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AMERICAN POLITICS AND THE RELIGIOUS DIVIDE

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The Brookings Institution
Saul/Zilkha Room
1775 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

MODERATOR AND PANELIST:

E. J. DIONNE, JR.
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PANELISTS:

ALAN WOLFE
Professor of Political Science, Boston College
Director, Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life, Boston College

KARLYN H. BOWMAN
Resident Fellow
American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research

PROCEEDINGS

MR. DIONNE: I want to welcome everyone here today.

I want to reverse the order in which these things are usually done because I always worry that when people get involved in a wonderful conversation, you forget to thank the people who made it possible. So before I begin, I want to thank Erin Carter, Gladys Arrisueño, Andrew Lee, Molly Reynolds, and Korin Davis for helping us gather such a wonderful group of people and for doing so much work on this project and this book.

My name is E.J. Dionne. I want to recount to you one of the best insults that was ever hurled at me, and it was hurled at me by my friend, David Brooks, who once said that I was the only person he ever met whose eyes lit up at the words, “panel discussion”. Now, as many in this room know, that is a real insult. It is also a very clever insult in my case. I, of course, deny it, but it has just enough truth that it might be the case.

Today, I have an experience on a panel discussion that I never had before which is I am both the moderator and a presenter. It is kind of like having your own side count all the votes with no supervision, and I will try not to abuse that trust. The reason I am in that role is because my wonderful colleague, Pietro Nivola, who is the Director of the Governance Studies Program and Vice President here at Brookings and really the leading spirit behind the Brookings Polarization Project, discovered at the last minute that there was a series of meetings he had to go to. So he apologizes for not being here and asked me if I would talk a bit about the Polarization Project and what we have in mind and introduce our distinguished panelists who are fortunately old and dear friends.

Well, they are not old, but they have been my friends for a long time.

This is the first of three panel discussions on America's polarized politics. It is inspired by chapters in the forthcoming book, *Red and Blue Nation: Characteristics and Causes of America's Polarized Politics*. The book is scheduled to be published in December of this year. There are many, many distinguished contributors including my friend, Bill Galston, whom I thank in advance for some of the insights in my own comments. Actually, the problems are mine; the insights are Bill's.

It really brought together an extraordinary group of scholars. It was a very exciting meeting here at Brookings some months ago where the chapters of this book were kicked around, and it deals with some of the most basic questions like: Are we or are we not polarized? There is a very big debate on that. To the extent that we are polarized, why and where might this go?

Today's discussion will address my chapter which is on religion and moral values in American politics and whether polarization today can be explained by attitudes toward religious faith and how much that is the case.

Subsequent discussions, just to put on your calendars:

On October 30th, my colleague, Tom Mann, will talk about gerrymandering in perspective and to what extent does gerrymandering of districts contribute to polarization. Without telling you what Tom says, I can tell you some of his comments are surprising and they are very interesting. So you should definitely come to that.

Also, in November — we haven't gotten the date — Diana Mutz of the University of Pennsylvania and Gregg Easterbrook will discuss the role of the

media in polarization.

The Director of the Polarization Project is our own Pietro Nivola. We have done this in partnership with the Hoover Institution, and David Brady of Hoover is a partner and a co-editor of the book. Other contributors include Bill Galston, Morris Fiorina, Gary Jacobson, and other distinguished authors.

I will begin by introducing our panel before I offer my remarks. They will speak after I do and contradict every single thing that I said.

The first is Alan Wolfe who is a Professor of Political Science and the Director of the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life at Boston College. Again, in this partnership world, I am very proud to say that on October 19th, a book that has been done, collaboration between Brookings and the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, will be coming out. It is a book called *The Culture Wars*. It is a kind of sister conversation to the one we are having today, and it is an argument I have been trying to stage for about five years because I have been a huge fan of Alan's work for a long time.

If you think that David's comment on me makes me seem too wonky, the only serious book I read on my honeymoon was Alan Wolfe's book, *Whose Keeper*, which actually sounds good enough. I won't give the long and more academic subtitle. The wonderful thing about that book is that Alan talks a lot about family and community, and I decided I was justified reading it on my honeymoon because at the beginning of the book, Alan says, many of my friends said I couldn't have written a book about this until I got married and had children, and then he said, many of my friends are right. So then I felt I had permission to read it on my honeymoon.

The author has some of the important books on religion and America and public life and has a new book just published on the problems of the American democracy with a title that I don't have on my piece of paper. Please, plug your book.

MR. WOLFE: (off mike)

Yes; *Does American Democracy Still Work?*

Karlyn Bowman is a Resident Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research. Karlyn simply knows what every person in this room thinks about everything, what group you belong to thinks about everything. I don't think there is anyone who has studied public opinion in America for longer, in more detail, or with more insight than Karlyn.

I also have very long ties to Karlyn because she was one of my first editors in this city. Karlyn started a wonderful magazine with David Gergen, and I still mourn the fact that this magazine does not exist, the magazine called *Public Opinion*, which some of you may remember and I remember very fondly. I actually got to write for the first issue of that magazine.

I can tell you that in addition to being a brilliant analyst, she is also a wonderful editor. Anyone here who has written before knows that it is a very serious compliment. So I want to thank Karlyn.

Now I am going to offer you my talk. I thought of doing a dramatic reading of all 8,000 words in my chapter, and I thought that would make no one happy, probably least of all me. So what I have decided to do is offer a summary of my findings.

I passed out a series of tables, and I did it the old-fashioned way. I should

have, of course, had a PowerPoint and all that, but my colleague, Ruth Marcus, recently, in a wonderful column, talked about all the problems with PowerPoint. So, instead, you can rustle through your papers, and I won't have to click around on a computer or have it go bad on me.

When I started this paper, I was determined to prove that religion's influence on politics was vastly exaggerated, that everybody got it wrong, and that if you controlled for everything else, you could show that religion was really an artifact. With a lot of data and help from a friend at the *Washington Post*, I analyzed and analyzed and analyzed and discovered, sorry, there is simply no way to get rid of the religious effect. It is a real thing in our politics. It does contribute, to some degree, to polarization. But in the process of looking at all these other factors, it became clear that, number one, religion is not all that matters; number two, I believe that religion is not why President Bush got reelected in 2004; and number three, the impact of religion, it matters in more complicated ways than we might sometimes think.

First of all, religion matters not in splits between faith traditions. That used to be the case in our country; most dramatically, the difference between John F. Kennedy's vote among Catholics and Protestants in 1960 was very large. Historically, there were differences between the more liturgical and the more Evangelical churches in the United States. Lutherans and Baptists often voted the other way from each other. Episcopalians voted differently than Evangelicals. Obviously, Jews had specific traditions of voting earlier on, much more Republican than we remember, and then after the New Deal, much more loyally Democratic with actually a strong Socialist vote in New York and a few other

states.

The religious differences now are not split along those lines. They are rather split both within the faith traditions themselves: liberal Catholics, Protestants, and Jews voting together; conservative Catholics, Protestants, and, to some degree, Jews voting together. Muslims have actually shown an awful lot of swing in recent elections. If we want to get into that, we can talk about that; enormous swings between 2000 and 2004. Secondly, there is definitely a difference between the more religiously observant and the less religiously observant. Put simply, and we will get to that on Table 1, people who attend religious services more frequently tend to be more Republican; people who never attend religious services tend to be much more Democratic; and that holds up across all sorts of groups.

The second point I want to make is that race matters, and race actually matters more than religion. It has bothered me for quite a while. In a very interesting new book called *The Truth About Conservative Christians*, Father Andrew Greeley and a co-author make the very strong point that everything we say about conservative Evangelical Christians is, in part, wrong because African-Americans are simultaneously one of the most theologically conservative demographic groups in the Country and also the most loyally Democratic constituency in the Country. You might say that white Evangelicals and African-Americans pray in rather similar manners on Sunday and vote very differently, come the next Tuesday. So I think it is very important when we talk about conservative Evangelical Christians to realize that a lot of the public conversation is really about white Evangelical Christians and leaves out the religiosity of

African-Americans. There are also some very interesting things happening with America's growing Latino community which we will get to when we go to the charts.

The third point is that class matters, and actually the role of class measured by income, for example, is going up, not down over a series of elections. This is the point where Bill Galston's instruction was extremely helpful in that when you look at data over a rather long series of elections, class has become more important.

But, as I said, no matter how hard you try to press the data, the religious observance still was one of the most important factors. As we will see when we go through the numbers, class and religion interact in very interesting ways.

The last point I will make, and we can talk about this more in the discussion, is that despite the real polarization that is happening in the electorate, despite the religious polarization that is happening, it is still the case that moderates decided the 2004 election and that moderates decided that election on the whole on the basis of issues other than the traditional hot button issues, in particular terrorism. I have some numbers to support that, but I will go through them. I will go through these very quickly. Again, that is a point we can discuss later.

I will now walk you through those tables. I think Table 1 tells a very straightforward story. It is a pretty much straight line of relationship between weekly church attenders down to those who never attend religious services. The difference in the Bush vote between the weeklies and the nevers is very large, but I would call your attention to the occasionalies in the middle.

In keeping with Alan Wolfe's work on this subject, it is worth noting that the very strong relationship between attending religious services and voting is much stronger at the ends than it is in the middle, and there is about 75 percent of the Country that either attends church almost weekly to occasionally that actually splits its vote. So a lot of times, we are talking about a religious war. We are talking about two groups of about 15 percent each on either end where the differences are large. Nonetheless, as you can see, for Whites, the line is very straight. For African-Americans, there is indeed a slight relationship between religiosity and voting, but I can't imagine that Republicans would be very happy getting only 15 percent of a constituency. Even among African-American weekly church attenders, the Bush vote was 15 percent.

Now, look at the Latinos. The Latinos, again, it is very clear that President Bush got a substantial share from very religious Latinos. I think somewhere in these tables, you will discover that Bush actually carried Protestant Latinos and lost Catholic Latinos. He carried Protestant Latinos by a significant margin. I told a Republic friend: Maybe you guys should just send preachers instead of organizations in to the Latino community because the relationship is very strong among Latinos between Protestantism and Republicanism.

But the line is not as straight in the Latino community, and some of the later tables will suggest, will show that the Latino vote really varies a great deal by region. If there is one group in which the regional factor may overcome the religious factor, it is the Latinos. To put it simply, California Latinos are much more Democratic than Texas Latinos; Cubans are much more Republican than Puerto Ricans; and so on. It is a very interesting and complicated vote.

I broke this up by region, again, in my effort to show religious attendance by religion in the 2004 election by region. It was my thesis that the South was especially religious and therefore that the religious numbers were boosted by Republican strength in the South. There is some truth in that. On Table 3, you will see — the exit polls permitted this breakdown — how different we are in our religious behavior state by state. These were states in which these numbers were available. It fits with most of your stereotypes. Isn't it nice when data confirm as opposed to deny your stereotypes? Georgia and Louisiana are especially prone to church attendance; California and Washington, much lower rates of church attendance.

Now, this Table 4 is designed, again, in my effort to push down the effect of religion. Southern Whites do behave differently from Whites in the rest of the Country. You see Bush's vote is 70 percent among Southern Whites compared to votes in the fifties in the other parts of the Country. African-Americans are solidly Democratic everywhere. The West number seems high, and I am still concerned about the "n" in that, if that sample is large enough, but it is probably a correct finding. Latinos, note the very, very sharp regional differences, and that high Latino Southern number, I think is attributable, in large parts of Texas and Florida, to Cubans in Florida and to Bush's strength in Texas.

Again, Table 5, I think makes the same point.

When I controlled for region, my great desire to show that the religious effect was actually a Southern effect simply was not supported by the data. That hypothesis went out the window. In Table 6, you will see that the Southern vote for Bush among church attenders is very high, but there is still this difference

right across the board, that there is a religious factor that is separate from a regional factor.

In Table 7, when you break those same numbers up by state, the same thing happens. There are some differences by region. Why Bush did especially well among the more than weeklies in Washington State, for example, I think may be explained, in part, by the fact there are fewer religious people in Washington State and therefore are more particular from that electorate.

Table 8 gives you that in more detail. Again, I have given you more detail than I am going to talk about.

Now, Table 9 is not from any study that I looked at. The source is actually from a very dear and old friend of Karlyn. It is Everett Ladd's very important book written in the mid-1970s with a gentleman called Charles Hadley. What you were observing during the sixties was actually a sharp decline in class voting. Notice that in Harry Truman's election, there was a very sharp difference in the Democratic vote: high and low status, socioeconomic status. In 1972, the Nixon-McGovern election, those differences had largely disappeared. McGovern actually ran a bit better among those of high socioeconomic status, but he lost 25 percent on Harry Truman's vote. This is, in some ways, the high point of both reaction in the white South to civil rights and the rise of a new set of social issues in the North. If you recall, Nixon ran against McGovern as the candidate of Acid, Amnesty, and Abortion, although I believe it was Hubert Humphrey who actually invented that phrase but Richard Nixon used it in the election.

You jump now to the 2004 election and really socioeconomic class is back. This controls race and income, and there is just a pretty straight line if you go all

the way up the income ladder — on this table, you go up the income ladder by going down — 43 percent for Bush among those who earn less than \$15,000; 51 percent in the \$15,000 to \$30,000; all the way to those who earn \$200,000 or more — this is the Whites category — where Bush had a very solid lead.

I like to throw these numbers at my friend David Brooks who has enjoyed arguing that really the Democrats are the party of the elite because it is an academic elite in all of that. There is an elite factor connected to education, but it is not connected to income nearly as much. The Republicans are still, in significant part, the party of the very wealthy.

Again, I was trying to drive out the religious factor. And so I decided, well, let us control, and I looked at white voters only because you start losing cases when you do the analysis with the Blacks and Latinos. I was trying to see how did the religious factor interact with the class factor, the income factor, and it is very clear that there is a religious effect that is independent of income. In fact, if you take white voters earning under \$15,000, the one group Bush did carry were those who attended church weekly or more religious services, weekly or more, at 55-44. The Democrat's strongest group is the very poor, non-religious at 74-24.

Go all the way to the other end of the table, \$150,000 or more. This is very dramatic, and I wasn't so much surprised by this, but it was such a robust finding, to use one of Karl Rove's favorite words, that if you are rich and religious, you are really Republican. Those who earned over \$150,000 a year and attended religious services weekly or more voted for Bush 76-23. Wealthy people who never attended religious services actually voted for Kerry 56-42. That is the minority that my friend, David Brooks, likes to talk about, the unchurched

wealthy. I think this table is very revealing because no matter what you say, no matter how you cut the numbers, you have a very strong relationship between religiosity and voting.

Just one last point I want to make before I turn it over to my colleagues, actually two final points.

The first is I will call your attention to Table 12, and this is the one I would really bring home with you and spend some time with, if you happen to like numbers. These are from a study by my friend, John Green, of the University of Akron and now of the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. John did these two very large surveys before and after the 2004 election. I think John's great insight was to say we tend to think of white Evangelical Protestants as kind of one large, undifferentiated group. Well, any member of any group will tell you: No, I am not a member of a large, undifferentiated group.

What John discovered by asking a whole series of questions is that all religious traditions are divided in interesting ways. His way of dividing them was to divide them among those he called Traditionalists who are the most conservative; those he called Modernists who are, if you will, the most theologically liberal and the most liberal in their behavior; and then a middle group that didn't quite fit into either and had some characteristics of one and some characteristics of the other, whom he called Centrists.

One can quibble about his titles. Alan and I have a long, friendly polemic about the word, Traditionalist. He argues that I like the word too much and that that reveals that I am actually Catholic. But for these purposes, I think that the terms are useful.

Traditionalist Evangelicals are indeed just what everybody thinks of white conservative Evangelicals as being. Traditionalists voted 88-12 — this is on Table 13 — for George Bush; Centrist Evangelicals, on the other hand, voted 64-36 for Bush; and Modernist Evangelicals, a very small group, actually voted for John Kerry.

Now, what is interesting, if you go back to Table 12, is that Traditionalist Evangelicals are only about half, actually just a little less than half, of the entire white Evangelical population, and that means that there are a lot of Evangelicals potentially in play, politically. If you see the Centrist Evangelicals line, that is 10.6 percent of the voting population. They are Republican but note that the margin is not that large, 47-31. Then the Modernists are small, but still that is a lot of human beings in that Modernist Evangelical category that leans slightly Democratic.

One can go through all the other traditions in the Country, mainline Protestants and Catholics as well. The other groups aren't broken up because they are large enough.

I think that suggests that if we get in our heads that the result of 2004 is the inevitable future, we are wrong. Amy Sullivan in the audience here, who is writing a wonderful book on this subject, has written some great pieces. One group I particularly like, she refers to them as Freestyle Evangelicals who, if nothing else, sound like an awful lot of fun. Her Freestyle Evangelicals would probably fall into the Centrist or Modernist categories.

My own feeling about the next time around, this fall and two years from now — here I am predicting on the basis of having read a lot of data but only on

the basis of a limited number of actually existing surveys — is that Bush may have marked the peak moment of conservative religious solidarity. First, it is very hard to get the vote much higher than he got it without cheating. I mean he got such an enormous share of the conservative religious vote that I think it is almost inevitable that it will come down some.

Second, you are seeing evidence in the Pew surveys and elsewhere that a significant share of white Evangelicals voters have actually left the President. If you measure by approval ratings, they may be leaving him — I am curious what Karlyn has seen — at a slightly lower rate than others, but it is not all that different from in terms of the shifts away from the President.

Lastly, I think there is both a certain, shall we say, I guess an exhaustion on the part of a lot of Americans with a particularly strong polarization around religious and moral questions. I think you are seeing that in both parties. On the Democratic side, Democrats discovered God in the 2004 exit polls. You will find Him or Her anywhere. They found him in the exit polls. I think Democrats are speaking in a much more open way to people of faith, and those Democrats who are religious are speaking in a more coherent way about their own religious traditions. On the Republican side, if you look at the two leading candidates in the polls for the Republican nomination, Rudy Giuliani and John McCain, you see Republicans who are quite different, who do not naturally appeal to white Evangelical voters. I mean if Rudy Giuliani appeared in drag on Saturday Night Live, I think it was, it is not exactly the behavior of a white Evangelical — can't favor it — and yet he has a lot of support among Evangelicals, the polls suggest. So I think what you are going to see in the longer run is a closing of the religious

divide.

Lastly, you are seeing some real rumblings inside the churches themselves. Rick Warren, the author of *The Purpose Driven Life* — all authors violate the commandment against covetousness when they talk about Rick Warren — his book has sold at least 25 million copies. It is probably up to 35 million right now. It seems to go up exponentially. Conservative Evangelical leader, Republican in his politics, I am quite certain, but trying to shift the focus of Evangelical Christianity or broaden the focus, if you will, of Evangelical Christianity to issues like third world poverty and AIDS and human trafficking. You are seeing that around the Evangelical community, generally.

I think the polarization that is described in these numbers is real. I think it will diminish.

Alan and Karlyn can now polarize totally in their response to this talk.

Thank you all very much.

[Applause.]

MR. WOLFE: I come not to polarize E.J. Dionne on the fact that I agree with a great deal of his analysis, and I especially think that he has managed a really important trick in his research; that is he has told us that religion is enormously important, but he has told us also that it is not everything. I think that gets it exactly right, and it has been very hard to get this right.

I think I can accuse both my own profession — the Political Science profession — and the American Political Science Association of having ignored religion for a very, very long time which is really quite amazing, given the events that have happened in the United States since the 1970s. It almost seems as if, as

religion became more important in American politics, the social sciences, convinced that they were building truly scientific models of rational human conduct, tended basically to ignore the single most important fact of American political life.

Journalists pretty much did the same thing. There were no religion reporters or if there were religion reporters, they were at the bottom of the hierarchy. Now, the tendency is to go in exactly the opposite direction. The *New York Times* now has, I think, six full-time religion reporters. There can't be a story in the *New York Times* without a religious angle. If they are talking about a new shopping mall, they will get in a religious angle. If they are talking about pop culture, they will get in a religious angle. Daycare, you name it, and they find a religious angle. I am worried that we are going actually from not paying enough attention to seeing religion everywhere.

Of course, I cannot accuse my own profession of doing that because making up for its sinful behavior in the past, the American Political Science Association decided to create a task force on religion and democracy and they asked me to be the chairman of it. So I can't possibly say that we are now overemphasized religion, but I do sometimes worry that we will fall victim to the same thing the journalists are doing.

E.J. got it exactly right; it is enormously important, but it is not everything, and we shouldn't find a religious angle everywhere. I agree with most of what he says. I also have nothing to dispute in his tables which seem to me to carry a statistical portrait of exactly that conclusion. But it wouldn't be fair just to leave E.J. completely off the hook, so let me try to focus on some of the underlying

phenomena I think he accepts and I think may accept a little bit too uncritically as a way of trying to come to grips with this issue.

The one that bothers me the most because I hear it so often, and E.J. is by no means alone, is to talk about this phenomena in which it is alleged that inter-religious conflict or conflict between religions is increasingly being replaced in American society by inner-religious conflict or conflict within religious denominations or traditions. On one level, that seems obvious. Look at what has happened to the Episcopal Church in this Country and the arguments over the ordination of Gene Robinson in New Hampshire, a gay bishop, and you see a profound split within the Episcopal Church, perhaps even a schism of enormous historical place taking place within that church. And so, you are bound to say, well, in this particular conflict, someone who is a liberal Episcopalian who believes that we should drop this emphasis upon the sinfulness of homosexual behavior, obviously will have more in common with a liberal Jew or a liberal Catholic, whereas a conservative Episcopalian will obviously have more in common with conservatives in other religious traditions. It just seems to be obvious that there are these kinds of splits.

Once we start thinking about it a little bit more, I actually think the picture becomes much more complicated. For example, the entire argument of religious polarization in the United States goes back to a series of propositions that have been established over the last 15 or 20 years, that increasingly look questionable. One of those propositions is that there has been a significant decline in mainline churches and then a consequent growth in Evangelical or Fundamentalist Protestant churches. Associated with that is the hypothesis that the reason for this

has been the fact of a kind of rational choice analysis, that conservative Protestantism differentiates itself in the market by offering a very, very strict interpretation of the commands that we are obligated to God for and that this strictness creates an attraction. It differentiates a product in the market, and it creates attraction. That is why you see this shift. Since American politics has pretty much gone from being dominated by liberals in the 1960s to being dominated by conservatives now, underlying that, truly there must have been this disaffection, what the great economist, Albert Hirschman, calls the exit from the more liberal religions toward the more conservative religions.

E. J. mentioned — I was glad to see him mention it because I was going to mention it — a new book by Father Andrew Greeley called *The Truth About Conservative Christians*. One of the findings in this book, I think is one of the single most important statistical finding that social scientist has ever come up with on this topic. I am not statistically trained enough to know whether it is accurate. Even if whatever training I have, I need to get the original data. But essentially, Greeley and Michael Hout, his co-author, show that the decline of the mainline churches is entirely due to low birth rates among wealthy members of what once were liberal congregations. It has just simply been a segment of the population that has very, very low birth rates, and over 30 or 40 years, those low birth rates result in a huge emptying out of those churches. But there is no evidence that people were actually, in any large numbers, leaving those liberal churches and joining or switching to conservative churches. So we are talking about two different segments of the population.

Now, if that is true, it seems to me to be enormously important because it

suggests that this is not a political polarization that is really causing what we all know to be the case which is that the mainline denominations are declining. It could very well be that conservative Protestantism is growing. It certainly is growing in the United States relative to mainline Protestantism, but it is not about polarization. It may have another cause entirely. Time will tell whether the Greeley-Hout finding comes to be widely accepted, but it seems to me to be of enormous significance.

There are other reasons I think that question the idea that what we are witnessing is a kind of politically-caused religious polarization in the United States. I mean it is true that once upon a time, Catholics and Protestants disagreed over all kinds of issues. In fact, Evangelical Protestantism itself has a long history of anti-Catholicism, of viewing Catholics as the enemy, and so on. When you find in the post-Roe v. Wade atmosphere that Evangelical Protestants and conservative Catholics have joined forces together in reaction to Roe v. Wade, it certainly suggests a big change because they were once at each other's throats and now they have joined together.

But again, the picture is a little more complicated. For one thing, conservative Protestants did not immediately condemn Roe v. Wade. The Southern Baptist Convention actually supported Roe v. Wade when the decision came down, and it was only about eight or nine years later that the SBC sort of officially repudiated its original support for Roe v. Wade. Now, in part, that was because if Catholics were against the decision, then an Evangelical Protestant group would naturally be for it, and it was a kind of reflection of that historic divide, but it was also because conservative Protestantism has a long history of a

libertarian suspicion of government, a belief in religious liberty, a belief in individual choice, a believe in voluntary assertions of one's faith. Government involvement in affairs of conscience has been something the Baptists, from the days of Roger Williams and John Williams to the present, have always been suspicious of. So, for conservative Protestants and conservative Catholics to join together comes at the cost of conservative Protestants abandoning an historic questioning of religious involvement in politics, a putting aside of an anti-theocratic history in favor of a more theocratic politics, and that is not done easily.

I think it was done. There is no doubt that the Southern Baptist Convention got very politically engaged in the 1980s. At least, there is no doubt that some leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention see the Republican Party as an essential component of their understanding of what this Country needs to do to make itself whole again and so on, but it really comes at the cost of a significant scar to a certain tradition that has long marked the difference between Protestants and Catholics, with Protestants, at least conservative Protestants, understanding themselves much more. What happens to things like infant baptism in all this? There used to be furious arguments about infant versus adult baptism. These were huge theological issues, and reams were written about why if you baptize an infant, the infant doesn't have free will. The baptism ritual is meaningless if the person who is being baptized doesn't have free will, and that is why you have to baptize as an adult. These things were huge, and they were tremendously significant. Do we then put them all aside because Protestants and Catholics now find themselves on the same side on the issue of abortion?

If we do, then essentially we are saying something very interesting. We are saying that, yes, we now have these cross-religious lines, but they are political lines; they are not religious lines. They say, in a sense, that the conclusion, if this idea of polarization is true, is that politics drives religion rather than the other way around. In other words, it is your position on abortion that comes first, you're your position on infant baptism or the liturgy or any other or salvation or grace or any other of the issues that once divided Protestants and Catholics.

In an odd way, this does not suggest that religion is important. It suggests that religion is unimportant because all those religious differences now suddenly don't mean anything because the only thing that matters is what is your position on gay marriage, what is your position on abortion, what is your position on stem cells. Why, then, have religion if those are the things that matter so much? I think for any religious believer, that has to be, at some point, a question that you have to address. Well, if my politics is driving my religion, then what about all those things that my church used to believe in?

I actually think that those things, the religious differences, may be coming back in American politics and trumping some of the political differences, especially in the present political environment.

There is another book just published that I think is extremely insightful into some of the issues. It is a book by Damon Linker, called *The Theocons*. Damon Linker worked for the conservative Catholic magazine, *First Things*, edited by Father Richard John Neuhaus, whom I am sure most of you know or at least know of. Somewhat, he has broken with that but not to the other extreme; it is actually a fairly moderate and judicious book. One of the things that emerges very, very

strongly in that book is that while we talk about conservative or conservative religion, there is a very profound difference between the way conservative Catholics understand the world and the way conservative Protestants understand the world and that these historic differences between a more libertarian understanding of religious freedom which we associate with Protestantism and a more state church tradition which we associate with Catholicism have, by no means, disappeared. Linker portrays Father Neuhaus, for example, as someone who is firmly persuaded that his Catholic understanding of the role of what is required to create a moral order through religion is one that he believes Evangelicals ought to believe, whether Evangelicals themselves actually believe it or not. There is a kind of tension that Linker explores in his book between these two different kinds of traditions.

Now, it happens to be enormously important right now in American politics because we now have, for the first time in our history, a Catholic majority on the U.S. Supreme Court, and five of our Supreme Court Justices are Catholic and they are conservative Catholics. So there is naturally an understanding that because they are conservative Catholics, they will issue conservative rulings that conservative Protestants will support. But, in fact, I am willing to predict that on a number of issues, conservative Protestants and conservative Catholics will not see eye to eye because the Catholic tradition which is one of emphasizing government and giving a central role to government in the reaffirmation of the moral order is one that for many Protestants, if they are at least familiar with their history, would be uncomfortable to accept. Let alone the fact that will it somehow work that a Catholic majority on the Supreme Court will be seen as the

voice of all conservative religious views, irrespective of what tradition they come from.

One final thing on this inner-religious and inter-religious, it also never really made sense to throw conservative Jews or conservative Muslims into this understanding that conservatism aligns people and religion sort of becomes secondary. Despite unbelievably strenuous efforts on the part of Mr. Rove and President Bush to win Jewish voters, the most pro-Israel administration we have ever had — Israel can do no wrong; the Israeli right can do no wrong; this is a strong and powerful foreign policy alliance between Israel and the United States as we have ever had — there was not a significant swing among Jewish voters to the Republicans. Jews voted for Reagan in higher numbers than they voted for Bush in 2004. The sense that we are just going to peel off conservatives, irrespective of whether they happen to be Jewish, Catholic, or Protestant, isn't really, I think, an accurate picture of what is going on.

Of course, Muslims, as E.J. points out, these were seen as natural conservative voters by Grover Norquist who made the recruitment of Muslims to the Republican Party essential, in fact. It is enormously important because, as we all know, Michigan is a crucial swing state in Presidential elections, and Michigan is where the Muslims are in this Country. Because of the Patriot Act and because of 9-11 and so on, that is not something that we are going to see in our lifetime, I think, a significant shift in that direction.

Don't throw out completely the fact that we still have different religious traditions in the United States and that they still stand for different things. I think that if E.J. is right in the end of the paper and in the end of his remarks today, that

this stuff may have peaked, we are much more likely to see conflict between religions replacing conflict within religion. Now, I am, by no means, endorsing that. I am not standing here, advocating that we go back to a time when Evangelicals were anti-Semitic and hated Catholics and Catholics disliked Jews. That is not what I am saying.

But I am saying that religion either means something or it doesn't. Its truths are either true or they aren't. I don't know if we will ever approach, in the United States, the kind of conflict that is emerging right now in reaction to Pope Benedict's remarks about Islam, globally, but that is kind of what religion is. It does involve. It has had a long history of different understandings of reasons, different understandings of truth, different understandings of the role of government, different understandings of violence. I am, by no means, prepared to write this off and say that politics trumps all of them.

One last comment on this whole question of whether the religious issues have peaked in American life; that is something we won't really know until the last couple of electoral cycles take place. I think if you look historically, there is strong evidence for believing that religious polarization has, in fact, peaked and that the mobilization of religious voters has peaked. I say this for many of the reasons that E.J. emphasized, but I just wanted to add one more.

Imagine if you were an Evangelical Protestant in the 1920s, the late 1920s. You had just lost the Scopes trial. Actually, you won the Scopes trial — you won the actual trial — but you lost the battle for public opinion. You also lost prohibition. You actually won the first time, but then you lost the second time. So you had two big defeats. You looked around at the Country in the late 1920s.

You are an Evangelical. You are from Dayton, Tennessee, where the Scopes trial took place. You looked around, and what did you see?

You saw Catholics flocking into the big cities. You saw America becoming an urban power. You saw the Democrats nominating Al Smith for President, the first Catholic nominated by a major party. From your perspective back there in the 1920s, you lost the Country if you are an Evangelical. The Country was going another way. It was going to become an urban immigrant-driven, non-Protestant majority country. It is perfectly understandable to me that so many Evangelicals then decided if we can't control this Country, we are just going to drop out of politics, which Evangelicals essentially and effectively did from the 1920s until the 1970s or 1980s.

Why did they come back? Why did they become so much more politically active? Well, in part, their worst fears from the 1920s never really materialized. Immigration essentially, effectively closed down, at least until 1965. Rather than urbanization becoming the big phenomenon in this Country, suburbanization and ex-urbanization did. Protestants did not lose their majority in the United States. The Catholics only elected one President in that entire period. All of sudden, the Country looks like maybe it is not such a place alien to you if you are an Evangelical. Maybe it is even friendly, and you begin to get your own people in office.

Now, if you are an Evangelical, you are totally opposite where you were in the 1920s. You have the President. You have the Supreme Court. Well, they are Catholics, but you have conservatives. You have both houses of Congress. My goodness, how can you maintain the energy that you are somehow an oppressed

and alienated, a non-belonger to American society? It is your Country now if you are Evangelical. There aren't any excuses anymore.

How much longer can you blame the divorce rate on liberals when you control the whole Country, especially when if you are from an Evangelical background, you come from a place where there are more divorces than there are in Catholic or secular society? How can you blame the problems your children are experiencing on some alien force when you yourself are in charge? That, it seems to me, is the biggest factor. At some point, introspection is hopefully going to emerge. After all, religious traditions are usually introspective. Maybe instead of blaming others for your problems, you will begin to say, well, maybe there is something wrong with the way we live, maybe there is something wrong with our values.

If that happens, then I think the whole kind of stereotyping of the enemy which drives so much of the polarization in American politics is bound to come to an end. That is my optimistic thought.

Thank you for the opportunity to share it with you.

[Applause.]

MR. DIONNE: I want to thank Alan for that wonderful presentation. I want to say a few things afterward about it, but I do want to assure him on one thing. I had to go a very interesting talk that I went to before this, where the same demographic fact about Evangelicals having more kids was raised by Richard Land, a very smart, very conservative man, head of basically the political arm, if you will, the policy arm of the Southern Baptist Convention. I didn't want to Richard Land to feel too triumphant about the conservative side, so I couldn't

resist pointing out that my wife and I have done our demographic duty to liberalism, and we also have three children which is the norm in Evangelical families. I always say we have a 1950s Catholic family, discounted for inflation.

MS. BOWMAN: I have three children.

MR. DIONNE: Yes, exactly. So you are doing your demographic duty to liberalism.

But I think that I, too, was very struck by that Greeley point, and it is a very interesting book.

Now, again, I want to thank Karlyn for coming today.

MS. BOWMAN: Thank you, E.J., and I would like to thank you for that very generous introduction earlier in the program and also to congratulate you on what I think is just a beautifully written and carefully argued chapter.

As E.J. said, we met for the first time in the late 1970s. We were both working, as he said, on a small niche publication called *Public Opinion*. I was a very junior editor, and E.J. was an early contributor to that magazine. I was a public opinion neophyte at that time, and since then, I hope I have learned a little about the issues that we are going to be talking about today.

When we were working on that magazine, we were working in the shadow of two giants. E.J. mentioned Everett Ladd, but we were also working very closely with Seymour Martin Lipsett, and both of them, of course, have taught both, I think, E.J. and me a great deal of what we know about American public attitudes about religion. At that time, we were trying to make some sense of what we thought of as a massive accumulation of survey data in this area and in many others. It turns out, given the growth of the business, to be barely a trickle

compared to the amount of data that we are analyzing today. I think both Marty and Everett would be very, very pleased that E.J. has maintained the interest in public opinion data, and I think you can all learn a great deal from this very comprehensive review that he has made, particularly of the exit poll data and breaking it down in the way that he has.

It might surprise you, E.J., but as I was reading this chapter last week, I got to about page 35, and I went down to see my husband and said, I haven't disagreed with a single word thus far. I said, well, I will go back and read the conclusion and see if I can find something that I am going to disagree with. But, in fact, I do agree in very large measure with the conclusions that you have drawn.

Religious commitment has joined race, class, and region as a key driver of our voting decision and that its influence has surely increased over the last several elections. I also agree that it is not as powerful an influence on voting decisions as, let us say, race, and that the influence varies as E.J. showed in the tables by region and also from state to state. The bottom line for me is that religion makes a difference and religious observance makes a bigger difference but so do many other factors.

The divisions that E.J. discussed in voting behavior in past elections have all indications of being fairly robust this year. Gallup recently aggregated data from July through mid-September on the generic ballot question to look at how different groups planned to vote on election day. A group that Gallup describe as white frequent churchgoers were 35 percent of the electorate, their vote, 34 percent for the Democratic candidate and 60 percent for the GOP Congressional

candidate; while white infrequent churchgoers, 49 percent of the sample, were planning to vote 55 percent for the Democratic candidate and 38 percent for the GOP one. They were almost mirror images of one another as much of the data that E.J. described from the exit polls suggests.

It was interesting in the extensive breakdown that Gallup did about how various groups plan to vote, that Gallup didn't even bother to break down the data by denomination. That is an enormous change because, of course, denomination, as both Alan and E.J. said, was what most political scientists looked to a long time ago.

I think E.J. is also right to note the importance of the differences within religious traditions and, of course, Alan echoed that in his remarks and he did that in great detail, I think, toward the end of this chapter overall. I would be curious, Alan, about your reaction about whether you think that a Catholic and a Protestant who attend church weekly and a Jew who attends synagogue weekly would have had more in common 50 years than they have in common today, whether on that dimension, we have seen less polarization or less significant differences between the deep believers or those who don't believe at all than we might have 50 years ago.

My question, I think, about all of this is that we know while the polarization exists on paper, those who attend church every week and those who don't, are they really unable to understand one another or worse? I think this goes to a fundamental question about the role that politics plays in the life of most ordinary Americans. I think it is largely peripheral and not central to the way we think about our families, our neighborhoods, and our communities, and we might have

some differences on that point overall. But I think there is a great deal of qualitative data as well as the kind of quantitative data that E.J. has been looking at that suggests, on a lot of major questions, there really aren't big differences in the population as a whole. In other words, we aren't that deeply polarized.

I quickly looked at just a few data points on what has been one of the hot button discussions, certainly during the Bush Presidency, and that is questions that have been asked by the major survey organizations about George Bush's faith, and most of them have been asked several times during the course of the Presidency. I would like just to go over a few of those numbers to show you how the public has answered those questions.

This is a question from CBS News, asked three times since February of 2003: Some people like the way George W. Bush talks in public about his strong religious beliefs. What about you? Do you like it or are you bothered by it somewhat? In the three cases where this question was asked, a majority said that they liked the way that George W. Bush talked about his religious faith, and the highest percentage saying that they were bothered by it was 36 percent in 2004 during the heat of the election campaign.

Another question asked by Pew, a very similar question: Do you think George W. Bush mentions his religious faith and prayer about the right amount, too much, or too little? A question that has been asked four times since 2003 and in the last sounding of that question, 52 percent said that they thought Bush talked about his religious faith and prayer about the right amount; 24 percent said that he talked about it too much; and another 14 percent said that he talked about it too little.

In making policy decisions, does Bush rely on his religious beliefs too much, about the right amount, or to little? The last time Pew asked that question, 53 percent said that he relied on his religious beliefs about the right amount; 15 percent said that he relied on them too much; and 21 percent, too little.

Again, in another question, to put the concerns about the Religious Right and that particular group into perspective, this is a question asked by CBS News and the *New York Times* and also Gallup. The question is asked separately about the Religious Right and about big business. Do you think the Religious Right has too much, about the right amount, or too little influence on the Bush Administration? The last time that question was asked was by Gallup in April of 2005, and 39 percent said that the Religious Right has too much; 39 percent, the right amount; and 18 percent, too little. But when asked about big business, 64 percent thought that big business had too much influence over George Bush; 23 percent, the right amount; and 5 percent, too little.

It is also interesting in a battery of questions that Fox News asked in November of 2005, and they broke the questions about by people who attended services weekly and those who attended services less than weekly, the division that E.J. talks about in the paper. Here are some of the responses: Which of the following is closer to your view? Religion is under attack in America today; religion has too much influence in America today; or the current standing of religion is just about right? Religion is under attack, 61 percent of those who attended religious services said that compared to 41 percent of those who attended church services less than weekly.

Another question: Do you agree or disagree that the courts have gone too

far in taking religion out of public life? Those who attend services weekly, 87 percent said yes, in fact, the courts have gone too far; those who attend church less than weekly, 70 percent said that the courts have gone too far in taking religion out of public life.

I think those are the main questions that I wanted to emphasize in terms of the fact that there seems to me to be a pretty substantial amount of agreement in society about the role of religion, at least in public life.

Alan Wolfe has pointed out, I think, that the cultural wars are largely fought inside the Beltway among elites on cable TV and now in the blogosphere. Although I think they resonate to some degree outside, I don't think the rest of the Country is obsessed with the role of religion and moral values as the media would have us believe. I also find myself in agreement with both E.J. and Alan in believing that perhaps the polarization of the religious differences that we see in the exit poll data have peaked. I also see in the survey data in this data, and this is not true in a lot of other areas of public opinion, just remarkable continuity and stability in terms of long-term beliefs about religion. If you ask about the importance of belief in God, questions about church attendance, do you have a Bible in your home, do you belong to a prayer group, just remarkable stability in public opinion over a 50-year period on those questions from the time that Gallup began asking them.

Finally, I would like to close with one question that I have always liked that Gallup began asking in 1937 for the first time, and they asked the question in 1937 about women. They asked whether or not you would vote for a women for President if she were qualified in every other way. Well, Gallup changed the

wording of that question very quickly, but not surprisingly, a lot of people at that point would not have voted for a woman even if she were qualified in every other way.

But over the years, Gallup added to that question, and they began to ask about a lot of different groups. Would you vote for a Black for President? Would you vote a Jew for President? Would you vote for a Baptist, a Mormon — again, a huge group — a homosexual for President? Today, the last time that Gallup asked that question, unfortunately, was 1999. I am hoping that they will update it fairly soon, particularly the question about a Mormon for President.

Of all the groups that they had asked about — women, gays, Baptists, Mormons — a solid majority said that they would vote for all of those groups. There was only one exception, and that group was, interestingly, Atheists. You still had 49 percent of Americans saying that they would not vote for an Atheist for President and 48 percent saying that they would. Religion is a powerful factor in American public life, and I think that is one indication of the role that it plays.

Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

MR. DIONNE: I just want to be very brief. Thank you, Karlyn. I knew you would bring new and better numbers to bear on this discussion.

I want to be very, very brief in replying, mostly to Alan but to something Karlyn said also, I want to talk about.

Just on Alan's point, I basically accept almost all his fraternal corrections. I think it is, in a sense, Clintonian of me, but two things can be true at the same time. I think Alan would agree that the differences within denominations are, on

the whole, more significant than the differences between them, particularly compared to 40 years ago. Again, the formulation of liberal Catholics, liberal Protestants, liberal Jews tend to vote together, I think, is broadly true.

Alan is right to say that there are still differences between these groups. For example, white Catholics are somewhat less Republican than white Protestants. It varies from election to election, but again, no matter how you slice those numbers, I usually find over a series of elections that white Catholics will be eight or ten points less Republican than white Protestants. Father Greeley, loyal Democrat that he is, I think, thinks the difference is even larger, but it is within that range. So there is a difference.

Obviously, Jews are, after African-Americans, the most Democratic group in the Country. Milton Himmelfarb famously said Jews have the wealth and status of Episcopalians and vote like Puerto Ricans. That is almost exactly true to the data. However, I do think in the last election, you did some movement. The Jewish vote for Bush went from about 18 percent to 25 percent. There was, I think, significant movement among the minority of Jews who are Orthodox, about 10 percent of the Jewish vote. Nathan Diament of the Orthodox Union looked at Orthodox precincts around the Country and noticed a very large shift. Now, some of that, you would expect with Joe Lieberman on the ticket in 2000 and not on the ticket in 2004. Some of that, I do think was a foreign policy vote, and some of it was the Bush Campaign realizing they weren't going to get much swing out of the Jewish vote anywhere else, and they really concentrated a lot of resources on the Orthodox. There is also some indication that younger Jewish men are less loyally Democratic than the rest of the group.

The other point that Alan made that I think is so many important and I think actually should be troublesome to people of faith is the extent to which partisanship has invaded the religious institutions. C.S. Lewis famously said, and I am paraphrasing here, that we look to the Scriptures not for enlightenment as to what we might believe, but we ransack the Scriptures to support the views of our own political party. I do think there is a lot of that going on out there. I think that is true. This is not a specific criticism of political conservatives or political liberals. I think that there is a sense in which party loyalty in some ways can become more important than religion, though it is often rationalized in terms of religion.

I think Alan is also right to raise the question: If that is the case, then which really is more important, party or religion? I think actually Alan should go preach that in religious institutions because it is a cult conscience that would be very useful to religious people of various kinds.

On the Atheists, I once wrote a column in which I quoted this wonderful in *The New Republic* on a very good piece that Leon Wieseltier did. The piece was called "God Bless Atheists". I have actually been troubled. As somebody who spent years arguing liberals should take religious people more seriously, be more respectful toward them, understand that there are as many intellectually serious religious people as there are intellectually serious non-religious people, I am now worried about a kind of rising prejudice against the non-believer. I wrote a column that they happily ran under that New Republic headline, "God Bless Atheists". Leon Wieseltier wrote that actually believers should be grateful to Atheists because Atheists take the issue of God as seriously as believers do. I got

one of my favorite emails I have ever gotten from a reader, and it began: Dear Mr. Dionne, I am an Atheist, but if you will forgive me, God bless you.

Fortunately, the last point, I think we are somewhat ambivalent about this. Pew asked the same sample two questions. They were agreed-disagree questions. You can argue about methodology there. One said: I want my President to have a strong religious faith. The other was: I don't like it when a politician talks about how religious he or she is. 70 percent wanted a President with strong religious faith, but 50 percent don't want a politician to talk too much about their religion. Now, if you are in the 70 percent, how can you know unless a politician talks about it? I think that is a nice ambiguity because on the one hand, we are, in a broad sense, a religious nation; on the other hand, we are suspicious of a certain misuse of religiosity in public, and I think that is a healthy suspicion.

With this distinguished audience, who wants to ask a question? Sir?

We have mikes going around so everybody in the back can hear. This is an odd room. It is like the doors open and then they shut when Pharaoh's troops come in.

QUESTIONER: Hi, Bill D'Antonio, sociologist.

We have been trying to find that polarization in the body politic for many years. Paul DiMaggio et al. did a famous 1996 study where they couldn't find it except possibly on abortion and when you control for party I.D. I have been following roll call votes in Congress since 1972, controlling for both party and religion with a colleague from George Washington, following Paul and Rosenthal's (phonetic) work. In 1972, we could account for votes by party line 34 percent of the time; religion, 7 percent of the time. As David Broder noted

about three weeks ago, you can now account for all significant roll call votes by party; 88 percent with the Democrats and 90 percent with the Republicans.

You find — I think Alan said it well — religion does not control the party ride. It is that party seems to be determining the religious factor. It is what party you are in.

Going from 1980, very briefly, following the abortion line in 1980, in the Senate, there were fewer pro-choice Catholic Democrats in the Senate. By 2002, the Catholic vote in the Senate on abortion was 80 percent pro-choice all the time. But the same thing happened with Protestants, mainline Protestants. They have gone from 50 percent pro-choice to 80 percent if they are Democrats; if they are Republicans, they are practically to down to zero but all of them have reasons for supporting abortion. Party controls the vote. In fact, I wonder. There are now three Catholics from North Carolina in the Republican Party, but they all vote pro-life.

I think that Alan's determination that it may be the polarization is in Congress not in the body politic. Thank you.

MR. DIONNE: Do you want to say something about that, Alan?

MR. WOLFE: Well, first, I will thank Bill D'Antonio. He is one of the great sociologists of religion, and it is great to have you here.

One of the differences between Catholics and Protestants is that Catholics have a longer tradition of direct religious involvement in politics, so that if you are going to draw explicit links between the one and the other, there should be some historical resistance to that among conservative Protestants. There should be less resistance among Catholics. Yet, I find that, at least at a place like Boston

College, direct interventions by the Catholic Church into politics, which is part of Catholic history, is offensive to many contemporary Catholics. When the three bishops condemned Kerry, for example, and said they would deny communion and they ignored the fact that three of the most prominent speakers at the Republican Convention were all Catholics and supported a woman's right to choose — Giuliani, Pataki, and Schwarzenegger. That just seemed like such a direct and explicit intervention by a church into partisan politics.

On a racist issue with my Boston College students — almost all of them are Catholics — they say, I just find that really wrong. I say, well, your church has been doing that for a long time. But in the current sensibility, they find it really wrong.

MR. DIONNE: Just briefly, Peter Seinfeld (phonetic) has also written a very interesting piece around that time in the *New York Times*, noting that Rick Santorum had supported the pro-choice Arlen Specter over the pro-life Pat Toomey in the primary and asking why should he be able to get communion, given that situation.

Absolutely right about the party polarization; obviously, some of it is about the sorting out ideologically where a lot of Southerners who used to be conservative Democrats are now Republicans in those same seats.

Then abortion has become a party issue. What is intriguing right now is: Is it in the process of becoming a little less of party issues as had been the case in the 1970s? Casey's candidacy in Pennsylvania is intriguing.

There are still about 30, if I remember, 30 to 40 pro-life Democrats in the House, and many of them but not all of them are Catholic. Some of them are

Southern. Some of them are Southern Protestant; some of them are Catholics. But the Catholics are the classic swing group. The rule is there is no Catholic vote, and it is important. The Catholics are a kind of 40-40-20 group, and where that 20 floats is extremely important. Bill Galston, who had to leave early, has argued that the Catholic vote may be the most critical swing vote, and certainly it is in a number of key places, notably Ohio.

MS. BOWMAN: What I think is interesting about your point about the increased polarization in Congress is if you look at public opinion data over that same period of time, you see extraordinary stability in attitudes. It is impossible to find either a pro-life or a pro-choice majority in the Country today. Those numbers do not move. They are so steady and have been now since the early 1970s.

MR. DIONNE: The lady in the front? Maybe if we could work slowly backwards, that will be more efficient, please.

QUESTIONER: I am Sylvia Smith with the *Ft. Wayne Journal-Gazette*.

I wonder if any of you would want to comment on, I think it was just last week, the announcement of the emergence of a moderate or I guess a progressive Evangelical movement to try to counterweight, be a counterweight to the conservative Evangelicals. Is that just an indication of what you are saying, that the importance of religion has peaked or the importance of Evangelicalism has peaked in politics, or is it something new?

MR. DIONNE: There have been progressive Evangelicals around forever, and William Jennings Bryan in many ways was the model. He was very conservative on many social issues but extremely progressive on everything from

women's suffrage to regulation of railroads, the income tax, and a whole lot of other things. More recently, you had small groups of Evangelicals, notably led by Jim Wallace, who were always there. But I think there has been, since the 2004 election, enormous energy in the progressive religious community, and the success of Jim Wallace's book, *God's Politics*, is an indicator of that. And so, I think you are seeing on both the Catholic and Evangelical sides, the creation of a lot of new organizations and an awful lot of mobilization. There are new political consultants who specialize in helping Democrats talk about religion.

What I think happened — and I am curious about what Alan or Karlyn think — is that with the rise of the Religious Right, a lot of religious progressives spent more time worrying about the intervention of religious people in politics because they thought the ways in which the religious conservatives were intervening were wrong rather than having a battle within their own religious communities to say, wait a minute, religion will always play a role in politics, but your way of doing it is a mistake or I disagree with your way of doing it. I think there is much more of a sense within the progressive religious community that they need to join the political fight, not only outside the religious communities but inside their religious communities.

I once had an argument with Ralph Reed (phonetic), where I said that I accept your right to base your political views on your religious convictions, but you just have to show me where in the Gospel Jesus calls for cutting the capital gains tax. I simply can't find it there anywhere.

Alan or Karlyn?

MR. WOLFE: Just one historical point since I was just teaching this stuff

yesterday; William Jennings Bryan wasn't actually a liberal on economic issues and a conservative on social issues. His opposition to the teaching of the evolution was based on the fact that Darwinism at the time was associated with Social Darwinism and with an extremely conservative market-driven economy as well as with a eugenics movement. I am not defending Bryan, but I think there was consistency. Michael Kazin (phonetic), in his biography, points this out very, very well. I just think we should give Bryan his due on that.

MR. DIONNE: Can I say "amen" to that?

MR. WOLFE: And on your question, by the way, I should just say personally I worry that my friends in the liberal world join crusades exactly at the moment when they are over. So here we are talking about religion's influence on the right might be peaking. Of course, my friends on the left would then join it. I actually worry about Jim Wallace and others for the same reasons I worry that I don't think the left does itself any good if it takes all the problems that we have seen by the right's involvement of religion in politics and just copies it. First of all, it just doesn't work.

I think what I would advise people in the Democratic Party to do is to make an argument as to why liberalism has always been good for religion and why conservative religion flourishes in a liberal environment because that is what conservative religion has always been about. It has always been about this. What I said is this emphasis on religious liberty which is just essential to the whole conservative Protestant religious administration. I would talk about the importance of liberty for everyone including religious believers as opposed to just trying to develop a left-wing version of what the right wing is doing.

MR. DIONNE: I agree with that, but I do think it is important within the religious community for a distinctive voice to make their voices heard. I agree that there are ways that the religious left or religious progressives don't want to replicate everything on the Religious Right, partly because I don't think they can anyway. On the other hand, I do think a real interaction really wasn't happening to the degree that it needed to happen. Some of it, I think, was that parts of the religious left did marginalize themselves on a farther left, that didn't really work in the context of the American political debate, but that is another story.

Who is closest to a mike? Why don't you give the mike to the closest person? I want to bring in Amy at some point.

QUESTIONER: I am Al Millikan, affiliated with Washington Independent Writers.

I was wondering if there was any controversy or difference in opinion on the way you labeled the various groups. It seemed like in the discussion today and the way religious individuals would identify themselves is not necessarily the way you have identified them.

MR. DIONNE: Is this the Centrist, Traditionalist, and Modernist?

QUESTIONER: Yes; I am just thinking Traditionalists would more likely call themselves Fundamentalists or Conservatives; and Centrists would probably call themselves Moderates; Modernists would call themselves Progressives or Liberals. Was there a reason why you did make that kind of distinction?

MR. DIONNE: I knew you had to come late, Al, but I actually talked about that in my introduction. These are John Green's categories from his survey, and I think you can re-label them all. Modernist could be Progressive; Traditionalist

could be — I am not exactly sure what that is — it could be conservative or, in many cases, it would be Evangelical. So I think the labels are debatable, but I think the relationships aren't. Those groups, however labeled, I think are authentic groups and that is why I admire John Green's work because I think he has identified a set. He has found a better way of categorizing us that is truer to the way we actually are. I agree with you totally that the labels are debatable, but I don't find them so objectionable that I don't use them myself.

Amy, do you want to come in?

QUESTIONER: Amy Sullivan; I just had a couple of additional poll numbers that I wanted to toss out there because they reflect on the polarization question.

The first is that the *L.A. Times* did do a poll in July, asking about Mormons, whether you would vote for a Mormon for President. I don't remember the exact number, but it was around 35 percent of conservative Evangelicals said they would not vote for a Mormon for President.

The question that really got me interested was when they asked whether you would vote for an Evangelical, and only 50 percent of liberal Democrats said they would vote for an Evangelical, which made me think not only would they but they did if they voted for Bill Clinton and Al Gore.

MR. DIONNE: And Jimmy Carter

MR. WOLFE: And Jimmy Carter.

MR. DIONNE: Do you have any thoughts on that Mormon question or anything else?

MS. BOWMAN: I wish they would use the same wording that Gallup

used, and they didn't. So you can't compare the two. But I agree with you about the demographic breaks. Those are quite interesting within the question.

MR. DIONNE: What I think is going to be a fascinating debate within the Evangelical community is about Mitt Romney. I think we are going to revisit. I think it will actually be a useful debate because we are going to revisit the issues of religious tolerance in a very interesting way because you have Mormons who have been recently, though not always, a rather conservative loyally Republican group, possibly confronting religious prejudice. I would prefer the prejudice not happen, but I think it will be a revealing moment in our politics.

MR. WOLFE: We are actually persuaded and are trying to persuade the Governor that Boston College will be the perfect venue for him to give his speech explaining his Mormon faith the way Kennedy gave his speech in Houston to the Baptist ministers.

MR. DIONNE: How are you doing?

MR. WOLFE: Well, we played Brigham Young, and Father Leahy, our President, sat in the same box with Governor Romney, and they discussed it. I am not at liberty, and it is off the record, but we did beat Brigham Young in double overtime.

MR. DIONNE: He is going to do it all at Bob Jones.

Who had their hand up, back there?

QUESTIONER: Yes, my name is Miriam Gusevich. I am Professor at Catholic University, but I am actually Jewish. So it doesn't quite count.

Max Weber used to make a distinction between class and status that I find still very valuable. By the way, thanks for your very thoughtful study of these

distinctions between class identification by income versus, say, status identification through religious affiliation which is a little less clear.

I was wondering; two questions. One, is this shift to becoming more conservative related to people identifying less as being part of a labor movement?

Where the labor movement has declined, do people then identify more in terms of their religious affiliation than they might have done, let us say, 30 years ago or 20 years?

The other question is: How much does the urban-suburban-rural dynamic plays into these dimensions?

MR. DIONNE: I think that is a wonderful question. I read my Weber but learned a lot about status politics from Marty Lipsett who is also a hero of mine as Karlyn suggested.

I think you are absolutely right about the decline of the labor movement. It once had in many parts of the Country, particularly in the Northeast and Middle West, kind of overlapping and reinforcing allegiances. I grew up in a place called Fall River, Massachusetts, where it was hard to distinguish between the union, the party, and the church, which in Fall River was almost entirely the Catholic Church and there really wasn't a lot of room there. There were people who dissented — my parents were dissenters — but they reinforced each other. Where there still is a strong labor movement in those states — Pennsylvania is a good example — you find that some of the effects of the social issues, including not only abortion but also guns, are mitigated by a continued affiliation with the labor movement.

Somebody once told me, and I never wanted to look it up because it is a

wonderful story of a labor guy urging his folks to vote Democrat, and it was a group that included a lot of members of the NRA. He said, at least under the Democrats, you can afford ammunition. When you looked in Pennsylvania, in particular, it was a real contest for the allegiances of some of the same people between the labor movement and the NRA. So I definitely think there is some of that.

But then also certainly in the case of the Catholic Church, I think you have seen in the last 20 years a quiet, slow shift toward — it is not to — the right but it is in a kind of rightward drift in that I don't think the bishops today would issue the kinds of pastoral letters that they issued in the eighties on either the economy or on war even though the Catholic Church remains quite progressive on a lot of economic issues.

You are a student of Max Weber. Do you have a status view?

MR. WOLFE: I would just use the question as an opportunity, if I may, to say something I meant to say when I was standing at the podium but forgot because it raises issues about economics. I wonder what either of you think.

Sometimes I think the reason why we started talking about religion was because we weren't talking about anything else. The nineties were a decade in which there was relatively good economic growth. We had eight relatively prosperous years. Communism had collapsed. We didn't have an enemy. The traditional foreign policy, labor union economic issues were, in a sense, off the table. So there was a vacuum, and we started talking about abortion or stem cells or gay marriage instead.

Now, who could possibly argue that economic and foreign policy issues are

not absolutely the most vital things that we have to talk about? We have a foreign policy debacle in the Middle East. We have the most significant shift in the nature of the rewards and benefits our economy generates that has taken place in almost 100 years. These issues are not really front and center. It may be that we will still talk about gay marriage and stem cells and not about Iraq and the economy, but forgive the expression, God forgive us if we do. We have just more important things.

I am sorry. I know that if you believe gay marriage is awful and so on, that is the most important issue in your life, but I am sorry. Iraq is more important. The economy is more important. There I am preaching. I will stop.

MR. DIONNE: The Reverend Rabbi Alan Wolfe.

Do you have a thought on the status question?

MS. BOWMAN: No; but I do have a thought on the most important problem question. The public has voted overwhelmingly on that one. Iraq is the number one issue facing the Country, followed by the economy. Issues like gay marriage are down there just with a very small number of people mentioning that as the most important problem.

MR. DIONNE: I think you are going to see, if the Republicans lose the House, one of the mistakes they made in this run-up was having a week to vote both on gay marriage and flag burning. I will always love the Republican political consultant who said, tongue in cheek, that if you are a gay who likes to burn flags, it is going to be a very long few months between now and the next election.

MR. WOLFE: No, no; you got it wrong. It was a gay immigrant. It was a

gay immigrant.

MR. DIONNE: I wrote a column saying I don't think conservatives, rank and filers, that they are being treated as dumb by their own leaders. So I have a lot of response from conservatives. They don't always, in fact, they don't usually agree with me, but a lot of positive response because they said this is very odd at this particular juncture.

I want to bring in two folks in the front here. Let us start with Mr. Mitchell.

QUESTIONER: I will try to do this quickly and pray that it will turn into a question.

MR. DIONNE: You are?

QUESTIONER: Oh, I am sorry; Garrett Mitchell from the Mitchell Report.

I want to say, first of all, that the comments Alan Wolfe just made really resonated and connected with some notes that I made. I want to make an observation and hope that it somehow sounds like a question.

I have been sort of saying to myself, not just today but this morning earlier with Madeleine Albright, who was talking about her book, *The Mighty and the Almighty*, et cetera, that there has, of course, been a great deal of talk about the role of religion in politics and/or vice versa. I keep saying to myself: Where did this come from? I do think it is very much sort of a response to a kind of political void that developed in this Country in the nineties in that moment when we thought peace was breaking out all over and there was going to be a peace dividend. We all remember that in August of Bush's first year, his first major speech really was about stem cells, not terror cells.

I wonder if, in some way, the influence and the language of religion are

responses in some way or another to the many influences of globalization to the disappearance of the social contract at work which leaves people with one more tether that they have lost, and even though I don't personally see it this way, that it functions to some extent as the language of authenticity in politics. I am wondering whether anyone else sees and/or feels it that way.

MR. DIONNE: As always, you raise the question we could spend a whole seminar are because I agree with almost everything you said. On the language of authenticity, there is a lot of evidence — and some people have done some good polling on this — where for a lot of people, religion is a surrogate for character and it is not necessarily when people say I want a religious person, what they really mean is a person of character and religion is associated with that, perhaps in many cases rightly and some cases maybe wrongly, but a lot of people sort of use that as a shorthand. So I think that is true.

Second, I think there is a sense of social dislocation in which the Church is often the most powerful community institution left. If you travel around Loudoun Country, for example, the new exurbs, you don't see a whole lot of government buildings. I had a friend who ran for delegate out there and won as Democrat. He used to have these young Democratic volunteers from cities came in to help him out in his race. He said, they come to me and they say: Where is the union hall? And I would say: Well, there are no union halls. Where are the African-American churches? Well, there are very few African-American churches.

What you see are a lot of community centers having to do with kids, like parks, and you see a lot of churches. So I do think the Church plays a specific kind of social role at this particular moment. It may be a larger role than it might

have in other kinds of social situations.

The last thing is some of this is a hangover of the politics of the sixties and seventies. Where did Jerry Falwell come from? The Religious Right came, I think, as Nathan Glazer has argued as a defensive-offensive reaction to certain things that happened: the courts legalizing abortion, the courts banning school prayer, and so on. You had a sense of Evangelicals feeling like a beleaguered constituency. It was almost like multicultural politics on the right instead of multicultural politics on the left, but there was a real sense of aggrievement. I don't think that was made up by politicians.

On the other hand, you also had very smart conservative politicians — Morton Blackwell being one of them out in Virginia — who realized that there was a whole constituency here to be mobilized. Jimmy Carter got a big Evangelical vote. A lot of these smart Republican organizers said, wait a moment, those should be our people, not Jimmy Carter's people. Lo and behold, Jerry Falwell came along and volunteered for the job and created the Moral Majority. We have had so much of our religious politics defined by that period. That has hit a point. It declined some in the Clinton years; hit a kind of peak now; and as I say, my hypothesis is — partly for Alan's reasons in terms of what the major issues are — that it may decline in the coming years.

Do you have a comment?

MS. BOWMAN: There are a lot of pollsters looking for evidence that the public is turning inward. I don't think it is very compelling at this point. The suggestion being that it was very similar to the period after Vietnam when we began to look inward. If it in fact exists, I doubt very much it would be coming

from concerns about globalization or concerns about a fraying social contract. First of all, most people are very satisfied with their own jobs. They don't fear at all that their jobs are going to be shipped overseas. They are becoming more and more accustomed to globalization with the new Benetton younger generation; it is just a fabric of their lives. Nor do I think it would be related to any kind of fraying social contract if it exist, and again pollsters are looking hard for it. It is probably just because of being tired of commitments abroad that are expensive and where we are losing many of our own people.

MR. DIONNE: Alan?

I just want to check. I am having such a good time. I have no idea what our time is. I am sorry? Are we still good? Oh, good.

Sir?

QUESTIONER: Chuck Matthews from the University of Virginia; thank you all for a wonderful discussion. I really learned a lot about this.

My request is really for more information or perhaps prognostication. You mentioned Rick Warren.

MR. DIONNE: They are often at odds with each other.

QUESTIONER: Yes, I have learned.

You mentioned Rick Warren. After a moment of covetousness, I go on to ask: Do you think there is any sort of evidence — you might know as well and maybe Alan — for generational changes in the Evangelical world view? We have heard this from Walter Russell Mead. Anecdotally, it seems to be true, but it does seem that Evangelicals in their twenties and thirties — Amy will have something to say on this, I am sure — do seem to have a different set of priorities. Is that

going to skew things as Falwell et al move into their sinessence or move further into their sinessence. That is just my question.

What is going on? Is there any useful generational information?

MR. WOLFE: One thing that is really important to talk about is we don't know what happens to born again children or born again parents. The experience of being born again is itself a kind of rebellion. Many Evangelical parents went through a break, a break with something, a break with an existing church, a break with some figure of religious authority and had a personal revelation and so on. Even though they call themselves Traditionalists or Conservatives, there is a kind of rebelliousness to being born again.

What happens if you, as a parent, have had that experience and then you have children? Do you want your children to just honor their father and mother and never have a personal awakening? It is just an interesting intellectual puzzle in and of itself.

I don't have any hard evidence. There is one study by some people at Calvin College — Penner (phonetic) and Schmidt (phonetic), is it, I think — that says that younger Evangelical college students are actually more conservative than their elders. There is lots of other evidence. At Baylor, the student newspaper endorsed gay marriage. The President of Baylor shut down the paper. For the students at Baylor, it is much more of a return to the libertarianism that I was talking about. It is just not an issue that seems; I don't know.

But it is absolutely the most important question in some ways because what is it going to look like 20 years from now?

MS. BOWMAN: I did call Tom Smith yesterday at NORC at the

University of Chicago just to ask him whether he had data bearing on this, and he said that he did not. I asked about the larger question of more conservative religiosity among younger people, and he said he thought there was some tentative evidence there but not a lot to go on.

MR. DIONNE: I am very curious about this also for a point that Alan has made elsewhere which is when you look at the actual as it operates Evangelical church like Rick Warren's, the many churches affiliated in a loose way with his movement, many of these churches are, in principal, theologically conservative but are, in practice, some combination of communitarian, therapeutic, and rather in a broad sense — they would never accept this term — liberal in their approach to life.

I am very curious what young Evangelicals going through these churches, how they come out the other end. I think it is quite possible that they would remain Evangelicals. It is not clear to me exactly what all their social views are going to look like? Will many of them be Amy's Freestyle Evangelicals? On other hand, it is quite possible that they could become more conservative.

I think you had some data to bear. Did you have a comment or a question?

QUESTIONER: (off mike) How they dress, doesn't that reveal something? In worshipping God, a lot of worshippers that follow Rick Warren, I mean they just dress very casually.

MR. DIONNE: Rick Warren only wears Hawaiian shirts, for example. You never catch him a suit, ever.

This gentleman over here?

QUESTIONER: My name is Mel White, and I am a paranoid Evangelical

gay activist who moved to Lynchburg so that my partner and I could go to Jerry's church. He has a \$200 million budget this year, and he expects 50,000 students on this campus by 2010. We sometimes have a tendency to underestimate the power of these guys and see them in their twilight years. As a gay activist, I don't think they are in their twilight years, and I don't think in any way that religion is peaking.

If you had 10 states looking at constitutional amendments against your civil rights and the Mormon Romney and you had the Catholic Santorum and you had the Protestants everywhere, trying to get elected, reelected on this issue of gay marriage, and then you have Jim Wallace who is our Progressive Evangelical, who leaves us out of his book almost entirely and can't possibly take a stand for civil rights for gays and lesbians, I think you would see it a bit differently in terms of the trends right now. Tell me on November 8th if their influence has peaked. Tell me if these amendments don't get passed. Tell me if these guys who are on these ballots on the basis of anti-gay marriage and anti-gay rights, tell me if they have peaked.

I have just written a book called *Religion Gone Bad*, and people say it has always been bad. But in my case, I am an Evangelical who has seen my brothers and sisters turn against me in ways that lead to suffering and death, literally, suicide and terribly tragic consequences.

So I just want to get into this discussion as a gay Christian. I am rejected by all sides of this debate, and I don't think their influence is peaking, though I pray to the God of whomever you serve, that it is.

MR. DIONNE: First of all, I appreciate your being here because I was just

talking about your book to a friend and said I wanted to read it. So I appreciate your coming today.

First of all, you are right; obviously, Falwell has built an enormous set of institutions. I think there is a distinction between do his institutions survive, which I think they do, and what is his actual influence on, say, the future of the Republican Party. I think, yes, Falwell will have important institutions. Yes, I suspect he will still get on TV shows. I think his specific influence on Republican politics is probably going to decline — in fact, I am quite certain — partly for generational reasons.

On the issue of gay rights, one of the fascinating things to me is that I don't think there is an issue — Karlyn, correct me if I am wrong — on which over a long period, opinions have become moved so much from a conservative to a liberal side as the gay rights issue generally. Americans, in the last 20 to 25 years, have very substantially changed their views on this issue. So that is point number one.

Point number two, my own feeling on this, and I am curious what my colleagues think, is that the difficulty with the gay marriage issue is the way it came onto the agenda with the Massachusetts court, and if I am gay, I am going to go to court to demand this right. So I understand entirely why somebody would go to court for this. But I think that it was sort of put on the agenda earlier than this shift will eventually allow. In other words, I think time is on the side of gay marriage because opinions on gays and lesbians are so conditioned by age. It really is one of the sharpest age relationships I have ever seen.

I happen to have my paper turned to the exit poll on gay marriage. The exit

poll gave people three options. 25 percent of voters thought gays and lesbians should be able to marry legally; 35 percent favored civil unions; 37 percent opposed any legal recognition for gay relationships. Now, you can use these findings mischievously, whichever way you want. You can say that 72 percent of voters oppose gay marriage or you can say that 62 percent, if I get that right, or 60 percent favor either gay marriage or civil unions. My hunch about how the politics of this is going to go is after a wave of some of these votes, you are going to have states moving in a direction of civil unions. You are going to have sort of slow and gradual recognition of gay relationships in one way or another. Over the longer run, we will get to gay marriage.

Now, if somebody is gay or lesbian and wants to get married, I understand that this is an unsatisfactory fact because I am saying that this will happen over a period of time, but I think that is quite different than thinking that the long haul is actually dark for gays and lesbians. I actually think the long haul, however defined — I am not even sure it is going to be that long a haul — is broadly speaking on your side.

I am very curious what Karlyn thinks, looking at a lot of numbers on this.

MS. BOWMAN: I have also been looking at a lot of ballot initiatives and referenda. While you are right about the number that are on the ballot this fall, they just pale in comparison to the number of initiatives and referenda on Kilo which is the hot issue right now. There are 12 imminent domain initiatives and referenda on the ballot. There are 40 different tax initiatives and referenda on the ballot. This is not the big deal that it was four years or two years ago. So I think the intensity is diminishing a bit overall.

E.J. is absolutely right about the data. There is no question that there has been extraordinary movement by the public, in part related to younger cohorts coming into the population. It has stopped at gay marriage right now. It is just moving in a very narrow range.

We expected age to change the abortion issue, and it didn't, and I wonder whether that is going to be true with gay marriage. I am just raising the question. We always thought younger cohorts would be more liberal on abortion. That hasn't turned out to be the case.

MR. DIONNE: But they weren't more liberal on abortion at the time. In other words, I think, and this is an empirical question that we could settle.

MS. BOWMAN: There are some new people coming in. Isn't that what you are talking about?

MR. DIONNE: What I am talking about is that when you look at the gay marriage question, the views of people under 30 are, in the broad sense, pro-gay marriage. The views of people over 65 are strongly against gay marriage. I don't think the current under-30s who are actually existing people are going to become sharply more conservative on that issue as they grow older. Maybe they will, but I don't think so.

I have noticed this in my classes in Georgetown where I knew there were conservative students in my class, who were opposed to gay marriage, and I feel very strongly that a class is not about indoctrinating kids; it is about teaching them and having them think critically, wherever they come from. I looked out, and I said: I know some of you are against gay marriage, and I am going to start making that argument myself. I don't want you intimidated.

I raise that because the consensus was so overwhelming, including a rather significant number of conservative students who just didn't see the problem.

MR. WOLFE: Two footnotes; one, you are more the political junkie than I am, E.J. You probably know. Where does Charlie Cook have Marilyn Musgrave? Is that seat threatened? Because of the Musgrave amendment thing, I think her seat, I think she is being threatened by a Democrat in Colorado. I don't know. I don't have the latest data.

I don't think it is quite the cutting edge issue that it was, as my colleagues are suggesting. I think we have to remember that Dick Cheney's position on this issue was to the left of Howard Dean's when Howard Dean was Governor of Vermont. Howard Dean was very reluctant to endorse gay marriage, not gay marriage, I am sorry, civil unions when he was Governor of Connecticut and Dick Cheney had no problem doing so. We shouldn't just say that is because his daughter is gay. We should say that that is because they read the data very carefully and they understand the public's views on gay marriage. It is not an advantage for Republicans to be seen as endorsing a constitutional amendment or measures that are just perceived as too harsh. So, yes, there are all these ballot initiatives, but you can go too harsh in the other direction if you are a Republican.

MR. DIONNE: Over here, the gentleman right there; is there a mike?

David, how are you? You should join this conversation.

QUESTIONER: Hi, I am Robert Jones. I am the Director and Senior Fellow at the Center for American Values in Public Life. We just released last week one of the larger surveys on religion and politics that has been done in a while. On this issue, I just wanted to bring this up and get some takes on this. It

would be really helpful.

We took on the moral values question. One finding that we found there is that even among Evangelicals, less than 1 in 5 cited abortion and gay marriage as what they meant when they voted their values, as the primary thing they meant in voting their values. But on the issue of same sex marriage, we found virtually identical numbers to the numbers you just cited on those three categories of support for same sex marriage, support for civil unions, or support for no legal recognition.

One of the interesting things we did, that I think may go to this issue of whether the energy on that has peaked in some ways and whether people are looking for other places to stand that are new and different, is we asked an interesting follow-up question to people who only supported civil unions or no legal recognitions. We asked them, because we had heard in our focus groups, some real worries that if gay marriage became legal that churches and synagogues and other religious congregations would be forced to perform these ceremonies. So we asked the question of everyone who said they only supported civil unions or they only supported no legal recognition.

We said: If the law guaranteed that no religious congregation which, of course, it does, but if the law explicitly guaranteed that no religious congregation would be forced to perform these ceremonies, would you, in fact, support marriage? We found a very astonishing 12-point shift in people who came from either the civil unions category or from the no legal recognition category, saying yes, if we had that affirmation, we would support marriage. That makes the numbers go from 28 percent to 40 percent support for marriage. By the way, that

movement held true across African-Americans and Hispanics as well.

MR. DIONNE: One, I apologize that I couldn't be at that event which I wanted to go to; and second, I think you raise a huge point because there is a lot of evidence that a lot of religious people are worried that if anything passed on this, it would require their churches to do things that obviously none of these laws would ever require a church to do. That is a very useful finding, as are a lot of other things in that study. Thank you very much.

MR. WOLFE: You have a comment way in the back.

QUESTIONER: Jim Malone with Voice of America Radio; a question about politics in 2008 race.

MR. DIONNE: Perfect way to end, pure prognostication.

QUESTIONER: You have the Republican side with Romney, Giuliani, McCain. I don't see Giuliani and McCain being strongly religious in terms of their outlook, at least not historically. John Kerry has been talking about his religion a little bit and some of the Democrats, there are some murmurings that they need to do a better job appealing to those groups. So if you could just comment on that outlook.

MR. DIONNE: Karlyn, do you want to start? I want to have everybody give just any closing remarks you have on the whole business.

MR. WOLFE: I think one of the crucial answers to our question that we are addressing today will come in 2008, but it won't come in the election between the Democrats and the Republicans; it will come in the Republican primaries. That is whether conservative Christians will vote for a John McCain. I don't know the answer at all at this point. There is lots of evidence that McCain has cut

deals with the Christian right leaders, but whether that actually means that he is going to go down there in South Carolina and win a South Carolina Republican primary, I think is still open. I think it is still an open question.

MS. BOWMAN: Was it Kate O'Beirne who made the funny comment about looking at the Republican field, that there is only one Republican and it is the Mormon who has only been married one time? Not original to me.

MR. DIONNE: I basically agree with what Alan said. I think McCain is so interesting. He did this wonderful volume of his heroes, and there is a story I bet you are going to hear in South Carolina, where he talks about a prison guard in Vietnam on Christmas Day who, without saying a word, made a cross in the ground with his foot and he exchanged a prayer. There was a moment of silence, and the prison guard smiled — I am not even sure he smiled actually — and went away. It is a very powerful story, how sometimes the most powerful preaching doesn't involve words. I just have a feeling we will hear that. We will hear that story again.

I wrote a column last year, predicting just for fun a McCain-Jeb Bush ticket, and I argued that to get the nomination, McCain needed the acquiescence at least of the Bush machine, the Bush operation, but that Republicans would be looking for something different because the likelihood is the President wouldn't stand where he did back then. I got a lot of interesting email back, including some email from very strong conservatives, some of them but by no means all of them, Christian conservatives. My favorite, which summarized a lot of them, said: "Dear Mr. Dionne, you would not understand this, because you are not one of us, but we will never let John McCain become our nominee."

The question is: How common is that? I think McCain has made a lot of progress in this group.

Then Giuliani where, in Andrew Greeley's book that we talked about before, there is a very strong linkage for a lot of conservative Christians between patriotism and their sense of religious faith. I think Giuliani's toughness on terror and other questions, for a lot of these voters, buys him more room than you might expect on some of these other questions.

As I say, my summary is looking at the numbers of 2000, Democrats will probably talk about religion a little more; Republicans may end up talking about it a little less. And so, this paper has a shelf life of about two years, but that is long enough.

We hope you come to our next polarization session. Thank you all very much.

[Applause.]

[Whereupon, the event was concluded.]

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