christian traditions, the Traditionalists were markedly more likely to choose democracy when compared to their Modernist counterparts, who tended to favor economic development.

The minority groups, Other Christians, Other Faiths, Jews, and all the Unaffiliated groups also preferred economic development over democracy as their second choice.

Table 19 The Religious Landscape and Foreign Policy Goals, Spring 2004

	Security Aside, the best Foreign Policy Goals is:*			U.S. Should Give High Priority to:**		
	<i>Human Rights</i>	<i>Economic Development</i>	<i>Promote Democracy</i>	<i>Fight AIDS</i>	<i>Famine Relief</i>	<i>Religious Persecution</i>
ENTIRE SAMPLE	48%	29	23	66%	53%	28%
Evangelical Protestant	47%	24	29	58%	49%	37%
<i>Traditionalist Evangelical</i>	46%	22	32	53%	46%	43%
<i>Centrist Evangelical</i>	45%	26	29	61%	49%	33%
<i>Modernist Evangelical</i>	54%	30	16	68%	65%	32%
Mainline Protestant	46%	29	25	63%	53%	21%
<i>Traditionalist Mainline</i>	43%	28	29	61%	57%	30%
<i>Centrist Mainline</i>	43%	28	29	61%	46%	21%
<i>Modernist Mainline</i>	53%	31	16	68%	58%	14%
Latino Protestants	57%	23	20	76%	51%	37%
Black Protestants	52%	29	19	81%	66%	33%
Catholic	47%	30	23	63%	52%	24%
<i>Traditionalist Catholic</i>	48%	24	28	59%	51%	36%
<i>Centrist Catholic</i>	40%	35	25	60%	50%	19%
<i>Modernist Catholic</i>	56%	26	18	72%	57%	22%
Latino Catholic	42%	31	27	77%	61%	24%
Other Christian	51%	30	19	63%	52%	24%
Other Faiths	51%	34	15	82%	59%	33%
Jewish	46%	33	21	69%	49%	37%
Unaffiliated	49%	31	20	71%	51%	19%
<i>Unaffiliated Believers</i>	48%	30	22	81%	50%	26%
<i>Secular</i>	51%	29	20	67%	52%	17%
<i>Atheist, Agnostic</i>	47%	39	14	70%	49%	13%

*Row sums to 100%.

** Row does not sum to 100%.

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

Humanitarian Policies. The final topic in Table 19 is a list of humanitarian goals in foreign policy. For example, almost two-thirds of the entire sample in 2004 said that fighting the AIDS epidemic should be given a high priority in American foreign policy (the other options are “some priority” and “low priority” and are not shown for ease of presentation.) In similar questions, one-half of the entire sample in 2004 gave high priority to famine relief and more than one-quarter gave high priority to stopping religious persecution abroad.

Fighting the AIDS epidemic around the world received high marks across the religious landscape. But the strongest supporters were the Other Faiths, Black Protestants, Unaffiliated Believers, and the Latino groups. The Atheists/Agnostics, Jews, Seculars, and Other Christians were also supportive.

In contrast, the Traditionalists in the three largest Christian traditions were less likely to give AIDS high priority compared to their Modernist counterparts. Traditionalist evangelicals were the least supportive group overall, and the three Modernist groups among the most supportive.

The patterns for famine relief were very similar to those for fighting AIDS, but at a generally lower level. Traditionalist Evangelicals were the lowest group here as well, but in this case other groups, such as Centrist Mainliners, Jews, and Atheists/Agnostics had similar attitudes. Black Protestants gave famine relief the highest priority of all the groups.

Stopping religious persecution abroad also showed similar patterns to fighting AIDS, but here the Traditionalists scored higher than the Modernists within the major religious traditions. Indeed, Evangelical Traditionalists had the highest score overall, while Seculars and the Atheists/Agnostics were the least likely to give this issue high priority.

The Religious Landscape and Cultural Issues

Disputes over cultural issues have become an enduring feature of national politics, but in the spring of 2004, such issues had lower priority than economic or foreign policy issues. Here we will consider three sets of cultural issues: the “life issues” (abortion, stem cell research and the death penalty), marriage and gay rights, and the role of religion in public life (school vouchers, public funding of faith-based social services, and the public display of religious symbols).

Abortion continues to sharply divide religious communities, with Traditionalists holding pro-life positions and Modernists, Non-Christians, and the Unaffiliated taking pro-choice positions. Over time, the religious landscape has become modestly more pro-life. However, these religious divisions were less evident on other life issues such as embryonic stem cell research and the death penalty.

There were similar divisions on marriage, but there was also widespread support for gay rights more broadly defined. Here African-American Protestants revealed relatively low levels of support for gay rights, a pattern that appears to be of recent vintage.

Table 20. The Religious Landscape and Abortion, Spring 2004

	Abortion should be:			
	<i>Always Illegal</i>	<i>Legal in few Circumstances</i>	<i>Legal in many Circumstances</i>	<i>Legal and up to Woman to decide</i>
ENTIRE SAMPLE	15%	33	17	35
Evangelical Protestant	24%	45	12	19
<i>Traditionalist Evangelical</i>	32%	52	7	9
<i>Centrist Evangelical</i>	19%	40	16	25
<i>Modernist Evangelical</i>	7%	30	19	44
Mainline Protestant	6%	29	21	44
<i>Traditionalist Mainline</i>	8%	45	16	31
<i>Centrist Mainline</i>	7%	30	22	41
<i>Modernist Mainline</i>	2%	12	24	62
Latino Protestants	22%	40	15	23
Black Protestants	21%	33	14	32
Catholic	13%	35	17	35
<i>Traditionalist Catholic</i>	26%	51	6	17
<i>Centrist Catholic</i>	12%	36	20	32
<i>Modernist Catholic</i>	3%	18	25	54
Latino Catholic	18%	39	17	26
Other Christian	35%	38	10	17
Other Faiths	3%	18	21	58
Jewish	0%	16	24	60
Unaffiliated	7%	20	20	53
<i>Unaffiliated Believers</i>	13%	33	19	35
<i>Secular</i>	5%	16	19	60
<i>Atheist, Agnostic</i>	0%	9	25	66

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

Opinion also varied among the religious groups on the role of religion in public life. There was a close division on school vouchers, much more support for funding of faith-

based programs to help the needy, and strong support for religious symbols in public buildings.

Life Issues: Abortion. What about the perennial “hot button” issue of abortion? Table 20 shows a sharp divide on the topic across the religious landscape. As one might expect, religious traditionalism and its absence was important in accounting for opinion on abortion.

The question asked had four-parts. Overall, one-sixth of the 2004 sample chose “[abortion] should not be legal at all,” and one-third picked “[abortion] should be legal in only a few circumstances such as to save the life of the mother.” A bit more than one-sixth agreed “[abortion] should be legal in a wide variety of circumstances,” and more than one-third chose “[abortion] should be legal and solely up to a woman to decide.”

Making all abortions illegal did not receive a plurality in any religious group, but when added to the “few circumstances” option, slightly less than one-half of the entire sample held pro-life positions. The other two options combined for a slim pro-choice majority.

As a group, Evangelical Protestants scored the highest on pro-life attitudes (seven of ten). But less than one-half of all Catholics and about one-third of all Mainline Protestants held pro-life positions.

However, within each of the largest Christian traditions, the Traditionalists were more strongly pro-life than the Modernists, who tended to be pro-choice. The Other Christians, Centrist Evangelicals, the Latino groups, and Black Protestants also had pro-life majorities.

The Other Faiths, Jews, and all the Unaffiliated groups were majority pro-choice, with Atheists/Agnostics showing the highest figures.

These findings reveal that abortion is more of an “Evangelical” issue than a “Catholic” issue in the mass public.

Trend Analysis. Table 21 looks at the change in pro-life positions on abortion since 1992. Overall, the samples moved in a pro-life direction by eight percentage points. In addition, the change was uniformly in a pro-life direction for most of the major religious traditions. Evangelical Protestants showed the largest change, followed closely by Latino Catholics, Catholics, and Black Protestants. Estimates from previous surveys suggest that the Traditionalists followed the overall pattern.

Table 21. Major Religious Traditions and Abortion, 1992-2004

*Percent, Pro-Life positions**

	2004	2000	1996	1992	1992-2004 Net Change
ENTIRE SAMPLE	48%	47%	45%	40%	+ 8%
Evangelical Protestant	69%	66%	60%	56%	+13%
Mainline Protestant	35%	38%	33%	33%	+ 2%
Black Protestant	54%	49%	43%	46%	+ 8%
Catholic	48%	50%	50%	40%	+ 8%
Latino Catholic	57%	52%	41%	47%	+10%
Jews	16%	24%	24%	20%	- 4%
Unaffiliated	27%	31%	29%	21%	+ 6%

** Ban and many limitations on abortion.*

Source: National Surveys of Religion and Politics, Bliss Institute of Applied Politics 1992 (n=4001); 1996 (n=4034); 2000 (n=6000); 2004 (n=4000)

Embryonic Stem Cell Research. A similar pattern, but with less overall division, appeared on another life issue, banning embryonic stem cell research, reported in the second part of Table 22.

Overall, less than one-third of the entire sample in 2004 agreed with the statement “The government should ban all scientific research involving stem cells from human embryos,” and about one-half disagreed. A little more than one-sixth had no opinion.

This item taps the underlying opinion on this kind of research and does not reflect the current policy debate over the limitations on federal funding for certain kinds of research. However, the strong support for such research in principle reveals why a limited policy response was advanced by President Bush.

All but one of the major traditions opposed banning embryonic stem cell research. The exception was Black Protestants, where a plurality agreed with such a ban. Evangelical Protestants as a whole opposed the ban by a small margin.

As with abortion, the Traditionalist groups were most opposed to embryonic stem cell research within the three largest Christian traditions. This pattern was especially strong for Traditionalist Evangelicals and Catholics. And although just one-third of

Traditionalist Mainliners agreed with the ban, like the other traditionalists, they were more likely to favor such a ban than their Modernist counterparts.

Table 22. The Religious Landscape, Stem Cell Research, and Death Penalty, Spring 2004

	Ban Research on Stem Cells*			Life Prison for Death Penalty*		
	<i>Agree</i>	<i>No Op</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>No Op</i>	<i>Disagree</i>
ENTIRE SAMPLE	32%	17	51	34%	15	51
Evangelical Protestant	40%	17	43	26%	15	59
<i>Traditionalist Evangelical</i>	<i>50%</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>25%</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>62</i>
<i>Centrist Evangelical</i>	<i>34%</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>26%</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>58</i>
<i>Modernist Evangelical</i>	<i>22%</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>63</i>	<i>32%</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>48</i>
Mainline Protestant	25%	18	57	33%	19	48
<i>Traditionalist Mainline</i>	<i>33%</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>47</i>	<i>36%</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>43</i>
<i>Centrist Mainline</i>	<i>28%</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>27%</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>55</i>
<i>Modernist Mainline</i>	<i>12%</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>39%</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>43</i>
Latino Protestants	35%	22	43	37%	13	50
Black Protestants	47%	20	33	49%	17	34
Catholic	32%	15	53	32%	15	53
<i>Traditionalist Catholic</i>	<i>51%</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>40%</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>45</i>
<i>Centrist Catholic</i>	<i>32%</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>53</i>	<i>27%</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>60</i>
<i>Modernist Catholic</i>	<i>15%</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>34%</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>50</i>
Latino Catholic	33%	20	47	44%	14	42
Other Christian	34%	27	39	32%	18	50
Other Faiths	18%	8	74	41%	11	48
Jewish	9%	7	84	49%	6	45
Unaffiliated	19%	16	65	32%	14	54
<i>Unaffiliated Believers</i>	<i>33%</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>30%</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>57</i>
<i>Secular</i>	<i>14%</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>31%</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>55</i>
<i>Atheist, Agnostic</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>81</i>	<i>39%</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>47</i>

*All rows sum to 100%. Agree=agree, strongly agree; disagree=disagree, strongly disagree; No Op=no opinion.

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

Indeed, all the Modernist groups opposed banning stem cell research by large margins, a position also held by the Centrist groups, the Other Faiths, Jews, the Latino groups, and all the Unaffiliated groups. The Atheists/Agnostics scored the highest on these views.

The Death Penalty. A different pattern appears on the death penalty, also reported in the Table 22. There was strong opposition to changing the death penalty across much the religious landscape.

Overall, about one-third of the entire sample in 2004 agreed with the statement “The death penalty for convicted murders should be replaced with life in prison without parole,” and about one-half disagreed. One-sixth had no opinion.

Black Protestants and Jews approached a majority in support for this change in the death penalty, and several groups were more evenly divided, including Latino Catholics, Modernist Mainliners, and Traditionalist Catholics.

All of the other religious groups opposed such a change, including all the Unaffiliated groups. Traditionalist Evangelicals and Centrist Catholics were the most opposed, followed closely by Centrist Evangelicals, Unaffiliated Believers, Centrist Mainliners, and Seculars.

The Legal Status of Marriage. The question of same-sex marriage surged to the forefront of public debate in 2004. The first section of Table 23 reports attitudes on the legal status of marriage. Although same-sex marriage received little support, the Traditionalist/Modernist division and the views of the minority groups were important in explaining the pattern of opinion.

Here respondents were offered a single item with three options on the legal status of marriage. Overall, more than one-half of the sample in 2004 preferred traditional marriages (between one man and one woman), roughly one-fifth favored civil unions for gay couples (legal arrangements between same-sex couples short of marriage), and a little more than one-fifth support same-sex marriage (between a couple regardless of gender).

As a group, Evangelical Protestants were strongly supportive of traditional marriage (at three-quarters), followed closely by Black and Latino Protestants. In contrast, less than a majority of all Mainline Protestants and Catholics choose traditional marriage—although only a minority picked same-sex marriage.

Within each of the three largest Christian traditions, the Traditionalist groups were always the most supportive of traditional marriage, far more than their Modernist counterparts. Centrist Evangelicals echoed this position as did the Other Christians and Unaffiliated Believers. Centrist Mainliners as well as Centrist and Latino Catholics were more divided.

Table 23. Religious Landscape, Marriage, and Gay Rights, Spring 2004

	For Marriage Favor:*			Support Gay Rights*		
	<i>Traditional Marriage</i>	<i>Civil Unions</i>	<i>Same-sex Marriage</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>No Op</i>	<i>Disagree</i>
ENTIRE SAMPLE	55%	18	27	57%	15	28
Evangelical Protestant	75%	13	12	45%	15	40
<i>Traditionalist Evangelical</i>	89%	8	3	36%	14	50
<i>Centrist Evangelical</i>	67%	16	17	50%	15	35
<i>Modernist Evangelical</i>	42%	24	34	63%	19	18
Mainline Protestant	47%	27	26	60%	19	21
<i>Traditionalist Mainline</i>	72%	18	10	44%	24	32
<i>Centrist Mainline</i>	44%	29	27	62%	17	21
<i>Modernist Mainline</i>	29%	33	38	73%	15	12
Latino Protestants	71%	9	20	47%	15	38
Black Protestants	72%	10	18	40%	16	44
Catholic	48%	22	30	64%	16	20
<i>Traditionalist Catholic</i>	71%	18	11	51%	17	32
<i>Centrist Catholic</i>	52%	19	29	59%	18	23
<i>Modernist Catholic</i>	20%	29	51	83%	12	5
Latino Catholic	52%	14	34	61%	17	22
Other Christian	77%	8	15	41%	17	42
Other Faiths	30%	20	50	68%	13	19
Jewish	16%	29	55	82%	7	11
Unaffiliated	31%	19	50	73%	11	16
<i>Unaffiliated Believers</i>	58%	10	32	57%	13	30
<i>Secular</i>	23%	24	53	79%	11	10
<i>Atheist, Agnostic</i>	7%	21	72	89%	7	4

*All rows sum to 100%. Agree=agree, strongly agree; disagree=disagree, strongly disagree; No Op=no opinion.

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

All the Modernist groups preferred alternatives to traditional marriage, but only the Modernist Catholics had a majority for same-sex marriage.

A majority of the Other Faiths, Seculars, Jews, and Atheists/Agnostics favored same-sex marriage, with Atheists/Agnostics showing the highest level of support.

Support for Gay Rights. A quite different pattern appears, however, on a broader question of gay rights, reported in the second section Table 23. Overall, there was a high degree of support for this measure of gay rights across the religious landscape, with just a few exceptions. One of these exceptions, Black Protestants, shows relatively low support for gay rights that is apparently of recent vintage.

Two-thirds of the entire sample in 2004 agreed with the statement “Homosexuals should have the same rights as other Americans,” and just one-third disagreed. One sixth had no opinion.

Most of the major religious traditions agreed with this statement of gay rights. Evangelical Protestants scored lowest (a bit over two-fifths), while the Unaffiliated scored the highest (almost three-quarters).

The two groups most in disagreement with this measure of gay rights were Traditionalist Evangelicals (one-half) and Black Protestants (more than two-fifths). The Other Christians were evenly divided.

However, all the Traditionalist groups were less supportive of this measure of gay rights than their Modernist counterparts, which had strong majorities in favor.

In addition, all the Centrist groups and the Latino groups backed gay rights, as did the Unaffiliated Believers, the Other Faiths, Jews, Seculars, and Atheists/Agnostics. No doubt these results reflect the American emphasis on individual rights, a value strong even among Traditionalists. But it also reveals considerable tolerance for individual homosexuals on a wide variety of topics—but not yet the institution of marriage.

The relative opposition of Black Protestants to gay rights may surprise some observers, given this group’s historic focus on civil right. But it fits with a broader pattern of issue positions. As we have seen, Black Protestants on balance hold conservative positions on social issues, such as marriage, abortion and stem cell research. These positions reflect the traditional religiosity that characterizes much of the black church. The recent debate on same-sex marriage may well have reinforced this tendency. However, such social-issue conservatism has yet to significantly alter the strong Democratic partisanship of Black Protestants.

Trend Analysis. Table 24 looks at change in opinion on this measure of gay rights since 1992. Overall, the level of support for gay rights has increased, from better than one-half to almost three-fifths. All but one of the major traditions showed gains in support for gay rights, including Evangelical Protestants. Estimates in the previous surveys suggest that the Traditionalist groups followed this pattern.

Table 24. Major Religious Traditions and Gay Rights, 1992-2004

Percent agree, homosexuals should have same rights ad other Americans

	2004	2000	1996	1992	1992-2004 Net Change
ENTIRE SAMPLE	57%	60%	56%	51%	+ 6%
Evangelical Protestant	45%	43%	42%	35%	+10%
Mainline Protestant	60%	62%	57%	55%	+ 5%
Black Protestant	40%	56%	65%	59%	-19%
Catholic	64%	67%	61%	57%	+ 7%
Latino Catholic	61%	72%	73%	56%	+ 5%
Jews	82%	74%	70%	68%	+14%
Unaffiliated	73%	71%	64%	57%	+16%

Source: National Surveys of Religion and Politics, Bliss Institute of Applied Politics 1992 (n=4001); 1996 (n=4034); 2000 (n=6000); 2004 (n=4000)

The exception to this trend was Black Protestants, who showed a decline in support for gay rights after 1996, and a sharp decline after 2000. This result may well reflect a reaction in the black churches to the debate over same-sex marriage. Whether this change is temporary or not remains to be seen.

Religion and Public Life: School Vouchers. Table 25 reports opinion on several current controversies involving religion and public life. The first topic is school vouchers, where the religious communities were divided and traditional religiosity was an important source of the division.

Overall, about two-fifths of the entire sample in 2004 agreed with the statement “The government should provide vouchers to parents to help pay for their children to attend private or religious schools,” and a little more than two-fifths disagreed. About one-sixth had no opinion.

School vouchers not only divided the sample as whole, they also evenly divided Evangelical Protestants and Catholics. In contrast, Mainline Protestants and the Unaffiliated as a whole were solidly opposed to vouchers.

The strongest supporters of school vouchers were Latino and Traditionalist Catholics, Traditionalist Evangelicals and Latino Protestants. Centrist Evangelicals, Centrist Catholics, Unaffiliated Believers, and Black Protestants were more evenly divided.

Table 25. The Religious Landscape, Religion and Public Life, Spring 2004

	Support School Vouchers*			Support Funds for Faith-based Groups*			Support Posting of Ten Commandments*		
	<i>Agree</i>	<i>No Op</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>No Op</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>No Op</i>	<i>Disagree</i>
ENTIRE SAMPLE	39%	16	45	50%	16	34	66%	14	20
Evangelical Protestant	44%	15	41	57%	16	27	83%	9	8
<i>Traditionalist Evangelical</i>	<i>51%</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>59%</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>91%</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Centrist Evangelical</i>	<i>41%</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>42</i>	<i>58%</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>82%</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Modernist Evangelical</i>	<i>28%</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>56</i>	<i>45%</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>38</i>	<i>56%</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>30</i>
Mainline Protestant	29%	15	56	44%	19	37	68%	13	19
<i>Traditionalist Mainline</i>	<i>37%</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>60%</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>80%</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Centrist Mainline</i>	<i>30%</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>46%</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>76%</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Modernist Mainline</i>	<i>18%</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>67</i>	<i>29%</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>44%</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>42</i>
Latino Protestants	51%	18	31	62%	11	27	67%	20	13
Black Protestants	40%	17	43	61%	16	23	67%	20	13
Catholic	42%	16	42	49%	15	36	67%	14	19
<i>Traditionalist Catholic</i>	<i>52%</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>61%</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>83%</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Centrist Catholic</i>	<i>44%</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>41</i>	<i>46%</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>39</i>	<i>68%</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Modernist Catholic</i>	<i>32%</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>52</i>	<i>43%</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>42</i>	<i>52%</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>36</i>
Latino Catholic	58%	20	22	59%	18	23	55%	24	21
Other Christian	37%	20	43	41%	23	36	60%	15	25
Other Faiths	36%	13	51	41%	9	50	41%	14	45
Jewish	42%	3	55	37%	7	56	34%	8	58
Unaffiliated	32%	15	53	36%	15	49	44%	15	41
<i>Unaffiliated Believers</i>	<i>41%</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>48%</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>57%</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Secular</i>	<i>29%</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>36%</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>48</i>	<i>43%</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>44</i>
<i>Atheist, Agnostic</i>	<i>22%</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>65</i>	<i>16%</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>68</i>	<i>25%</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>63</i>

*All rows sum to 100%. Agree=agree, strongly agree; disagree=disagree, strongly disagree; No Op=no opinion.

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

None of the Mainline Protestant groups showed majority support for school vouchers, although the Traditionalist Mainliners were most supportive.

Meanwhile, all the Modernist groups strongly opposed school vouchers as did the Other Christians, Other Faiths, Jews, Seculars, and Atheists/Agnostics.

Funding of Faith-Based Groups. There was, however, much more support for public funding of faith-based organizations across the diverse religious communities.

Overall, one-half of the entire sample in 2004 agreed with the statement “Public funding should be available to churches and houses of worship to provide social services for the needy,” and about one-third disagreed. About one-sixth had no opinion.

All of the major religious traditions supported this faith-based initiative except for the Unaffiliated, who were majority opposed.

The most support for faith-based funding came from Latino Protestants, followed by Black Protestants and Latino Catholics. Within the three largest Christian traditions, the Traditionalist groups were the most supportive, by large majorities.

Centrist Evangelicals and Catholics also on balance backed faith-based programs, as did the Unaffiliated Believers and Modernist Evangelicals. Modernist Catholics and Other Christians were more evenly divided.

Opposition to such programs came from Modernist Mainline Protestants, Other Faiths, Jews, Seculars, and Atheists/Agnostics (who were the most opposed).

Religious Symbols in Public Places. The final entry in Table 25 concerns religious symbols in public places, focusing on the recent controversy regarding the Ten Commandments. There was widespread support for the public display of such symbols.

Overall, two-thirds of the entire sample in 2004 agreed with the statement “Local communities should be allowed to post the Ten Commandments and other religious symbols in public buildings if the majority agrees,” and just one-fifth disagreed. About one-sixth had no opinion.

All the major religious traditions agreed with this statement. And not surprisingly, so did large majorities of the Traditionalist and Centrist groups. In addition, Latino and Black Protestants, Other Christians, Unaffiliated Believers, and Latino Catholics agreed as well. Here the Modernists were less supportive than the Traditionalists, but in all cases agreed with the statement.

Substantial disagreement with this statement was found among non-Christians: Atheists/Agnostics, Jews, Other Faiths, and Seculars.

This statement taps not only into popular religious symbols, but also the values of localism and majority rule.

Table 26. Major Religious Traditions, Vouchers, and Faith-based Programs, 2000-2004

Percent Agree, School Vouchers

	2004	2000	2000-2004 Net Change
ENTIRE SAMPLE	39%	42%	- 3%
Evangelical Protestant	44%	46%	- 2%
Mainline Protestant	29%	33%	- 4%
Black Protestant	40%	50%	-10%
Catholic	42%	45%	- 3%
Latino Catholic	58%	52%	+ 6%
Jews	42%	37%	+ 5%
Unaffiliated	32%	34%	- 2%

Percent Agree, Faith-based Programs

	2004	2000	2000-2004 Net Change
ENTIRE SAMPLE	50%	45%	+ 5%
Evangelical Protestant	57%	44%	+13%
Mainline Protestant	44%	37%	+ 7%
Black Protestant	61%	65%	- 4%
Catholic	49%	45%	+ 4%
Latino Catholic	59%	58%	+ 1%
Jews	37%	35%	+ 2%
Unaffiliated	36%	37%	- 1%

Source: National Surveys of Religion and Politics, Bliss Institute of Applied Politics 2000 (n=6000); 2004 (n=4000)

Trend Analysis. Table 26 reports on changes in opinion since 2000 on support for school vouchers and faith-based programs.

Overall, support for school vouchers declined slightly between 2000 and 2004, with all but one of the major religious traditions showing decreased support for vouchers. The exception was Latino Catholics, where there was a large increase in backing, but within a group already supportive of vouchers.

Estimates from the 2000 survey suggest an important cause of this decline in support. While the Traditionalist groups remained steady in their support for vouchers, the Modernist groups moved strongly in the opposite direction. Something analogous happened among Black Protestants with the less traditional members becoming much less supportive of vouchers, even though the most traditional Black Protestants reported continued support. A reverse pattern appears to have occurred among Latino Catholics and Jews: more traditional members became more supportive of vouchers.

Overall, support for faith-based programs increased modestly between 2000 and 2004. This increase was largely attributable to increased support from white Protestants, especially Evangelicals. Estimates from previous surveys suggest that the change occurred substantially among Traditionalist Evangelical and Mainline Protestants. These groups were initially suspicious of faith-based programs after the 2000 election.

The Religious Landscape and Self-Identified Ideology

A fitting way to conclude this analysis is with self-identified ideology, reported in Table 27. To some extent, ideology can be thought of as the sum of a respondent's issue positions. Overall, the distributions of ideology across the political spectrum resembled partisanship. Traditionalists were the most conservative, while Modernists, Non-Christians, and the Unaffiliated tended to be more liberal.

Overall, a little more than one-third of the entire sample in 2004 claimed to be “conservative,” a bit more than two-fifths “moderate,” and roughly one-fifth “liberal.”

More than one-half of Evangelical Protestants as a group described themselves as conservative, but note the great variation among them: two-thirds of the Traditionalist Evangelicals were conservative compared with less than one-third of the Modernists—with the Centrists falling almost exactly in between the two (about one-half conservative).

Liberals were rare among Traditionalist Evangelicals, but increased sharply with the Modernist Evangelicals, so that more than two-thirds were either moderate or liberal. The Other Christians also contained many conservatives, but moderate was the largest category.

Table 27. The Religious Landscape and Self-Identified Ideology, Spring 2004

	<i>Conservative</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Liberal</i>	
ENTIRE SAMPLE	35%	43	22	=100%
Evangelical Protestant	55%	31	14	
<i>Traditionalist Evangelical</i>	66%	25	9	
<i>Centrist Evangelical</i>	48%	36	16	
<i>Modernist Evangelical</i>	30%	39	31	
Mainline Protestants	34%	46	20	
<i>Traditionalist Mainline</i>	49%	38	13	
<i>Centrist Mainline</i>	37%	43	20	
<i>Modernist Mainline</i>	15%	56	29	
Latino Protestants	32%	44	24	
Black Protestants	27%	48	25	
Catholic	33%	47	20	
<i>Traditionalist Catholic</i>	54%	39	7	
<i>Centrist Catholic</i>	29%	49	22	
<i>Modernist Catholic</i>	21%	50	29	
Latino Catholic	25%	47	28	
Other Christian	44%	47	9	
Other Faith	10%	46	44	
Jewish	19%	35	46	
Unaffiliated	20%	48	32	
<i>Unaffiliated Believers</i>	26%	49	25	
<i>Secular</i>	21%	48	31	
<i>Atheist, Agnostic</i>	10%	46	44	

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

Overall, Mainline Protestants and Catholics were less conservative than Evangelicals (at about one-third each). But a similar pattern occurred within each tradition: the Traditionalists were the most conservative, the Modernists the least, and the Centrists—as one might expect--were found in-between.

The Latino groups and Black Protestants were markedly less conservative than their white counterparts, with the largest proportion describing themselves as moderate. A similar pattern held for the Unaffiliated Believers, where nearly one-half were moderates. The Seculars also contained as many moderates, with a modest liberal slant.

The most liberal groups were Jews, the Other Faiths, and the Atheists/Agnostics (all more than two-fifths).

Table 28. The Religious Landscape by Ideology, Spring 2004

	Conservative	Moderate	Liberal	
	<u>Majority Conservative</u>			
Traditionalist Evangelical	66%	25	9	
Evangelical Protestant	55%	31	14	
Traditionalist Catholic	54%	39	7	
	<u>Majority Conservative or Moderate</u>			
Traditionalist Mainline	49%	38	13	
Centrist Evangelical	48%	36	16	
Other Christian	44%	47	9	
Centrist Mainline	37%	43	20	
ENTIRE SAMPLE	35%	43	22	=100%
Modernist Evangelical	30%	39	31	
	<u>Majority Moderate</u>			
Modernist Catholic	21%	50	29	
Modernist Mainline	15%	56	29	
	<u>Majority Moderate or Liberal</u>			
Mainline Protestants	34%	46	20	
Catholic	33%	47	20	
Latino Protestants	32%	44	24	
Centrist Catholic	29%	49	22	
Unaffiliated Believers	26%	49	25	
Black Protestants	27%	48	25	
Latino Catholic	25%	47	28	
Secular	21%	48	31	
Unaffiliated	20%	48	32	
	<u>Plurality Liberal</u>			
Jewish	19%	35	46	
Other Faith	10%	46	44	
Atheist, Agnostic	10%	46	44	

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

Table 28 reports these findings in a different fashion, listing the religious groups in order from the most Republican to the most Democratic.

- Two religious groups were majority conservative (Traditionalist Evangelicals and Catholics) and five groups were majority conservative and moderate (Traditionalist Mainline, Centrist Evangelical, Other Christians, Centrist Mainline, and Modernist Evangelical).
- Two groups were majority moderate (Modernist Catholics and Mainliners)
- Six religious groups were majority moderate and liberal (Latino Protestants, Centrist Catholics, Unaffiliated Believers, Black Protestants, Latino Catholics, Seculars).
- Three groups were plurality liberal (Jews, Other Faiths, and Atheist/Agnostics).

Trend Analysis. Table 29 looks at changes in ideology between 1992 and 2004. Overall, there has been only a very modest change. The only major alterations were for Evangelical Protestants, who had become majority conservative by 2004, and Jews and

Table 29. Major Religious Traditions and Self-Identified Ideology, 1992-2004

	2004		2000		1996		1992		1992-2004	
	<i>Cons</i>	<i>Lib</i>	<i>Cons</i>	<i>Lib</i>	<i>Cons</i>	<i>Lib</i>	<i>Cons</i>	<i>Lib</i>	<i>Cons</i>	<i>Lib</i>
ENTIRE SAMPLE	35	22	33	21	34	18	32	22	+ 3	0
Evangelical Protestant	55	14	49	15	45	13	42	16	+13	- 2
Mainline Protestant	34	20	34	21	35	15	35	18	- 1	+ 2
Black Protestant	27	25	26	25	27	24	23	31	+ 4	- 6
Catholic	33	20	31	18	32	19	30	21	+ 3	- 1
Latino Catholic	25	28	22	21	30	24	26	32	- 1	- 4
Jews	19	46	15	49	15	29	15	37	+ 4	+ 9
Unaffiliated	20	32	24	39	24	21	25	25	- 5	+ 7

Legend: *Cons*=conservative; *Lib*=liberal; moderate omitted for ease of presentation; moderate equal to 100% minus the sum of each pair of numbers in a single year.

Source: National Surveys of Religion and Politics, Bliss Institute of Applied Politics 1992 (n=4001); 1996 (n=4034); 2000 (n=6000); 2004 (n=4000)

the Unaffiliated became more liberal. Estimates from previous surveys suggest that the create bulk of this change occurred among Traditionalist Evangelicals.

APPENDIX Data and Methods

The Surveys. This report is primarily based on the Fourth National Survey of Religion and Politics, conducted by the Bliss Institute at the University of Akron. The survey was a national random sample of adult Americans (18 years or older), conducted in March, April, and May of 2004. The total number of cases was 4,000 and the margin of error is plus or minus two percent. The survey instrument included a large battery of questions on religious affiliation, practice, and belief. (For additional information, contact John C. Green at the University of Akron (green@uakron.edu)).

Similar surveys were taken in the spring of 1992, 1996, and 2000. All of these surveys were supported by grants from the Pew Charitable Trusts, and in 2004, the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life.

Defining the Religious Landscape. The eighteen categories used in this report were derived from measures of religious belonging, believing, and behaving. (For more details on the construction of these measures, contact John Green, the Bliss Institute, green@uakron.edu.)

The first step was to use the detailed denominational affiliation collected in the survey to sort respondents into religious traditions. Ambiguous categories (such as “just a Christian”) were sorted with the aid of belief and behavior questions.

Latino Protestants and Catholics and Black Protestants were then placed in separate categories because of their religious and political distinctiveness.

The remaining portions of three major traditions were then broken into traditionalists, centrists, and modernists based on three sets of measures. First, six belief measures (belief in God, belief in an afterlife, views of the Bible, the existence of the devil, evolution, and the truth of all the world’s religions) were combined into a single scale running from the most traditional beliefs to the most modern. This measure allowed for a great deal of nuance. Second, five measures of religious behavior (worship attendance, financial support of a congregation, private prayer, scripture reading, and participation in small groups) and the salience of religion were combined into a single scale running from the lowest to highest level of religious engagement.

Third, scales measuring identification with religious traditionalist and modernist religious movements were constructed. For evangelical Protestants, traditionalists were those who

claimed to be fundamentalist, evangelical, Pentecostal, or charismatic, and those without movement identification who agreed in preserving religious traditions. Modernists were those who claimed to be liberal or progressive, ecumenical or mainline and those without a movement identification who agreed in adopting modern religious beliefs and practices.

For mainline Protestants and Catholics, traditionalists were those who claimed to be “traditional or conservative” in the context of movement identification and those without movement identification who agreed in preserving religious traditions. Modernists were those who claimed to be liberal or progressive in the context of movement identification and those without a movement identification who agreed in adopting modern religious beliefs and practices.

For the three largest religious traditions (white evangelical and mainline Protestants and non-Latino Catholic), the belief, behavior and movement scales were combined and then divided into three groups. Although the cut-points were slightly different in each of the major tradition (reflecting their special circumstances), the traditionalists scored high on all three scales--identifying with traditionalist religious movements, having traditional beliefs, and a high level of religious engagement. The modernists identified with modernist religious movements and had a high level of modern beliefs (religious engagement made less difference in defining modernists, but overall modernists had longer levels of religious engagement). Centrists were members of each tradition that did not fall into the traditionalist or modernist groups.

Finally, the respondents that reported no religious affiliation were subdivided on the basis of belief. The Unaffiliated Believers were those with the same level of belief as the Centrists in the three largest traditions. Atheists and Agnostics were defined by self-identification, and the Seculars were the residual category.

While these categories are certainly not definitive, they do capture important regularities across the American religious landscape. Table 30 illustrates the content of these categories by looking at three important measures of religiosity: worship attendance, views of God, and views of traditional beliefs and practices.

Table 30. Defining the Religious Landscape: Measures of Religion

ENTIRE SAMPLE	Worship Attendance:			View of God:			View of Tradition:		
	<i>Regular</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Personal</i>	<i>Impersonal</i>	<i>Unsure</i>	<i>Preserve</i>	<i>Adapt</i>	<i>Adopt</i>
	43%	32	25	40%	41	19	45%	40	15
Evangelical Protestant									
Traditionalist Evangelical	87%	11	2	89%	11	0	78%	18	2
Centrist Evangelical	36%	41	23	60%	37	3	48%	43	9
Modernist Evangelical	23%	46	31	12%	56	32	30%	42	28
Mainline Protestant									
Traditionalist Mainline	59%	33	8	75%	24	1	61%	35	4
Centrist Mainline	33%	45	22	28%	55	17	33%	53	14
Modernist Mainline	19%	46	35	4%	58	38	3%	62	35
Latino Protestants	63%	31	6	57%	33	10	57%	29	14
Black Protestants	57%	33	10	54%	44	2	43%	38	19
Catholic									
Traditionalist Catholic	87%	11	2	56%	44	0	65%	32	3
Centrist Catholic	45%	36	20	34%	59	7	29%	55	16
Modernist Catholic	21%	49	30	4%	56	40	3%	66	31
Latino Catholic	47%	41	12	35%	55	10	44%	31	25
Other Christian	57%	28	15	43%	43	14	63%	28	9
Other Faiths	40%	35	25	12%	62	26	37%	43	20
Jewish	24%	49	27	10%	45	45	37%	46	17
Unaffiliated									
Unaffiliated Believers	9%	33	58	15%	70	15	NA	NA	NA
Secular	1%	20	79	2%	28	70	NA	NA	NA
Atheist, Agnostic	1%	16	83	0%	5	95	NA	NA	NA

Legend: Worship attendance: “regular”: weekly or more; “often”: 1-2 a month; few times a year; “rarely”: seldom or never; View of God: “Personal”: God is a person; “Impersonal”: God is a spirit or force; “Unsure”: not sure or doesn’t believe in God; View of Tradition: “Preserve”: strive to preserve beliefs/practices; “Adapt”: strive to adapt beliefs/practices to new times; “Adopt”: strive to adopt new beliefs/practices; NA: Not asked.