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FAITH AND YOUTH IN THE iPOD ERA

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. DIONNE: I want to welcome everybody here today. It's a great pleasure to host this event, and Brookings is very glad to co-sponsor it with all the groups you see here, and particularly with CIRCLE which my friend Bill Galston established, which has done extraordinary work in financing important research on political participation by the young.

I should begin by saying that I am here as an unabashed Anna Greenberg fan. Whatever Anna works on always turns out to be interesting. And by the way, since this is about generations, we should welcome Anna's mom who is here today.

I mean, Anna is well known for her political work. I happen to know, because they've told me, that people in the party opposite hers are always uneasy when Anna is on the other side because they know she's really good. But what a lot of people don't know is that Anna has been engaged both with questions about religious commitment and with concern for young people long before these concerns became fashionable. It didn't take an answer in an exit poll in which 22 percent of Americans said they voted on moral values to get Anna interested in the subject of religion. She's been there for a long time. And it didn't take the fact that people under 30 were the one outlier age group in the last election for her to realize that young people are important. That is partly, of course, because, compared to people like me, Anna is young. It's also partly because she's been a teacher and has been engaged with young people for a long time. And it's partly because she, like the rest of us ought to, understands that young people offer a distinctive voice and are indeed the future of our country.

I should say—you've all seen the cover of this report—my kids took a disproportionate interest in this event compared to other events I do here at Brookings when they saw the iPod. I confess they were a little less interested when they learned about the subject, although growing up in our household they have a certain sort of political requirement. At the very least, they humor their dad by being interested in politics. In fact, some of my favorite observations on this subject come from kids.

This is a really important study because it—well, Anna will present it, and I won't sort of intrude on that. But there is, first, a dangerous tendency to see religion as living only on the right end of our politics, and that's certainly not true. And I think there is a dangerous lack of appreciation, a misunderestimation, if I can paraphrase our president, of how important religious commitment is to civic commitment, and Anna will tell you more about her findings. But that's why I'm so glad we were able to host this event today.

What I'm going to do is begin by introducing Roger Bennett, who is a co-founder of Reboot, the principal sponsors of this project. And what an interesting life he has led. He has spent the past five years examining generational identity changes. In addition to Reboot, he has founded Grand Street, probably showing a New York City bias, sort of a downtown New York City bias, a network of young family foundation inheritors, and 2164, a consulting division specializing in the next generation and intergenerational strategic philanthropy. He has a law degree from the University of Leeds in England, and he is a co-producer of a forthcoming documentary film, "A Game of Two Halves," following a season in the life of Israel's leading Arab soccer team. He is co-author of "Bar Mitzvah Disco," an examination of identity and community as told through bar mitzvah photographs of the 1970s and 1980s. That's published by Crown Books this year. I'm sure it makes an excellent bar mitzvah gift I would call to your attention.

Then we will be followed, if she ever escapes from the traffic jam, by Malia Lazu, who is the national field director for the Cities for Progress project at the Institute for Policy Studies. The Institute for Policy Studies, as you know, is a very well-known progressive think tank. She is responsible for reaching out to and recruiting activists and local elected officials in 30 cities who work on progressive political campaigns and she is working on a number of projects connected to—well, not exactly connected to—Wal-Mart for universal health care and other questions. A graduate of Boston's Emerson College, Malia is the founder and former executive director of MassVOTE, which is a statewide nonpartisan coalition of community and faith-based neighborhood organizations.

And lastly, Bill Galston. I recently described Bill Galston to someone by saying some people can manage to speak decent sentences, some people manage to speak in whole paragraphs; Bill Galston manages to speak in whole chapters and hold your attention throughout. He is one of the smartest people I have ever met in my life. He's a political theorist, author of six books and more than 100 articles. He both studies and participates in American politics. He was deputy assistant to the president for domestic policy during the first Clinton administration; executive director of the National Commission on Civic Renewal, which was chaired by Sam Nunn and Bill

Bennett. He has served as director of economic and social programs at the Roosevelt Center for American Policy Studies here in D.C.; as chief speech writer for John Anderson's 1980 campaign, issues director for the Mondale campaign—I just call to mind he did work for Clinton, so he's had some victors; senior advisor to Al Gore during his run for the 1988 presidential nomination. He has served as the founding member of the board of the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. Bill is just a model of academic integrity and civic engagement.

So I want to bring up Roger to talk about his project and to bring on Anna Greenberg.

MR. BENNETT: Thank you very much, E.J., and thank you to the Brookings Institution for so wonderfully hosting us this afternoon. It's a great honor to be here. It's a wonderful topic for us to tackle together.

We are all very aware that we're living in an era of change within change. Previously unassailably powerful institutions have been kind of brought to their knees by the world changing about them. The record industry, as the front cover of our report so beautifully captures, has been turned inside out by the iPod. Network television has been thrown asunder by the power of the TiVo box. Even the Democratic Party, the DNC, has been turned upside down a little by MoveOn. And the army, that wonderful collective institution, is trying to persuade anyone that will listen that it's an Army of One. All of these institutions have been changed or are trying to pretend that they've changed by the forces that are surrounding them. And the question, essentially, that we're going to tackle this afternoon is how should or how well America's religious traditions navigate this extremely adaptive era.

Using the word "traditions" is an indicator of the challenge that we were all discussing. And these traditions are, in the main, thousands of years old. They've kind of thrived, you can make the case, because they cut against modern culture. They're not kind of sensitive, or over-sensitive, to popular or modern culture. They don't focus-group a huge amount, they don't poll a huge amount, unlike the record industry, network television, and the political parties. But how can they, Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim alike, discern which trends are essentially just that, fads which can be ignored, and which are more long-term trends and we can disregard them at our own peril?

Those are the questions that have perplexed all the members of the network which I am honored to represent this afternoon, Reboot, which over the past three years has engaged essentially a network of individuals from this target audience, most of whom would consider themselves unlikely candidates to do anything Jewish at the outset. Reboot essentially has engaged this network in contemplating generational changes in identity, community, or meaning, and to also take those conversations a step forward through a series of actions which are experiments, experimental mechanisms of meaning that can allow or not allow community to form around them, from journals—"Guilt & Pleasure," which is about to launch—to a record label, a film production company, and a research wing, the product of which is this that we are going to discuss this afternoon.

So Reboot, from a Jewish perspective, was founded in response to these unique challenges. It was founded on an understanding that more of the same is not going to work. If you look Jewishly, but this true for most of the denominations—I mean, our grandparents' generation socially, geographically were on the periphery of dominant society. Our grandparents lived in Skokie or in Fairfax, in L.A., or in parts of Brooklyn and Queens. They kind of lived socially in a homogenous setting. The institutions, most of which are still alive but they were all founded in that era, had a monopoly for their interests, had a monopoly for their leadership interests. Lou Wasserman might well have been in the middle of dominant society as a Jewish dude, but he was pretty well on his own. Everybody else would love to be there with him.

But essentially, generationally, it's not that we're the most affluent Jewish generation ever or the most suburban or the most unchurched, because the past two generations could all make the same case. I think the truly unique thing is that we have experienced unfettered access to the universal. We are all in the midst of American society. We can work wherever we want, we can marry whomever we want, we can hang out with whoever we want. And the question is, how can issues of identity, ritual, spirituality, heritage, and even community translate through to this new reality, this unfettered access.

Anna's going to talk a little bit about some of the phenomena that we're dealing with—diverse social networks, apparent lack of interest in institutional realities, the emphasis on the personal. These issues, we realize, can't be tackled solely through a Jewish lens nor they can be tackled just through a Catholic or a Muslim or a Protestant lens. They have to be dealt with at the macro level. And they can only be understood by doing a study that crosses the silos of faith.

We're launching this poll in between Easter and Passover. And as we went out to try and find partners in the Christian and Muslim world, we realized that it wasn't just Jews who were, with Passover coming or—Easter, the lack of young faces in pews in churches, synagogues, and, as I've learned, even now in mosques also. And we were delighted to have such an active coalition come stand by us as active partners in this ground-breaking approach to try and examine these issues across the silos of faith. The CIRCLE Foundation, Hassa [ph], and the Carnegie, Cummings, MAPS—Muslims in the Public Square—have been remarkably active partners in supporting the study, but also in standing up and, instead of just wringing their hands and asking themselves what's wrong with these kids, what's wrong with Generation Y, being prepared to stand up, dig a little bit deeper and search for a more nuanced understanding of the generation and then really experiment with the making of meaning and the transitional formation of community.

As I read the study, I think there's much to be optimistic about. The composite picture that this study gives of Generation Y is really a generation that is far more a generation of seekers than of drifters. And as we listen to Anna over the next 20 minutes or so, you can't help but think, as a representative of an institution or a representative of a denomination or as somebody who really cares about the future of community and religious community in this country, that if we can just tap into this undecided, this middle category of 46 percent who Anna has uncovered in the course of examining this study, and we experiment with creating the episodic religious experiences that they crave, then the future could look very rosy indeed.

As a representative of Reboot, which is a network of doers rather than talkers, we issue this study, this survey in the hope that it triggers conversation but it also spurs action and experimentation. Because one thing is for sure: More of the same is not going to lead to any change, and with a modicum of experimentation, creativity, self-confidence, we will work side by side with anyone who is willing to work with us to offer Generation Y the sense of meaning and the experience of community that they so deficiency deserve.

Anna?

MS. GREENBERG: Thanks. I'm going to sit here. One of the reasons I know that, while I may be young in E.J.'s eyes, that I'm not Gen Y is I can barely walk from playing my first softball game yesterday. So I'm just going to sit here and person the PowerPoint.

First of all, I just want to thank E.J., who always gives me incredibly gushing introductions and I get embarrassed. But I'm always awed by how nice he is to me and how supportive he's been in everything I've done, in all of my work. And thanks to the Brookings Institution for helping us co-sponsor and release the study at this event.

I also want to thank Roger and everybody at Reboot for being partners with me on this project, helping to raise the funds to do it, seeing it through some of our darker days, seeing us through some of the methodological difficulties in fielding the study, and being partners in releasing it, and hopefully, continuing to do work in this area.

I want to thank Bill Galston. CIRCLE gave us our first grant to get this study going. He's been incredibly supportive. I always am happy to be on a panel with him and continue to learn from him.

And I want to thank Malia, who has agreed to be an actual person who does something—though Roger does things out in the community also—but who does things that we talk about in this report maybe to be even a reality check on some of the stuff that we've found here.

I'm going to talk briefly about this report. You have copies of it. All of the graphs that I'm going to show you are in the report, so you don't have to frantically take notes or worry that you're going to miss numbers. This report and the slides and the survey will all be on the Reboot Web site and our company's Web site, so you'll be able to get everything from this report if you want it.

Let me start by talking about why we did this study. Roger said a little bit about it, but one of the things that emerged out of some of the meetings that I had with Reboot and sort of the network of young Jews that I was interacting with was a sense of not really understanding the role that religion plays in young people's lives. We have a lot of very good research, particularly in the last 10 or 15 years, about the role that religion plays in older people's lives, especially the relationship between religious participation and civic engagement and politics—some very important studies.

But understanding a little bit about the role that religious faith, commitment, practice—however you want to talk about it—plays in young people's lives at a time that's really a critical moment of identity formation, that

period between leaving your parents' home and either entering the workplace or being in school, being on your own for the first time, and at a time when you get to decide how you want to spend your time, who you want to be with, where you want to go, where you want to be a member, what you want to do with your free time, what kind of role does—and it's a really critical moment in identity formation around politics and community as well. It is this time that young people—I mean, it happens much throughout their life, but at this period of young adolescence to early adulthood is when people sort of decide who they are. And frankly, it doesn't change much. Though certain aspects of religious practice change as you age, how you think of yourself and who you are as a person doesn't change much as you get older.

We wanted to understand people at that moment, and so we raised the funds to do this research and implemented it. It was one of the hardest surveys I've ever done in my life. It was a survey—just to give you a little bit of detail—a nationally representative survey of 18-25 year-olds. It's about a 1,400 sample. It had over-samples—in other words, we did extra surveys with African American youth, Hispanic youth, Asian American youth, Jewish youth, and Muslim youth. I don't think there has ever been a study of Muslim youth, sort of stand-alone, although there have been larger studies of Muslims in the United States. And we asked a series of very rich questions about their religious practice. We were as—you know, in some ways just as interested in just chronically describing the ways that young people think about faith, the role of religion in their lives, how they practice as we were about anything else. But we also looked at how they're engaged civically, how they're engaged politically. We even were able to take a little bit of look at their political attitudes, though we didn't have a lot of time in the survey to do that.

And again, as I said, that survey will be available on the Reboot Web site and you can look at it. We really—in some ways this study just scratched the surface of the range of questions that we asked in the survey.

Part of the reason why the survey was done so self-consciously to be nationally representative, to make sure we had over-samples of youth of color and of different religious traditions is because this is a critical moment in understanding the increasing diversity of this country. I'm just going to do some of these slides as I go along.

This is—the demographers predict that we will be a majority non-white country by 2050, and it's really Generation Y that is leading this change. Generation Y is the most diverse generation in this country, the most diverse generation ever, and it is on the vanguard of continuing change. It's related to a lot of issues, but most particularly immigration and new immigrants and birth rates in immigrant communities. But you can see here on this first slide, if you look at Generation Y, which is 18-25 year-olds, you can see here that 61 percent call themselves white and the rest are either African American, Asian, Hispanic. This is changing rapidly. If you just look at even the difference between the baby boom and Gen Y, there's a huge difference on percent white. And obviously, if you look at the older generations, the Silent Generation, the G.I. Generation, nearly all white.

So it's a moment of incredible change in our country and change that we think is going to have an incredible impact on all of our institutions—our political institutions, our civic institutions, educational institutions, and certainly our religious institutions.

It's also a generation that is increasingly religiously diverse. If you look at this next chart—hopefully, you can read it, but it's also in your report if you can't read that far—if you look at this chart, you can see that there is growing religious diversity in this country. Now, one of the interesting findings of the survey was that—I was a little bit shocked that only 26 percent of Generation Y said they were Protestant. Overall, 41 percent of this country is Protestant and another 10 percent "other Christian," some of which are evangelicals or fundamentalists or Pentecostals. They just don't traditionally define themselves as Protestant.

But one of the things that was very clear in going through the survey data was that a lot of people in this age group don't actually know what denomination they belong to. So, for instance, they may know they're a Methodist or a Baptist, but they don't know that makes them a Protestant. But that's actually pretty interesting. In fact, when we were trying to look at the percentage that were evangelical, Protestants or mainline Protestants, Catholic, et cetera, we wanted to break down that evangelical category, in fact, we only found about 16 percent of people in this age group were evangelical. Well, that doesn't make sense. We know that there's been an increase in the evangelical population in this country. Well, it turns out if you don't know you're a Protestant, it's sort of hard to be categorized in a survey as an evangelical Protestant. About 40 percent of the people in our survey said they were born-again. So there's obviously more evangelicals in Generation Y than we were finding.

But the larger point is, is that part of what's going on with this generation is there's increasing religious diversity, there is a decline in traditional denomination affiliation. You can see here on this chart that nearly a

quarter of people in Generation X and Generation Y say they have no affiliation; they are nothing. Some of them say they are atheist, some of them say they're agnostic, but many of them just say I'm nothing. This is a huge difference if you look at the G.I. Generation, the Silent Generation, even the Baby Boomer Generation, a huge increase in the percentage who say I'm just nothing.

Now, one of the things we know about people's life cycle is people tend to become a little more religious as they get older. The kind of low point of religious practice—not necessarily faith, but practice, actually going to a church service, for instance—is going to happen in this time period. And so we are probably in some ways, some of these folks who are in the "nothing" category may become something as they get older. But since one of the things we know about religious identity is that it is so strongly inculcated in your family and your life growing up, there is no doubt in my mind that a large percentage of these "nothings" are going to remain "nothing," even if some of them find a faith or decide to at some point return to a faith that they were raised with.

So part of what is behind the study is to understand, again, this question of what is the role of religious identity in faith, commitment, practice at a very important period of a identity formation, a figuring out who you are in the world politically, civically, et cetera, but also at a time when this generation is on the vanguard of a change that nobody quite understands. It's something that, you know, in my political world we talk about all the time, about how this country is changing politically, but we don't exactly know what that's going to mean in 10, 15, 25 years as Generation Y become the majority of voters, for example. We have no idea what that's going to mean for our politics. So trying to understand that at a period when they're figuring out just who they are we thought was enormously important.

Let me offer a few generational comments and then I'll show you a few slides.

One of the most important things that we found in this study, despite the fact that there is a growing number of young people who just don't identify with anything at all, a decline in traditional denominationalism—certainly at this period of life they are less likely to attend any kind of religious service or do anything that's in a traditional religious institution—that religion remains an incredibly important organizing principle in young people's lives. We were not surprised—and I'll show you a slide on this later—that being religious was linked to being more civically engaged. We knew that with adults there was a strong connection between people who were religious and being more likely to be a volunteer, being active in community and voluntary associations—and that's also true of politics, though we didn't find the strength of the relationship with younger people and the relationship between religion and politics that you do with older people, and I think that's actually quite interesting. But this relationship existed with young people as well.

But even more important, or equally important, having a sense of who you are and how you define yourself and where you sit, or who you want to be friends with or where you want to be was also very strongly related to being religious. Young people who were religious—and we created a pretty complicated scale, a religiosity scale, which is in the methodological appendix of the study, where we defined certain young people as godly and certain young people as godless, and certain people in the undecided middle, which Roger referred to in his comments—but that people who were at the top end of that scale were more likely to be identified with anything. So we had a series of questions in the survey where we said, How strongly do you identify with your family? How strongly do you identify with your gender, your generation, your racial origin, your ethnic origin? And on all of those questions people who were religious were more strongly identified than people who were not religious. It didn't surprise us they were more connected to their religious identity, but they were more connected to every aspect of who they were. They were also more connected to their families, closer to their families, more likely to say they got along with their families, obviously much more likely to volunteer.

So there's a sense that I think we've understood the connection between religiosity, however you want to define it—and obviously we spent some time thinking about that, and I'll get to that in a minute—between that and civic engagement, please, et cetera, but I think that we sort of drew this out and expanded it and said actually it's not just about these things that people do, it's actually about how you think of yourself and who you are.

Now, as a secular Jew, I thought, well, the people on the godless side have made a decision not to be religious and they're finding their identity in other places and they're finding their connection to community in other places because that's what I've done. And, you know, my softball game is my religious identity and the D.C. Jewish Community Center softball league, that's my worship on Sunday morning, and so other, you know, godless youth like myself must find their identity in other places.

And I would actually say that one of the more surprising results of the study was the fact that was not true. Just as the more religious were more strongly identified in every way with who they were and where they lived and who they knew and what they did for a living, on every measure the less religious youth were less connected. They were less likely to volunteer, they were less likely to—almost, really, to have high self-esteem. And that's actually something that Christian Smith's research has shown in a pretty compelling way, that adolescents who are religious tend to have higher self-esteem, tend to have better mental health, tend to be less suicidal, are less likely to use drugs and use alcohol.

And it was true that this group in our survey, that this group of godless youth, if you will, were not necessarily making a choice not to be religious, they were sort of drifting, and it wasn't clear in this survey where they were going to find their connection. And what was also interesting is that while, not surprisingly, much of the godless or people on the end of the less religious scale were found in mainline Protestantism and Judaism, it was also found in the kids of immigrants. So Asian American youth, Hispanic youth, very disconnected from—very connected to their families, but very disconnected from traditional religious institutions and, frankly, again, on every measure of kind of identity and community involvement, you know, much, much lower.

And, you know, I'm not—we can talk about in the question-and-answer what are the implications of that, because if you look at the previous slide, these are the groups that are growing at the fastest rate in our country. The biggest groups of immigrants are coming from Mexico and China, and so these are going to be at some point—certainly Hispanics are now the largest non-white group, but Asian Americans are rapidly growing as well, and so there are, I think, a lot of implications when we think about community, that this is a group that's fairly disconnected.

Now, when we did this study, we wanted to understand the role of religious identity in the life of young people. But we also wanted to understand their lives more broadly. I think that one of the problems of a lot of research on religion in general and a lot of studies I've seen of youth is that we tend to not embed it in the other things that are going on in their lives. We tend to be interested in the thing that we're interested in and we want to know a lot about it, and we tend not to think as hard about, well, how does this actually fit in their overall lives. And so we actually asked a lot of questions about that.

We had a series of questions where we asked people, What do you worry about? What keeps you up at night? And as you can see from this chart, Your relationship with God is fairly low on the list, though with more religious youth the relationship with God, not surprisingly, was much higher on the list of things that young people worried about.

As you can see, the number one issue with the intensity measure, the thing that was very worrisome to young people, was getting an STD. Which is, you know, as a Gen Xer who lived through the onset of discovery of AIDS and sex eds in college campuses and schools about condom use and, you know, sex becoming something that isn't necessarily a symbol of freedom and liberation but as something that can kill you, it's not that surprising to me that getting an STD is so high up on the list. But I was somewhat surprised by it.

Finding a job when you get out of school—we did the survey in a period of not such great economic times for this age group; unemployment much higher in this age group than the rest of the country—grades at school, relationships, all more important than worrying about your relationship with God. I think this is something certainly, as traditional religious institutions but others as well grapple with Generation Y, trying to understand them, what they're up to, why they do what they do, you know, you have to focus on the fact that they have a lot of things going on in their lives that are much more important than certainly religion and certainly politics. Politics on some of our other measures is really at the bottom.

Now, I say this and we know that political participation was up in this election cycle and it's very clear that if you speak directly to youth and actually do something about helping them get involved in politics, they do participate. So I would not take these numbers to say forget it, don't worry about youth and politics. But there's no question that politics and faith are lower on the list of things that young people are worried about.

Now, obviously there are very big differences across different kinds of youth. For instance, African American and Jewish youth, much more concerned about politics than other youth. Obviously evangelical Christian youth much more worried about their relationship with God. So this is, you know, generalizing across the entire generation. But, you know, this is fairly low on the list. And what it means is that as you grapple with trying to figure out how to communicate with or engage young people, you're fighting against a lot of things that are frankly somewhat more important to them than worrying about their relationship with God. It doesn't negate in any way the

finding that religious identity is a framework for youth to understand who they are and their place in the world, but it does mean that you're breaking through a lot of other things as you try to engage that.

The other thing that's important here is that the way that youth are practicing religion is fairly informal. Roger alluded to this in his comments. But when we think about trying to reach youth and as traditional denominations and groups try to reach youth and try and engage them in religious life, you're not going to find them on Sunday morning in church, you're not going to find them on Friday night at synagogue. That's not where you're going to find them. You're going to find them playing softball in the DCJCC league or other places. You're going to find them at Christian rock concerts, you're going to find them within social activity.

And when we asked about a broad range of religious activities, as you can see on this chart—and certainly there is, if you look at the Total column on the left-hand side, that's what you should look at, but we broke it down by kind of that religiosity scale that we were dealing with—that it's really the more informal ways of being religious that dominate over the kind of more formal ways of practicing. Again, we did this survey at a time when youth is a little less likely to be a member of a religious institution and attend services. When people get married and have kids, they tend to come back to church or wherever it is that they belonged to when they were younger.

At the same time, it's very clear that—you know, we had a question to Jewish youth, Would you rather go to synagogue or talk about being Jewish with your friends? and talking about being Jewish, twice as many wanted to do that as opposed to going to synagogue. Which is precisely why Reboot exists, I might add.

But, you know, thinking about this growing diversity, this decline of traditional attachment to denomination, we also have an incredible array of diverse and informal ways that young people are being religious. This is not new. I mean, Robert Bellah talks in "Habits of the Heart" about Sheilaism, which is the woman who had her own way of being faithful. But, you know, I think it has become magnified with each generation.

I actually can't remember what slides I have coming next. I think I might have pretty much said everything that I wanted to say.

The one thing I didn't say which I think is important, and then I'll just stop and pass it over to Bill Galston, is that one of the reasons why I think it is so—even as we see a decline in traditional denominationalism, the rise of informal forms of religious practice, why it's so important to keep focused on it is that one of the things that was, I think, very surprising and very interesting about the study was the ways in which ascribed aspects of identity are less important, except for African Americans and some Muslim youth, are less important than communal forms of identity, for lack of a better way of describing it.

So for instance, if you look—let's just take the Asian youth column on this chart—if you look at ethnic origin and race, those are on the bottom of the list of the ways that Asian American youth—what they think is important as they think about themselves. And really African American youth are the most likely to say that their racial identity or their ethnic identity is very important to thinking about who they are, though I would note that religion still trumps race and ethnic origin for African Americans as it does for Muslim youth. And if you look, it's Family and it's Religion and Your Job and even Your School, these are all trumping more ascribed kind of aspects of identity. And I think this is maybe particular to this generation and growing. This is a generation that, you know, doesn't know what box to check on the census forms, and I think that our traditional categories that are ascribed, what you're born with, are becoming harder and harder for us to use as a way of talking about Generation Y.

The other interesting finding is the question of sexual preference. I'm sure you can see that on there, that that is the third-ranking way that people—you don't have the Total column on here, but overall, sexual preference is the second or third most important kind of aspect of identity for young people. And that was sort of an interesting finding. I had chalked it up to the fact that Generation Y politically, on social issues is pretty progressive. A majority of youth in our survey favor gay marriage; that's true in other surveys as well. And so I had chalked this up to a kind of openness and tolerance and growing progressive world view of Generation Y—which is, by the way, confirmed in this survey. But in fact it really was for more religiously conservative youth that sexual preference was important to their identity—for evangelicals, African Americans—and actually it was being straight, or not being gay was actually the aspect of sexual identity preference that was important to young people, not this more kind of progressive world view that I assumed was in that result. Which I just think is an interesting finding of the survey.

So this is an incredibly rich survey. I could talk for a long time—and I'm not going to do that, because there are other people who need to speak on this panel. Also, I think that this discussion would be much more interesting with the questions that you have about the study. So I'm just going to stop here and pass it over to Bill Galston.

MR. DIONNE: Thank you, except that I think that Malia was our— We were going to welcome Malia. I have already introduced you and your distinguished career, trying to let you get here. So thank you for fighting traffic and joining us today.

MS. LAZU: Wonderful. Hi, everybody. I want to apologize for being late. My Christian sensibilities were definitely tested while I was driving through traffic on 14th St.

You know, it's so wonderful when I get to hear these studies or participate in them and read them. And while I was reading this study on the plane coming back from Chicago, it's nice when you read a study and say, Wow, I'm really normal, right? So I'm black-Puerto Rican-Italian. I'm from Honolulu, Hawaii. I was raised Catholic and I attended a Pentecostal church for about five years. And I say that as a background to kind of say, in reading this, I was like, Oh, right, yeah, that's me, right? I know I have these—you know, I know I believe in God and I believe in Jesus, and how I show that personally is very different than how my grandparents would like to see me express that. So it was wonderful to see this.

When I thinking about what I wanted to say and what I wanted to bring, I mean, I'm an organizer, I'm a community organizer that works throughout this country primarily with the hip-hop culture and generation. And one of the things that I realized is that this generation that I'm talking about is also a huge chunk of that "undecided," meaning that of course when I say the hip-hop generation, most people think of people of color, right, they think of young black guys with, you know, corn rows or whatever we think. And really, 70 percent of all hip-hop is bought by white kids from the suburbs. And it's a great way— Yeah, really. You know, you don't go multi-platinum with just black people buying your stuff. And it's really, it's a wonderful tool for me to use because it allows me to do multi-racial organizing. It allows me to organize young people. When I talk about hip-hop, kind of like the flip side of that is one of the best skaters in the country is this black guy from Oakland. You know, and so I think that my generation is definitely also moving more toward this culture-based identity stuff and obviously still identifying with their race.

So what I wanted to do is talk about two examples that I've had that I think highlight not only the work but the potential of this poll and of this report.

The first that I wanted to talk about was I started an organization in Boston called Boston Vote that worked to increase voter participation. And when we were working within the faith community and looking for young people to organize, it was a very easy place to do it in the sense that a lot of churches have youth ministries. But what I found in working with a few churches in particular is that churches are also using a lot more cultural stuff to get more young people to come to church. So the church that I belong to, Greater Love Tabernacle—and actually it was their political ideology and work, which is why I went to a Pentecostal church and joined them for so many years—they have a recording studio at their church.

Hip-hop gospel is the largest hip-hop market that's growing right now. It's larger than women in hip-hop, it's larger than, you know, this whole homo-thug thing that we thought was going on for a minute, and it's also becoming very popular. People remember—I don't know how many people watched the Grammies, but Kanye West and his song "Jesus Walks," which is actually a fabulous gospel song, you know, his whole act was in church and going to church. And I think that using culture the same way politics used culture is going to be getting more young people into the church.

The second example that I saw in Boston in doing this work was an organization called Dunk the Vote. Dunk the Vote was an organization that actually combined—see, it's all about marketing, right? You have to just give away sneakers and they'll come. No, but it was a great combination of youth ministries and political organizing, where youth ministries organized basketball tournaments. And it was for—you know, they had two separate ages and it was men and women, and they actually also had a wheelchair league. And they competed, and then you would win prizes, and you had to be registered to vote in order to compete.

And what excited the churches about doing this was it took their organizing—you know, most churches have basketball leagues. But it was able to take their organizing and put it front and center, you know, in the 2000 election, when people were talking about how are we going to get young people out to vote. Now, of course, this was going on in Boston, Massachusetts, so no one cared what we did in the 2000 election because they knew where our votes were going to go. But what it did was not only bring people from the church outside the church, right, and to start walking around the towns where their churches are, which I think we also need to encourage more of, but it allowed people to come to them. All of a sudden it was, you know, I want to be a part of, you know, X church, I want to be a part of this church because I want to play basketball and do well.

It was a really, really great example, I think, of seeing young people coming together, the church taking that lead, spending their resources on doing that, and also talking about politics. Now, this was a nonpartisan effort, and in Massachusetts you can be nonpartisan a lot easier than you can be in some other states. So I don't know how the political, as far as Republican and Democrat aspects, would have played out.

Finally, the last couple of things that I want to highlight here is really about where I think we're going as a generation with our identity. I think a lot of times, for some groups, is a lot like voting for other groups. Everyone says, you know, that they believe in it or that they feel it. Especially, I would assume, you would find that more in the African American community. But where I see it going is there are three organizations that are right now building in Midwest states, that are using this idea of spirituality, not necessarily identified religion, as a way to organize.

The first is an organization called Endangered Species: Saving Black Men. It's an organization that not only works with young men of color coming out of jail, to reintegrate them into the community, but they also go on this—I don't know what to call it, but this spiritual quest, where they do sweat lodges and, you know, and fasts, and really try to work with these young men to get them to look internally into who they are and to the work that they do. And that organization is also a major sponsor of the national hip-hop political convention. So again, I'm excited to see the two coming together.

The second organization that I want to talk about, kind of because it's the antithesis, is an organization called—Arte. It's an organization in Puerto Rico that works with the poorest youth in Puerto Rico, which, for those of you who aren't familiar with Puerto Rico, is pretty poor. And works with them on murals and art projects to get them involved in the issues of gentrification. That organization is run by—I don't even know if this term exists, but this new, like the New Generation of Marxists, I guess you could say; the New Black Panther party, I think, is another example. So his organizing committee and the work that he does is actually completely devoid of any type of spiritual content because he's a Marxist and therefore doesn't believe in it. And I talk about—Arte because I think that there also is, you know, this feeling on the far left and fear, almost, of talking about religion, although I think it would be very helpful to the left to start doing that.

I'm going to end with a story because I like to end with stories because sometimes they can be interesting. No, but I'm going to end with a story around some work I did in 2004, when I was doing the field campaign for the Young Voter Alliance, which was a 527 and—just to put my partisan hat on for a second—was really the arm for the Young Democrats of America.

I was going around talking to quite a few young people, primarily young people of color who were trying to get to vote. And I walked—first of all, on my way to this one group in Florida, there was a commercial on the Hot 97 station down in Florida, which is the Radio One station. And it said something to the effect of support the Republicans, you know, we won the great war, we freed the slaves, what have the Democrats done for you lately? And I was kind of like, well, that's a little bit revisionist history. But it was playing on Hot 97. It was playing on the largest radio station listened to in the country, and not just by people of color. And so I thought that that was kind of interesting. And I was walking into the youth organization, the youth ministry that I was going to speak to. And I was talking about voting and why they needed to get involved and this and that. And a young person raised their hand and said, Oh, well, there's no way we can vote for Kerry. We can't vote for him. And I said, Well, why not? And he said, Oh, because he wants gays to marry.

And it was so shocking to me, because when you look at all the statistics about gay marriage, young people, just as Anna said, young people skew to be more accepting. And I kind of see gay marriage as what interracial dating was, like from my mother's generation, you know, like something her parents had a problem with, but, you know, obviously she didn't. And a lot of her generation didn't. And now we're all, you know, kind of around and we're all light enough that no one really knows what we are and just accepts us and loves us. And I saw, you know, homosexuality being that, you know, from my generation. You know, like my kids are going to be like What was that like, mom, when gay people couldn't get married? You know, and ask me those questions. And I really look forward to telling them about what it was like.

But what scared me about that was when you talk to young organizers about how to organize young people in voting, the first thing that they say is that they want to go to traditional churches. And what worries me is that, when you go to churches and you get certain messages that will tend to be more conservative than, you know, what your peers may be telling you, you're probably going to put more weight in that.

So I end with that story because I think where do we go from here. I think we need to, you know, look for creative ways, like the organizations I talked about and some of my experience I talked about, to get young people involved with a spiritual aspect. But I also say it because I think that there are a few really kick-ass dope young pastors and religious leaders that are out there, and I think we need to find ways to support them and to allow them to do their work on the streets and on the ground one-on-one in communities.

So I look forward to your-guys' questions. Thank you.

MR. DIONNE: Thank you very much. I mean, I was thinking, when Malia was describing her identity, and I was just doing some math, black-Puerto Rican-Italian Pentecostal/Catholic—when she becomes mayor of New York City, do not be surprised, because my calculations said she is a majority all by herself.

I want to welcome Bill Galston.

MR. GALSTON: No, she's actually a balanced slate. You usually have to work very hard in New York to do it.

Anna's account of the young people who prefer to talk with each other than go to religious services reminds me of an old Jewish story, of course, you know, where this guy who is just fervently anti-religious goes to synagogue every week. And finally, his friend can't take it anymore and he says, Irv, you hate religion, you rail against religion. Why do you go to synagogue every week? And Irv replies, You know my friend Goldberg? Yeah. Well, Goldberg goes to the synagogue to talk to God and I go to the synagogue to talk to Goldberg.

That's the way things used to be, but now apparently you have to make a choice.

I read this report with great fascination. I pulled out four points that I wanted to emphasize very quickly. I was allotted five minutes, and I'll try not to run too much over.

The first concerns what I regard as fascinating demographic findings from the study. There is a pronounced gender gap. Women are much more likely to be godly and much less likely to be godless than men. And by the way, there's also a marriage gap. Married women are only half as likely to be godless as unmarried women. There's a story here. There are also some fascinating ethnic gaps. For example, African Americans are far less likely to be godless than the general run of people, or young people. Only 9 percent of African Americans identify themselves as godless versus 27 percent of the population as a whole. I mean, that is a stunning testimony to the persistence of religious identity in the African American community. And there is—Anna made this point in passing, but it really jumped out at me. This was the last slide she talked about. If you look at the identity template that her study constructed, the similarity in the identity template between African Americans and Muslims is really stunning. And it's worth thinking about why that might be the case. I think it has something to do with the sense of being outsiders, not being fully accepted by the community because of aspects of identity that are not easily subject to personal choice. That would be my hypothesis. It's worth thinking about.

So that's the first point. And I could go on and on with these fascinating demographic tidbits.

The second set of points I want to make has to do with more general characteristics of young adults. Young adults are far more likely to self-identify as Democrats and also as liberals than the general run of the population, and stunningly, if you look at party ID, the most Republican cohort is—hold your breath—baby boomers, and they are close to being the most conservative cohort as well. So this study really contradicts what is widely assumed to be the case about my generation and E.J.'s generation as opposed to your generation. It just ain't so. Well, since you've grown up with us as parents, you probably knew that already.

The other thing that we know about young adults is that they are far more likely to be godless than the general run of folks, even after you correct for life cycle effects. I absolutely agree with Anna. And speaking for a minute as a political scientist, formative experiences when young, between the age of 15 and 25, are a kind of indelible dye that stick with you throughout your life. Fifteen to 25 are the years that developmental psychologists tell us identity formation is at its height. So I absolutely agree that these patterns of disaffiliation and disassociation are likely to persist. And that is of importance for the political future because godlessness is far more associated with rising social liberalism—liberalism not with regard to the traditional economic class questions, but with regard to questions of social conduct. And I'll get back to that point later.

The third set of points that I want to make has to do with the impact of religion on young people. As Anna has pointed out, it is associated with strength of identity. And I absolutely agree. One of the single most fascinating findings of this study from an academic standpoint is that it's not that other things replace identity formation for

godless young people, it's that they seem to have weaker senses of personal identity across the board. What that means for the farther future as godless young people increase as a fraction is anyone's guess, but it does suggest that this post-modern emphasis on the fluidity of identity may have at least a tinge of sociological realism, and God only knows what it means.

The other thing that fascinates me about this study is that religiosity has a far greater impact on attitudes towards questions of sexuality and gender than it does on other issues. The chart on page 29 of the study makes it absolutely clear. It really doesn't matter how religious or non-religious you are, you have an affirmative attitude towards immigrants and social diversity. But it makes a huge difference in what you think about issues such as gay marriage and abortion and postponement of sexual behavior until marriage, et cetera. And what that suggests to me—and I know this is true internationally, but I think it's also true domestically—is that questions of sex and gender are at the epicenter of the culture wars. They are not epiphenomenal. They are not displacements of controversy over economic and class questions. They are the heart of the controversy.

Finally, fourth point, and this gets to the heart of the study. This study is situated within a broader change in American culture that has occurred in my adult lifetime—roughly speaking, in the past 40 years. The enormous growth not only of pluralism but also individualism. We have developed what might be termed a high-choice society. And one of the ways in which I read this study is as a series of reactions to the centrality of choice not only in our public culture but also in our private lives. As the study makes clear, the rise of choice is associated with a kind of anti-institutionalism. And the metaphorical meaning of iPod as applied to religion is that young people in religious matters, and as others, are inclined to mix and match according to their own taste rather than accepting somebody else's pre-formed and pre-chewed conception of what religious ritual or religious belief ought to be.

Another consequence of this individualism in choice is that what I will call the gospel of personal salvation trumps the social gospel. And interestingly, all three groups in this study—the godless, the ambivalent middle, and the godly—agree that religion is more about personal salvation than it is about doing good for others or for the community. I think that is an enormously important finding, which I see as consistent with this trend. I'm referring to the findings on page 20, at least of the draft study that I received.

But—and this will be my pivot and the last part of my last point—I would submit to you that in American culture today, the high-choice society, there his a deep ambivalence about the prominence choice and the kind of freedom that choice is embedded in and which it implies. A question on the table is where does identity come from if not from religion? Where does guidance for life come from if not for religion? I find it very significant that 47 percent of the young adults in this survey, including 52 percent of the undecided middle, the seekers, believe that it is necessary to believe in God to be a moral person and to have good values. That, it seems to me, is the clearest possible indication of ambivalence about a life that is permeated with choice but seems to be devoid of God. I think that a lot of young people throughout their lives are going to be wrestling with their desire to have choice with as few limits as possible and, on the other hand, this intuitive knowledge that life without limits is not livable. And how those two forces are configured over the next 20 or 30 years will help define us.

I would also say that there is another important consequence of the high-choice society, and that is what sociologists would call a reaction formation. A lot of the fervor and self-consciousness of contemporary godliness, it seems to me, arises out of this sense of the need to take an oppositional stance vis-à-vis a high-choice society that appears to be a choice without limits. And a lot of religious young people today think of themselves very self-consciously as counter-cultural. They see themselves on a mission to oppose and, if possible, to reform a culture that they see as having gone off the rails because it affirms choice and denies God.

So what we have, in short, in this study is a rising tide of godlessness, a deep ambivalence in the middle about the consequences of choice without God, and a rising fervor of the godly in opposition to a culture of choice. This is going to be a heck of a ride, folks.

MR. DIONNE: Thank you very, very much. When Bill was describing the ambivalent middle's relationship with God, I was reminded of the term my friend David Brooks introduced me to, that many, many Americans are flexidox—which is that they desire the certainty of orthodoxy but want their orthodoxy to be flexible. And it seems to me a perfect term to describe an awful lot of people in this survey.

MR. GALSTON: Orthodoxy à la carte.

MR. DIONNE: Yes, exactly. Which means a question mark.

What I want to do is I want to just put a couple of questions myself to Anna about the survey, just a couple of things that struck me. And then I want to open it up to the discussion here.

Just one small—a smaller question and then a couple of I hope not so small questions. I was very struck by the finding on Protestants. And I'm wondering if the decline in the self-identification as Protestant is simply the product of the fact that you don't have the Protestant-Catholic divide that existed back in, say, 1960, when John Kennedy ran for president. Because what struck me is if you put—you had 14 percent "other Christian," which I presume means a lot of people who might be Methodist or Presbyterian or Episcopalian don't pick the term "Protestant" but mention their denomination, because the difference between Gen X and Gen Y—if you put together "Protestant" and "other Christian," you get 40 percent in Gen Y, 42 percent in Gen X. That's an intriguing finding. I'm not sure it's about the decline of Protestantism as such, but about the nature of the divide. I'm just curious what you made of that finding.

MS. GREENBERG: Well, I do think part of it is the decreasing salience of those kinds of religious divisions and an ignorance on the part of this age group in understanding what their tradition is supposed to be. And some of that obviously comes from their parents and what they learned in their homes growing up, and some of it comes from society and the way we talk about religious issues. I think the more salient number is the percent in "no preference" "atheist/agnostic," and I think that that's where you see the decline of kind of traditional affiliation with denomination and less so in that kind of confusion about what it means to be a Protestant.

MR. DIONNE: The second question, and this comes out of that chart that Bill referred to on page 29, is it the case that young people who are religious tend to be more traditional or orthodox? And is there a change over the generations in that sense? That is to say, if they choose a strong form of identification, they are likely to be, if you will, counter-cultural in the sense Bill described, which is quite different from the sense of the counterculture in 1968, say. Is that the case? Because certainly I know a lot of people, friends in either the conservative Protestant denominations or the conservative wing of the Catholic church who believe that those young people who stay loyal to the faith tend to be more traditional orthodox.

MS. GREENBERG: I think that's true. I think the data in the survey bear that out. If you just look at the slide I've put up here, which is the portrait of the godly—and that's in the report that you have as well—it shows you that the godly are more concentrated in more traditional, orthodox, conservative, however-you-want-to-describe-it denominations. They're concentrated among evangelical Christians, African Americans, Muslims. You see that the concentration of the godly are in that. And I think that part of the reason why younger people who are religious stay religious in a period when no one is forcing them to be religious is because they come from traditions that are more inclusive of every aspect of their lives, so that every aspect of social life is happening within a religious context, whether it's your schooling or your after-school activities or what you're doing with your family on the weekend. And obviously that has a very strong pull on young people even as they leave their parents' home.

If you look at the undecided middle and the godless, you see that it's concentrated in the less orthodox or traditional denominations. You can see here that the undecided middle, you know, a disproportionate number of mainline Protestants, a disproportionate number of Jewish—if you look at the godless, you see a disproportionate number of Jewish in that category. So I think that that's exactly right.

MR. DIONNE: Which would suggest that, over the long haul, the leadership of religious denominations is more likely to become more conservative over a period of time.

MS. GREENBERG: Right.

MR. DIONNE: That's a very important finding—disturbing for religious people of more moderate or liberal views.

MS. GREENBERG: Well, I mean, it bears upon the whole discussion we're having about the Democratic Party and progressives and the role of faith and, you know, the religious left. Because where the action is, especially with younger people, is in more religiously conservative denominations. And so it—you know, for this whole discussion of Democrats need to become more religious, progressives need to talk about faith, it's not clear to me in the long run who that constituency is for them.

MR. DIONNE: Right. By the way, I can't resist noting on that chart on page 20 that 21 percent of the godless say it is necessary to believe in God to be moral and have good values, which makes you ask what do they think of their own values if they are going to answer that question. I don't know how to explain that percentage.

You have one of the neatest, you know, social scientists sort of would pay a lot of money to get as neat a finding as this: 27 percent godly, 27 godless, and 46 percent in the middle. It doesn't get more perfect than that. Do you have any sense of where over time that 46 percent breaks out? What evidence do you have in the survey about what direction—obviously life cycle will probably push some toward the godly, but what is that group?

MS. GREENBERG: Well, first of all, it's a little artificial because what we did was we created a scale, 0 to 10, of religiosity, broken out that way. So it's not that naturally the categories sort of came out that way. We kind of artificially tried to categorize people, and for analytic heuristic, which we thought was helpful for writing the report. But this—I mean, I don't know, obviously, because this is a cross-sectional study. It's going to depend in large part what happened with your family when you were growing up, if your family was religious and you remain close to your family, it is more likely that as you get married and have your own family that you will return to whatever tradition it is you grew up with. And so some portion of that kind of undecided middle will return to some kind of tradition when they reach that stage in their life cycle.

I suspect that youth who are in that category of the undecided middle who are in there because they simply just don't have any—they're sort of ambivalent, they don't have any real attachment and didn't really have much going on in their homes when they were growing up will not return to any—or not find any kind of—I mean, obviously this is a massive generalization, but will not return to some kind of, or find some kind of religious home. And I think that it really—what is so clear from the study is that so much of it depends on what you did with your family when you were growing up, what stays with you and what choices you make when you're older.

MR. GALSTON: Let me just add a quick point to that. I think the impact of family points forward as well as backward. That is to say, if you get married and have kids you are more likely to react in one way, and when you put that up against the finding from the Census Bureau that a higher and higher percentage of young adults choose not to get married and not to have kids, that suggests something pretty important about the way this 46 percent is going to shake out vis-à-vis the seekers or the ambivalent middle of a generation ago, where marriage and kids were more the norm.

MS. GREENBERG: Right. I mean, if you look at the National Elections Study, and I'm not going to remember the number exactly, but if you look at it and you look at the '50s, '60s, '70s, '80s, and '90s, the percentage of people who get married in the 18-25 year-old age period has gone from about—I'm looking at Patrick—70 or 80 percent to about 36 percent. I mean, there is a massive drop-off on the number of people in that age group getting married, and it has a huge impact on the choices you make about your community, about the role that religion plays in your life.

MR. GALSTON: But even if you run that out to 45, there's been a big decline in the percentage of people who ever get married and ever have kids. My prediction is that over the next 20 years that's going to be very consequential for today's 25-year-olds unless they become much more traditional pre-1970s in their choices.

MR. DIONNE: And then the last question I wanted to ask, which I just couldn't resist, is on that, the second question on the chart on page 20. On the one hand, as Bill suggested, the division between—asking people to choose between those two statements, "Religion is about personal salvation" versus "Religion is about helping people, especially the disadvantaged," while that reveals something very interesting, it is also, as former President Clinton liked to say, a classic false choice. And I'm curious if—you know, because there are plenty of people I can imagine answering yes to both of those if given that choice. Can you talk a little bit about that? I'm curious how many people rebelled against the question itself when you asked it.

MS. GREENBERG: Oh, our interviewers are trained to force people to make choices on surveys. We don't let them, you know, take the middle if we can possibly avoid it.

MR. DIONNE: Oh, that I understand. I was just curious about the resistance, principled resistance you got to the question, but also how you sort of square those things.

MS. GREENBERG: I mean, this is a problem of survey research that when you ask these kinds of—we call them double-barreled questions, where we ask people to make false choices. We're doing it because we think it's going to help us analytically in some way understand people, not because we think that we've actually captured the whole of how they think about these issues. And with most of these kinds of questions, if we offered the middle category, they would take it, and then our data wouldn't be very interesting.

I think it speaks to something that Bill talked about, which is the growing intensity of faith and the kind of conservative nature of people who are in the godly category I think is driving that result as much as anything else.

And I think the decline of traditions, like mainline Protestantism, the social gospel in the Catholic church, the decline of those kinds of attachments, especially among younger people, is reflected in this result.

MR. DIONNE: See, because I'm very—this question has sort of created an opportunity, because I would like to figure out how to offer the "both" option and then force a choice. Because I'd be very curious to see what—

MS. GREENBERG: We should have done a split-sample experiment in the survey.

MR. DIONNE: Yes, exactly. That's what I was thinking.

MS. GREENBERG: Lots of things you want to do after it's done.

MR. DIONNE: We can arrange this. I'm going to try to figure out how to do that.

I could go on and ask a ton of questions to the whole panel, but I want to bring folks in. We've got a couple of microphones floating around. I always say no one likes to ask the first question. This isn't the first question. I've asked about five. So this is like the sixth, seventh question. So please join us.

Up here in the front. I feel like we should have a bias in favor of anyone under 30, but that would be demographic discrimination and we can't engage in that either.

QUESTIONER: My name is Mary Mullen.

You were saying that immigrants don't seem to identify with anything but their family, if I'm understanding it correctly. But the immigrants that I know are very much involved in their church. Not just Latin Americans, but some from the Balkans and so forth. They seem to feel that that's where they get their help and that's where they sort of have their identity.

MS. GREENBERG: Sure. Well, I probably exaggerate when I said nothing but their family. It's obviously much more complex than that. But I'm talking about really the children of immigrants. When you look at the data in the survey, most of the kids in the survey actually were born here or came here at a very young age. And it's really the children of immigrants that are less connected to their religious communities and their ethnic communities than their parents are. And so you may be dealing with new immigrants to this country.

But it was actually a very interesting study in the New York Times about six or eight months ago looking at second generation and third generation Hispanic youth and sort of how their Catholic identity and attachment to kind of traditional Catholic positions—for instance, on gay marriage, abortion—are much, much less diminished. But at the same time, their economic populism also diminished. So there are, at least in terms—in this example of the Hispanic community, youth becoming more and more like other youth. And so I think that the issue is really the children of immigrants, not immigrants themselves.

MR. DIONNE: The lady over here?

QUESTIONER: Just a moment of stress whether or not I'm going to be identified as above 30 or below 30 and actually receive the microphone.

MR. DIONNE: Oh, definitely under 30. There's no doubt about it.

MS. GREENBERG: I know the answer, but I won't tell.

QUESTIONER: I was wondering, you were talking about religion as sort of being the variable in determining whether or not people identified with other aspects of their life. Is it really the predictive variable? Is it religion and religious affiliation, or is it sort of a strong family that makes you go to church, that provides you identity in these other fields as well? I have trouble accepting the chicken-and-egg argument there that it's just religious identity.

MR. DIONNE: That's a great question. In fact, that paragraph I'm going to read after you're finished, on page 15, because we could take that whole paragraph and run a session on it.

MS. GREENBERG: I would say it's not predictive, it's associated with, because I think that families clearly are incubators for their kids on a whole range of different aspects of attachment to community, self-esteem. I mean, there's a whole range of issues where the kind of family that you grew up in has a huge impact on your sense of self and who you are and your place in the world. And so I think they're all associated with each other. I don't

think it's predictive. I don't think—in a cross-sectional survey like this, you can't really make arguments about that anyway.

MR. DIONNE: Bill or Milia? Does somebody want to come in on that?

MS. LAZU: [Off microphone, inaudible.] But thinking about the African American community, I also don't know that because you identify with your family that that means that you have a strong family or a strong family home or a traditional family. And you know, like I know I very much identify with my family, and like the best thing that ever happened to my family was my father moving out of the house. You know, so, I think that, especially people of color do tend to, you know, have stronger identities with their family, but it also doesn't necessarily mean that their family is strong or providing that structure. And it also might mean, then, in that case, that they will be more apt to then go to church because of whether their grandmother takes them or because, you know, some pastor reached out to them or, you know, they have a day care center.

The other thing I want to throw out, and as a Puerto Rican I always feel the need to do this, is when we talk about Latinos. You know, and I love that because my grandfather wasn't a Latino and neither was my father till he came to this country. And I think that to lump the Latino experience together and to lump 37, 38 countries together, and to lump slave trades and civil rights movements and independence movements together to say, you know, all these people, because they speak Spanish, have a similar experience, you know, is being—is not giving Latinos the credit—not the credit, but giving them the identity that they deserve with their own histories. And I know as a Puerto Rican and as a black Puerto Rican that my experience was much more, you know, African American, if you will, growing up in this country than it would have been if I grew up in Puerto Rico. You know, so with the talk just around the Latino and the Hispanic, a lot of people that are Latino are black and have a black experience in this country when they're driving down the street or when they're—you know, and a lot of Latinos are poor and have a very poor experience in this country, versus, you know, a small percentage of rich Latinos that are coming across that do tend to be more conservative. So that's just a personal observation.

MR. DIONNE: I just want to underscore that. I was looking at the 1980 census in New York City, and it was striking that, you know, Latinos—I think "Hispanic" was the census term—who lived in the Bronx were far more likely to identify themselves as black than Latinos who lived in Queens. Then we tried to take that apart and figure out what combination—how much of that is sort of socially constructed, if you live in the Bronx you're more likely to feel black, and how much had to do with the identities people brought when they came in, i.e., more people from Argentina. So, I mean, I just think it's that notion. And my friend Roberto Suro has written a lot about this, that the "Latino" term can disguise as much as it can reveal.

MR. BENNETT: I think one of the associated challenges which we've discussed briefly in passing but I think should be highlighted, in terms of likelihood of an individual participating in physical church community or synagogue community is the diverse social networks. Even of the godly segment, the study shows I think it's about 9 percent of them say that their social circles are predominantly the same religion as they are. When you think about physical community and the need essentially the importance of the peer group as an influential, outside of the family probably one of the most influential, characteristics that influences an individual's behavior.

And also, connected to that, the study shows that "I like to talk about religion with my friends" is one of the most widely—experiences of episodic religious behavior. If those friends are across-the-board different religions to me, and that's how I like to experience my religiosity, it makes it very difficult if I were a pastor or if I were a rabbi in terms of how I can actually translate that experience into a communal one, because every community has to have boundaries. And the challenge this presents in terms of trying to create religious communities that have incredibly porous boundaries and I can bring my peer group with me is one of the more perplexing issues that I think this study puts forward.

MR. DIONNE: Let me just read that one paragraph, because I think it's full of sort of things we could discuss here today.

"Importantly, religious youth have a stronger sense of themselves than less religious youth. In other words, among the less religious religion is not supplanted by a stronger ascribed or achieved characteristic. In fact, less religious youth are less strongly identified with anything at all, which suggests that religious group involvement is mutually reinforcing of other identities, or that a feeling connected to a religious community or tradition heightens all other aspects of self-understanding. Religious adherence, in other words, builds social capital not just in terms of participation in civic life, but also in terms of connection with family, self-esteem, and self-understanding. And

then, as Christian Smith finds in his study of teenagers, religious youth ranked higher than less religious youth on every measure of self-esteem."

Boy, there's a lot in those sentences.

Let me go back to the audience. Kayla? By the way, before Kayla speaks, I just want to thank Catherine Moore—where's Catherine?—for helping put this event together and Kayla for being one of the prime movers and lobbyists for us to do this. Bless you, Kayla.

QUESTIONER: Thank you. One question I've got for you, and I know this is enduring for several of you on the panel, but how is it and how does this survey help us understand how faith might be connected to political knowledge in a sense of trust in public institutions or maybe some vague sense of political efficacy? Because I think there are dimensions here that are just as strong and enduring, if not messy and difficult to understand, and I think that's perhaps as strong as sort of the personalism dimension and sense of self-esteem and strong identification.

And then one thing tied to that is that in some of the questions, and I think like the issue of top concerns, the question that—I guess the option of having your relationship with God be a choice, were there other choices, such as being a good person, things that are more common moral, ethical sort of choices that are more universal which might be the way some people describe their religious identities?

MS. GREENBERG: On the political question, one of the things that was a little surprising to me in the study was how weak the relationship was between religious/faith/practice/connection and political life. There was the attitudinal aspect of it, and that was very clear—I mean, Bill pointed it out—that the less religious, the godless, the undecided, much different views about sexuality, gender roles, all those kinds of issues. So you saw that, and that obviously has huge political implications. And so you saw that relationship, but the actual voting and other aspects of participation, much weaker connection. And I actually think it's, from what we know about the relationship between religion and politics is that people who are religious, who attend religious services more, are more likely to be active in politics.

Part of the reason why I don't think we see that in here is that, as I said over and over again, this is a group that's less likely to be involved in religious institutions in traditional ways. And part of what people get out of their traditional involvement is churches are amazing sources of information, they're amazing mobilizers, they make sure people are registered to vote, they take people to the polling places, they have information in the churches and temples and mosques. I mean, that's what religious institutions do. So if young people are not actually physically going to that institution but have a vaguer sense of identity and faith, that kind of social capital building that happens in institutions is just not there for younger people. So actually I think that that connection is weaker, and it's completely understandable.

We didn't ask questions the way you were describing it, though we certainly asked young people if they describe themselves as religious, spiritual, or both, or nothing. And what we found was about a little less than half called themselves religious and the rest called themselves something else, either spiritual or nothing or both. I thought that was actually pretty interesting that there were, particularly in that undecided category, many more people who said they were spiritual as opposed to religious. So I think that it is possible for young people to feel that they have some kind of spiritual religious connection without having the actual physical experience of going to services or participating in religious group activity.

QUESTIONER: We just sent our daughter to college in the fall and she's not going to Mass. And we're concerned about that. Are a lot of people concerned about that in this country? Are a lot of parents concerned about that. Number one.

Number two, to me the basic question is, is this good or bad what's happening in this country?

MS. LAZU: I want to take on that first question, because now I feel—my Catholic guilt makes me feel really guilty, because when I was in college I started going to the Pentecostal church. And, you know, I don't know the actual statistic; Anna will probably know that better than I do. But I think that when you're in college, I mean, going to church is difficult, to wake up on Sunday mornings. Or any other morning. No, but one of the things that—I went to college in Boston, which is a very Catholic and very collegey kind of town. And one of the interesting things was how many Friday evening services are offered throughout the city of Boston. Whether that's Mass or, you know, worship. And I think that that's part of the reason to try to get people in and try to get young people in, because young people in Boston is such a huge constituency that makes up Boston, and again, a lot of

these religious institutions, at the end of the day, are businesses, right, and they want to get a lot of people in the door to get 10 percent. So they do certain things like that to try to encourage people.

So, you know, I would throw that out. I don't necessarily think that your daughter's going to—I think you can encourage your daughter to find ways to integrate Mass into her life that's not, you know, a traditional 8:30 or 10:30 Mass, but ways that she can work that into her schedule.

MR. DIONNE: Let me just say, I am struck. I teach at Georgetown and I am struck at how many of the students actually do go to Mass. There was—when my wife went to Georgetown, there was a priest called Father Freeze, who was very popular because he gave an 11:30 p.m. Mass on Saturday nights. And he was reasonably efficient in the way he said Mass, and the Mass became known as Freeze's Breeze and it had an enormous turnout. But there was this sense of obligation that continued. I suspect that the good Father Freeze kept a lot of people in the church. But in other words, I think that there is clearly a tendency—we laughed, but this notion of not get up in the morning is not a trivial thing among college students. You know, I think there is a certain falling away and returning.

But again, I am impressed with how many people that I run into who are college students who maintain some connection to their tradition rather than walk away from it totally. I don't know what Bill's experience is at Maryland.

MR. GALSTON: Well, my experience wallowing in survey data may be somewhat reassuring to the gentleman in the rear of the room; namely, that the college period is the all-time life-cycle low in religious practice. It's all up from there.

MR. DIONNE: That's true.

MR. GALSTON: And if you've done your job as a parent well, then there will be a return. It may not be a return to exactly the point that you would have specified.

Which brings me to my next point, and that is that in a high-choice society, parents by definition have less control over outcomes than they do in more traditional societies. Some parents with your worries, starting not at college but much earlier than that, consciously decide to send their children to more controlled environments or to home-school them for very much the same reason. In the long run, I think, the effort to create a hermetic seal between the experience of developing young people and the high-choice society is doomed to failure. So that will put much more of an onus on the capacity of parents not to enforce their choices but to make their choices attractive to their children, which is a much harder job.

MS. GREENBERG: I just want to make one more point on what Bill was talking about. I've never seen a question about Parents, are you worried that your kids won't be religious or won't go to church? But it is true that if you talk to parents about what they worry about with their kids, the thing they worry about the most is being able to teach them the right kind of values and trying to teach them faith in God, precisely because they understand how complex it is in a high-choice society to teach those kinds of values. And one of the reasons why there's so much distress about Hollywood values, cultural pollution, what's on TV and the Internet and video games is because it makes parents feel that it's all the more difficult to make sure that their kids are learning the right kind of values. And as Bill said, for the most part not every parent would think those values would come from some kind of religious tradition. So on the narrow question, are parents worried about their kids going to church when they go to college, I don't know. But there's no question that there's a very broad sense, a kind of angst, about your ability to inculcate your kids with the right kind of values.

MR. BENNETT: In terms of the question about whether it's good or bad, I mean, it clearly depends upon where you're standing when you look at the thing. I think the remarkable "undecided" category can only give one hope, and I think that ultimately how we're prepared to deal with or respect the informality or the reported informality of the religious experiences that the audience talk about actually craving will ultimately determine whether we're sitting here in 10 years, when we, hopefully, do the report again, looking back with some sense of self-confidence and pride.

And I do think on that point, I mean, Reboot was grounded as an experiment. We did 800 interviews across the country from individuals who were in the entertainment, media, technology, literature, politics, social activism realm. We'd phone them up out of the blue, say to them I'd love to speak to you about your Jewishness. They were all 18 to 30, so a slightly older ceiling than this study. We'd phone them up out of the blue. We'd be, like, I'd love to speak to you about your Jewishness. These were 800 interviews. They were so rooted, it's

unbelievable. The person would be like, Dude, I'm the last person you want to speak to, I don't do anything Jewish. Well, that's exactly why we'd love to speak to you. They'd all agree to meet, and it didn't matter whether they were like a Hollywood producer or a professed leader of the anti-globalization movement. They'd all meet in a bar that was totally deserted in the middle of nowhere. They'd be like, why the hell are we meeting here? They'd say I thought you'd be some 70-year-old rabbi who's here to solicit me for a gift and I didn't want anyone to see us together.

And once we'd gotten over that, I'd be like, well, I'm not exactly what you're thinking. And they'd go, like, all right, dude. And they do for it. They talk for—I mean, literally. I know Americans love to talk, but these characters love to talk in a very serious way about the questions they were experiencing about ritual, about meaning, about community, about their heritage, about value, talk in very, very profound ways. They all said, you know, I've been dying to talk about this, but the communal mechanisms that are on offer fail me. They're not intellectual, they're kind of sloganeering. The cultural aesthetic is kind of schlocky Chagall kind of faux stuff that my grandma may dig having on a coffee table, but it's not quite for me. And the social networks are, quote, not the kind of people I'd normally hang out with; they're very interested in dating and networking, and I can do both of those things fine without relying on my religious identity for a crutch.

And I tell you this for a reason. I mean, your question about is this good or is it bad, it depends, I think, whether you care deeply about organized Judaism or about Jewishness in general. And that could be the same for kind of institutional Catholicism or the values of Catholicism equally as well. And I think if you care deeply about the greater thrust—in our case, Jewishness rather than the current manifestations of organized Judaism—I think you can only read this report and really lick your lips with the prospect, the potential, and with a modicum of a willingness to experiment, and feel very good about the future.

MR. DIONNE: See, I actually think that the—first of all, I don't know what the answer to your question will be when the next generation of Greenbergs does the study of Generation ZZZ or whatever we're going to call the young generation after we run out of alphabet. I don't know why they started at X; it made it troublesome for later generations. You know, perhaps your daughter would be standing in the back of the room saying I have trouble because my daughter or son doesn't go to Mass, in which case we're talking about the lifestyle effect that Bill is talking about. What I worry about as a friend of religious traditions is it doesn't quite—it is not just a lifestyle effect, that there is something deeper going on here which possibly points to an erosion of belief, particularly among sort of middle-of-the-road believers who either felt more of an impulse or more pressure to participate 20 years ago or 30 years ago than they do now.

Is that a fair reading of this data, the second concern? And then we've got a bunch of voices who want to come in.

MR. GALSTON: Yeah, I think it is. You asked a fair question, and I'll give you what I hope you regard as a fair answer. Namely, this report points to an uncertain future. If the replacement for ossified religion is no religion, then it's bad for all of us. If the replacement for ossified religion is renewed religion, then I believe it will be good for all of us. And we do not know which it is, but if you look at the past two centuries-plus of American history, we are the world center of religious invention, innovation, and renewal. And that's what the series of Great Awakenings is all about, that's what all the religions that nobody else ever thought of in the history of the world, that's what they're all about. I mean, you know, I think Mormonism would be possible in no place but the United States, at least as a religious founding—obviously as a religious practice it's possible in many other countries. And so, taking a snapshot and saying oh woe is us is probably a mistake. If you put it against the backdrop of American history, there's grounds for cautious optimism.

MR. DIONNE: Thank you, Bill. Perfect.

Right in the back, the man who lost the microphone earlier.

QUESTIONER: And it's Peter Levine.

I guess my question is can you compare Generation X and Generation Y? Because I notice on the one slide about the basic religious belief that they were very similar, so I'm wondering if the real issue is did you grow up before or after the great upheaval that we call the '60s, although some of it went into the '70s. But that's important because X is getting to be not so youthful anymore.

MS. GREENBERG: Sadly, I know that.

I think that it is a matter of change happens slowly over time. And, you know, I feel like every election cycle people who write about politics want to talk about the new group or the new thing that's going to happen in American politics. It just doesn't work that way. Change happens slowly over time, incrementally in response to events that happen in the world. And I think the same is true of this report. We just did a study of Gen Y, but I have no doubt that we would see many of the precursors in the younger baby boomers and in Gen X, and in some ways Gen Y is the fruition, at this moment the pinnacle of these changes. So I don't have data on Gen X on all these questions, but I suspect that's true.

However, the one thing I would say, what makes this generation distinct is the ethnic and religious diversity and racial diversity. This goes back to a point you made a while ago about party identification. Part of the reason why the chart looks funny is that if you looked at white youth, you would see many more Republicans in Gen X and Gen Y, but because Gen X and Gen Y is so much more diverse, it looks much more politically left. And I think that that is probably going to continue, though I think it then becomes complicated by all the things that Malia just talked about in terms of you can't really say all Hispanics or Latinos are one kind of way politically. There's lots of diversity. There's lots of diversity among Asian Americans as well. But the point is that Gen Y is more ethnically and racially diverse than Gen X, and that does make it a little more distinct, a little more different, and, you know, you see that in other surveys when you look at political attitudes and other kinds of questions.

The one thing I want to add to this good-bad question, because I think it's complicated and hard to answer, there are some things that come out of growing pluralism and diversity that I think are objectively good for this country. If you look at the questions on immigration, if you look at the questions on gay marriage—and this is my progressive liberal hat on here—I mean, the openness, the tolerance, kind of respect for other people's choices and the way they want to live their lives that comes, I think, in part out of growing pluralism, informal forms of religious attachment, a breaking off of traditional institutions. The question is does—I think, you know, Bill's question is central here—does it sort of mean that then— I mean, I do think that there are changes in the overall political world view and sort of attitudinal world view of younger people that comes of these changes that are objectively good for our country.

MR. DIONNE: I just want to underscore that chart on page 28. It is remarkable that Gen Y is the only generation where liberals actually outnumber conservatives, albeit by a statistically insignificant margin. But you haven't seen numbers like that in a long time. That's mind-boggling if, you know—and I presume that's consistent with other surveys? I'm just curious.

MS. GREENBERG: Yeah. I mean, the only group that Kerry won were people under 30 in this election.

MR. GALSTON: Well, which suggests that folks like Ray Boshara and John Judis were just a little bit ahead of themselves and that if progressives are prepared to wait for, say, 30 years, there may—

MR. DIONNE: It's like being a Red Sox fan.

MR. GALSTON: Eighty-six years. Give me a break.

QUESTIONER: I'm Al Milliken affiliated with Washington Independent Writers.

I would, from my own observations, believe also that the statement that religious teens are more self-aware and they have higher self-esteem and a sense of self. And I'm just thinking if—well, I'm wondering if anyone has an explanation for this and how much this may be an American religious phenomenon as opposed to other parts of the world. I'm not, you know, in the last decade I've visited Cuba and Russia, China and England, and I don't sense necessarily the same emphasis on self in religious practice there as there is in this country. I know like our test scores, even though they are falling in regard to the rest of the world, our students I guess have very high self-esteem. They feel very good about not doing so well on the tests. And I know someone like a minister and also a politician like Jesse Jackson, he was preaching and calling and responding for people to say that they are somebody. And I know that many churches use a market-driven approach with an emphasis on self-fulfillment and, you know, making people comfortable when they come and worship and practice their faith. But, you know, it seems historically and traditionally much of religion and much of what has been good about religion has been a denial of self, and not so much a self-awareness but awareness of others.

MR. DIONNE: Al, as always, you've asked a great question. Thank you. Who wants to be selfless enough to take on that question?

MR. GALSTON: Well, I mean, since you asked, you know, I think you're on to something when you describe a lot of contemporary religious practice as a marketing exercise. And there is no way to win a marketing war without playing to the dominant tendencies of the customer base, by definition. And what this report reveals very clearly is a piece of a larger truth, namely that a culture that has always been individualistic and choice-oriented and anti-institutional is now arguably more so than ever before. And if you ask most people to show up and comply with a predetermined pattern, they will come once at most and then go to a place that quote-unquote "meets my needs," a phrase that you'll hear very frequently with reference to the choice of religious institutions for affiliation.

That's not the only thing that's going on. There is a minority, but I think not an insignificant minority, that is genuinely looking for authority and wants to be challenged. And you see this among young people and among others as well. And so as a minority tendency, but I think neither socially nor politically insignificant, you see congregations with very challenging leaders, who are very prescriptive, very certain of their faith and the implications of faith for daily life. And I have to believe that a portion of the global youth reaction to John Paul II was in response to exactly that sense of certainty against the ambivalence of the modern age.

MS. GREENBERG: I mean, I think that that marketing and the complicated way you talked about it is part of it, but it's also very clear that family is really important here and that family practicing their faith in some way together is part of what's going on. And it's—you know, without making a normative comment at all about, you know, intact families versus broken families, we know from lots of different studies that people who come from families that have two parents—no matter what gender—do better on all sorts of measures than kids who come from single-parent families. And in the data here, religious youth feel closer to their parents, they feel they can talk to them about anything, they generally feel sort of just happier and closer with their family life. And so there's something going on. Again, this is a cross-sectional study from a survey, so I can't really do much more than speculate, but there's something going on with the collective practice of religion with your family that I believe is related to religious youth feeling a higher sense of self-esteem, a stronger sense of identity, a stronger sense of what their place is in the world.

MR. DIONNE: Isn't the hard part there in social science terms sort of chicken-and-egg? In other words, you know, how much of it is the strong family in the first place leading to the religious commitment, or how much of it is the religious commitment leading to the strong family, and so on? And they are obviously all interrelated, and it's hard to sort of tear apart which ends up being primary, or if any of those things is primary. Is that fair?

MS. GREENBERG: Yes. I mean, that goes back to the question about whether or not this is predictive, and that's why I said I think it's associated. Because it may be a cop-out, but I do think these are all interrelated and without, you know—what we really should do is a panel study and check in with people every 10 years and look at the relationship between these different—the relationships they have in their lives either with their families, their friends, their communities. But this kind of research is very difficult to disentangle.

MR. DIONNE: And so there's the first great application for the panel study, to continue this.

Mr. Mitchell?

QUESTIONER: E.J., thanks. Gary Mitchell from The Mitchell Report.

I want to ask, given the late hour of the question, you're welcome to treat it as rhetorical. But I was just thinking that some of us were in this same room a week ago with a panel that E.J. led discussing the life of John Kenneth Galbraith. And one of the elements that came out of that was to remind everyone that he's the one who coined the term "conventional wisdom." And as I listened to this research today, I was thinking to myself we have a new set of data upon which the develop new conventional wisdom.

And on that point, this doesn't come out of the research per se, but it certainly comes out of the comments from the panelists. I was wondering what happens if we didn't assign sort of categorical definitions like "progressive," for example, or "liberal" or whatever other terms to certain elements of politics and public policy. So for example, and this is sort of trying to tie in with the notion of conventional wisdom, why is it that conventional wisdom says if you favor gay marriage, you are progressive; or if you are pro-choice, you're progressive, but if you're pro-life, you're not; if you're pro-choice in education, you're not necessarily progressive. And I'm not trying to start a food fight here. I just wondered. It comes from the story that Malia told and the reaction of that fellow in the church.

So anyway, it's about conventional wisdom and whether or not we're hewing to conventional wisdom as we define certain political choices as being progressive or not progressive.

MR. DIONNE: That's a great question. By the way, Jamie Galbraith, John Kenneth Galbraith's son, said that if the family had gotten a nickel for every time the term "conventional wisdom" had been used since his father coined it, they would all be very, very rich.

MS. LAZU: They would need to become friends with that guy that has coined, you know, "Are you ready to rumble?" And like he gets a—he does get five cents every time we say that.

I was just going to say, I just wanted to address that because I think what you're getting at is what not only, you know, religious communities are getting at, but also how politicians and, you know, the discussions happening in political circles, which is young people—and I think it showed in this survey—are not—the way we built our construct, you know, young people, whether it's because they, you know, by nature want to deconstruct that or just by a different experience, living a different experience because of the changes that have happened from the '60s and '70s, and '80s included, which I don't—we always talk about the '60s and '70s, and I would like to remind people that I'm the first generation that had to live with crack. Which, you know, as much as we might want to talk about being a post-Watergate or, you know, being a post-Vietnam, I think that crack in communities also has a huge effect on how we look at ourselves.

But that's like a million-dollar question right now, which is, you know, how are young people defining their constructs of these political labels? And I know, like for me, I call myself a progressive, but that's probably because, you know, I historically come out of a progressive community. You know, and Heather Booth is a mentor of mine, so I have no choice but to be progressive. And you know, but I think that my generation is questioning a lot of those kind of things that were taken for granted, and I know within our own circles the whole idea of, like, feminism is something that's also—that we like to get into discussions about, especially me and my mother. You know, because what she sees as being a feminist and what I see as being a feminist is quite different, and actually contradictory sometimes.

And so I think that, you know, because of the experiences and how we've been able to integrate with one another, we are going to be seeing more that, you know, you can be very progressive but, you know, pro-life. And I think that over the next few years we're going to have to redefine and re-label our generation.

MS. GREENBERG: Well, I mean, it's an excellent point because we could have an entire session on youth and politics. But Gen Y and Gen X to a certain extent really does not fit neatly into our categories of liberal-conservative, Democrat-Republican. So for instance, they can be liberal or progressive or left or whatever word you want to use on gay marriage, but very supportive of school choice, pre Social Security debate on privatization of Social Security, very favorable toward market solutions. Now, if you were a Democrat, those two issue positions wouldn't bundle together. And I'm less, I guess, optimistic that it's a result of questioning and choice as much as a generation that has not had a political leadership that's helped provide frameworks or categories or a narrative for younger people to understand politically what their place is in the way that the Baby Boom Generation had a national narrative articulated by certain people. I don't think that Gen X and Gen Y really has had that, especially not Gen Y.

So I think that it's a very—it's an apt question because our categories don't apply very well to Gen Y and they are really politically uncertain in my mind. Even though they're trending a little bit Democratic, they're not overwhelmingly Democratic and they hold a lot of views that we would traditionally describe as conservative or Republican positions. And it's not clear to me that there's any leader emerging at the moment who would speak to this kind of diversity of political views that young people have.

MR. GALSTON: Well, but there is a term that comes closer to describing them than liberal, conservative, progressive or reactionary, and that term is "libertarian."

MS. GREENBERG: True.

MR. GALSTON: And I think what unites their views on social issues and their views on market issues is a kind of libertarianism which, if it persists—I mean, libertarianism is a very easy view to adopt when you're young and single. When you're married or when you're old, your views may start to change somewhat. But I would argue that this is arguably the most libertarian generation of young people we've ever seen. And that doesn't flow—and here Anna and I can have an interesting historical discussion—that doesn't flow necessarily from the absence of a narrative so much as it does from a counter-narrative, the narrative of the market. Right? I mean, there is a romance of the market which a lot of young people, particularly those who grew up in the heady days of the 1990s, when the market seemed to be the cure for everything, are going to take with them as a story.

MR. DIONNE: But the one amendment to Bill's point in terms of this being a libertarian generation is it's a libertarian generation with certain communitarian signals. You know, that if you look at the amount of service that this generation does, there is some kind of community regarding this, so it's not a sort of pure form of libertarianism. Because I think the answer to Mr. Mitchell's question in terms of liberalism is that we've—Peter Steinfels once wrote that the definition of liberalism, liberal or progressive, went from being primarily a commitment to greater class equality, then extending that to class and racial equality, and now to gender and sexual preference equality. And so to be progressive once meant primarily being communitarian in economics, and now it's taken on a sort of meaning that's libertarian on personal autonomy issues. And it is a kind of contradiction within progressivism, or liberalism, I think.

MR. GALSTON: The question is whether this communitarianism has been extended or rather displaced. And one question is whether is, as it has increased in the social sphere, whether it's dwindled in the economic sphere. The metaphor of extension assumes that the one doesn't weaken the other, and there may be evidence that it has.

MR. DIONNE: Right. No, and I think Peter would agree with you.

Let's see, do we have a new voice? I know the gentleman in the back wanted to come back in with a small point, but I want to— If you promise to be brief, come on back in, and then I'll just invite everyone to offer quick closing comments or the one thing they've been burning to say that they haven't said.

[Change tapes.]

QUESTIONER: —it's your generation now, you have to make changes. You know, it's your responsibility to improve the country. And as I think back, many of the movements—civil rights movement religiously based, many of the movements religiously based, Solidarity religiously based. And on and on and on. What's going to happen if religiosity begins to erode, as you put it? Are we going to have a mission?

MR. DIONNE: That's a perfect closing question, actually. Thank you very much. Could I sort of—I'm going to let Anna wind the whole thing down. If we could go to Malia and to Roger, Bill, and Anna, if that's all right.

MS. LAZU: In answer to your question, I think that we're going to see movements continue and they're going to be based in different places, if that in fact happens. You know, it's easy to have movements based in religion, too, because you have a constant income flow, which makes a difference as well.

In closing, I guess what I want to say is that I think that my generation—and I'm going to speak for all of Generation Y right now, and what we would like to say is— No, but I think that my generation as I know it and as I experience it is something that is completely different. You know, and you can explain it. I mean, I threw some stuff out there to, hopefully, challenge you guys around who buys hip-hop or on, now, who's skateboarders and who's into punk and stuff, because I think that we're going to be seeing more of that.

And I want to end my closing by saying also that, with this influx of Latinos that have their own identities and that have their own histories and that have their own civil rights movement, and especially looking at what's happening in South America right now, that I do think that we're going to see young people wanting the same types of movements that were in the past, and they're going to get involved and, hopefully—I hope that—what this report showed me as an organizer, there's a lot of room for me to organize around the ideas of spirituality and politics. And that's very exciting for me, especially being someone who is a progressive, who considers myself progressive and who wants to talk about religion to young people and who is constantly told on the left that we can't do that.

So this report for me was very exciting, and I look forward to using these aspects of these reports in my organizing.

MR. BENNETT: One of the issues that we've barely addressed today, which I think is going to be key if the outflow of this report is going to be, in your terms, good rather than bad, is the role of culture as a manifold tool in the hands of denominations, to some extent. I think Malia, at the outset of her comments, talked about the move generationally towards a cultural-based identity, or a culture-based identity. And I think the culture as a distributor of messages or a distribution system for value, a convener of community, or even in the consumption as an individual, an expression of identity, is probably one of the under-utilized tools that religious denominations do have at their disposal.

And you can look, in just the past couple of weeks reading the newspaper, the frenzy, and I do mean—in a limited way perhaps, but it is a frenzy around Matisyahu, the orthodox reggae toaster who's touring across the country and the remarkable—I mean, sociologists, I think, are making up most of his audience at the moment because they're trying to work out how the hell Jews who would never set foot in a synagogue would tour and go to 10, 12, 14 concerts over a three-week period and follow this dude on the road. The King of Kings Skate Ministry in Ventura, California, using the power of the skateboard to spread the word of the gospel. Or even the Emerging Church, which I think is truly a fascinating model, and if I'd found out about it earlier, I wouldn't have spent so long working with a team of remarkable characters to create Reboot, because to a large extent they're mirror models of each other—the Emerging Church, young individuals rebelling against the mega-church and coming together, mainline all the way through to progressive, Catholics all the way through to the different Protestant denominations, and trying to engage their peers under the age of 30 in a conversation—that's what they call it—and seeing themselves as just having the role of distributing information around which individuals can just argue with their own friends in their own home in their own time.

And finally, in terms of culture, an optimism. I mean, when you leave here, we should all go and look at Meet Up to see a thriving world of religious identity that's occurring deinstitutionally. And you can log in to that. We can plop in San Antonio, and we will find those escaping from Scientology are meeting on Tuesday night at the very same time as progressive young Muslims are meeting on the other side of town, and Jews who are toying with Jesus are going to come together Wednesday or maybe they'll come together Friday. And I think that when you look at the terrain on Meet Up, it's deinstitutional, it's without leadership, it's all based around a good old-fashioned argument, one of the great values of this country.

And I think in terms of optimism and in terms of a path that can make one feel extremely optimistic, the reality is the unfolding of religious community is already happening. And the question is whether the denominations are really going to be able to tap into that.

MR. DIONNE: Thank you. Bill?

MR. GALSTON: Well, in the immortal words of Kinky Friedman, they don't make Jews like Jesus anymore.

[Laughter.]

MR. GALSTON: But let me answer the gentleman's question more specifically. Forty years ago, all of the energy was on the religious left. Today, all of the energy is on the religious right. And so it's not that religion is dropping out of social movements. It has been displaced to a different part of the political spectrum. The question that Jim Wallace and others are raising is whether it has to be this way. And there are a bunch of people now thinking hard about a form of liberal social action that does not think of itself in opposition to religion, but as an extension of it.

I think the jury is still out on, to use Anna Greenberg's phrase, what the constituency for that kind of politics in the center-left portion of the political spectrum actually is. My own view, for what it's worth, is that it's going to be a long slog and that it will not be one book or one charismatic leader, but a slow development over time if it happens at all.

MR. BENNETT: Well, I'd like to say in closing that I wished we'd had this panel discussion before I wrote the report. But that's okay. Because it was an amazing discussion, and I learned a lot from everybody on this panel and the questions in the audience.

I guess what I would say is that I am fascinated by the undecided middle. I think that what happens with them, in some ways, is the future of Gen Y. In a lot of ways, the godly certainly have chosen a path and because of the way they've chosen that path, that is their path. And the godless in some ways, whether it's by default or experience, I'm not sure it was a deliberate choice—for some of them it was, but not all of them—they also are on a path that I think would be very difficult to change. It's really the undecided middle. And I am just fascinated to see in the next 20 years how traditional religious institutions decide to deal with the middle, how politicians decide to deal with the middle, how schools and how families deal with the middle. I think it is an outcome that is uncertain, but it's going to be fascinating to watch.

MR. DIONNE: Thank you so much. I like Bill's notion. If he's right about the 40 years, if it must be, then we're at the beginning of the new cycle after the two 40-year cycles.

I want to—when somebody mentioned religious marketing, it brought to mind one of my favorite ad campaigns which the Catholic Church in New York City ran to attract priests. And I love the double meaning of the tag line. The ads all ended, "The New York priest—God knows what he does for a living." And it made me think of this panel. Generation Y, God knows what's going to happen to them. And in the absence of omniscience, Anna's data has brought us a little closer to the truth. And I thank you very much, and I thank all the panelists, and I thank you all for coming.

[Applause.]

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