

Are Conservative Churches Growing?

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Introduction

It is generally accepted as Gospel that fundamentalism has been growing in size and strength in recent years (Hope, 1990, p. 1; Stark, 1990, p. 7; Hunter, 1987, p. 203; "Religion in America: 1977-78," 1978, p. 41; Roozen and Carroll, 1979, pp. 24-25; Kelley, 1972; 1977; 1986; Roof and McKinney, 1987, p. 4). The popular impression is that the country is becoming religiously more conservative or, more precisely, that a greater proportion of Americans a) are members of fundamentalist churches and b) hold fundamentalist beliefs. It is doubtful if either of these situations is true.

The strongest evidence for a rise in fundamentalism is the comparison of the official church membership figures of fundamentalist and non-fundamentalist denominations. As interpreted by Dean Kelley in his influential book, *Why Conservative Churches Are Growing* (1972; 1977; 1986), these statistics show that fundamentalist denominations are "overflowing with vitality," "rapidly growing," and "flourishing," while in "startling contrast" non-fundamentalist denominations are showing "significant decline" and "signs of decline" (Kelley, 1972, pp. 6, 9, 21, 23, 26). Similar to the figures presented by Kelley and others, Table 1 shows that in recent quintals all liberal and most moderate

churches have been experiencing absolute declines, while fundamentalist churches have shown substantial increases.

Supporting evidence on the growth of fundamentalism comes from the expansion of the electronic church in general and of televangelists in particular. As two leading news magazines described it

In less than two decades, the vocation of preaching the Word of God via video has grown from hardscrabble beginnings into far-flung real estate and broadcast empires with assets ranging in the hundred of millions of dollars. *Time*, August 3, 1987, p. 50.

In the last decade, the number of stations devoted to sermons and gospel variety shows has multiplied from a relative handful to more than 1,300 on radio and 40 on television... combined audiences according to the National Religious Broadcasters have soared to about 130 million people a week - more than go to church. *US News & World Report*, April 7, 1980, p. 40.

Additional support comes from the rise of the New Christian Right (or alternatively the New Religious Right). Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority galvanized fundamentalists behind a wide ranging political agenda, Jimmy Carter became this century's first born-again president in 1976, and Televangelist Pat Robertson ran for the Republican presidential nomination in 1988.

Growing memberships in fundamentalist churches, high tech proselytizing by TV preachers, and the political mobilization in election booths and legislative lobbies seem to chorus one clear refrain, "Hallelujah, fundamentalism has risen."

Counter-Evidence

But all was not harmonious for the fundamentalism has risen hypothesis. Examination both of the evidence offered in support of the hypothesis and of additional evidence from surveys on religious preferences, behaviors, and beliefs, suggests that the rise of fundamentalism has been much exaggerated.

Church Membership Statistics

A close examination of the official church membership figures on which the reports of a growth in fundamentalism rests raises some questions about the magnitude and breadth of the fundamentalist revival: Is Protestant church membership too narrow a base for studying popular changes? Do the church membership figures adequately cover fundamentalist denominations as a whole? Are church membership figures accurate? Has the contrast between fundamentalist growth and non-fundamentalist decline been exaggerated?

First, focusing on the issue of the relative growth of the fundamentalist vs. non-fundamentalist Protestant church membership is too narrow. Only about 60-65% of the population is Protestant and only about 70-75% of Protestants are church members. Thus looking at changes in church membership among Protestants covers only a minority of adults (42-49%). Thus, even if fundamentalists were gaining ground among Protestants church members (which is not certain), they are not necessarily gaining ground in the total population. In addition, while the Protestant share of the population has been dropping at an annual rate of one to two fifths of a percentage point per annum over the last 40 years, the percent

Catholic, Other Religion, and No Religion have all been gaining (Smith, 1991).

Second, the reported fundamentalist growth may be focusing on denominations that are growing and that are not typical of all fundamentalist churches. In Kelley (1972) information on only 10 conservative, 9 liberal Protestant denominations, and Roman Catholics are given; in Doyle and Kelly (1979) only 8 Protestant denominations plus Roman Catholics are covered, and even in Jacquet (1988) only 28 Protestant denominations and Roman Catholics have trend data covering the period since 1955. As Table 2 shows, full time trends data are available for only 18 of the over 120 fundamentalist denominations listed the Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, 1988 (Jacquet, 1988). Recent, but not trend, data are available for another 75-86 denominations and for 30 denominations the most recent information is at least 10 years old. In addition, authoritative listings of American denominations list hundreds of additional fundamentalist denominations (Mead, 1970; Melton, 1978; 1985). Thus studies of fundamentalist membership trends ignore the vast majority of Protestant and fundamentalist denominations. This omission is lessened however by the fact that most large denominations are covered.

Because of this limited coverage, it is possible that the those fundamentalist churches for which trends are typically analyzed may not be representative of all fundamentalist denominations. In particular, churches may not report membership figures if they are experiencing slow growth or decline. For example, in the Yearbook there are 30 fundamentalist denominations with last reported membership figures of 8,168,799 which are not included in the fundamentalist trends and which have no recent membership data (most recent figures at least 10 years old). Black fundamentalist denominations account for at least 95% of the membership of these churches. If black fundamentalist churches are not growing as rapidly as those reporting fundamentalist churches, the overall fundamentalist average would be appreciably reduced. Moreover much of the growth in the covered fundamentalist denominations could be coming from the uncovered black fundamentalist denominations. While hard figures on trends in the membership of black fundamentalist denominations are unavailable, C. Eric Lincoln, co-author of *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (1990) states "the black church is at least holding its own. But whether that will continue is anybody's guess (Ostling, 1990)." Beyond the black fundamentalist denominations without trend data, there are hundreds of mostly small denominations for which there are little or no reliable membership records. Their impact on overall fundamentalist membership is unknown.

Third, the reported denominational membership figures may not be accurate. While there is ample evidence that official church statistics are often unreliable (and often self-serving), there is less evidence that fundamentalist churches exaggerate more than non-fundamentalist churches (Smith, 1991; Demarath, 1968; Roozen and Carroll, 1979). However, it is generally the case that at least the "mainline" Protestant churches devote more effort to maintaining accurate statistics than more fundamentalist churches. (Kelley, 1977; Stark and Glock, 1968) Also, evangelical churches may be prone to exaggerate membership more than non-fundamentalist denominations since growth in general and conversion in particular are given greater emphasis by them.

In addition, unintentional overcounting from double counting occurs. This can come about in various ways. Counting a person as a member two (or more) times is more likely to occur in denominations that 1) are adding new congregations because people

may be counted as belonging to both old and new congregations, 2) have many members who are geographically mobile, 3) do not keep good records of transfers of members, and 4) do not regularly prune membership rolls of former members who have changed congregations. Such complexities of counting can easily seriously distort membership figures.

Fourth, the relative growth of the membership in fundamentalist Protestant denominations compared to liberal Protestant denominations has been exaggerated. In particular, the manner in which Kelley presented membership change figures overemphasized fundamentalist gains (for a detailed explanation see Smith, 1991, p. 84-85, n. 12). Using the limited number of denominations presented in the Yearbook, shows that the membership in 18 fundamentalist denominations grew by 65% from 1960 to 1985, Roman Catholic membership rose by 26% and non-fundamentalist Protestants (mostly of the mainline variety) fell by 16% (Jacquet, 1988).

Finally, the decline of membership in mainline churches has often been seen as proof of the rise of the fundamentalist churches. But typically a former member of a mainline church does not become a fundamentalist. Most frequently the ex-member remains affiliated with the former denomination. The most common destination when a non-fundamentalist Protestant stops being an official denominational member is to become a lapsed member or affiliator of the same denomination. For example, a former official member of the United Methodists is likely to still identify as a Methodist or to give Methodist his/her religious preference.

As Table 3 shows, of those raised as non-fundamentalist Protestants 76% are still non-fundamentalist Protestants, 13% are fundamentalists, and 11% are something else (no religion, Roman Catholic, etc.). Of those who have left non-fundamentalist Protestant denominations, only a little over half identify with fundamentalist denominations. In addition, the 13% who switched to fundamentalist denomination are largely off-set by the flow of people raised as fundamentalists changing to non-fundamentalist Protestant denominations. Among those raised as fundamentalist 80% are still fundamentalist, 13% belong to non-fundamentalist Protestant denominations, 5% have no religion, and nearly 3% are Catholic or other.

If we look at nominal members of non-fundamentalist Protestant churches (those who are probably the most likely to cease affiliating with these churches), we find that their religious and social beliefs clearly differentiate them from fundamentalists. As Table 4 shows, active affiliators (i.e. those who are members or who attend services weekly) with non-fundamentalist Protestant churches tend to be closer to fundamentalists than do nominal affiliators of non-fundamentalist Protestant churches. Their would therefore seem to be little in the profile of nominal non-fundamentalist Protestants that would suggest a likely switch to fundamentalism (See also Hadaway and Roof, 1988; Nelson, 1988).

In brief, depending on official membership figures of Protestant denominations to chart the changing religious orientation of America has decided limitations since it covers only a minority of the population, relies on a very incomplete and probably biased coverage of denominations, and depends on statistics of questionable reliability. However, while there is ample reason to question the generalizability and accuracy of the church statistics, it is not possible to assert that the picture of growing fundamentalism (and a declining non-fundamentalist sectors) sketched by church membership figures does not reflect a general social trend. To help resolve the issue, more evidence is needed. Such evidence can be found in survey-based studies of religious

affiliations, behaviors, and beliefs.

Cross-Sectional Survey Trends

Both NORC and the American National Election Studies (ANES) of the Survey Research Center (SRC) trends on religious affiliation show small gains in the % fundamentalist averaging +.14-.24 percentage points per annum (Table 5). Of course since these are annual rates of gain, they translate into gains of from 2 to 6 percentage points over the covered periods. However, while the trends are statistically significant, they are not particularly robust. If we remove the first NORC data point (1964) or the last SRC observation (1988), both series show no significant change over the remaining years (NORC:1967-1989 and SRC:1972-1986).

Birth-Cohort Trends

Across birth cohorts from before 1910 to 1960 and later, the percent fundamentalist has not changed (Table 6). Nor does the generation maturing since the late 1970s (the 1960+ birth cohort) shows any signs of leading an emerging fundamentalist trend. There has been some decline in liberal religious orientations, but this is entirely taken up by a growing center. This growth of moderates is in turn largely due to an increase in Roman Catholics (Smith, 1991).

Self-Identification as "Fundamentalist"

There is a short time series (1986-1989) and other scattered readings (Table 7) that directly ask respondents whether they are "fundamentalists". This series show some significant variation over time, but no clear change either up or down.

Behaviors and Beliefs

Another way to measure the rise of fundamentalism is to track trends in religious behaviors and beliefs. Three items which Gallup used to use as part of an Evangelical scales and some closely related items provide information on religious behaviors and beliefs related to fundamentalism. These are 1) beliefs about the inerrancy of the Bible, 2) having had a "born-again" experience, and 3) proselytizing (try to have people adopt Jesus Christ as their personal savior). On the three-item scale an evangelical (or fundamentalist as we have been using the term) is someone who believes in the inerrancy of the Bible, has had a born-again experience, and has tried to have someone adopt Christ as their savior. From 1976 through 1988 this scale showed some statistically significant variation, but no clear trend (Table 8; statistical analysis for Tables 8-12 appears in Table 13).

Since the Bible inerrancy questions have also been used outside of the Gallup three-item Evangelicalism scale, they shed additional information on trends in fundamentalism. There are three separate time series covering the overlapping periods, 1952-1965, 1963-1989, and 1964-1988. All three series agree that belief in the inerrancy of the Bible has declined over time (Table 9). Today substantially fewer Americans adopt the fundamentalist belief in Bible inerrancy than did some 30-40 years ago.

Born-again questions have been asked since 1976 (Table 10). Taking all data points and all variants asked of the general adult population, one finds a significant movement in the fundamentalist direction of 0.38 percentage point per annum. This change however may be the function of shifts in the coding of Don't knows,

wording, mode of administration, and other differences across surveys. If we take only personal interviews using the same wording (wording 1 in Table 10) and excluded Don't Knows and No Answers the trend is Non-constant, Non-Linear. This means there was significant variation across surveys, but no net direction or trend. A more general religious experience question shows no change over time (Table 11).

Questions on encouraging people to adopt Jesus Christ as their savior have also been asked from 1976 to 1988 (Table 12). Again using all points asked of all adults, there is a significant trend in the fundamentalist direction of 0.41 percentage points per annum. In this case the change seems to be created by higher readings on telephone surveys. If we look only at personal surveys (all using the identical question), there is no change across the period.

In addition, items that measure belief in traditional or orthodox Christian faith (but not necessarily fundamentalism), such as belief in God, Jesus Christ, and life after death, show either that faith has not changed in recent decades or some erosion in the traditional position (Smith, 1990b; Greeley, 1989). There is no evidence of a growing traditionalism that might be expected as part of a fundamentalist revival.

To summarize the evidence on denominational affiliations, behaviors, and beliefs from surveys on the rise of fundamentalism, 1) there is mixed evidence of a small increase in fundamentalist affiliations 2) No recent changes in self-identification as a fundamentalist, 2) no directional change in the Gallup Evangelicalism scale, 3) no clear directional change in the born-again experience, religious experiences in general, or proselytizing, 4) long-term decline in belief in Bible inerrancy, and 5) stability or some decline for traditionalist Christian beliefs (Table 13). The overall pattern from surveys is of little to no gain for fundamentalism.

The Electronic Church

While Christian broadcasting and televangelists have expanded in terms of hours of programming and number of stations during the last two decades (Buckser, 1989), there is apparently little hard evidence on the size of their audience and how it has changed. First, the best available evidence questions whether there was an increase in the audience of the electronic church during the last decade and a half (Table 14). There are five series that measure trends in viewing religious television. One shows a decrease in viewing, two show no change, and two show an increase. In addition, the rise in the one of the indicators (Item C) may have resulted from the restriction of the second time point to registered voters and the small shift in question wording. Both of these changes would have increased reported viewing. Evidence of stable or declining viewerships prior to the recent scandals also comes from some Nielsen and Arbitron figures for selective shows (Horsfield, 1984; Martz, 1987; Frankl, 1987).

Second, there is evidence that the standing of television ministers is not high and may have been in decline for some time. Billy Graham is the best known and most respected television minister (Table 15). On the 1987 LAT favorability scale only Graham and non-fundamentalist Robert Schuller had positive evaluations (with Jim Bakker, Jerry Falwell, Oral Roberts, Jimmy Swaggart, and Pat Robertson having negative scores). Rating trends are available for Graham and Falwell. Graham's ratings show a steady decline from 1972 to 1981 followed by a levelling-off. Falwell's ratings show little change at the positive end from 1981 to 1987 (see also

Brand, 1987).

Third, it is uncertain whether the changes in mass media religion either reflected or encouraged the growth of fundamentalism. If televangelists were merely preaching to the choir, then their technological innovations represented a change in techniques and not an expansion. This interpretation is supported by data that indicate that the religious beliefs and behaviors of most people are not changed by watching religious programs on television. For example, of those reporting ever having watched religious programs, 90% reported it did not effect their involvement in their local church, 4% report more involvement, 2% less involvement, and 4% were not sure (Gallup 4/1987, n=1571; see also Gaddy and Pritchard, 1985).

Political Action

The rise of the New Christian Right in general and of the political activities and influence of fundamentalist political groups such as Moral Majority in particular are real phenomenon, but not necessarily tied to or resulting from any increase in fundamentalist identifications. First, the phenomenon basically represents the mobilization and effective organization of a constituency that was traditional apolitical, not the grow of that constituency (Marsden, 1990; Shupe and Stacey, 1983). Second, the size and growth of the political movement itself has been exaggerated. Fundamentalist traditional have been less likely to vote than non-fundamentalist. While this differential has decreased recently, as of the mid-1980s fundamentalists were still less likely to vote than non-fundamentalists (Kellstedt and Noll, 1990). In addition, despite of the election of born-again Carter and the presidential campaign of Robertson, fundamentalists apparently remain underrepresented in national office. In the 102nd Congress only about 15% of the members belong to fundamentalist denominations, while 41% belong to mainline Protestant denominations, 3% to other non-fundamentalist Protestant denominations, 26.5% are Roman Catholics, 8% are Jews, and the rest are unspecified Protestants and others. In addition, the Moral Majority and similar fundamentalist political groups had limited memberships, low popularity ratings, and did not represent a growing segment of the public (Buell and Sigelman, 1985; Cutler and Yinger, 1982; Sigelman and Presser, 1988; Simpson, 1983; 1988; Wilcox, 1987; Yinger and Cutler 1982). For example, when people were asked to chose groups "you feel particularly close to--people who are most like you in their ideas and interests and feelings about things," fundamentalist political groups finished last in 1980, 1984, and 1988.

Whose's Right?

Survey Affiliation vs. Church Membership Statistics

While it may at first seem that the aggregate, denominational data and the cross-sectional survey data are measuring the same thing, this is not true. First, the official denominational data are counting church members (according to the definition of each denomination) regardless of age, while the cross-sectional survey data include adults who identify with or have a preference for a particular denomination. The first is broader in that it includes members (by baptism, confirmation, etc. according each faith's own definition) younger than 18, while the second is more encompassing in that it includes identifiers and not members. As a result, there is substantial difference between what these two set of figures

measure.

In trying to reconcile these figures, we find (Table 16) that survey reports substantially exceed the number of reported church members among denominations that generally restrict their membership counts to confirmed members. Some of this comes from the counting of members younger than 18 which we have crudely adjusted for in column B. Much of the remaining surplus presumably comes from affiliators who are not members of the denomination they identify with. However, the magnitude of the surplus differs considerable from 34% among fundamentalist denominations to 124% for the United Church of Christ. Several factors contribute to these difference: denominations may have 1) more nominal affiliators that others (people who identify with the denomination but who are not members), 2) exaggerated membership counts, 3) more members under 18 than other denominations, and 4) confusion among survey respondents as to their denominational affiliation (e.g. between members of the Churches of Christ and the United Church of Christ). Of course some combination of these factors is undoubtedly at work.

Among denominations that tend to count as members both baptized infants as well as confirmed teenagers and adults, the discrepancies between the church membership figures and survey reports appear to be more in line although once a crude adjustment for number of members under 18 is taken into account, the survey reports are still notably above the church membership figures.

Church membership figures and surveys of religious affiliation describe substantially different segments of the populations. With an adjustment for non-adult members, the survey measures routinely identify more members than the church statistics because they include lapsed and nominal members. The differences for particular denominations (or groups of denominations) are fairly large. This differential can result from various factors including inflated church memberships and a large number of lapsed/nominal members. Because of the differences in the populations covered by the church and survey figures and because the magnitude of the differences can be influenced by many distinct factors, it is hard to compare point estimates from these two sources.

Likewise, because of the differences in coverage, it is difficult to reconcile the disparate trends. Among the more likely explanations for the surges church membership in particular fundamentalist churches and little or no growth in fundamentalist affiliations as reported in surveys are the following:

1. Fundamentalist churches reported in church statistics may not be representative of all fundamentalist churches. They may be showing more growth than is typical and may in fact be drawing their new members from non-report fundamentalist churches.
2. Intentionally and/or unintentionally some fundamentalist denominations may be exaggerating their membership growth.
3. The ratio of identifiers to members in non-fundamentalist Protestant denominations in general and mainline churches in particular may be increasing over time.
4. Mainline decline is off-set by non-fundamentalist growth among Catholics, non/inter-denominational churches, and those without any religious affiliation. (This of course is of little comfort to mainline churches with dropping memberships.)

Limitations of Survey Measures

Survey estimates are of course also influenced by sampling variation, nonresponse, and related technical matters. In addition, on any particular topic there are special challenges relating the accurate measurement. Below some of the key issues relating to measuring the strength of fundamentalism using religious affiliation/membership, self-identification, behaviors, and beliefs are discussed.

1. Religious Affiliation

To categorize respondents as fundamentalists/non-fundamentalist one needs to collect accurate information on a person's denominational affiliation and to classify the denominations along the fundamentalist/liberal continuum. Common problems in recording denominational affiliation are using overly broad religious groupings, uncertainty among respondents about their denomination, and confusion between similarly named denominations. One needs to code affiliation into specific denominations. While broad denominational families (e.g. Baptists, Lutherans) are often used, these are of limited utility since most denominational families include both fundamentalist and non-fundamentalist denominations (e.g. the fundamentalist Missouri Synod Lutherans vs. the moderate Evangelical Lutheran Church of America). Similarly one needs to code the smaller denominations and not lump them into a large residual category. However, getting precise denominational affiliations is hampered by the fact that a large number of people can not give the exact name of their denomination. Either they only know their general affiliation (e.g. "Baptist"), give a name (e.g. American Baptist) that does not distinguish between similarly named denominations (e.g. American Baptist Association vs. American Baptist Church in the U.S.A.), or give the name of their local congregation (e.g. 2nd Baptist Church, St. James). Classifying denominations according to their theological orientation is a equally difficult task that is discussed in Smith, 1990a.

2. Church Membership

Most studies do not distinguish between nominal affiliators and official members. Even when an attempt is made to measure membership, reports are sensitive to the phrasing of the membership question and may not match the definition applied by the churches themselves (Smith, 1991).

3. Self-Identification

As Table 7 illustrates, there are a number of ways of directly asking about being a fundamentalist and these generate estimates of fundamentalists ranging from 16 to 50%. This variation appears to be largely due to different definitions and variations in question wording. In particular reports of being a born-again Christian are highly sensitive to question wording. Questions that offer "'born-again' Christian" as the only response typically generate three times as many fundamentalist as questions that offer other options such as "Christian" (Table 17). This apparently occurs because people are trying to identify themselves as Christian.

4. Behavioral and Belief Measures

There have been various critiques of the existing Gallup items used to create a fundamentalism measure (Hunter, 1983; Kellstedt, 1989; Smidt, 1989) and Gallup itself abandoned the three-item scale in favor of its single, self-identification question on being a born-again Christian (Gallup and Castelli, 1989, p. 93). While much of the criticism is cogent, it consist mostly of proposing improved measures and does not question the basic relevancy of the three measures. A related issue is whether it is sensible to count non-Protestants in general and Roman Catholics in particular as fundamentalists. On our denominational classification the Roman Catholic church is classified as non-fundamentalist and thus no respondents identifying themselves as Roman Catholics are fundamentalists. The behavioral and belief measures do not apply any such constraint however and any respondent regardless of his/her religious affiliation can be classified as a fundamentalist. To a certain extent this does not matter since relatively few non-Protestants give responses that lead to their classification as fundamentalist, but of course some do (Kellstedt, 1989). While a breakdown of respondents with fundamentalist beliefs and behaviors into Protestant and non-Protestant sub-groups makes solid theological sense, it does not reduce the value of looking at the portion of all respondents who have such beliefs and behaviors.

Bible Inerrancy - Just as the various questions on self-identification vary by question wording, so to a lesser extent do the various Bible inerrancy questions. Support for Bible inerrancy varies inversely with the strength or restrictiveness the options offered. The SRC Bible inerrancy option is weakest and garners the most support, typically 7-8 percentage points higher than the standard Gallup question. That Gallup question in turn captures about 6 percentage points more support than an alternative Gallup wording used in 1987. These differences are both quite sensible and stable. However, the SRC and Gallup wordings do disagree on the magnitude of the decline in support for Bible inerrancy with Gallup showing a decline of 0.99 percentage point per annum from 1963 to 1989 and SRC a drop of only 0.23 per annum for 1964-1988. This difference seems to result from a shift in belief in Bible inerrancy that was concentrated between the more demanding Gallup position and the less strict SRC option. The SRC drop was not as steep because beliefs changed enough for many people to abandon the stricter Gallup option, but not all of these people changed enough to disagree with the less strict SRC criteria (Smith, 1984).

Why Do We Think That Fundamentalism Grew?

If fundamentalism as a theology and fundamentalist churches as organizations have not been appreciably increasing their hold on the minds and memberships of the American people, then why is there a widespread belief in the revival and advance of fundamentalism?

Most prominently it was the differences in growth rates of certain fundamentalist and mainline denominations, especially as reported in Kelley's book that first established that fundamentalism was on the rise. This conclusion was then seen as validated by the expansion of the electronic church and the televangelists and the political impact of the New Christian Right in general and Moral Majority in particular. The notion of a

fundamentalist revival has been widely accepted by many scholars, the mass media, and the general public (Table 18). If we look at such phenomenon as political mobilization, media access, and religious programming on television, there are signs of notable changes that some might characterize as a revival.

But the common idea that more Americans are adopting fundamentalist beliefs and joining fundamentalist churches is not well supported by the available evidence. As we have seen, the church membership figures present a limited and probably biased view of changes in religious affiliation and theological orientations. The electronic church has been a major development in contemporary religion, but does not necessarily either reflect or cause a growth of fundamentalism. Similarly, the political mobilization, while an important development in and of itself, has both been exaggerated and has wrongly been interpreted to imply changes in the size and popularity of fundamentalism among the public.

In particular the advance of fundamentalism was exaggerated by the mass media. As prominent observers of recent religious change have noted:

"Evangelicals emerged in the midseventies, because the media had largely ignored them before that time (Gallup and Castelli, 1989, p. 92)."

"Perhaps the so-called revival [of "the fundamentalist/evangelical segment"] is nothing more than journalists' discovery of a phenomenon which historians and sociologists of American religion have always known was present and important...this component of American religion seems to be neither decreasing nor increasing (Greeley, 1989, p. 20)."

In line with the media discovery hypothesis, coverage of fundamentalism rose sharply from the mid-1970s to a peak in 1981-82. Interest was then relatively low until the 1987 scandals.

The idea of a fundamentalist revival in recent decades needs a reevaluation. Despite the image created by church statistics, the fundamentalists have not been rapidly increasing their share of the general population. They may have modestly increased their popular appeal, but even these gains are uncertain. Likewise, fundamentalist beliefs have not advanced. Belief in Bible inerrancy has clearly declined over the last 40 years, while proselytizing and having had a born-again experience have shown no clear trend over the last 10 years. Fundamentalism is an important, enduring part of the American religious experience, but it attracts no more of the public than it has for decades (Gallup and Castelli, 1989, p. 93; Greeley, 1989, pp. 19-20; Hunter, 1987, pp. 205-206).

Table 1

Changes in Reported Church Membership
by 5-Year Intervals, 1950-1985a
(Percentage Change During 5-Year Interval)

| | 1950-55 | 1955-60 | 1960-65 | 1965-70 | 1970-75 | 1975-80 | 1980-85 |
|------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Liberal Churches | | | | | | | |
| UCC | 7.0 | 5.9 | -7.6b | -5.3 | -7.2 | -4.5 | -3.0 |

| | | | | | | | |
|------------------|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|------|-------|
| Episcopal Church | 15.0c | 17.6c | 4.1c | -3.4c | -13.0 | -2.5 | -1.7 |
| United Methodist | 3.9 | 6.1 | 4.0 | -5.0 | -6.1 | -3.5 | -3.7d |

Moderate Churches

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|------|------|------|-------|-------|------|------|
| Disciples of Christ | 7.3 | -5.1 | 6.5 | -25.7 | -8.6 | -9.5 | -5.2 |
| Pres. Church, USA | 15.3 | 12.4 | -4.3 | 1.5 | -12.6 | -4.9 | -9.3 |
| Roman Catholic | 16.6 | 26.1 | 9.8 | 4.3 | 1.4 | 3.2 | 4.4 |
| Luth. Church in Am. | 15.2 | 10.6 | 2.9 | -1.1 | -3.9 | 2.1 | -0.9 |
| Am. Lutheran Church | 20.4 | 17.3 | 13.3 | 0.0 | -5.0 | -2.6 | -0.9 |
| Ref. Church in Am. | 12.3 | 11.0 | 8.8 | -4.7 | -3.4 | -2.7 | -0.9 |

Fundamentalist Churches

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Luth. Church- | | | | | | | |
| Mo. Synod | 19.7 | 19.3 | 12.6 | 3.6 | -0.9 | -5.0 | 0.1 |
| Southern Baptist | 19.6 | 14.9 | 10.7 | 8.0 | 9.5 | 6.8 | 6.5 |
| Church of | | | | | | | |
| the Nazarene | 19.4 | 13.7 | 11.6 | 11.6 | 15.1 | 9.8 | 7.8 |
| Mormon | 10.7 | 20.9 | 20.3 | 15.9 | 12.7 | 23.3 | 37.3 |
| Jehovah's Witnesses | -- | 33.6 | 32.1 | 17.8 | 44.2 | 0.8 | 29.2 |
| 7th-Day Adventist | 16.9 | 14.7 | 14.7 | 15.3 | 17.9 | 15.2 | 14.1 |
| Church of God | | | | | | | |
| (Cleveland, TN) | 22.5e | 19.3 | 20.7 | 32.5 | 26.1 | 26.7 | 20.3e |
| Assemblies of God | 25.6 | 27.1 | 12.5 | 9.2 | -- | 35.5 | 95.7 |

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- a From Jacquet, 1987. For slightly different figures for 1950-1975 see Doyle and Kelly, 1979.
 - b Some of this drop is due to congregational secession following merger.
 - c Estimated from 1956 and 1966 figures.
 - d Estimated from 1984.
 - e Estimated from 1951 and 1984.

Table 2

Reports of Church Membership for Fundamentalists

| Category | Number of Denominations | Reported Membership |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Full Time Trend Data1 | 18 | 26,922,604 |
| Recent Data2 | 75 | 11,767,278 |
| | 86 | 11,872,728 |
| Dated Data3 | 30 | 8,869,025 |
| Total | 123-134 | 47,558,907- 47,664,357 |

- 1 Data in Table 1-H in Jacquet, 1988 for 1960-1985.
- 2 Not in Table 1-H, but figures since 1975. Most are for 1985 or 1986. 75 denominations are classified as fundamentalist. 11 small denominations could not be definitely included or excluded as fundamentalist.
- 3 Not in Table 1-H, and most recent figure 1975 or earlier. Average date for 30 denominations is 1967.

Table 3

Inter-generational Religious Change
of People Raised as Non-Fundamentalist Protestants

(GSS 1984-1990)

Current Religion

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------|
| None | 6.7% |
| Non-fundamentalist Protestant | 75.6 |
| Fundamental Protestant | 13.4 |
| Roman Catholic | 4.1 |
| Other | 0.3 |
| | (3054) |

Table 4

Religious and Social Attitudes of Non-fundamentalist Protestants
by Church Attendance and Church Membership
With Fundamentalist Protestants as a Reference Group

(GSS 1984-1990)

| Attitudes | Non-Fundamentalist Church Attendance | | | Fund. | Non-Fund. Church Member | | Fund. |
|------------|---|---------|---------|-------|----------------------------|------|-------|
| | Yearly | Monthly | Weeklya | | No | Yes | |
| Bible | | | | | | | |
| Inerrant | 20.1 | 30.1 | 51.4 | 56.8 | 31.3 | 38.1 | 55.8 |
| Life after | | | | | | | |
| Death | 69.7 | 81.9 | 93.2 | 85.6 | 74.6 | 89.4 | 87.2 |
| God as | | | | | | | |
| Father | 41.5 | 44.1 | 58.9 | 61.0 | 50.8 | 50.5 | 62.2 |
| Premarital | | | | | | | |
| Sex Wrong | 11.0 | 11.9 | 43.4 | 42.7 | 11.9 | 42.4 | 38.4 |

a Church attendance: Yearly=less than once a year; Monthly=once a year to once a month; Weekly=twice a month or more

Note: Sample size are 173-248 for Yearly attenders, 243-367 for Monthly attenders, 316-482 for week attenders, 1862-2835 for Fundamentalists compared to attenders. The membership question was asked only in 1988 and the sample size is 42-97 for membership groups and 328-500 for Fundamentalists.

Table 5

Trends in Fundamentalism/Liberalism

A. NORC/GSS

| | 1964 | 1967 | 1984 | 1985 | 1986 | 1987 | 1988 | 1989 |
|----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Fundamentalist | 26.2% | 32.2% | 33.1% | 34.6% | 34.5% | 36.0% | 35.4% | 33.0% |
| Moderate | 57.0 | 42.1 | 42.3 | 9.4 | 40.6 | 38.5 | 38.6 | 40.7 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Liberal | 16.8 | 25.7 | 24.6 | 26.0 | 24.9 | 25.5 | 25.9 | 26.3 |
| | (1955) | (3092) | (1432) | (1499) | (1473) | (1423) | (1426) | (1491) |

B. SRC/ELECTION

| | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1972 | 1974 | 1976 | 1978 | 1980 | 1982 | 1984 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Southern Baptists and Fundamentalists | 18.8% | 20.5% | 18.2% | 19.1% | 18.9% | 20.9% | 18.0% |
| | (2695) | (2500) | (2867) | (2285) | (1598) | (1402) | (2237) |

| | |
|------|------|
| 1986 | 1988 |
|------|------|

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------|--------|
| Southern Baptists and Fundamentalists | 20.5 | 22.8 |
| | (2153) | (2040) |

Table 6

Religion Raised in by Birth Cohort
 Fundamentalism/Liberalism
 (Excluding people raised in another country)
 (GSS 1984-1987)

| Birth Cohort | Fundamentalism/Liberalism | | | |
|------------------|---------------------------|-----------|----------|--------|
| | Fundamentalists | Moderates | Liberals | |
| Prior to 1910 | 32.2% | 36.3 | 31.6 | (258) |
| 1910-1919 (1931) | 33.0% | 38.5 | 28.5 | (516) |
| 1920-1929 (1941) | 33.9% | 34.4 | 31.7 | (775) |
| 1930-1939 (1951) | 36.8% | 36.4 | 26.7 | (830) |
| 1940-1949 (1961) | 32.3% | 39.3 | 28.4 | (1107) |
| 1950-1959 (1971) | 34.0% | 39.9 | 26.0 | (1341) |
| 1960+ | 32.8% | 45.7 | 21.4 | (982) |

Table 7

Self-Identification as "Fundamentalist"

A. Gallup Single-Item Evangelical/Born-Again Question

| | Yes | No | DK | N | Mode |
|---------|-----|----|----|------|------|
| 7/1986 | 32% | 68 | -- | 2517 | P |
| 8/1986 | 38% | 58 | 4 | 978 | P |
| 10/1986 | 30% | 66 | 4 | 1559 | P |
| 1/1987 | 30% | 67 | 4 | 1562 | P |
| 3/1987 | 36% | 60 | 4 | 1015 | T |
| 4/1987* | 27% | 68 | 5 | 1571 | P |
| 4/1987 | 33% | 63 | 5 | 1009 | T |
| 7/1987 | 26% | 71 | 3 | 1607 | P |
| 5/1988 | 28% | 66 | 5 | 3021 | P |
| 9/1989* | 34% | 62 | 4 | 1238 | T |
| 6/1990* | 38% | -- | -- | 1236 | T |

Would you describe yourself as a born-again or evangelical Christian, or not?

* May omit "or not."

P=personal T=telephone

Table 7 (continued)

B. Miscellaneous Self-Identification Questions

Gallup: Which, if any, of these are you involved in or do you practice?

| | 2/1979 | 8/1980* |
|--------------------------|--------|---------|
| The Evangelical Movement | 7% | 6% |
| | (1512) | (1536) |

*Are you involved in or do you practice the Evangelical Movement?

Gallup: Do you consider yourself an evangelical?

| | 4/1977 |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| Yes | 16% |
| No | 37 |
| No opinion | 4 |
| Couldn't describe Evangelicals | 43 (1549) |

GALLUP(CT): Do you consider yourself a Pentecostal or Charismatic Christian?

| | 11/1978 |
|-----|--------------|
| Yes | 20.2% (1473) |

Roper: There has been a lot of talk recently about fundamentalist religion in this country. Would you describe yourself as a religious fundamentalist, or not?

10/1981

| | |
|-----|-----|
| Yes | 19% |
| No | 66 |
| DK | 15 |

(2000)

Table 7 (continued)

ABC/WP: Please tell me if the following describes you: Evangelical or Fundamentalist Christian.

9/1986

| | |
|-----|-----|
| Yes | 50% |
| No | 44 |
| DK | 6 |

(1507)

CBS/NYT: Some people think of themselves as evangelical, or charismatic, or fundamentalist. Do you think of yourself in any of these ways?

8/1987

| | |
|-----|-----|
| Yes | 18% |
| No | 73 |
| DK | 9 |

(1480)

Gordon Black: Are you an evangelical or fundamentalist Christian?

8/1987

| | |
|-----|-----|
| Yes | 31% |
| No | 59 |
| DK | 10 |

(800)-registered voters

ANES: Do you consider yourself a born-again Christian?

Fall/1988

| | | |
|------------|-------|-----------------|
| Yes | 35.7% | |
| No | 50.6 | |
| Not Asked | 11.8 | (Not Christian) |
| Don't Know | 1.8 | |

(2021)

Table 7 (continued)

ANES: Here is a list of groups. Please read over the list and tell me the letter for those groups you feel particularly close to - people who are most like you in their ideas and interests and feelings about things.

Fall/1988

% Mentioning

Christian Fundamentalists 11.7 (1757)

Table 8

Gallup Evangelical Scalea

% Evangelical

| | |
|-------|----|
| 1976 | 18 |
| 1980 | 19 |
| 1981 | 17 |
| 1983 | 20 |
| 1984 | 22 |
| 1988b | 19 |

a Evangelicals are those who reported being born-again, who believed in the inerrancy of the Bible, and who have tried to convert others to Christ:

Would you say that you have been born again or have you had a born-again experience - that is, a turning point in your life when you committed yourself to Jesus Christ?

Which of these statements comes closest to describing your feelings about the Bible?

The Bible is the actual word of God and is to be literally, word for word.

The Bible is the inspired word of God, but not everything in it should be taken literally, word for word.

The Bible is an ancient book of fables, legends, history, and moral precepts recorded by men.

Have you ever tried to encourage someone to believe in Jesus Christ or accept Him as his or her Savior?

For Ns and variations in wordings see the individual questions discussed below. At least for 1976 and 1988 the percentages are based on all cases with no exclusions for missing values. If missing cases are excluded, the percent Evangelical is 19% in 1976 and 20% in 1988. Information on the handling of missing values for other years is not available.

b Asked by GSS.

Table 9

Bible Inerrancy

A. Gallup

% Believing in Inerrancy

Wording

| | | | |
|---------|-----|---|---------|
| 1963 | 65% | 2 | (1500)a |
| 1976 | 37 | 1 | (1553) |
| 1978 | 37 | 1 | (1523) |
| 1980 | 39 | 1 | (1538) |
| 1981 | 37 | 2 | (1483) |
| 1983 | 37 | 2 | (1540) |
| 1984* | 38 | 1 | (976) |
| 1984 | 37 | 1 | (1590) |
| 1984 | 40 | 1 | (1509) |
| 1984 | 38 | 1 | (1500) |
| 1985* | 36 | 1 | (746) |
| 1986** | 35 | 3 | (1148) |
| 1987* | 37 | 1 | (955) |
| 1987*** | 37 | 1 | (2040) |
| 1988* | 34 | 1 | (1450) |
| 1989* | 31 | 1 | (997) |

aN unknown, 1500 used in calculations.

* GSS

** ABC/Washington Post

*** Los Angeles Times

Table 9 (continued)

B. Election Item

% Believing in Inerrancy

| | | |
|-------|-----|--------|
| 1964 | 51% | (1450) |
| 1968 | 52 | (1538) |
| 1980 | 46 | (1394) |
| 1984* | 46 | (479) |
| 1984 | 48 | (1902) |
| 1985* | 44 | (770) |
| 1987* | 44 | (489) |
| 1988 | 48 | (1761) |

* GSS

Gallup Wordings

1=Which of these statements comes closest to describing your feelings about the Bible?

1. The Bible is the actual word of God and is to be taken literally, word for word.

2. The Bible is the inspired word of God, but not everything in it should be taken literally, word for word.

3. The Bible is an ancient book of fables, legends, history, and moral precepts recorded by men.

2="perceptions" instead of "precepts".

3="more perceptions" instead of "moral precepts".

Table 9 (continued)

SRC Wording

Here are four statements about the Bible, and I'd like you to tell me which is closest to your own view.

1. The Bible is God's Word and all it says is true.
2. The Bible was written by men inspired by God, but it contains some human errors.
3. The Bible is a good book because it was written by wise men, but God had nothing to do with it.
4. The Bible was written by men who lived so long ago that it is worth very little today.

C. Other Bible Wordings

Do you believe the Bible is really the revealed Word of God, or do you think it is only a great piece of literature?

% Revealed Word of God

| | | | |
|------|-----|--------|------------------------------------|
| 1952 | 83% | (2987) | Ben Griffin |
| 1965 | 79% | (2783) | Public Opinion Survey 671 (Gallup) |

Gallup(CT): Which one of these statements comes closest to describing your feelings about the Bible?

1. The Bible is a collection of writings representing some of the religious philosophies of ancient man.
2. The Bible is the word of God, but is sometimes mistaken in its statements and teachings.
3. The Bible is the word of God and is not mistaken in its statements and teachings.

11/1978

| | |
|--------------|-------|
| Ancient Man | 23.4% |
| Mistaken | 30.3 |
| Not Mistaken | 41.8 |
| Don't Know | 4.5 |

(1553)

Table 9 (continued)

Gallup: Which of the statements on this card comes closest to describing your feelings about the Bible?

- A. The Bible is the actual word of God and is to be taken literally, word for word.
- B. The Bible is the inspired word of God. It contains no errors, but some verses are to be taken symbolically rather than literally.
- C. The Bible is the inspired word of God, but it may contain historical and scientific errors.

D. The Bible was not inspired by God, but it represents humankind's best understanding of God's nature.

E. The Bible is an ancient book of human fables, legends, history, and moral precepts.

1988

| | |
|---------------------|-----|
| Actual Word | 31% |
| Inspired, No errors | 24 |
| Inspired, Errors | 22 |
| Not Inspired | 7 |
| Ancient book | 10 |
| No Opinion | 6 |

(2556)

Table 10

Born-Again Experience

| Date | Yes | No | DK/Other | N | Mode | Wording | Org. |
|---------|-----|----|----------|------|------|---------|------|
| 8/1976 | 35% | 65 | -- | 1553 | P | 1 | G |
| 4/1978 | 37 | 56 | 7 | 1523 | P | 2 | G |
| 12/1979 | 39 | 54 | 7 | 1522 | P | 1 | G |
| 8/1980 | 39 | 61 | -- | 1538 | P | 1 | G |
| 8/1980 | 38 | 62 | -- | 1600 | P | 1 | G |
| 12/1981 | 36 | 64 | -- | 1483 | P | 1 | G |
| 5/1983 | 33 | 66 | 1 | 1540 | P | 1 | G |
| 9/1984 | 40 | 60 | -- | 1590 | P | 1 | G |
| 10/1984 | 34 | 63 | 4 | 1014 | T | 3 | Y* |
| 10/1984 | 38 | 59 | 3 | 4831 | T | 4 | L* |
| 11/1984 | 35 | 65 | -- | 1509 | P | 1 | G |
| 12/1984 | 38 | 61 | 2 | 1024 | T | 3 | Y* |
| 7/1985 | 36 | 62 | 2 | 1013 | T | 3 | Y* |
| 7/1986 | 42 | 55 | 3 | 2405 | T | 4 | L |
| 8/1987 | 43 | 55 | 2 | 2040 | T | 5 | L |
| 3/1988 | 37 | 62 | 1 | 1481 | P | 1 | N |

1=Would you say that you have been 'born again' or have had a 'born again' experience -- that is a turning point in your life when you committed yourself to Christ?

2=...that is, an identifiable turning point in your life?

3=...that is, a religious experience which has been a turning point in your life?

4=...committed yourself to Jesus Christ? [asked of Christians only]

5=Wording 4, but asked of everyone.

*Registered Voters

Table 10 (continued)

Gallup(CT): Have you ever had a religious experience--that is, a particularly powerful religious insight or awakening--that changed the direction of your life, or not?

11/78

| | |
|------------|-------|
| Yes | 33.5% |
| No | 65.3 |
| Don't Know | 1.1 |

(1553)

If YES:

Did this experience involve Jesus Christ, or not?

11/78

| | |
|-----|-----------------------------------|
| Yes | 27.9% (83.4% of those saying YES) |
|-----|-----------------------------------|

If YES:

Was this a conversion experience--an identifiable turning point that included asking Jesus Christ to be your personal savior, or not?

11/78

| | |
|-----|-----------------------------------|
| Yes | 23.1% (79.0% of those saying YES) |
|-----|-----------------------------------|

ANES: Some people have had deep religious experiences which have transformed their lives. I'm thinking of experiences sometimes described as "being born again in one's life." There are deeply religious people who have not had a experience of this sort. How about you; have you had such an experience?

Fall/1980

| | |
|------------|-------|
| Yes | 26.6% |
| No | 47.0 |
| Not Asked* | 25.5 |
| Don't Know | 0.9 |

(1395)

*Not asked of those who did not say religion was an important part of their lives. Table 10 (continued)

ANES: Some people have had deep religious experiences which have transformed their lives. I'm thinking of experiences sometimes described as "being born again in one's faith" or "discovering Jesus Christ in one's life." There are deeply religious people who have not had a experience of this sort. How about you; have you had such an experience?

Fall/1984

| | |
|------------|-------|
| Yes | 28.1% |
| No | 49.3 |
| Not Asked* | 21.6 |
| Don't Know | 1.1 |

(1907)

*Not asked of those who did not say religion was an important part of their lives.

Table 11

Having Had a Religious Experience

| Date | Yes | No | DK | N | Mode | Wording | Org. |
|---------|-----|----|----|------|------|---------|------|
| 4/1978 | 35% | 64 | 1 | 1523 | P | 1 | G |
| 11/1978 | 34% | 65 | 1 | 1533 | P | 2 | G |
| 12/1980 | 30% | 67 | 2 | 1549 | P | 2 | G |
| 1/1981 | 34% | 64 | 1 | 1729 | P | 2 | G |
| 5/1981 | 33% | 65 | 2 | 1519 | P | 2 | G |
| 5/1983 | 34% | 63 | 3 | 1540 | P | 1 | G |
| 3/1988 | 33% | 63 | 4 | 2556 | P | 1 | G |

1=Have you ever had a religious experience--that is, a particularly powerful religious insight or awakening?

2=Have you ever had a religious experience--that is, a particularly powerful religious insight or awakening--that changed the direction of your life, or not?

Table 12

Proselytizing

| Date | Yes | No | DK/Refuse | N | Mode | Wording | Org. |
|---------|-----|----|-----------|------|------|---------|------|
| 8/1976 | 47% | 53 | -- | 1553 | P | 1 | G |
| 8/1980 | 45 | 55 | -- | 1538 | P | 1 | G |
| 8/1980 | 45 | 55 | -- | 1600 | P | 1 | G |
| 5/1983 | 47 | 52 | 1 | 1540 | P | 1 | G |
| 9/1984 | 48 | 52 | -- | 1590 | P | 3 | G |
| 10/1984 | 53 | 46 | 1 | 4831 | T | 4* | L |
| 11/1984 | 46 | 54 | -- | 1509 | P | 3 | G |
| 7/1986 | 51 | 48 | 1 | 2405 | T | 2 | L |
| 8/1987 | 52 | 47 | 1 | 2040 | T | 4 | L |
| 2/1988 | 46 | 54 | -- | 1481 | P | 3 | N |

1=Have you ever tried to encourage someone to believe in Jesus Christ or to accept Him as his or her Savior?

2=...as their Savior?

3=...to accept Jesus Christ...

4=Wording 2 asked only of Christians

*Registered voters

Table 13

A Summary of Trends Related to Fundamentalism

| Measure | Years | Model | Trend |
|---|---------|-------|--------|
| A. Denominational Trends (Cross Sections) | | | |
| % Fundamentalist (NORC) | 1964-89 | SLC | +.0024 |
| % Fundamentalist (NORC) | 1967-89 | C | ---- |
| % Fundamentalist (SRC) | 1972-88 | SLC | +.0014 |
| % Fundamentalist (SRC) | 1972-86 | C | ---- |

B. Denominational Trends (Birth Cohorts)

| | | | |
|--|-----------|-------|--------|
| % Fundamentalist (NORC) | 1911-81a | C | ---- |
| C. Direct Self-Identification Trends | | | |
| % Evangelical/Born-Again | 1986-89 | NCNL | ---- |
| D. Attitudinal/Behavioral Trends | | | |
| % Evangelical (Gallup 3-item Scale) | 1976-88 | NCNLb | ---- |
| % Bible Inerrancy (Gallup) | 1952-1965 | SLT | -.0023 |
| % Bible Inerrancy (Gallup) | 1963-1989 | SLC | -.0099 |
| % Bible Inerrancy (SRC) | 1964-1988 | SLC | -.0023 |
| % Born-Again Experience-Yes | 1976-88 | SLC | +.0038 |
| % Born-Again Exper.-Not No | 1976-88 | SLCc | +.0011 |
| % Born-Again Exper.-Limitedd | 1976-88 | NCNL | ---- |
| % Religious Experience | 1978-88 | C | ---- |
| % Proselytize | 1976-1988 | SLC | +.0041 |
| % Proselytize-Personal | 1976-1988 | C | ---- |

- a Dates represent approximate year in which median member of birth cohort was 16 years old. For details see Smith, 1991.
- b Not significant if adjusted for design effects. Constant model would fit data.
- c NCNL if adjusted for design effects.
- d Limited to consistent studies all using wording 1 and personal interviewing.

Table 14

Watching the Electronic Church

A. Watch Evangelical Preacher on Television (Harris)

Yes

| | |
|------------|-------------|
| 9/1980 | 15%* (1492) |
| 12/88-2/89 | 15% (4050) |

* Likely Voters

Do You belong to or attend in person, watch on television, listen on radio, or receive literature from any evangelical church or preacher?

B. Time Spend Watching Religious Shows per Week

None

| | |
|---------|---------------|
| 11/1978 | 72%** (1533) |
| 3/1988 | 71%*** (1481) |

** Gallup
*** GSS

About how much time per week, in hours and minutes, do you normally spend watching religious shows on television?

C. Regularly Watching/Listening To Preachers on TV/Radio (ABC/WP)

Yes

5/1981 29% (1533)
 9/1984 38% (1953)****

**** Registered voters (77% of all adults). "Or not" omitted.

Would you say you regularly watch preachers on television or listen to them on radio, [or not]?

D. Watch Selected Religious Leaders on Television (Roper)

None

9/1980 58% (2005)
 9/1986 63% (1997)

Of course there are many different religious programs on television. Here is a list of a few religious leaders who appear on television regularly or from time to time. Would you call off any that you make a point of watching whenever you can? 1980: Billy Graham, Oral Roberts, Pat Robertson, Robert Schuller, Jerry Falwell, Jim Bakker, Rex Hubbard, and James Robinson. 1986: As in 1980 plus Jimmy Swaggart.

E. Ever Watch Religious Television Programs (Gallup)

No

12/1981 57% (1483)
 1/1982 55% (1484)
 1983 58% (----)
 4/1987 51% (1571)
 9/1989 51% (1238)

Do you ever watch religious programs on television?

(On some of the above surveys questions were also asked about viewing in the last 30 and 7 days. Since these are highly sensitive to seasonal effects (the December, 1981 poll was conducted during the Christmas season, 12/11-14, and the April, 1987 poll fell over Palm Sunday, 4/10-13), they have not been utilized.

Table 15

Public Evaluations of Television Ministers

A. Los Angeles Times (3/1987)a

| | Very Favorable | Somewhat Favorable | Somewhat Unfavorable | Very Unfavorable | Not Sure | Not Known | Net Scorea |
|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------------|------------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| Billy Graham | 27% | 32 | 10 | 9 | 6 | 16 | +40 |
| Robert Schuller | 7% | 16 | 10 | 8 | 11 | 48 | + 5 |
| Pat Robertson | 6% | 13 | 15 | 15 | 12 | 39 | -11 |

| | | | | | | | |
|----------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|
| Jimmy Swaggert | 9% | 14 | 19 | 20 | 10 | 28 | -16 |
| Jerry Falwell | 5% | 16 | 19 | 23 | 9 | 28 | -21 |
| Oral Roberts | 4% | 12 | 21 | 39 | 5 | 19 | -44 |
| Jimmy Bakker | 3% | 6 | 21 | 32 | 9 | 29 | -44 |

a What is your impression of ____? As of today, is it very favorable, or somewhat favorable, or somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable--or haven't you heard enough about that yet to say? Telephone (n=1268)

b Net score=(%very favorable + %somewhat favorable) - (%very unfavorable + %somewhat unfavorable)

B. Gallup (4/1987)c

| | +5,+4 | Don't Know |
|-----------------------|-------|------------|
| Billy Graham | 31% | 10 |
| Jimmy Swaggert | 12% | 24 |
| Robert Schuller | 11% | 47 |
| Pat Robertson | 9% | 28 |
| Oral Roberts | 7% | 11 |
| Jerry Falwell | 7% | 22 |
| Jimmy Bakker | 4% | 22 |
| Rex Hubbard | 4% | 50 |
| Herbert N. Armstrongd | 3% | 69 |
| D. James Kennedy | 2% | 81 |

c You will notice that the boxes on this card go from the highest position of plus 5 for someone you like very much--all the way down to the lowest position of minus 5 --for someone you dislike very much. Please tell me how far up the scale or how far down the scale you would rate the following men.
Personal, n=1658.

d Apparently Herbert W. Armstrong who died January, 1986.
Table 15 (continued)

C. Trends in Liking Billy Graham/Jerry Falwella

| Dates | +5,+4 | Don't Know |
|--------------|-------|------------|
| Billy Graham | | |
| 5/1963 | 41% | 10 |
| 8/1972 | 58% | 3 |
| 10/1972 | 52% | 3 |
| 8/1973 | 49% | 4 |
| 9/1976 | 42% | 6 |
| 5/1977 | 41% | 6 |
| 12/1978 | 38% | 5 |
| 6/1981 | 33% | 5 |
| 6/1982 | 29% | 5 |
| 4/1984 | 32% | 6 |
| 4/1987 | 31% | 10 |

Jerry Falwell

| | | |
|---------|----|----|
| 6/1981 | 8% | 36 |
| 4/1984 | 4% | 25 |
| 10/1986 | 8% | 13 |
| 4/1987 | 7% | 22 |

a See above section for wording. Some slight differences do occur across years.

Table 16

A Comparison of Church Membership Figures and Survey Estimates of Denominational Affiliation

| Denominations | A Church Membership (Est. Adults) | B Church Membership (Est. Adults) | C Survey Affiliations | (C - B)/B |
|--|--|--|-----------------------------|----------------|
| Fundamentalists | 47,664,357 | 44,946,357 | 60,020,274 | 33.7% |
| United Methodists | 9,192,172 | 8,475,183 | 13,357,113 | 57.6% |
| Episcopalians | 2,504,507 | 2,309,155 | 4,041,828 | 75.0% |
| United Church of Christ | 1,676,105 | 1,545,369 | 3,469,380 | 124.5% |
| Evangelical Lutheran Church of America | 5,318,844 | 3,909,350 | 4,857,132 | 24.2% |
| Roman Catholics | 52,893,217 | 38,876,500 | 45,101,940 43,107,046 | 16.0% 10.9% |

Sources: Church membership figures are from Jacquet, 1988. Inclusive membership figures are used. While most figures are fairly current (1985-86), for some denominations the latest available figures are rather dated. This is specially true of fundamentalist churches. See Table 2 for more details. Church membership figures are adjusted to estimate the number of adult members. For denominations that generally count only confirmed members the number is multiplied by .922 (the proportion of people 14+ who were 18+ in 1984). For denominations that generally count infants, the number is multiplied by .735 (the proportion of people 18+ in 1984). Survey affiliations are the average proportion identifying with the denomination in the 1984-1986 GSS and the 1984 and 1986 ANES multiplied by the population in 1984 18+. For Roman Catholics the GSS estimate is first and the ANES estimate below it.

Table 17

% "Born-Again" Christians by Question Wording

| | "Gallup"-version | Christian Alternative | |
|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------|
| North Carolina 10/1984a | 67% | 20% | (470) |
| North Carolina 2/1985b | 60% | 20% | (488) |
| Illinois 10-11/1984 | 28% | 11% | (458) |

"Gallup"-version: Would you say that you are a "born-again" Christian?

Christian alternative: In terms of your religious beliefs, would you describe yourself as a (1) Christian, (2) "born-again" Christian, or (3) other than these?

a Registered, likely voters.
 b Percents are approximate.

Source: Dixon, Levy, and Lowery, 1988

Table 18

Public Perception of Strength of Various Religions

Roper: Turning to the question of religion, here are some different kinds of groups. Would you read down that list and for each one tell me whether you think it is a stronger force in the world today than it was twenty years ago, about the same, or a weaker force than it was twenty years ago...

| | Stronger | Same | Weaker | DK | S-W |
|---------------------------------|----------|------|--------|----|-----|
| Christian Fundamentalist Church | 42% | 21 | 6 | 31 | +36 |
| The Moslem or Islamic Religion | 38% | 20 | 9 | 33 | +29 |
| The Protestant Churches | 27% | 41 | 15 | 17 | +12 |
| The Jewish Religion | 25% | 36 | 14 | 25 | +11 |
| Atheism and Godlessness* | 30% | 26 | 19 | 24 | +11 |
| Atheism* | 22% | 30 | 18 | 30 | + 4 |
| The Roman Catholic Church | 27% | 30 | 31 | 12 | - 4 |

(1997)

* Asked on half sample.

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