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Source: *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Autumn, 1967), pp. 259-269

Published by: Wiley on behalf of Society for the Scientific Study of Religion

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# POLITICAL VALUES AND RELIGIOUS CULTURES: JEWS, CATHOLICS, AND PROTESTANTS\*

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**Instances of political behavior which bear no rational relationship to maximizing a group's material and social self-interest may be explained as responses to subcultural factors. Religious groups in America, despite their generally high level of acculturation, still retain ethical and belief systems which influence basic conservative-liberal political orientations. The criteria used to distinguish sect from church seem to be of less importance in shaping political predispositions than beliefs centering around revealed dogma, salvation, impulse life, intellectualism vs. faith, and the nature of evil. The cultural belief systems of the various denominations operate as independent variables within the social structure.**

THE literature on pressure groups and voting behavior demonstrates that American politics are, for the most part, "rational." That is to say: group attitudes and actions are generally directed toward promoting some kind of substantive measure which the group deems beneficial to its interests. Thus we can observe party-class voting correlations, union support of the closed shop, business opposition to certain state regulations, rural opposition to reapportionment, Negro support of civil rights, Catholic support of parochial school aid, etc. The objective position an individual or group occupies in the social structure, and the material conditions operating therein, determine much about individual or group percep-

tions and evaluations of life, including political life.

Corresponding to the above definition of "rational," "irrational" political behavior would be that kind of action or attitude which is intended to minimize rather than maximize socio-economic self interest (for instance, unions opposing the closed shop and Negroes supporting an inferior status for themselves). Are there such instances of political behavior, and if so, how might they be explained?

In the Wilson and Banfield study<sup>1</sup> of twenty referenda elections for bond issues to pay for public services such as hospitals, schools and parks, it was found

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\* A revised version of a paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, New York, October 29, 1965; Benjamin Nelson, program chairman.

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<sup>1</sup> James Q. Wilson and Edward C. Banfield, "Public Regardiness As a Value Premise in Voting Behavior," *American Political Science Review*, 58 (1964), 876-887. These elections were held in seven major cities between 1956 and 1963.

that the groups which because of their income level would pay little or nothing at all and yet benefit most from the services were also the groups which were most opposed to such services. These were the Poles, Czechs, Italians, Irish and other Catholic ethnic groups. Conversely, upper income white Protestants and Jews, the very groups that would be paying the costs while benefitting least, were the strongest supporters of the proposed expenditures. (The only group acting according to rational self interest was the low-income Negroes, who were supporters of public services.) The correlations were too compelling to assume that the voters of all groups were acting out of ignorance of their actual material interests; such ignorance would have produced more random results. It might be that upper-income groups place less value on the dollar or are better schooled civically, but these appear to be, at best, only partial explanations. More likely, the authors conclude, the WASP and Jewish sub-cultures tend "to be more public-regarding and less private-(self or family) regarding" than are the Catholic ethnic sub-cultural groups.<sup>2</sup>

While no delineation of these cultural ingredients was attempted by Wilson and Banfield, their findings do lead us directly to Max Weber's consideration of culture as a force operating independently of the objective or material factors, an understanding Weber submitted not to confound but to complement the usually recognized materialist interpretations of causality.<sup>3</sup> According to We-

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 882-885. Wilson's study of the Democratic reform movement in New York shows a similar division between liberal-activist-reformist Jews and WASPs on the one hand, and conservative, non-ideological, politically traditional Irish and Italian Democrats on the other. See James Q. Wilson, *The Amateur Democrat*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

<sup>3</sup> Weber's best known and probably most

ber, different social groups possess some kind of "style of life" and operate under the influence of distinct, albeit sometimes implicit, moral ideas, among which are those associated (or originally associated) with religion. These ideas or values, while frequently a response to material conditions, are also often the product of other ideas which persist in the face of drastically changing material conditions.<sup>4</sup> Ideas, for Weber, are also an expression of human aspirations and longings that seem to transcend a particular material environment, frequently in response to some deep-seated spiritual challenge.<sup>5</sup> Religious belief systems possess both the inspirational and the durable traditional qualities and through much of history have played a key role in the determination of moral and normative codes. While not all religions afford guidance on the many particulars of secular life (some are relatively indifferent to certain economic and political questions), the belief systems of all do provide principles and assumptions that shape

pertinent work on this question is *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958).

<sup>4</sup> For application of this proposition to the American scene, see Seymour Martin Lipset, *The First New Nation* (New York: Basic Books, 1963), especially the sections entitled "The Unchanging American Values and Their Connection with American Character" and "The Inadequacy of a Materialistic Interpretation of Change", pp. 110-129.

<sup>5</sup> See Reinhard Bendix's discussion of these points in *Max Weber, an Intellectual Portrait* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1962), pp. 59ff. For a broader statement on the transcendent quest, see Benjamin Nelson, "The Future of Illusions," in Contemporary Civilization Staff, Columbia University (eds.), *Man in Contemporary Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), II, 958-976. I wish to acknowledge a personal debt to my former colleague, Nelson, for much of my own interest in, and understanding of, Weber's work.

many of the basic orientations toward worldly activity.

Herein, I shall attempt to trace the religio-political value derivatives of the major American denominations. Despite the allegedly growing "Americanization," "homogenization" and secularization of religions in this society,<sup>6</sup> there exist significant differences in the ideational content of sectarian systems, especially in regard to beliefs about man's nature, his redemption and his commitments to the temporal world. These beliefs may produce, or help explain, political orientations that cannot readily be explained as manifestations of rational material self-interest.

The following discussion is to be considered suggestive rather than exhaustive in its scope. At no time is it being contended that socio-economic interests are of no importance for the shaping of group political attitudes. Nor is it to be assumed that there may not be normative persuasions other than those of a religious origin that lead to responses counter to rational self-interest (*e.g.*, some of those propagated in the name of "patriotism"). Our concern here, however, is with certain of the key components of religious sub-cultures.

#### JEWISH LIBERALISM

One of the more striking examples of the influence of religious sub-culture

<sup>6</sup> Representation of this homogenization theme may be found in Will Herberg, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, rev. ed. 1960); Martin E. Marty, *Varieties of Unbelief* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1964). For a discussion of the theological and material factors that foster denominational consensus in America, see Talcott Parsons, "The Cultural Background of American Religious Organization" in Harlan Cleveland & Harold D. Lasswell, *Ethics and Bigness, Scientific, Academic, Religious, Political and Military* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962), pp. 141-167.

is to be found in American Jewry. By most objective measures of class level, Jews occupy as high a status as the more well-to-do white Protestants. Yet support of civil rights and civil liberties, and, more significantly, support of welfare expenditures and reforms on behalf of lower strata groups (along with an addiction to the Democratic Party) remains characteristic of Jewish political behavior.<sup>7</sup>

It may be that Jews, despite high income and occupational status, still suffer many of the social disabilities of an "underdog" group, as evidenced by the exclusionist practices of an unofficial but quite prevalent upper-class anti-semitism.<sup>8</sup> Nor is this underdog sensitivity weakened by a history of ruthless oppression. Thus, it might be said that Jewish liberalism is a reaction to the marginality that challenges a seemingly solid economic position.

Without denying what was affirmed at the onset, *viz.*, the importance of the group's position in the social system in determining its perspectives, we might still wonder whether such explanations take all factors into account. First, it might be noted that Catholic ethnic groups

<sup>7</sup> The AllinSmiths find that while Jews are like Presbyterians and Congregationalists in their professional and white collar SES level, their opinions on policies affecting job security are like those of the Baptist and Catholic urban workers. Wesley and Beverly AllinSmith, "Religious Affiliation and Politico-Economic Attitude," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, XII (1948), 377-389. See also Lawrence Fuchs, *The Political Behavior of the American Jews* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1956).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. E. Digby Baltzell, *The Protestant Establishment, Aristocracy and Caste in America* (New York: Random House, 1964). On the distinction between the Jews' high economic status and their social "subordination," see W. Lloyd Warner and Leo Srole, *The Social System of American Ethnic Groups* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1945), p. 96.

such as the Irish, Italians, and Poles have had somewhat comparable centuries of hardship behind them. Starvation, oppression, and harsh military occupation is the history of Ireland, Poland and Southern Italy. Similarly, the discrimination and exploitation accorded the Catholic newcomers in America were at least as severe as anything the Jewish immigrants encountered. Yet among the Catholic groups we find few traces of that liberal reform-mindedness which seems a substantial sentiment in the Jewish community.<sup>9</sup>

If oppression and marginality have been, then, the common lot of many, it may be said that the various groups have defined and reacted to such historical experiences in accordance with their respective value systems. Is there anything in the Judaic view of life that might help explain Jewish liberalism? Fuchs and others have observed several distinct themes:<sup>10</sup>

(1) The usual tension between faith and intellect does not grip Judaism. If anything, the spiritual leader in the Jewish community was traditionally not one who cultivated an inner-worldly asceticism or other-worldly spirituality, but one who was expert in the interpretation and application of the law. The synagogue was also the *shul*, a place of study as well as a place of worship. Given this intimate connection between learning and religion, "the religious virtuoso was not the saint but the scholar."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> See Allin Smith, *op. cit.*; also Milton Himmel-farb, "The Jew: Subject or Object?" *Commentary*, XL (1965), 54-57.

<sup>10</sup> Fuchs, *op. cit.*, pp. 171-203; also Himmel-farb, *op. cit.*; Werner J. Cahnman, "The Cultural Consciousness of Jewish Youth," *Jewish Social Studies*, XIV (1952), 198-199; Israel S. Chipin, "Judaism and Social Welfare" in Louis Finkelstein, *The Jews, Their History, Culture and Religion* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949), Vol. I, Chapter 16.

<sup>11</sup> Marshall Sklare, *Conservative Judaism*:

Historically, for Jews, the intellectual has not been an object of scorn, but a man to be esteemed and entrusted with the responsibilities of leadership and power.<sup>12</sup>

(2) In modern times, Judaism has been less an other-worldly theology and formulated creed than a system of practices, observances and moral commitments. An important component of of the morality of Judaism is the continuing obligation to live with some dedication to social betterment and justice. Prayer and personal piety alone do not make one a Jew. Redemption is to be found in the worldly enactment of God's love and charity as evidenced by one's efforts on behalf of his fellow men and his community: one must be "a Jew for the world." Closely associated with the idea of social justice is the belief that the Jews, as the chosen people, serve a distinct missionary purpose in the world. Exile is not seen as the punishment of a wrathful Yahweh, but as fulfillment of the divine purpose: they are to serve God by working for social righteousness wherever Jews be found. "Our secret weapon as a people," David Ben-Gurion instructs, "is our moral, intellectual and spiritual superiority which we inherited from the Bible."<sup>13</sup>

(3) Whatever may be said of orthodox Old Testament strictures, Judaism does not, like traditional Christianity, teach ascetic renunciation as the prime means to personal salvation. A high value is placed on life in this world. Bodily ap-

*An American Religious Movement* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1955).

<sup>12</sup> The Israeli "Knesset is as packed with historians and economists as our Congress is studded with lawyers." Fuchs, *op. cit.*, p. 180 fn.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted in the *New York Times*, May 26, 1965, "Ben-Gurion Urges Jewish Renewal." See also Oscar Handlin, "Judaism in the United States," in James Ward Smith and A. Leland Jamison, *The Shaping of American Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 122-161.

petites are understood to be natural and acceptable rather than sinful, and one does not face the world in a chronic state of antagonistic, guilt-ridden self-denial. Liberal reforms designed to maximize man's well-being and happiness on earth are part of a noble quest untainted by a fear of worldliness, sin, or loss of salvation. Life is reaffirmed rather than renounced.

Even if we were to grant Nathan Glazer's contention that contemporary Jewish liberalism derives more from nineteenth century liberalism and socialism than from the Judaic religious tradition,<sup>14</sup> we might still wonder why Jews of that day responded to and initiated such political traditions rather than electing any one of several other alternatives open to them. Jewish liberalism today may be an example of how the value commitments of a religion persist as an "idea of life" well after the specific theological underpinnings are discarded. This is what Weber meant when he spoke of the "ghost of dead religious beliefs." To the extent that Jews today are concerned with questions like "What examples of Jewish life shall we present to the world?" and "What are the special ethical demands made upon a man who calls himself a Jew?", they are still involved in a distinct ethno-religious tradition.

#### CATHOLIC CONSERVATISM

In contrast to Jewish political behavior, the Catholic tradition in America could hardly be characterized as liberal-reformist. Democratic party affiliations among Catholic voters reflect their urban working class background and status interests (*viz.*, the status attractions of Democratic Catholic candidates for high office), rather than any commitment to liberalism. And their loyalty to the Democratic party, especially in the post-

<sup>14</sup> Nathan Glazer, *American Judaism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), Chapter 8.

war years, has been markedly less stable than that of Jews and Negroes.<sup>15</sup>

The special popularity enjoyed by Father Coughlin and Senator Joseph McCarthy and the lukewarm response to civil rights among the Catholic lay public, along with somewhat conservative attitudes toward civil liberties, censorship and Communism, place American Catholics decidedly further from the liberal side of the political spectrum than might be supposed, were judgments made solely on the basis of voting returns.<sup>16</sup> Among lower middle-class Catholics there is growing evidence of an ultra-conservatism at least as virulent as any found among middle-class urban Protestants, and certainly of a kind alien to middle-class Jews. One Catholic writer suggests that the conservatism of William Buckley is probably preferred to the liberalism of *Commonweal* by most of the rank and file faithful "and the less articulate of the clergy."<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Catholic attachments to the Democratic party have been evident at all income levels. However, unlike the Jews, Democratic affiliation decreases as income rises. See P.F. Lazarsfeld *et. al.*, *The Peoples Choice* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1944). See Angus Campbell *et. al.*, *The American Voter* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1960), pp. 301-306. The Catholic vote in 1956 actually went Republican despite the low Catholic SES level. The appearance of John Kennedy brought this group's vote back into the Democratic column in 1960.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Gary Wade Marx, *The Social Basis of the Support of a Depression Era Extremist: Father Coughlin* (Berkeley, California: Survey Research Center, University of California, 1962); Alan F. Westin, "The John Birch Society," in Daniel Bell (ed.), *The Radical Right* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1964), pp. 239-268; Seymour Martin Lipset, "Three Decades of the Radical Right: Coughlinites, McCarthyites and Birchers," *Ibid.*, pp. 344-373.

<sup>17</sup> Henry J. Browne, "Catholicism," in Smith and Jamison, *op. cit.*, p. 107; Lipset, *op. cit.*,

An explanation may be found in the fact that the American Catholic belief system contrasts sharply with the Judaic orientation on each of the major value areas previously discussed.

(1) There is a wealth of evidence, most of it from the pens of devout Catholics, suggesting the existence of a strong anti-intellectual strain in the Catholic constituency. A religious system which stresses the unchanging truth and purity of its sacred dogma and lay obedience to hierarchical teachings is prone to view the secular and sometimes irreverent scholarship of the modern age with something less than unmitigated enthusiasm. "[In the minds of many Catholics]... 'Science' is irretrievably allied with 'atheism'," observes one Catholic sociologist, "and to ask why we have so few Catholic scientists of note is equivalent to asking why we have so few Catholic atheists."<sup>18</sup>

This "censorship mentality" has been a long-standing trait of Catholic America. In his study of nineteenth century Irish immigrants in Boston, Handlin notes that books and public schools were considered instruments of heresy, licentious-

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p. 431, shows that the John Birch Society appeals somewhat more to Catholics than to Protestants among well-to-do Republicans; Robert D. Cross concludes that the Church's liberal element has long been "conscious that the majority of Catholics in America were indifferent if not actually hostile to their program . . .", *The Emergence of Liberal Catholicism in America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958), p. 50.

<sup>18</sup> Thomas F. O'Dea, *American Catholic Dilemma* (New York: New American Library, 1962), p. 23; see also John Tracy Ellis, "The American Catholic & The Intellectual Life", *Thought*, XXX (Autumn, 1955). For a discussion of the hostility of Catholic culture toward Catholic intellectuals see Daniel P. Moynihan, "The Irish," in N. Glazer and D. Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot* (Boston: M.I.T. Press, 1963), pp. 276-286.

ness, and secularity.<sup>19</sup> The heroic Catholic effort in parochial education can be seen not as any commitment to worldly intellectuality, but rather as a protection against it.

The effects of this education tell us something about Catholic value orientations: Lenski finds, after controlling for income level and family party affiliation, that parochially educated Catholics rank obedience ahead of intellectual autonomy and tend to be more doctrinally orthodox and politically conservative than publicly educated Catholics.<sup>20</sup> A survey of midwestern Catholic students yielded the following results: only 53 per cent agreed that "love of neighbor is more important than fasting on Friday." Only 55 per cent thought that "the heart of the race question is moral and religious." Fifty-eight per cent declared that they would not "share our food with people of Communist countries if their need is great." And in choosing between "a comfortable life" and "a job which enabled you to do good to others," 77 per cent voted for personal comfort.<sup>21</sup>

(2) Catholicism is essentially a theology of personal salvation. Good works are acts of personal faith directed toward the propagation of spiritual rather than earthly values. Catholic concern for the poor traditionally has confined itself to charity work and rarely includes reformist attacks upon the abuses of the existing social system. The American hierarchy has issued statements reaffirming the necessity for individual responsibility in social and economic life and less reliance on the "inordinate demand" for benefits that arise from the

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<sup>19</sup> Oscar Handlin, *Boston's Immigrants* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1959), pp. 130-144.

<sup>20</sup> Gerhard Lenski, *The Religious Factor* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1963, rev. ed.), pp. 268-270.

<sup>21</sup> Cited in Emmet John Hughes, "God, Man and Holy Cross," *Newsweek*, May 3, 1965, p. 21.

pressures of organized social action.<sup>22</sup> It is felt that by relying on temporal rather than spiritual agencies, liberals propagate worldly values and obscure the far greater task of saving one's eternal soul.<sup>23</sup>

(3) "One often has the impression," observes a noted French Dominican, "that American Catholics are more Puritan than anybody else and that they are very close to setting themselves up as the Champions of Puritanism."<sup>24</sup> (The same writer conjectures that it was this Puritan mentality of "either virtue or the reign of terror" that made Catholics so responsive to McCarthyism.) The Catholic Church, while not as ascetic as many Protestant fundamentalist sects (dancing, drinking, and gambling in moderation are not sinful), contains within it a strong antagonism toward the erotic and pleasurable components of life. The orientation is "puritanical" insofar as it emphasizes the inherent propensity for sin in man's nature, the dangers of fleshly temptation, the proximity of hell, and the pitfalls of "too much freedom." Evil is willed and individually, rather than socially, caused. Viewed from this perspective, liberalism frequently appears as an invitation to self-indulgence, license and concupiscence. What are, for the liberal, social problems calling for social solutions (e.g., juvenile

delinquency and crime) are, for many Catholics, problems of discipline, authority, and personal rectitude.<sup>25</sup> Lacking true religious commitment, and suffering under the illusion that man is perfectible without divine intervention, the liberal coddles the evil-doers while encouraging moral irresponsibility. He strives too hard for happiness in this world because he does not believe in the happiness of the next.

In conclusion, it might be observed that much of American Catholic sociopolitical conservatism might be ascribed to the peasant ethnic cultures of the various Catholic groups rather than to religious belief systems *per se*.

Yet, lest undue reliance be placed on the secular antecedents of immigrant life, it should be remembered that the Old World peasant values themselves emanated from, and were heavily influenced by, Catholicism. This is certainly true of the group that has shaped and dominated the American Church—the Irish Catholics.<sup>26</sup> Finally, it should be kept in mind that whatever the peculiarities of Jansenist-Irish or Italian and Polish peasant conservative influences, the Catholic belief orientations described above are not exclusively American. It need only be noted that liberal English Catholics have observed in English Catholicism the same elements of insularity, "censorship mentality" and want of liberal social commitment.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Quoted in Roger A. Freeman, "Big Government and the Moral Order," *The Catholic World*, May, 1962, p. 88.

<sup>23</sup> William A. Osborne, "The Catholic Church and the Desegregation Process" (a paper presented at the 1965 Conference of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion), notes the dysfunctional effects of such a theology with respect to the civil rights struggle.

<sup>24</sup> Rev. R. L. Bruckberger, O.P., "The American Catholics as a Minority," in Thomas T. McAvoy (ed.), *Roman Catholicism and the American Way of Life* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1960), pp. 46-47.

<sup>25</sup> See Leo Pfeffer, "Changing Relationships Among Religious Groups," *The Journal of Intergroup Relations* (1960), 81-93, for a brief comparison of the Jewish, Protestant and Catholic views.

<sup>26</sup> The peculiarly Jansenist qualities of American Catholicism are ascribed by most informed observers less to the influence of American Protestantism and more to the overbearing impact of the Irish. See Moynihan, *op. cit.*; Rev. James Shannon, "The Irish Catholic Immigration," in McAvoy, *op. cit.*, pp. 204-210.

<sup>27</sup> See the essays by a group of English Cath-

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The particulars of historical origin, name and ecclesiology that distinguish the many Protestant churches are less crucial for the purposes of this analysis than the differences between fundamentalists and modernists which, even while separating one sect from another, also tend to cut across denominational lines.<sup>28</sup> One should take exception to the presumption that every theological conservative is a political conservative, but one cannot deny the existence in Protestantism of a congruence between religious belief and political orientation.

What is especially interesting is the striking resemblance in underlying belief orientations between fundamentalist Protestantism and Catholicism on the one hand, and liberal Protestantism and Judaism on the other. Most sects of a predominantly fundamentalist hue eschew hierarchical control, priest administered sacramental grace, and elaborate liturgy and canon doctrine; there does exist, however, a distrust of intellectuality, a strong faith in sacred dogma, an other-worldly emphasis on salvation, and an ascetic rejection of secularity, of the kind represented in Catholicism. For the fundamentalist, the Bible is the unchallengeable source of Christian faith and the font of all sacred wisdom. The truth is final, fixed and revealed, something to be learned and obeyed; the intellectual search, therefore, can only

olics in Michael de la Bedoyère (ed.), *Objections to Roman Catholicism* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1965).

<sup>28</sup> See A. Leland Jamison, "Religions on the Christian Perimeter," in Smith and Jamison, *op. cit.*, pp. 182 ff., for a discussion of the historical background of the liberal-orthodox controversy. Also Winthrop S. Hudson, *American Protestantism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 143 ff.

lead one astray. As with many Catholics, the fundamentalists often consider secular intellectuality to be a potential threat to faith; at best, it is a form of excessive worldliness, and at worst, an open invitation to heresy.

For the fundamentalist, it is God alone who rewards and punishes and who will deliver final judgment at the Second Coming. Man is guilty of hubris in thinking that he can solve the world's ills through secular effort. One's real task is to attend to personal faith and piety and wait for the day when God will decide that righteousness shall prevail in His universe. The fundamentalist ethos has little concern for social, racial, and international justice, for it "denies the existence of this world and its woes" and substitutes a "putative society in the Kingdom of God," wherein the underprivileged, by virtue of their piety and special religious endowment, will be the elite.<sup>30</sup>

Rejection of worldliness, however, means neither withdrawal from the world, nor protest against the established structure of society. Thrift and industriousness which foster steadiness in work and individual achievement are, as in Calvin's day, traits of the good Christian.<sup>31</sup> The faithful must believe in the

<sup>29</sup> Browne observes, "It is probably not so well known what a large percentage of Catholics—and Southern Protestants—the Federal Bureau of Investigation is glad to have as employees in work that requires a certain high moral stability." Browne, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

<sup>30</sup> Quoted from Walter Goldschmidt, "Class Denominationalism in Rural California Churches," *American Journal of Sociology*, IX (1944), 354. See also René de Visme Williamson, "Conservatism and Liberalism in American Protestantism," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 344 (Nov., 1962), 76-84.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Charles C. Cole, Jr., *The Social Ideas of the Northern Evangelists* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954); also Liston

avoidance of worldly pleasures, amusements and esthetic frivolities and must be, in Weber's phrase, devoted to "the destruction of spontaneous, impulsive enjoyment."<sup>32</sup>

There is substantial evidence to support the proposition that fundamentalism may lead to certain kinds of conservative political derivatives. One only has to note, as have Liston Pope and others, the affinity between the values of ascetic Protestantism and the ideals and interests of the business community, or the nature of fundamentalist political attacks upon the liberal National Council of Churches, or the response of fundamentalist populations to right-wing candidates (especially discernible during the 1964 elections), or the prominence of fundamentalist preachers in those movements preoccupied both with the "devil influence" of Communism and with apocalyptic anticipations of an East-West conflagration—a kind of political rendition of the Last Judgment.<sup>33</sup>

Theologically liberal Protestantism, in contrast to fundamentalism, does not place exclusive reliance on the Bible as the source of spiritual guidance and faith; rather it entertains the proposition that the Scriptures contain historical errors and occasional ethical contradictions and aberrations which are open

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Pope, *Millhands and Preachers* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942).

<sup>32</sup> See Benton Johnson, "Do Holiness Sects Socialize in Dominant Values?" *Social Forces*, XXXIX (1961), 309-316.

<sup>33</sup> Pope, *op. cit.*, Cole, *op. cit.*; Williamson, *op. cit.*; David Danzig, "The Radical Right and the Rise of the Fundamentalist Minority," *Commentary*, XXXIII (April, 1962), 291-298; and Danzig's "Conservatism after Goldwater," *Commentary*, XXX (March, 1965), 31-37. Several of the essays in Bell, *op. cit.*, also draw the link between fundamentalism and ultra-conservatism. Also, Richard Dudman, *Men of the Radical Right* (New York: Pyramid Books, 1962).

to the challenge of modern scholarship and the human intellect. Emphasis is on God's immanence in Nature and the present world. Like the Jews, and in contrast to Catholics and fundamentalists, modernist Protestants have largely discarded the ideas of hell and devil. Personal sin is not the cause of all the world's ills; rather, attention should be focused on social, economic and political forces.<sup>34</sup> The Christian ethic, then, must be applied not only to private conduct but to the public sphere as well. Redemption is achieved by participation in the kind of social commitment that will lead to the Christianizing of the economic, political and social order, the true fulfillment of the Church's mission in this world. With its antecedents in the Social Gospel movement of the early part of this century, liberal Protestantism represents a decisive gravitation away from the theistic and traditional elements of Christianity and toward the humanistic and reformist.<sup>35</sup>

The political effects of this kind of belief orientation are perhaps most visible in the "irrational" positions held by articulate elements of the mainstream Protestant ministry and by organizations like the National Council of Churches on such issues as race relations, international affairs, and social welfare—especially when these positions are compared to those assumed by fundamentalist groups.<sup>36</sup> Rational responses to

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<sup>34</sup> Cf. John Dillenberger and Claude Welch, *Protestant Christianity* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954), pp. 217-223. Also Jami-son, *op. cit.*; Hudson, *op. cit.*; and Williamson, *op. cit.*

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Walter Rauschenbush, *Christianizing the Social Order* (New York: Macmillan, 1912).

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Murray S. Stedman, Jr., *Religion and Politics in America* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1964), *passim*; Benton Johnson, "Ascetic Protestantism and Political Preference," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, XXVI (1962), 39-40; also Pope, *op. cit.*, p. 164; James

material self-interest, however, are still evident among the faithful rank and file. Thus, Benton Johnson finds that parishioners among the liberal denominations tend, in accordance with their higher socio-economic status, to be more Republican than are fundamentalist believers,<sup>37</sup> and most studies support the impression that modernist Protestant clergy are usually more liberal than their followers. Nevertheless, the influence of the church's orientation on the political predispositions of the faithful is not to be discounted. Johnson also discovers that upper income mainstream Protestants who attend church frequently are less Republican than those who seldom attend. The converse holds true for fundamentalists. When comparing frequent attenders of all denominations, it was found that fundamentalists are more Republican than those attending the modernist Protestant churches, even when occupational class is controlled.

#### CONCLUSION

This investigation has not focused on those political issues usually identified in the public mind with denominational controversies (*e.g.*, divorce laws, sabbath observances, parochial school aid, etc.), but rather on the less readily observable political derivatives of religious belief systems—specifically liberal-conservative orientations.

The differences in ecclesiology and social origin that usually distinguish sect

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Otis Smith and Gideon Sjöberg, "Origins and Career Patterns of Leading Protestant Clergymen," *Social Forces*, XXXIX (1961), 290-296, find that the reasons given for choosing the ministry as an occupation reflect significant denominational orientations. Thus, Episcopalian clergy tend to cite and desire to perform "service," while the fundamentalist Baptists more often speak of "God's calling."

<sup>37</sup> Johnson, "Ascetic Protestantism and Political Preference," *op. cit.* Republicanism is treated as an indicator of conservatism.

from church are less pertinent to an understanding of religiously based political valuations than are the similarities and disparities among the belief systems of the major faiths. Thus, the Roman church and the Protestant sects, while polar extremes on the church-sect spectrum, bear a striking resemblance to each other in certain crucial underlying beliefs. By the same token, the resemblances that Episcopalianism bears to Catholicism in liturgy, rites, services, conditions for membership and church organization, should not hide from view the differences in religious and political belief.

The key components of belief that seem best to distinguish the politically conservative from the liberal may be summarized as follows:

- (a) The extent to which divine teaching is considered fixed, final and unchallengeable, as opposed to being susceptible to rational investigation and modification, and consequently, the extent to which intellectualism, and many of the values associated with it, are opposed or welcomed.
- (b) The extent to which the drama of redemption and atonement is defined as a personal battle one wages for one's soul for the sake of eternal salvation, rather than as a moral commitment to a this-worldly social betterment of mankind.
- (c) The extent to which sin and evil are defined as inherent in man's nature (*e.g.*, original sin) and inevitable in his behavior (*e.g.*, concupiscence), rather than as social effects of widespread environmental causes.
- (d) The extent to which human well-being and natural pleasures are manifestations of a "lower," corrupting realm of nature, something to be repressed as the contamination of the spiritual, rather than responsibly cultivated as the fulfillment of God's beneficence.

We return to Weber's view that the cultural (or subcultural) ethic is rarely exclusively a response to "objective"

factors shaped by the productive forces. An individual or group might give any one of a variety of ideational constructions to any particular material condition before reacting to it; therefore, the question is not *whether* a people are responding to their material conditions, but rather, *why* they are responding in this way rather than in some other way. The evidence offered herein suggests that certain political predispositions which ordinarily might be defined

as "irrational" as measured against narrowly defined rational material self-interest might better be understood as reflections of subcultural religious matrices. Despite the alleged secularistic dilution of religious devotion, the beliefs held regarding man's nature, his redemption and his commitments to this and the next world compose a crucial component of that ideational environment which defines responses toward political conditions.