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THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION
SAUL/ZIKHA ROOM

THE END OF WHITE CHRISTIAN AMERICA

Washington, D.C.

Monday, July 11, 2016

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PROCEEDINGS

MR. DIONNE: I want to welcome everyone here today. It's a real honor and pleasure for me to be here with Robbie Jones. I'm E.J. Dionne. I'm a senior fellow in Governance Studies here at Brookings. And my colleague, Bill Galston, and I are delighted truly to welcome our friend, Robbie Jones, to talk about his important new book, "The End of White Christian America." Everyone who has not read it should read Sam Tanenhaus's extraordinary review of a whole series of books on populism and new developments in politics. He singles out Robbie's as the best -- I think it's a fair reading of Sam's review -- that it's the best of the lot, and the one you really need to read this year to understand the election.

Robbie is going to offer a brief presentation of the themes and trends outlined in the book. We've done this before. As some of you know, PRRI, Robbie's polling organization, and Brookings have collaborated on a whole series of polls going back six years. And the initial seed of this book was in a chart Robbie gave us one day that was so striking that it was worthy of a whole book, and you are going to hear that today.

Robbie has all manner of degrees in both -- he's the CEO of PRRI. He got a Ph.D. in religion from Emory, an M.Div. from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and The New York Times Review, by the way, said it was quite possibly the most illuminating text of this election year. The other thing I want to commend Robbie for before he comes up is it's a very stark title. Robbie writes with extraordinary fairness about white Christian America. This is not a partisan book. It's not an attack book. It's a book that describes what's happening in our country, and it sheds enormous light on what is happening in this presidential campaign and in many other aspects of social life.

I will close simply by saying for those of you again who have to our events before, Robbie Jones without an extraordinary PowerPoint is like a baseball game that David Ortiz plays in and doesn't hit a homerun. Fortunately, Robbie will be doing one of his extraordinary PowerPoints, and I am sure that you will learn as much from it today as we have over many years. It's a real pleasure and honor to introduce my friend, Robbie Jones.

DR. JONES: Well, thank you to E.J. and for that extraordinary introduction, and thank all of you for being here. I want to say a couple of thank you's, first to E.J. Dionne and Bill Galston for hosting this today and the entire Brookings team here. And I'll say once we get started, it'll probably be

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obvious, but many of the polling questions that were in the surveys actually began as conversations between our team at PRRI and the Brookings' Governance Studies team actually in the conference room just down the way here. So it's nice to see it come full circle really from an idea that we were wrestling with over a conference table into a survey and now into a book. So thank you for that.

I also need to thank Simon & Schuster who's done a fantastic job on getting the book out there and publishing the book, and also to the entire PRRI team who worked tirelessly on a whole range of surveys across the last seven years that the book draws on. So thank you to everyone here.

So I will start with just a little riff on this picture here. So some of you probably have the initial reaction that this looks kind of Norman Rockwell-ish, this sort of "Freedom from Want" piece. This actually is from a Christian Coalition of American email that I got right after Barack Obama's inauguration in 2012. And what was striking about it is that it was sort of lamenting the state of the country was in. So this email had this photo on the top. It had a caption under it that said, "Thanksgiving 1942, Pennsylvania" was the caption on it. And then there was this text under it that said this in the email, "We will soon be celebrating the 400th anniversary of the first Thanksgiving and God has still not withheld his blessings upon this nation, although we now richly deserve such condemnation. We have a lot to give thanks for, but we also need to pray to our Heavenly Father and ask Him to protect us from those enemies outside and within who want to see America destroyed." So this is three weeks after the election, so right -- it was actually three weeks after the election, in between the election and the inauguration in 2012 of President Barack Obama. So what's clear here is that there's a very clear intentional vision of what America is supposed to look like. It looks like this white Protestant family at prayer in Pennsylvania in 1942. So I was struck by this and I saved it immediately because I just realized this is a real commentary on a very different vision of America.

Before I jump into too many numbers here, I want to just say what I mean by "white Christian America," lest I'm misunderstood. I sort of use this term as a metaphor in the book, and it really is talking about the cultural and political edifice that's built primarily, not exclusively, but primarily by white Protestant Christians. And it was this edifice that really set the tone for our national conversations and shaped American ideals for most of the country's life. One great quote that was actually from a book about the Christian century, which was the flagship magazine for the mainline Protestant world, said this.

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“In the sort of middle of the 20th century, if you were in charge of something big and important, chances were you were a white Protestant.” And that was sort of true in the middle of the 20th century. So I kind of used this to talk about not just demographics, but really an entire cultural and institutional world that was built by white Protestants across the course of the nation’s history.

So I want to say a little bit about this -- and, E.J., I promise I’m going to get to some numbers here in a second -- but I’m going to start with some buildings. One of the things that I also realized is if you think about the history of the country and the way that America’s cities’ skylines have changed overtime, like if you think about really up until the 20th century, if you were to look at most major cities, the things that you would see across the silhouette at sunset were steeples. They weren’t skyscrapers. They were steeples. And if you think about the way that that shapes people’s minds -- if you just walk around everyday life and as you scan the horizon, what you’re really seeing are church steeples. That sort of imprints a kind of power and kind of cultural dominance in your mind. This little still is taken actually from a pretty remarkable video that was put together for One World Trade Center when it went up. What they have, if any of you have been to visit, they have a floor-to-ceiling panel in the elevator and as you go up, it’s really ingenious that they have a time-lapsed shot of Lower Manhattan that goes from like the 1600s all the way to the present. So the higher you go in the elevator, the further the timeline goes and you start seeing first the Dutch settlers—actually first it’s like water and ducks, then you see the first Dutch settlers coming around and you see the little buildings popping up in Lower Manhattan, this is 1795 and you’ll see the biggest thing there by far is I don’t know if anyone can probably name this New York, lower Manhattan, big steeple --

SPEAKER: Trinity?

DR. JONES: Trinity, yes. Trinity Chapel dominated the New York skyline all the way really almost up until the 20th century. And this was kind of a mark and in most American cities you could do this exact same experiment with and you would see this similar thing. This, of course, is what lower Manhattan looks like today. Now Trinity Chapel has not been torn down. It’s still in there somewhere, but it’s not something you can really see from the shoreline. But that’s a really different cultural place to be that our skylines are now dominated by steeples to commerce and not to kind of religious institutions.

A couple of other buildings that may help set up the story here. The one on the left I’m

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guessing people may recognize, United Methodist building on Capitol Hill here in Washington, D.C. This building was built in 1924. If you haven't been there, it sits basically adjacent to the Supreme Court and the U.S. Capitol. So if you look out one side, you see the Capitol. If you look out the other side, a beautiful view of the U.S. Supreme Court. When this building was built, it was built by a single mainline Protestant denomination, the United Methodist Church, which at the time was by far the largest denomination in the country. And on the fundraising appeals for that building, the way they described this building is it was going to be a sentinel for Protestant Christian witness and social reform in the nation's capital. So it was kind of militaristic, kind of on-guard, positive influence there. They actually sort of built apartments into it so that -- at the time there was a shortage of office space on Capitol Hill -- people from Congress might even book rooms. They would rub shoulders with people in power during the day. So it was a very powerful statement by a single denomination. In fact, it made the other mainline Protestant denominations quite uncomfortable that the Methodists themselves had planted this single denominational building right there on Capitol Hill.

This other building on your right you may not recognize as well, but it's in New York City. Some of you will -- this building is affectionately sometimes called "The God Box" in New York City. This is the Interchurch Center. It was built in 1960 at sort of the height of the National Council of Churches power and the kind of mainline Protestant power. So I kind of think of these things as kind of two waves of kind of mainline Protestant power, kind of ensconcing themselves and manifesting themselves in these like very powerful edifices. If you go in, they have like marble floor ways in the lobby. They're very structurally impressive buildings. What's also interesting about these buildings is that neither one of them through the course of history have actually quite realized the original vision of their founders; that they have sort of changed overtime. And one thing that both these have in common now is that they actually host quite a number of interfaith kinds of organizations, social service organizations. It's a real mix of organizations in them. This one on the right, when it was founded President Eisenhower laid the cornerstone for this building. He laid the cornerstone and cemented a rock from Corinth, kind of referencing some New Testament passages and the cornerstone of this building. There were tens of thousands of people that turned out for the dedication of this building. It was a who's who of clergy in America. It was written up everywhere and was really an amazing thing. It was funded by John D.

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Rockefeller, Jr., who provided the site and the limestone cladding of the building as well.

So what's interesting about these building, though again, is that they had these -- this was called actually the closest thing to a Protestant Vatican the world will ever see when it was sort of founded. But these buildings actually never quite realized that kind of power and influence. They certainly don't express that today. They've had to kind of change their mission as things have changed.

One more, lest I pick on the mainliners too much, anyone recognize this? Crystal Cathedral, right, out in California, Schuller's ministry. This building when it was originally built had 10,000 individual panes of glass. It was called, "The most important building since the construction of the Cathedral of Notre Dame," by The New York Times when it was first built; very impressive structure, thousands and thousands of people. It had you can't quite see it here, but there was a actually a window that would open so that Schuller at the beginning had people in the parking lots that he would preach to as well as inside the building. He had a button on the pulpit that he could push and open a door, and he could go out on a platform and talk to people in the parking lots. But it was a massive, massive ministry. Again by the 21st century, first part of the 21st century, this building or the Schuller ministry went bankrupt and this building now -- again if you think about the purpose of the building as kind of being this kind of expression of Evangelical power -- this building now is a multi-ethnic Catholic Parish in L.A. county, so another kind of indication of real demographic and cultural change in the country.

So with that kind of set-up, let me kind of talk a couple of numbers. If there was one chart I could show you, and I'm sorry to say I'm going to show you a few more than one, but if there was just one that I was going to show you, it would be this one. And this is kind of two different lines, one that sort of shows the kind of demographic decline of white Christians in the country and also the kind of attitudes about same-sex marriage. And then this little shaded part, which doesn't come out to be so shaded, but between 2008 and 2015 is the Obama presidency here.

So let me just kind of show you first, here is the trend line for the percentage of white Christians in the country. Now this is all white Christians, so this is Catholics, Orthodox, white non-Hispanic Christians in the country. So one of the astonishing things that I realized in sort of writing the book is that we really had passed a real tipping point that not a lot of attention had been paid to, and that is at the beginning of Barack Obama's presidency and when he was running for president, the country

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was 54 percent white and Christian. Our numbers at the end of last year are 45 percent; end of 2014 it was 47 percent; end of 2015 it was 45 percent. So that's one kind of pretty dramatic change just during the last eight years in the country. At the same time, just as a kind of proxy for cultural change in the country, our shifting attitudes on same-sex marriage. So if you look at those attitudes, this is what they look like again during the same period. So if you go back to 2008, only about 4 in 10 Americans supported the legality of same-sex marriage. Today that number's 53 percent, so a big, big shift just in a small amount of time. So if you just think about these two things, I think it sets the table well for understanding the kind of anxiety that I think we are seeing from many quarters of the white Christian world, particularly among conservative white Christians for whom same-sex marriage was a very important issue. They were all-in opposing this issue and sort of not only lost sort of in the court of public opinion, but, of course, in 2015 they lost in the Supreme Court as well. And I think that has set off a real set of reactions in the country. Just to kind of take a look at this in one big pie chart: So this is the end of 2014, 47 percent white Christian. The other piece of this puzzle that I'll unpack in a minute is, of course, that 22 percent number, more than one in five Americans religiously unaffiliated and those have overwhelmingly come from the ranks of white Christians, they have become religiously unaffiliated in the country.

SPEAKER: Is that including Catholics?

DR. JONES: Yes. When I'm using the term "white Christian," this includes all white Christians -- so Protestants, Catholics, Orthodox, anyone who's white and non-Hispanic. In a second I'm going to telescope down just to Protestants, but for right now we're looking at all white Christians together, which I think is even more remarkable. You put all white Christians together and you're still at less than a majority of the country.

The other striking thing -- this is the setup to the chart that E.J. mentioned here -- the other striking thing that we saw is you can see just in the generational breaks, the people who are alive today, the stark differences and the way that things have shifted just among the American population that is living today. So take a look at this. This is the percentage of white Christians in each living generation today. So if we look at seniors, 65 years of age and older, two-thirds of seniors identify as white, non-Hispanic Christians. You take that number down to the youngest group, 18 to 29 year olds today, that

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number is only 29 percent and it's linear. You could take a ruler and like draw a line right through these generational breaks. So it's very, very steady overtime. And if you kind of look at it, you can sort of see what's going on here. The biggest thing going on is that there are far more religiously unaffiliated Americans in that younger group, almost, in fact, more than a third of younger people are religiously unaffiliated today and only one in ten seniors were religiously unaffiliated. So this is part of the big sea change going on in the country here. The other thing you can see is that among seniors, the number who were non-white Christians is only 15 percent and among anyone under 50 it's double that. So there's more than double non-white Christians. So it's a combination of disaffiliation and growth among non-white Christians as well in the country.

So what does this look like if that's all white Christians? If we kind of look at white Protestants, the group that I think has been the most powerful expression; if you think about the U.S. as a waspy nation of white-Anglo Saxon Protestants, that kind of stereotype, what does it look like if we just narrow it down to white Protestants? Well, the story is pretty clear if you just look at -- this is an area chart -- from 1974 to 2014, so this is basically 40 years of data on white Protestants. And as you can see, back in the 1970s and really even through the early 1990s, the U.S. maintained a kind of and it's maybe helpful, but it runs right on that vertical gridline in the middle of the presentation that last little point I did that on purpose where that little peak is there is 1993. That was the last year that the country was a majority white and Protestant. And so ever since then we've been on a pretty steady slide. We're down in the mid-30s over here by the time we get to 2014. So the decline of Protestants in the country really is almost entirely due as you can see if I add in -- so here African-American Protestants, those other race Protestants, and then Latino Protestants -- if I add in those layers on top of this, what you see is that the decline is really almost entirely -- well, it is entirely really -- due to white Protestant decline. African-Americans, that green ribbon there, have basically maintained their proportion of the population overtime. And then Protestants who are other race or Latino as you can see have actually been growing. So really this sort of slide in Protestant, the number of Protestants in the country, is entirely due to this kind of white Protestant decline. And there's been this sort of mythology I think or kind of talking points among Protestants one of the things the book does is it unpacks this kind of battle between or this kind of sibling rivalry is maybe a better way to put it between the white mainline Protestant world and the white

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Evangelical world. So all along these two groups, these two expressions of Protestantism, they've been creating competing institutions, the National Council of Churches on the one hand, the National Association of Evangelicals on the other, the Christian Century Magazine on the one hand, and Christianity Today on the other. There are always these kinds of pairings of responses of one to the other. And up until the last ten years, there has been this kind of talking point among Evangelicals that it's just the mainline churches that have been declining and conservative churches have been sort of hanging on or even growing; and sort of linking this to theology; that liberal theology was the kind of cause of mainline decline. And so you can see why that talking point was here. If I just put up -- this is white mainline Protestants overtime from the late 1980s to 2014, clearly decline overtime that you can see here. But if I put in the white Evangelical Protestant line, it's certainly flatter, but it still goes from 21 to 18 just over the last eight years. And that may not seem a lot, but this dataset actually has 80,000 people each year, so we can know with a lot of precision that just a slippage of 3 points is actually significant here. And I should also say that in our 2015 data, it goes one more point to 17, so the Evangelical number kind of goes down one more number.

And if you think I'm making too much of this, if we look at there's a lot of other internal indicators from the aging of Evangelicals their average age now rivals the average age, has been creeping up and the average age of mainline Protestants. And this data here is actually from Southern Baptists themselves. So the Southern Baptist Convention, which is the largest denomination in the country and by far the largest white Evangelical organization, has now posted nine straight years of membership losses. And this data actually comes from LifeWay Research, their own organization that tracks these things. Here is the declining growth rate among Southern Baptists from 1950 to the present. And you can see that sort of up until really about 10 years ago, they were either stagnating or in like 1 percent still in growth mode, but really over the last 10 years, the growth rate has entered into negative territory. And there's actually one more data point on the end of that that goes the same direction.

So what does this mean for politics? And I'll take you into the voter realm a little bit. Basically, I say just a little bit and we can talk about this some more. But if we look at the national election polls and we kind of chart again going back to all white Christians together here. This is Catholics, Protestants, everyone put together. And if we look at the percentage of white Christians in the

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electorate, we can see a very similar pattern, although it's delayed. So even though if we look at 2012, 2014, right now we're 47 percent at 2014 white Christians in the general population, but about 57 percent in the electorate. That's because of higher turnout rates among whites is the reason why we get this higher turnout rate. So basically what we see is that in the electorate we see the same pattern, but a kind of delay in its manifestation overtime.

And then we also see this interesting little kick in the midterm elections. There's always a little bit of a holdover. So even though the trends in the general population are fairly steady, there's basically a holdover each midterm mostly because of again that whites' turnout at much higher rates in midterms even than when they turnout in the general elections. So that kind of gives in some ways a little bit of a time machine effect to the midterm elections where the electorate looks a lot like it did in the general election the year before and then we see a bump down the following year.

But as you can this, if current trends continue, by 2024, just a couple of election cycles away, that will be the first election where we have a minority of white Christians actually in the electorate as it kind of follows the trend line down, so barring some other unforeseen event.

So what does this mean for the parties? One of the interesting things that the data shows -- again this is national exit poll data. If we look at Democratic presidential candidates, one of -- and this a chart of each presidential election year for how reliant the Democratic presidential candidate has been on white Christian votes. So we go back to Bill Clinton, Bill Clinton's coalition was 60 percent white and Christian. We look down at Barack Obama's 2012 reelection, it was only 37 percent white and Christian. So the Democratic Party and their candidates have been kind of following these trends in the American electorate, but becoming less and less reliant on white Christian voters as the demographics change.

But look at the Republic line. So here's the Republican line. So we go back to 1992, 86 percent reliance on white Christian voters. And even in 2012, it hasn't changed that much, still about eight in ten. Romney was relying -- his coalition was about eight in ten white Christian voters. So we kind of see this -- if the gap between the parties was only 26 percent in 1992, the gap has become 43 percentage points in 2012 here between the two parties and their reliance on white Christian voters. So these are very different kinds of campaign strategies here.

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Here is again, this kind of same layout that I had before, a similar chart. This is among voters, though, and not among the general population. But the story is basically the same, white Christian voters in the electorate here broken out by generation. Then I'll put the Obama coalition and the Romney coalition up here so you can kind of see it. This is the chart E.J. was talking about that sort of launched sort of the idea for the book.

So what we basically see is that Obama's coalition in 2012 looked about like 30-year-old America if we break it down into its kind of racial and religious demographics and kind of place it where it would fit on the chart. And if we look at Romney's coalition, though, it looks about like 70-year-old America. And so this is a real challenge I think for the Republican party going forward with these kinds of changing demographics. And I have a chapter in the book that's entitled "The End of the White Christian Strategy," the idea that we're going to pile up white Christian votes to compensate for the changing demographics of the country, is an increasingly challenging strategy to pull off and win as you can kind of see here.

So where do we go? So in the book -- I begin the book with an obituary and I end the book with a eulogy for white Christian America. So if you want to take a look at that, my attempt at doing that, as kind of a metaphor. But it did occur to me that if we sort of accept the idea that this kind of cultural institutional force that really was dominant in U.S. culture really has passed from the scene, then where do we go from here? And I sort of talk a lot in the book about so where do people who are basically celebrating and dancing on the grave of white Christian America, what do they do? Where do the people who are the descendants who are kind of grieving in various ways the loss of this presence in the country, where do they go?

And one way to kind of see it, at least where people are, is we had this great question. This is one of those questions that we hatched actually here at the Brookings conference room, this question about like has the country changed for the better or changed for the worse since the 1950s? It turns out it's a question that divides the country almost evenly in half and then sorts people remarkably well in kind of striking ways. So here's the question. Since the 1950s do you think the American culture and way of life has mostly changed for the better, or has it mostly changed for the worse? The groups are sorted here by descending order of people who say mostly changed for the better. So over here on

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the left you see it's religiously unaffiliated people, African-Americans, Democrats, Latino Catholics, African-American Protestants, Hispanics as a whole, all in majority territory saying things have changed for the better since the 1950s. Down here on the other side all the way from the right is white Evangelical Protestants, the Tea Party, Republicans, white mainline Protestants here all at 4 in 10, but white Evangelicals in particular. Twenty-seven percent, only 27 percent, saying the country has changed for the better since the 1950s. And if you kind of look at the other side, you can see like 7 in 10 white Evangelical Protestants saying the country has changed for the worse since the 1950s.

And I'll maybe end on this note, saying that I think in this chart also is maybe one way of seeing some of the divides that we're going to be faced with in the election; that at the end of the day, this may be an election that is a referendum on the end of white Christian America and that vision of what the country was like with groups kind of thinking back about a kind of golden age of kind of white Protestant hegemony and power on the one hand, versus kind of an America that looks very different from that picture I started with at the beginning of the presentation.

So I'll stop there and we can have a little conversation with E.J. and Bill and then we'll open it up.

MR. DIONNE: By the way, Bill and Robbie did note that I seem to come dressed today like a Southern white politician, and I am a son of New England, but

DR. JONES: You're missing the white shoes.

MR. DIONNE: I'm missing the white shoes. I couldn't pull it off. Thank you, Robbie, for that extraordinary presentation. You all know now why you have to read this book.

I want to start with the word "white" because what's very important about that chart you showed is that when you add white Christians with African-American and Latino Christians, you still have a majority. A few things about that -- and you could take this in a number of directions as you wish. This may change the public face of Christianity itself, and I think we're seeing that around the immigration issue. There is a habit that both of us have talked about and bemoaned the sentence, "Evangelical Christians are Republicans." Well, that leaves out a whole lot of Evangelical Christians who happen to be African-American and also in many cases Latino. And it was striking last week that Hillary Clinton's comment on the killings of both young black men by police and the killing of police officers in Dallas came

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in a speech to the anniversary of the AME Church in Philadelphia, which reminds you of the profound importance of the African-American Christian tradition. Could you talk about how we should think about these things, the issues raised by the word "white" in your title?

DR. JONES: Well, the first thing to me is when I say "white," I mean white non-Hispanic Americans, so we have screened out Latinos from that designation. But it is important to say that I really am talking about a decline among this kind of white, and primarily white Protestant, world, but that leaves a whole range of Christianity pretty vibrant. So African-Americans, you can recall that chart, have not lost members in the way that white Protestants have. However, I think they are struggling a bit with the younger generation and keeping them engaged. And there's been some tensions actually between the Black Lives Matter movement and the kind of older Civil Rights movement that's more rooted in the churches that I think is playing out a bit. And Latino churches are growing, and so both Protestant churches -- Latino Protestant churches are growing. Many of them are nondenominational, charismatic in their kind of worship style, and also Latino Catholics is worth saying. So the chart I didn't put up there is that if you look at Catholics in the country and you kind of go back again to the 1970s and forward, what you basically see is that the number of Catholics in the country hasn't changed that much at all. But the only reason that's true is because of Hispanic replacement of white attrition. So it's maintained to be about 1 in 5 Americans are Catholic, but Catholics as a whole as you know have lost an enormous amount of members, and it's been mostly white non-Hispanic Catholics that they've lost.

MR. GALSTON: I recall from a Pew study that former white Catholics are either the second or third largest religious denomination in the country.

DR. JONES: Right, because one in ten Americans are former Catholics today.

MR. GALSTON: This is a wonderful book, wonderfully written by the way.

DR. JONES: Thank you.

MR. GALSTON: It's not just wonderfully argued, but it's written with an artist's eye for detail and anecdote. And there were a lot of things in this very rich book that you didn't have a chance to talk about in your presentation. I'm going to invite you to talk about now one strand that really struck me forcefully. One way of summarizing your religious narrative in the past 40 or 50 years is it's the triumph of ideology over theology, and let me tell you why I say that.

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Here are three examples: One, you describe the Southern Baptist U-turn on abortion. I think that was in 1979. That was a big deal, and it set the stage for a lot of the conservative religious politics of the past two generations.

You might well say, second, that the tension between Protestants and Catholics in America was one of the defining features of the American religious scene. But within the past generation, we've actually seen a treaty of peace between Protestants and Catholics, which was really historic and was once again driven I think in your narrative by politics. And then, of course, most recently white Protestants who had previously denounced Mormonism as a cult. You'll recall the Republican party's founding convention in 1856 on the cover of the program the twin relics of barbarism. One was slavery, the other was Mormonism. Suddenly Mormons are in the fold. Once again these theological differences appear to fade away in the face of political exigency. What happened? Why did these theological divisions disappear in our lifetime?

DR. JONES: Well, I do think one of the things that I was struck with as I kind of put the data together is this partisan polarization that sort of runs through the parties. Partisan and race I think were the two kind of powerful pieces that have kind of divided religious groups. And the story of kind of who's in and who's out in white Christian America I think is really an important one. I mean I had some episodes early on where we kind of dialed back to the early part of the 20th century and like intermarriage between Protestants and Catholics was like a really big deal. It wasn't just -- these weren't kind of cousins being married. This was like different religions being married. It was a very, very strong taboo. In fact, I have an anecdote in the book of a Protestant minister actually showed up and shot and killed a Catholic priest who had married his daughter without his knowledge. And these kinds of tensions were very, very real.

MR. DIONNE: You know, neither Joe Kennedy nor Rose Kennedy showed up when Kathleen Kennedy married a Protestant, a British Protestant. They didn't come to the wedding.

DR. JONES: Interesting, yeah. So it lingers. But what's interesting is as the numbers have declined -- so as sort of white Protestant dominance has been less and less possible because of demographic changes, the doors have come open to admitting other people who previously would never have been admitted. So this kind of alliance between white Evangelicals and Catholics -- there's a

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marker for this. This document called "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" in the early 1990s that really was about making the theological case for cooperation across these lines on a whole range of political issues that happened to comport with the Republican agenda for the most part. But I think what was interesting to me is that the Methodists were more than willing to go it alone when they thought they were the most powerful denomination in the country. But as they realized oh, our numbers are declining. We need some other coalition partners, then the doors sort of come open. Same thing with Evangelicals I think with Mormons as finding common political cause as the Christian right movement is waning and not able to kind of deliver I think on its own. So I think it's this kind of political necessity that has driven a lot of these barriers down and that's a pretty interesting phenomenon, particularly if you think about it in a theological key.

MR. DIONNE: I want to underscore that and then move to your piece today in The New York Times. If you haven't read it, Robbie has a really good piece in the Times today on Trump. The new ecumenism is, as Bill suggests, is entirely ideological. You have conservative Catholics, Protestants, some Orthodox Jews, and others on the one side of the divide, liberal Catholics, Protestants, more liberal Jews, and others on the other side. Alan Wolfe has made this point forcefully that no one argues about the virgin birth anymore, the meaning of the Nicene Creed, predestination -- except maybe that you're destined to hell if you vote for the wrong party -- and this is really striking. So it's a peculiar kind of division ecumenism, if you will, divided by ideology. And this actually is systematic in Wolfe's view not of the importance of religion in our politics, but of declining importance of religion in our politics because these aren't theological questions. These are political questions. But I'd also like you to talk about this split in particular that we're seeing among Evangelical Christians. And in the recent survey that we did an event on a couple of weeks ago here, there was a very striking question where we asked if things are so bad in the country that we need a president who breaks some of the rules to put the country right, which some could see as a symptom of not a symptom, but an indication of a more authoritarian view at least, at least less of a constitutional view. And when you looked at that question among Evangelicals, it was really quite decisive as to whether people supported Trump or not. The folks who said things are so bad that we need a really strong leader were for Trump, and the people who disagreed with that were not for Trump. So talk about those two things, sort of the rise of ideology just to elaborate a little more, and then

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what are we to make of what Evangelicals, white Evangelicals, may end up doing this year.

DR. JONES: Well, Robert Wuthnow identified this rift that the fights were no longer going to be between Protestants and Catholics, but between liberal Catholics and conservative Catholics and liberal Protestants and conservative Protestants a while back. But we're seeing that really come to fruition.

And the other piece you were asking about was the -- oh, Trump. One of the interesting things we've seen both on the ground -- so you have on the one hand some of the old guard -- James Dobson, Jerry Falwell, Jr. -- all sort of lining up behind Trump on the one hand. And then you've got sort of newer voices on the scene like Russell Moore at the Southern Baptist Convention very much lining up against Trump. In fact, saying like very strong things like well, if this is what it means to be Evangelical, I'm going to stop using the term. That's something pretty strong for someone who's actually on staff at the Southern Baptist convention to say. But we did see it in the data as well. And we saw a couple of different breaks that I think are important. We see people who have this view that things are so bad that we just need someone who -- even if they have to break the rules, whatever they've got to do to fix things. There was a sizable group of Evangelicals that said that and then supported Trump. On the other hand, the group that said they did not believe that question was less likely to support Trump.

And then the other dividing line we found in some previous survey data as well is that those Evangelicals who attended religious services weekly or more, and particularly the more-than-once-a-week crowd, were also less likely. So were those more tightly tied to an institutional church were also less likely to support Trump than not. So we had that kind of a divide. And you can see that showing up among Mormons also who are more likely to attend frequently and be tied to religious institutions less likely to support Trump. But maybe the most what I argued in the piece in the Times today was that there's kind of a utilitarian tendency that's crept into Evangelical thinking here that basically says look, things are so bad that we have an end here that we need to meet, that the means matter less. So the end we need to achieve is so important and things are such in crisis that even if we have to do some things with dirty hands now, like get behind Trump even though he doesn't sort of fit our kind of values voters frame, so be it. And, in fact, the starkest quote that I quote is the pastor of the First Baptist Church, pretty influential church in Dallas, Robert Jeffress, who came out and said look, I'm just going to

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break it down for you. Here's what's going on. When I see the crisis we're facing and the threats facing Evangelical Christians today, I want the meanest son of a you-know-what in the Oval Office and that's where I many Evangelicals are. And that was putting it out there in a very bold way.

MR. GALSTON: Let me shift to another one of the contemporary manifestations of these religious changes and what some people on the losing end see as a moral and political as well as religious crisis. And that is the rise of what you characterize -- and I think it would be fair to say criticize -- as a very expansive conception of religious liberty that you see as a rearguard effort to resist some of the changes, including Supreme Court decisions. In that connection, I'd like to just spend a minute reading a very instructive quote from your book, and it goes as follows: "No one shares life with God whose religion does not flow out naturally and without effort into all relations of his life. Whoever uncouples the religious and social life has not understood Jesus. Whoever sets any bounds for the reconstructive power of the religious life over the social relations and human institutions to that extent denies the faith of the Master." That for the theologically informed among you is Walter Rauschenbusch, the pioneer of the social gospel. Now, Rauschenbusch refused to cabin faith narrowly simply to private observance. He insisted that it flow out, as he said, into all of the social and political, all of the human institutions of life. So here's my question. What's the difference between Rauschenbusch's position and the expansive conception of religious liberty that the theological conservatives are now pressing?

DR. JONES: Yeah, next question? No, it's a great question. I think it is really instructive. I think that passage would probably ring true for any sincerely faithful person who had religion as a very serious part of their being, like that it has to flow out into all areas of your life. You can't compartmentalize one's faith. I think the difference is for here, what ends up happening I think with the religious liberty piece of things, is it's a very like Rauschenbusch when he was talking about like the labor movement and it wasn't I think bringing forward like a very sort of narrow view in a self-serving way. And I think that may be the difference here. For me like when I looked at the Evangelical move on same-sex marriage or on religious liberty angles, it seemed very clearly that they don't pop up really severely until you start seeing public opinion really moving into majority territory. And it becomes very clear at the national level at least that that's no longer going to be the public view of things, and particularly after the Obergefell decision last summer. What we end up seeing is -- I think there's now like a hundred of these

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religious liberty bills that have popped up across the country and they're just very clearly a response to sort of losing the battle at the national level and trying to figure out either can I carve out a space in my state for trying to sort of not follow sort of what the Supreme Court has said. Is there a way to kind of carve out these exemptions from the state or not? And I actually think also this is a place where Trump and Cruz -- you could see a real difference here, like Cruz was pretty much all about the religious liberty exemptions. This was like a very campaign point he was campaigning on. And I think one of the reasons why actually that Trump actually had more of an appeal to Evangelicals than Cruz was that while Cruz was saying hey, I'm going to assure you exemptions from these battles that we've lost, Trump was saying no, no. I'm actually going to like turn the tide of the war. I'm not going to kind of just kind of give you an exemption to a battle we're going to concede we've lost. We're going to restore power to the Christian churches and we're going to turn back the clock.

MR. DIONNE: We're going to be able to say "Merry Christmas" again. He said that over and over.

DR. JONES: That's right. We're going to kind of win this cultural war battle. I mean to me that has a very different feel than the kinds of things that Rauschenbusch was sort of championing. I think they have in common the sense that it flows from faith. I think that's in common. But it seems very different to me for one group pushing sort of a battle that they've lost in the court of public opinion and the legal courts and the kind of stuff that Rauschenbusch was championing.

MR. DIONNE: One thing that jumps out of your title is race. The other thing that jumps out of your analysis on page after page is age, and we saw that very strikingly. One of the reasons why the turnout patterns in midterms is different is not only race, but also age. I wanted you to talk about that also in relationship to the Tea Party and who the Tea Party is. Earlier research that we did showed that to people's surprise, or some people's surprise, Tea Partyers were not a new Libertarian movement in the country. There are some Tea Party Libertarians. There were actually -- they overlapped in a substantial way with the religious conservative movement. Tea Party members had quite conservative views on a whole lot of social issues and obviously very conservative views or restrictionist views on immigration. And in the end when you boiled it down, it's because an awful lot of white Evangelical Christians and an awful lot of Tea Partyers were over the age of 50 and in many cases over the age 65. So could you talk

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about that and having grown up in Mississippi yourself, maybe you could also relate that to real big regional differences in the country on these questions.

MR. DIONNE: I thought it was Georgia.

DR. JONES: Well, I was born in Georgia, but grew up in Mississippi, all along I-20. So the Tea Party is if we think about that last chart I showed, the two groups that are on the right-hand side, about 7 in 10 saying that they think things have changed for the worse since the 1950s, are white Evangelical Protestants and the Tea Party. Well, when we did some analysis back in 2010 actually, we were one of the first organizations in partnership with Brookings to really dial down to see who the Tea Party were and what we found is that actually about half of them counted themselves also as members of the old Christian right movement. So basically the Tea Party borrowed heavily from foot soldiers of the Christian right movement and that's why on issues like abortion or same-sex marriage, Tea Party members didn't look like Libertarians. They looked like social conservatives on these issues, strongly opposed to legalization of abortion, strongly opposed to same-sex marriage, and they think they share this kind of worldview of kind of thinking things were better back in the 1950s. And part of that is that both of these groups are aging, so the Tea Partyers are typically a little over 50 and the white Evangelical Protestants have had -- again just in the past 10 years especially -- their average age has been creeping up as they've been having a harder time holding onto younger people and that has been a real sea change. So one of the things we might have expected, for example, on same-sex marriage is that white Evangelicals have moved a little bit on that issue, but they have not moved a lot as the rest of the country has been moving. And one of the reasons why they haven't been moving as much as other groups is because the way they would have moved as if those young people had stayed inside those ranks and then they would have been counted and moved that whole group. But as young people have been leaving the white Evangelical world, they've remained kind of anchored in an older generational view on this issue. And so I think that dynamic is driving I think a lot -- also, in addition to the demographic changes, the sense among I think white Protestant groups in particular they're losing a whole generation of people and having a hard time holding onto them is I think accentuating the anxieties that they're feeling about the bigger demographic changes in the whole country.

MR. DIONNE: Bill, could I cheat and just ask a follow-up, and then you can take two

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before we go to the audience?

MR. GALSTON: No, no, no. I'll leave you isolated as the soul cheater.

MR. DIONNE: Okay, I can live with that. One of the things -- I talk about this in my book, which also draws I should say on Robbie's data. One of the hard things to figure out over the last 40 or 50 years in analyzing the rise of the religious conservative movement, the religious right, is how intertwined that was with the conversion of the white South toward the Republican party. That was a kind of slow process that accelerated first with Strom Thurmond's third-party campaign and really accelerated with Goldwater's campaign. How do you disentangle -- in the case of white Protestant America, particularly in the South, though not exclusively in the South -- how do you disentangle attitudes toward race, opposition to civil rights, from sort of purely religious questions because it's a tricky question. I think it's extremely important to recognize it. As soon as you say this, somebody says you're saying all these people are racist. No, that's not what you're saying, or at least it's not what I'm saying. And yet it is very clear that racial reaction preceded the rise of the religious conservative movement. How do you sort that out?

DR. JONES: Well, it's a complicated story. I grew up in Mississippi or have some sort of firsthand feel for this. But what's really clear, and you can see it in the data, you can see it in the historical record, reading your book, "Why the Right Went Wrong," was also a good reference and really helpful in kind of understanding Goldwater, I think your book was and its continued influence on our politics today. And I think the analysis idea shows largely the same thing, that what you see is what -- I love this term. These two political scientists who happen to be twin brothers, Merle and Earl Black, wrote this great book called "The Rise of the Republican South" that really did track this. They called it the great white switch that happened when sort of post-Civil Rights and there were a lot of disgruntled whites in the South that began still identifying as Democrat, but started voting Republican at the top of the ticket. And by the time you get to Reagan, they had done this enough. They had voted for Republicans at the top of the ticket, Democrats at local level, that they finally figured out well maybe I'm a Republican. And what you see is that during the 1980s with Reagan, it was Reagan's presidency that was also wrapped up with the launching of the Christian right. So it's all right there together that this kind of early founding of the Christian conservative political movement was about getting Reagan elected and being deeply

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disappointed with Carter's presidency who was one of their own. And I think that sort of backlash against Carter and sort of a backlash against civil rights is absolutely part of the story here. You really can't excise the racial component I think from the launch of the Christian right and the switch of whites in the South from being the kind of solid Democratic South to the solid Republican South that we have today.

MR. GALSTON: God Bless Merle and Earl.

MR. DIONNE: They couldn't be better named.

MR. GALSTON: You can just see the dueling banjos there. Let me just drop a footnote to that before I move on to the next question. I have long believed -- and I think your book suggests that you may believe this, too -- that the trigger during the Carter administration for the great white switch was the attack on the tax exemption of the white academy.

MR. GALSTON: Which, by the way, began under Richard Nixon, but everybody forgot that when Jimmy Carter carried the policy to its fruition. But I agree with you on that.

First of all, I just want to tweak E.J. a little. If you look at the famous opinions about changes in American culture since the 1950s, there is no difference between white mainline Protestants and white Catholics on that question. In the case of white mainline Protestants, you have 58 percent saying that the change has been for the worse; for Catholics you have 58 percent saying the change is for the worse, white Catholics. So this is not just a white Protestant phenomenon. It is a much broader sentiment, which actually brings me now to my question.

Towards the end of the book you warn, I think sagely, against what you call "the siren's song of nostalgia." Nice phrase. But as your own research points out, fully 53 percent of Americans as we speak are listening to this siren's song. So I want to invite you to speculate a little bit. What does this say about our present moment that 53 percent of Americans are looking back on six decades of American history and saying we took the wrong path? We don't like these changes. What does that mean not just for our politics, but for our culture and our sense of ourselves as a people?

DR. JONES: Pass. The next question? No. I think it's troubling, is what it is. I mean at the end of the book I'm trying to kind of sort out where do we go from here, and I think

MR. GALSTON: That is the question.

DR. JONES: Yeah. And on the one hand like I do think there's some real dangers in

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nostalgia. Nostalgia like is never -- it's never really accurate. You sort of always sort of think back with a kind of rose-colored glasses and you sort of selectively remember what was good and you sort of forget what was bad. So in that sense I think it has a real danger to it and that's why I call it kind of the siren's song of nostalgia. If I could speak theologically for just a minute, I mean I think the danger for white Christians in the country again in theological terms what the temptation is to try to resurrect a 1950s Protestant dominance when it's not really that possible I think to do that at our current moment. And the line I have in the book is I say that "resurrection by human power rather than Divine power always produces a monstrosity, something akin to Frankenstein." And that temptation I think can be a real danger because I think instead of something that's sort of organic, what you have is something that's sort of propped up by power and I think flagrant uses of power that I think becomes sort of dangerous, both for those within and without that world. So I think that's the real challenge.

The problem I think is that we are still struggling I think as a country to tell a story that has a place for everyone. And part of what the anxiety among white Protestants and white Christians who feel themselves sort of they know they've lost their place at the center and they know they've been sort of pushed to the side and they're profoundly anxious about that. I think one of the challenges is trying to figure out what is the story of America that still has a place for the descendants of white Christian America. Is there a story that they can still feel a part of because I think one of the problems is older white Protestants, for example, look at America and the America they see doesn't reflect the vision that they grew up with and that's a real place of dissidence for them. So I think how does that -- I don't think I have any easy answers here, but I think one of the things that has to happen is we have to come up with a new story that is telling the story of America that includes those people, but also means that it's going to be very different from the vision that they had to begin with.

MR. GALSTON: Well, if I wanted to be grandiose -- and this will be my closing note before we turn it over to you for the last half hour -- if I wanted to be grandiose, I would say that the twin pillars for America for 250 years were on the one hand the Constitution and on the other hand what many have called the informal Protestant establishment. And what you're charting is the removal of one of those pillars. This is, and I will not literally quote Vice President Biden, a big deal. I might also say in conclusion that my deepest fear is that nostalgia isn't what it used to be.

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MR. DIONNE: Could I just go one? Your last wonderful answer and Bill's comment were brought to you by Paul Simon's song, "Kodachrome," if some of you may remember that song. But one thing before we go to the audience because I really want you to have a chance to talk about this. One of the reasons I like the book so much and like the way you think is because you are describing a reality, in which you are essentially saying white Christian America has to come to terms with. But you do not do this in a harsh way and you actually talk about the contributions that white Christian America made to all of us, including those who are not white Protestants or white Christians. I'd just like you to close on that before we go to the audience because I think it's very important that you wrote the book that way. It wasn't triumphalist. It was just this is who we are and we've got to deal with it. Could you talk -- I'd like you to go -- you've done a lot on the obituary. I'd like you to close this section with your eulogy.

DR. JONES: Well, I did intentionally frame it as a eulogy and I tried to think about this as like if I were a pastor at a really complicated death, what would I say? Where you've got like warring factions of the family and you've got people showing up at the funeral who people haven't seen in 20 years and some people are like I'm glad, I'm so glad the guy's dead, whatever. So there's like a whole -- and there's people crying on the front row and celebrating on the back row. So what do you say when you have a funeral like that? So I really try to kind of think and dust off my M. Div. and put on my pastoral hat and try to think about it that way as a metaphor. To the folks who may be grieving, and it's a lot of the country that fits the descendants of white Christian America model. It's 47 percent of the country. That's a lot of people.

MR. DIONNE: Funny that it's 47 percent. I just want to note that.

MR. GALSTON: And by the way, the share of the vote that Mitt Romney got, there is a God.

DR. JONES: So what do we say to those? And I think what I was trying to kind of come up with is if you went outside in D.C. and you walked six blocks, you probably would pass some institution that has its history in what I'm calling white Christian America, that has its roots there, that was founded by people who were -- again back to this quote, if you were charged with something big and important in 1950, you were probably a mainline Protestant, that that was kind of the world. So everything from like hospitals to social clubs to universities and colleges that maybe now no one really understands. But if

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you go back and you look at the founding documents, I mean really white Christian America was like responsible for many of those institutions that have held civic -- this is a term I stole from E.J. -- that served as America's civic glue for most of the country's life. And I think it's important to acknowledge that contribution. So even for the people who might want to celebrate its death, that should be acknowledged I think. And it should also be acknowledged that it's really unclear what, if this is sort of passing from the scene, what is going to serve that role? What's going to play that role? If you think about Lincoln's second inaugural address, you think about Martin Luther King's letter from Birmingham jail, I mean these documents depended on a kind of vocabulary and a set of traditions. To make really mean what they meant, you have to really understand the sort of theological allusions that they had. So if we're going to lose the ability for that kind of vocabulary, what's going to replace it? And I don't really think I've got any easy answers for that, but I think it's important for that to be acknowledged, particularly for the folks that are like I think maybe sometimes too ready to celebrate sort of the passing of this world from the scene. So I try to do a little bit of both kind of addressing kind of these different worlds. And I think it's some of the ways we see -- we see these divisions I think showing at the scenes in our public life now, in our partisan politics and the kind of racial tensions that we see in front of us. And I think we're kind of at a crossroads and I think it's going to require some really serious reflection and hopefully some wisdom to figure out how to mend some of these fences and figure out how to build something new as the remains of white Christian America lay dormant.

MR. GALSTON: Well, I personally wouldn't object to a modest revival of judge not lest ye be judged. We could do a lot better. We could do a lot worse. And I just want to pivot to the audience by noting that six decades ago the young Catholic J.D., Mario Cuomo, couldn't get a job in a Manhattan law firm, and now white Protestants can't get a job on the Supreme Court. Go figure!

MR. DIONNE: Yes, sir? And wait until the roving microphone reaches you and then introduce yourself any way you'd like.

SPEAKER: Hi. I'm Gene Robinson, a bishop in the Episcopal Church. I think this falls in the category of ideology triumphing over theology. So religious liberty often gets fought out on a ridiculous level like baking wedding cakes. Those same bakers who want an exemption so they don't have to bake wedding cakes for gay couples are not screening out those getting remarried, which Jesus

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clearly labels a sin, remarriage after divorce. So why did this issue rise to the surface as the location for the fight over religious liberty? And secondly, how does the spate of bathroom bills fit into that?

DR. JONES: It's a really interesting question. It is interesting to see that what's really clear is that from the very beginning of the rise of the conservative Christian movement. In particular, opposition to gay rights was right there at the very beginning in a way that opposition to abortion was not. And so it's interesting to sort of note that, that it's actually more firmly ensconced in its launching there. And I'm not sure I've got the full answer to kind of why it is. It certainly was -- in its day in the 1970s a large number of Americans who were not conservative Christian shared those, so in some ways it was sort of borrowing. Even in the 1980s when the Christian right was making the claim that it was the moral majority, there was a kernel of truth to that. They could sort of look at public opinion and their stance comported somewhat with public opinion. So I'm not sure I've got a great answer for exactly why that issue from the beginning. You probably have a better answer than I do to that question. But what's interesting to me is that it has held on as a defining issue of that group, and I think that because of that and also the very clear loss on this issue I think has set off -- what I think many people still have not grasped is the enormity of the Obergefell decision last year for conservative white Christians in the country. I mean it was a nuclear event that sort of upset four decades' worth of political activism. I mean it was a big, big deal. And I think that's why we've seen the sort of eruption of these bills. It's basically I think various tactics, so some of it's about singling out transgender people. So if you lose on gay and lesbian couples, the next tactic is to sort of single out transgender people as a way to win. But what's interesting is in the Mississippi law that was just recently overturned, they did take aim at a much broader swath. And, in fact, that Mississippi law could have been interpreted as holding up single parents, cohabitating couples. It did take aim at a much broader line, but it was overturned in its entirety I think just last week or the week before. So I think there has been an attempt to sort of take on a little bit broader, but for the most part it has been sort of focused on sort of same-sex marriage and then with that loss, moving on to kind of limiting or providing exemptions on a whole range of fronts.

MR. DIONNE: Let me apologize in advance. There are enough people in this room to trigger a visit from the fire marshal. There is no way that I'm going to be able to get to all of your questions, but I suspect strongly that Robbie will be willing to stay around for a little while.

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MR. GALSTON: Why don't we get a couple at a time to have two questions thrown at him just to include a few more folks?

MR. DIONNE: Then he can skip the hard ones!

MR. GALSTON: I'm going to recognize the gentleman over there and then second in from the row.

MR. DIONNE: You have one mic?

DR. JONES: We've got two back there I think.

MR. GALSTON: Why doesn't the second mic preposition itself over here in the name of efficiency? Yes, sir?

SPEAKER: Thank you very much. My name is Hiller Astovas. I'm a staff attorney with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Thank you very much for your presentation, Dr. Jones. Two quick questions. The first one is in your search did you disaggregate for membership in the Ku Klux Klan as part of white Christian America? I'd be curious what your findings were if you did.

And then secondly, what do you make of efforts I would say principally by white Christian America, perhaps the last decade, decade and a half, to introduce or to integrate creationism into the education curriculum? We had a major case I think, Dover case, back in 2005, and I'm just wondering whether that is part of the sort of backlash, the sort of resistance to this loss of privilege or standing. Thank you.

SPEAKER: My name is Nelson. I'm a political scientist and scholar from George Washington University. So three brief questions.

MR. DIONNE: No, no. We don't have time for three questions. Two questions.

SPEAKER: Okay, okay. So I miss the cross between religion and party affiliation. I guess the biggest group that is increasing is known religious affiliated, how it's related not to a specific coalition, but political party. I guess they would be independent. The second question is that if those trends that you showed I guess they're not evenly distributed among the country, if there is a kind of geographic concentration you would say it's not changing, but it's concentrating. If it's not, you have a broad perspective. And can I make my third?

MR. DIONNE: No. There's a principle of fairness at work here.

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SPEAKER: Okay, thank you.

DR. JONES: Okay, so we have KKK, evolution, and the unaffiliated. So I'll start back over here. So the unaffiliated right is absolutely the fastest growing religious group around the country. We looked back in the 1990s, all the way up through the 1990s, the religiously unaffiliated were in single digits. So less than one in ten Americans claimed to be religiously unaffiliated. The number today is 23 percent and it keeps going up and it's predominantly driven by younger people. One note I'll make and kind of connect it to Gene's comment is we did ask young people who had been raised religious and left, why they left. And we got a range of kind of mundane answers, but one sort of stood out. A third of them said that they left over antigay teachings or negative treatment of gay and lesbian people. So it's not the majority, but it is a sizable group that said like a third of that group left because of that. So I'll put the pin there.

So the KKK and evolution. So I did not we have no data that I know of on KKK affiliation, but I will say that I do talk in the book about the history of race and civil rights and resistance to civil rights in the book on the chapter on race. And one thing that is really clear is that there was kind of this -- Jerry Falwell, Sr. is a kind of a really good person to kind of look at this. When people were marching on civil rights, Falwell preached a famous sermon that basically Christianity was about saving souls and not about politics; that preachers had no business in the streets. They should stay in the pulpits and not in the streets. Not a decade later when he was part of the Christian right getting off the ground, completely flipped his tune in less than a decade really to talk about the importance of Christians standing up for their values in the public realm. So there was a kind of real shift really and it was quiet on civil rights, but then when these other issues, anti-LGBT moves and then when abortion came on the scene, it became a more activist piece. I would see the evolution thing as being of a piece here, and I think many of these actions are about preserving a world or preserving enclaves of a world that's been sort of lost at the national level. And I guess to kind of put the ribbon on it back over here, you do see in the book I actually have a map where I map out where white Protestants are still dominant. And basically what you see is, it's the Deep South and Appalachia and parts of the Midwest. That's where you see -- there's only six states, though, that are majority white and Protestant, so it's not that many and the rest of them are at 40 percent Protestant or more.

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MR. DIONNE: Just in the back of your head as you answer some of these questions because Bishop Robinson's question put this in my head. Try to distinguish, which is something that I struggle with a lot analyzing this stuff, between the theological and the moral on the one side and the tribal and cultural on the other. I think that's one of the tricky problems we have in understanding what you're writing about. But just keep that in the back of your head. Bill, go ahead.

MR. GALSTON: Okay, a sea of hands. I'm now going to go to three. First of all the woman on the aisle, then the gentleman on the aisle a few up, and then this gentleman right here. And then I'm going to move to the other side of the room for the next tranche of questions.

SPEAKER: My name is Jo Freeman. I write about women in politics. I'd like to know which of all these groups you studied have gender gaps and how big and what the range of gender gaps was among those groups.

MR. DIONNE: Great question.

SPEAKER: Bill Dentonales, sociology. One of the observations that I was expecting is the difference between the mainline Protestants, especially in Congress. Once they were both Democrats and Republicans. There was no period of time when you didn't have Democrats and Republicans, even when there were at one point 64 of the 100 seats in the Senate were held by mainline Protestants. When you look at Congress and you look at the Evangelicals, I can't find an Evangelical who's a Democrat. And I don't know how much in the book you reflect on the fact that it's an Evangelical is to be a Republican identified in very narrow ways and what we've really lost is the mainline Protestants, not only in their churchgoing, but in their presence in Congress.

MR. DIONNE: Right. Evangelicals, the Republican party at prayer.

SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I am (name inaudible) with the American League. Thank you for expanding the picture and also assuring that the reel of time cannot be reversed. The diversity is really the strength of this country because everybody gets Constitutional protection. But as you mentioned about elections also, the elections are actually held in eight to ten states and there, too, the fate of the candidate is decided by the minorities, by Hispanics and black people. What is this phenomenon? And you talked of interfaith dialects. In Libya and Iraq and Syria, in those countries, first they need intra dialect. Do you think even in this country some kind of intra dialect is needed to move

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forward? Thank you.

DR. JONES: All right, that's three. You're not going to give me four, are you?

MR. GALSTON: No.

DR. JONES: Okay. So let me go back to gender, the question of gender. One of the places where it shows up is in this attendance thing. One of the things we see among Evangelicals, for example, is the women are much more likely to attend weekly or more and that's actually driving some of this lesser support for Trump among more attending Evangelicals. So that's one place where we see a kind of gender gap, among the more frequently attending Evangelicals that then translates I think into

MR. DIONNE: Which could be more about Trump's problem with women than the problem with church attenders.

DR. JONES: Yes, that's right. It's all wrapped up together I think there. So, Bill, on your question of Congress. I mean I think it's a really astute point. You've shown your work through the decline of the number of mainline Protestant representatives in Congress, in the Senate, first in the House and then in the Senate. So you will lose them first in the House because the bar's a little higher in the Senate. And then Bill has also mentioned the Supreme Court where 2010 was when we lost our last Protestant on the Supreme Court. I want to kind of put an accent point on that, too, because there's been 119 Protestant justices in the history of the Court. There are zero on the Court now. Right now it's all Catholics and Jews, right, on the Supreme Court. There's also been only a handful of Jews that have ever served on the Supreme Court, and a big chunk of them are serving right now on the Supreme Court. So that's been a big change. The first African-American in the White House, the sea change in the Congress, so you can see it. You can see this shift in kind of the power, particularly of white mainline Protestants, which were much more upscale in terms of education and income and power in the country. And you can really see the sea change coming through. And Congress because it's an elite institution tends to kind of lag behind the population, so we're seeing this. What we haven't quite seen in Congress is the rise of a lot of unaffiliated members of Congress, but I think that's coming as the country really shifts.

And then the last question on interfaith work. So I mentioned these buildings and great ways to come back to, the United Methodist building, the Interchurch Center in New York. I mean one of

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the real transformations has been from these buildings representing power bases of white Protestant and if anyone else wants to join the parade, okay great. But we're leading the parade and going forward. And now I think they're acting much more like midwives in a sense. They're not saying this is what we're doing and fine if you want to join us, but there's a lot more humility and collaborative approach by necessity among these groups. I do think the thing that we'll have to see, though, is I think maybe we're moving beyond the interfaith dialogue phase and into what are people going to do together. So it's not just sort of talking across lines of religious difference, but like trying to figure out is there a way. And I think it's an open question. Is there a way for other religious groups to join with these groups, or these other groups may just do their own thing. I think we're still waiting to see what that's going to look like in our national politics.

MR. GALSTON: Well, I can now confess that when E.J. and I met a quarter of a century ago, we agreed on many things, including deploring the religious composition of the Court. And so we launched a conspiracy to change that, and I think we can now declare between us complete success at Robbie's expense.

Okay, I'm going to shift to the other side of the room now. There's a gentleman in the back and then a woman right in front of the gentleman in the back and then there's a gentleman also in the back.

SPEAKER: Hello. Matt Bulger from the American Humanist Association. The argument has been made that those who are atheistic or religiously affiliated in their youth become more religious as they get older. Do you think that that will be the case with this current generation of atheists? And if that's not the case, what do you think the political impact will be of having a large number of senior citizens who are nonreligious who vote at higher levels than the youth?

SPEAKER: Katherine Reed. I'm with the Quality of Virginia, but actually my question has to do with the role of women inside these mainline Protestant religions. I know a lot of fabulous women pastors who have taken over very big churches like Amy Butler at Riverside in Manhattan. But in some churches there are not a lot of roles for women and so there is a gender discrepancy inside the churches for women who want leadership positions, while at the same time the Tea Party has been driven by the Phyllis Schlafly and these Evangelical women who actually have wielded an enormous

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amount of shadow power throughout decades of elections that have led to very extreme conservative position against abortion. How do you see mainline Protestant religions figuring out how to create a role for women so that we have a better balance?

SPEAKER: Thank you. Sir, (name inaudible) just a student. The question is very quick. A lot of your presentation was on demographic changes, the loss of demographic power for white Christian Americans. My question is on a local and state level, has that really translated into a loss of economic and institutional power? It can seem at times, at least when I read the news, that at the local level and the state level that when it comes to things like abortion, policing, voter ID laws, so on and so forth, that white Christian Americans seem to be winning that war. Thank you.

DR. JONES: Great. I'll start in the back. So, it's a great question about -- one quick clarification. That number of 1 in 5 Americans are religiously unaffiliated. That includes people who say atheist, agnostic, or nothing in particular. So it's not just atheists in that number, so I want to be really careful about that. But having said that, the question is there's been some evidence that people in their 20s they're busy, they have multiple jobs, they're moving around a lot, so they're not active in churches. But once they get married, they get a mortgage, and some kids, they sort of head back to church. So I think there's some kernel of truth to that. But there's a couple of reasons why even if that effect is in place -- let's say we grant that that effect is going to be there -- this generation will still be the most religiously unaffiliated generation we've ever seen. And the reason is if we look back at the Baby Boomers in their 20s, this generation is still much more unaffiliated than the Baby Boomers were in their 20s. So it's starting off at a much higher level of disaffiliation. The other thing is that we're just starting to see -- and my colleague, Dan Cox, has written a great piece on this -- we're just starting to see that the religiously unaffiliated have been around long enough that what tended to happen was -- that a religiously unaffiliated person would marry someone who was affiliated and that sort of mixed marriage would pull the unaffiliated one back to a religious institution especially when there were kids involved. What's happening now is that because of political polarization and ideological polarization, that unaffiliated people are actually seeking out other unaffiliated people as marriage partners. And that means there's no partner to pull the other one back to a religious institution anymore. And I think we'll be seeing many more people raised as unaffiliated, just intentionally raised without an affiliation.

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The other question on women clergy, so generally speaking there's been many more places in the more liberal mainline Protestant world for women than there has been in the Evangelical world. It's a mixed bag in the Evangelical world and some churches will allow them to be Deacons, others won't. Some will allow them to preach, some of them won't. In the mainline world there have been many more official roles for women. But having said that, the last data I saw even among mainliners is that when you're talking about the big, tall steeple prestigious churches, those still overwhelmingly go to men even in the mainline Protestant world. And so there's still a kind of gap, a clergy gap, even in the mainline Protestant world there.

And then the last question here was about the local level. I think that you're right to say -- and if I go back to that chart and say where is white Christian America still really strong? It is sort of in the Deep South, up through Appalachia, and parts of the Midwest. The difference, though, is this. I think three or four decades ago -- again you can use this term of the moral majority -- I mean take my home state. White Evangelicals in Mississippi four decades ago could I think march on under the illusion that most of the rest of the country broadly shared their values. That is no longer possible and I think that changes the game. So even if you're in a state like Mississippi where you can't swing a dead cat without hitting a Baptist that those people are still in a place where -- my friends and family are still in Mississippi - they are under no illusions that the rest of the country shares their basic set of values. So it changes their posture I think toward the broader national conversation.

MR. DIONNE: Let me just plug another book for the person who asked. Our friend, Melissa Deckman, this is on your question about women -- where are you? Oh, welcome. I didn't even know you were here. Melissa wrote a great book called "Tea Party Women." I love the subtitle, "Mama Grizzlies, Grassroots Leaders, and the Changing Face of the American Right." You might be interested in her book.

DR. JONES: And the point she made was exactly your point, that the Tea Party provided places outside of the Republican structure for women to get involved and take leadership positions and that was the real strength of the Tea Party. E.J. saved me because Melissa's the chair of PRRI's board.

MR. DIONNE: It was the Holy Spirit at work.

MR. GALSTON: If I could riff on Edward Edwards for just a minute, looking forward a

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generation you won't be able to swing a cat in Mississippi without hitting a dead Baptist.

Okay, we have time for one more tranche and I'm coming to the front. Yes, ma'am. Yes, sir. And yes, sir. But it's going to have to be quick, no extended preludes.

SPEAKER: This morning in your op-ed piece you referenced an Evangelical working for the Trump Campaign who said well, he's been a good father. And one could argue that Hillary Clinton, who did not seek a divorce when some might, was being a good Christian Methodist white religious person. So my question goes to what is the role -- doesn't that relate to early on when she said I'm no milk-and-cookies woman, which was sort of take that "Father Knows Best?"

SPEAKER: Thanks very much, Robbie. Garrett Mitchell. I write the Mitchell Report. I'm struck by the fact that it's really difficult to sort of think about all that you've said today without thinking about the last week, the last month, et cetera. And that takes me to I think your last slide that shows who thinks things are getting better and who thinks things are getting worse. And I'm struck by the fact -- and I don't know whether your data can get us there, but I'd be interested in your view of this, which is one could look at that and say well, there's some good news there. There are people who are feeling better about things and there are people who are feeling worse about things. But is there in the work that you've done and your sense, if you took that same group of people in the various classifications and you said is America on the right track or is America on the wrong track, which track do you think those folks think we're on?

SPEAKER: Thank you. Larry Chacko, Accountability Central. You used a very interesting word, Robbie, the narrative. And I grew up in the 1950s. I don't want to give my age away. I know I look a lot younger. But I grew up in that narrative, the white Christian American narrative, and it was a strong one and your aspirations that you wanted to be of that group. Can we now with the diversification that's gone on in this country over the last 50 or 60 years, can we only have one narrative that's going to be that strong again?

MR. DIONNE: That's a great closing question.

DR. JONES: Okay, I'll come back to that one at the end. So I think you're right. So one of the interesting things is in 2008 I went to an event where both Barack Obama and I'm forgetting the university. They've going to kill me, but it was in Pennsylvania. The Evangelical university hosted a

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conversation on faith with Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton. Do you remember where this was?

MR. DIONNE: Eastern?

DR. JONES: Eastern, yes. Eastern something. But what was interesting is that I mean Hillary Clinton talked about very eloquently about her Methodist upbringing, the impact that it had on her life, how it fits with her political views, and we're hearing I think less of that in this election cycle. I think it's partially because her supporters don't expect that of her. But I also think it's because that rhetoric by necessity has gone away on the Republican side of the ticket. Now that Cruz is not in the primary anymore, we lost Cruz, Santorum, Huckabee, all the people who foregrounded that talk, gave their own testimony, talked about Jesus, how Jesus had shaped their life, and we're not seeing that conversation really on either side of the debates. I mean one of the things we've seen is a real evacuation of God talk for good or ill across both sides of the debate. But Hillary Clinton told a very compelling story about how these things connected up for her and informed her life.

And remind me, your question was about the right track, wrong track and the stuff around racial tensions. So there's a chart in the book. I think it's on page 154 that breaks out the attitudes on whether -- we had this really illuminating question that asked do you think that the recent killings of black men by police are isolated incidents or part of a broader pattern of how police treat African-Americans? And not surprisingly more than three-quarters African-Americans say it's part of a broader pattern of how police treat African-Americans. And what we found is that about half as many whites overall agreed with that statement. And when we broke it down by religion, there was this kind of really interesting divide between unaffiliated whites among whom two-thirds agreed with African-Americans that it was part of a broader pattern. But when we looked at white mainline Protestants, only 43 percent of them agreed with the statement. And when we looked at white Evangelical statements, only 29 percent of them agreed that it was part of a broader pattern. So when you look at those kinds of divides, what you see is that it's not just that people are disagreeing about what to do about a problem, there is a clash of world views that don't even perceive the same set of problems. So it's a very deep-seated problem I think. And on the chapter on race I really dig into this and try to -- I think Russell Moore actually has been one of the better voices in the Southern Baptist Convention, trying to get particularly white Evangelical Protestants to rethink their knee-jerk reactions to racial politics. And I think that's a really important thing for white

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Christians in particular to approach these issues with a lot more humility than I think they have in the past.

And then the last question over here was

MR. DIONNE: I think it was Eastern University where Tony Campolo, a well-known progressive Evangelical, teaches.

DR. JONES: Thank you. It's interesting. I was looking the other day at a survey I hadn't seen. It was conducted a couple of years ago by MTV of all things. So they interviewed 13 to 16 year olds and they asked them -- because one of the challenges with polling the younger generation is we're now like running -- we've been calling the younger generation millennials for some time -- there's Gen Y, Gen X, and then millennials. But we're kind of running out of the period where we can keep calling them millennials because the younger edge of that group is now 18 to 35. It's a big span now. So there's a younger edge to that group that's probably something else and we're trying to find out where that dividing line is. So they interviewed 13 to 16 year-olds and they threw out a bunch of names to them and asked them what they would self-label their own generation. They gave them a bunch of names so that they could pick from. And interestingly enough the one that came to mind, the one that won out from all the names, the favorite label was the founders generation. And what they meant by that was that the millennials generation they saw as the disruptive generation that broke with the era of the past. There was a lot of disruption, a lot of change, and this younger generation coming along behind them they saw as actually the "founders" generation that was going to tell a different kind of narrative about what it meant to be American, what it meant to belong I think. Now whether it's going to be one or multiple I don't know, but I think that there's some hopefulness for that I think in my mind at least that this group is thinking like yeah, there is something new that has happened and we're sort of growing into a new era. And I do think it's not going to be people my age or older who's going to figure that out. I do think it's going to be the younger generation that's going to finally figure this out.

MR. GALSTON: So on that hopeful note of a forthcoming new e pluribus unum, please join me in congratulating Robbie.

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