

From Prophet to Pharisee:
An Analysis of Arizona Christian Politicians,
Political Theory, and Theology

by

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary Christian American politicians have diverse identities when integrating their faith with their political ideology and have developed their worldviews and interpretive schemas and have defended, enacted, and given meaning to their positions, knowingly or unknowingly. There are two distinct theoretical clusters which are a result of an already existing dichotomy. This ideological divide happens along the philosophical notions of individualism or communitarianism, libertarianism or egalitarianism, capitalism or collectivism, literalism or hermeneutics, orthodoxy or praxis. One cluster, Institutional Christianity, exerts a dominating influence on the political and cultural landscape in the US, particularly during the last ten years, and could be considered a hegemonic discourse; while the other, Natural Christianity, serves as the counter-hegemony within a political landscape characterized by a two party system. This study explores the relationship of these dichotomous clusters with contemporary Arizona Christian politicians. Using a phenomenological, qualitative study, interviewing sixteen Arizona Christian politicians, this study yielded ten themes, and binary meaning units within each theme, that describe the essence of politicians' faith and political behavior as they intersect. Finally, this study found, as reported by each subject, what political perspectives generally created a sense of dissonance with one's faith and what perspective exhibited a unified sense of congruence with their faith and political behavior.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my amazing wife Hilary, without whom I would never have been able to complete this work. Thank you for your patience, sacrifice, encouragement, and love throughout this process. You are a true role model to me, daily exhibiting the attributes of how Jesus Christ instructs us live. To my children Brielle and Zachary, I pray that you grow to be an instrument of Heavenly Father's love, using your talents and passion in life to serve others, and to never be afraid to speak out against injustices. As Micah 6:8 instructs, "Act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly". To my family and extended family, thank you for your support and belief in me, I love you all!!!

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CHAPTER 1

THE PROPHETS AND PHARISEES:

A PERPETUAL STRUGGLE

Introduction

The relationship of Christianity and American politics has deep historical roots; in fact, many may argue that religion and spirituality are the primary roots. Behind the thinly veiled argument of the Establishment Clause of the Constitution, the hegemonic symbolism of Christianity as individualism is as “American” as apple pie. Research on hegemonic Christian individualism is scarce. The literature identifies dichotomous clusters in which a contemporary American Christian politician would be classified; however, studies are non-existent that speaks to how this affects policy decision-making. Christian politicians are categorized by either Institutional Christianity, which is a theology of Pre-Millennial Dispensationalism and Theological Individualism, or Natural Christianity, which is a theology of the Social Gospel and Liberation Theology. Because these clusters are so diametrically opposed, it is intriguing as to how the Institutional Christianity cluster became and maintained the dominant ideology. It is also fascinating to determine how a politician who understands their worldview from counter-hegemony, Natural Christianity, handles the ridicule, political pressure, and isolation that often characterizes the lives of politicians who openly act and share their beliefs. Moreover, it is necessary to examine what ways contemporary American Christian politicians understand their worldview to serve a notion of their self or a higher moral good. How do politicians that experience dissonance between their faith and political behavior, give meaning and work through the dissonance? What coping mechanisms do they use?

This qualitative phenomenological study will focus on findings from in-depth interviews to gain a detailed understanding of how contemporary Arizona Christian politicians incorporate their faith and political behavior or how they operate from dissonance unable to put into political practice their Christian principles. By exploring how members of the Arizona Legislature reconcile political and religious beliefs when making laws, a legislature that some believe to be at the center of controversial and extreme legislation, insight from Arizona's politicians might be applicable to other state politicians. By analyzing how a politician copes with dissonance, and if they are aware¹ of it or not, will be helpful in understanding the meaning behind their various actions and political positions. Furthermore, by defining congruence between faith and political behavior, this research can provide examples of how a politician can incorporate Natural Christianity into praxis and why it may be difficult for the orthodoxy of Institutional Christianity to do the same. This study will provide new information to this highly important yet ignored topic. It will also provide a critique on the contemporary American political landscape for religious leaders, politicians, journalists, historians, foreign leaders, citizenry, and social scientists to better understand how Christian politicians integrate their faith into their political behavior, professing one belief but behaving in a contradictory way. It can also tell us about justice as related to religion and political cultures in the United States.

This study illustrates how politicians from opposite clusters draw different conclusions regarding scripture. An example of this is using Jesus' Parable of the

¹ Awareness in this study refers to the subjects' recognized dissonance from the interview, there may be the possibility that awareness exists even when one does not represent it.

Talents². When taken literally, the Christian Republican finds in this parable it's justification of private property, usury, capitalism, competition, and accumulation of wealth. However, when understood hermeneutically, the Christian Democrat interprets the parable as speaking to the social ills of the oppressive land owner, a society where the rich get richer and poor get poorer and in turn, finding a champion for social justice in the third servant. This is one of many examples that will highlight the significance for an accurate scriptural interpretation and fleshes out why the clusters are so divided.

In this study, I will be focusing on two major questions: In what ways do contemporary Arizona Christian state-level elected politicians defend, enact, and justify their religious and political worldview as ideology, and in what ways do they cope and adjust if they experience dissonance between their faith and political behavior? By studying the hegemonic position about contemporary Arizona Christian politicians, this research examines the potential contradictions embedded in the religious rhetoric used to explain a political position or legislative decision. Furthermore, this study puts into historical discussion the counter-hegemonic force of Natural Christianity with the liberation history and power of the prophets, the apostles and Jesus Christ.

Self-Reflectivity

In preparation for my dissertation, I reflected on my role as a Christian state legislator. Because I am so engrained in the culture of Arizona politics and have varying relationships with most of the subjects of this research, I am aware of personal biases to this study. Because my biases can influence the way I interpret the data, in order to

² From Matthew 25: 14-30

approximate objectivity, I employed a number of research strategies to minimize researcher bias and enhance objective interpretations of the data. However, as Herzog (1994) writes, “Some would contend, no doubt, that scholarship should be objective or neutral, as if objectivity were possible in historical study. It seems increasingly obvious that the claim to objectivity is essentially a rhetorical ploy to assert the authority of an argument, and because all efforts to remain neutral actually serve the interest of some group, it is impossible to take refuge in neutrality” (p. 3). Nevertheless, this research presents as a guide for the incorporation of faith into political action and does so aspiring, not to objectivity, but consistency.

As a researcher who is also Christian, and an elected Arizona politician, I believe that politicians who have salient Christian identities experience either dissonance or congruence when confronted with their religious identity and political behavior. The intent of this study is to gain meaning and a better understanding as to how contemporary Arizona Christian legislative-elected politicians defend, enact, and explain, give meaning to their religious and political ideology as worldview. Also, under what conditions do politicians experience dissonance between their faith and political behavior? And, if they are cognizant of it, how do they cope? This study is relevant not only to the fields of justice theory, political behavior, and religious studies, but also to elected officials who struggle with incorporating faith into political behavior. Finally, by examining opposing ideologies, this research hopes to provide a narrative or guide that can unite contemporary Christian politicians across political and religious clusters in their work rather than divide them.

About this Study

This research examines the cognitive dissonance or integrated congruence that contemporary Arizona Christian politicians have between the principles of their faith and political behavior. Additional questions explored in this study are: What theory of justice do legislators more closely align with and does it fit with the principles of their faith? How important is one's political party platform versus the practice of their faith? What is given consideration when making political decisions, the Constitution and/or religious Scriptures? How does one interpret religious scriptures, literally or contextually? What is one's view of God and how does interpretation, and one's view of God, influence legislation and policy outcomes? Finally, what are policy positions and behaviors that create dissonance for a politician versus congruence, and how aware of this are they?

Writing this dissertation helped me understand that when humanity (the people, interviews, contradictions and deceptions, elaborate self-narratives and understandings) is injected into politics, just as with everything else in this world, there are no easy answers or infallibility. All of these politicians that I knew or have gotten to know because of these interviews are great human beings and we love our community, we love God, but unfortunately we also love ourselves a little too much. Conducting this research has shown me how an hour-long conversation with a politician from the same or opposing party can produce a connection with the person, unlike what is normally experienced in the public eye when behaving polemically. I also learned just how distrusting members of opposing parties are of each other and their reluctance to sit down and talk with me for these interviews, and how I experienced internal sadness over feelings of rejection when some colleagues refused my invitation to participate. Finally, the most transformative

thing that I learned was just how fearful I was in conducting and writing this research. I realize the nature of politics is perpetual positioning from politicians in framing their message, from the media in sensationalizing the mundane, and from the public in expecting consistency and honesty from their political leaders. Writing this dissertation has highlighted an anxiety-laden anticipation from politicians in their denunciation of this research and the researcher, from the reporters to comb through everything and find a minor contradiction and aggrandize it, and from the public, who will find something in these pages from which to be offended. Most importantly, I learned about my own frailty and the importance of research such as this to aid in the restoring of love being the primary political action in our country.

Outline of this Research.

Part one of this dissertation explores the historical narrative and genealogical pathway that developed these two diametrically opposing religious/political clusters. It also includes the formulation and substantiation of the theoretical basis to each cluster. We learn in the first half of this dissertation the background and theoretical framework of Institutional and Natural Christianity. We are able to analyze the assignment of identity of these clusters onto pivotal leaders of the pre-modern era through post-modernity, and their behaviors which exemplify either Institutional or Natural Christianity. Part two of this research addresses the question, “In what ways do contemporary Arizona Christian state-level elected politicians defend, enact, and justify their religious and political worldview as ideology, and in what ways do they cope and adjust if they knowingly or unknowingly experience dissonance between their faith and political behavior?” We learn

stories and in-depth interviews of the sixteen contemporary Arizona Christian politicians who took part in this phenomenological research study are the primary data set analyzed in this research. Through an analysis of the words of my subjects, we learn how they associate with a particular religious/political cluster and how they explain their dissonance or accept their congruence. Though this study is not ubiquitous to all areas of social life, it presents data that are important to the political arena as well as religion in America. In the final chapter of this study, I identify what can serve as a basis for a more systematic research by future scholars.

This dissertation is composed of nine chapters and appendices. Chapter 1 is an introduction to the political ideologies of contemporary Arizona Christian politicians and a brief explanation of the dichotomy between the two religious/political clusters. Chapter 2 describes the research methods, including sample collection, data collection, data analysis, validation strategies, the potential ethical issues, and the role and background of the researcher. Chapter 3 explains the Biblical/historical narrative of Judeo-Christianity intertwined with politics from pre-modernity to contemporary era. Chapter 4 analyzes the theoretical frameworks of the two clusters presented in this the research. Chapter 5 presents a comprehensive narrative of the genealogy of the two opposing religious/political theoretical clusters. Chapter 6 presents the raw data results of the in-depth interviews. Since the interviews are lengthy and overwhelming, this chapter shares the significant statements that emerged from their interviews. Chapter 7 and 8 groups the significant statements together into the themes that have emerged from each of these interviews and discusses the meaning units that were found within each theme. Chapter 7 analyzes the results of the first six themes, while Chapter 8 analyzes the results of the last

four themes, looking at the important policy issues politicians are wrestling with. Chapters 7 and 8 present the intersection of a politician's religious belief and political action into themed matrices and Word Clouds and are highlighted with quotations of significant statements by the participants. The final chapter, Chapter 9, examines the results of the study and the implications for religion, public policy and politics, the strengths and limitations of the study, a conclusion, and suggestions for future research. The appendix includes copies of the Interview Instrument, informed consent and anonymity disclaimer form, demographic questionnaire, informational email letter, researcher's responses, spider grams (field notes), and the coding scheme.

Conclusion

This research provides insight to the integration of religious and political beliefs of Arizona's Christian politicians, which is important because of its impact on and implications for legislation in the rest of the country. Determining which religious/political theoretical cluster is defined by politicians who promote and pass or fight against the controversial legislation in Arizona is needed. This research is important because of the political consequences it has for elected politicians across the country with respect to their voting behavior, policy sponsorship, and political rhetoric. Though this country is rooted in a strong commitment to the Establishment Clause in the 1st Amendment, politicians for centuries have asserted their Christian identity as inseparable from their political worldview. This research will provide empirical evidence of the qualities and characteristics of the politician that experiences dissonance and conflict between their Christian identity and their political behavior. In the same way, this

research will provide evidence of certain characteristics of politicians that experience congruence and praxis with their politics and Christian identity. Furthermore, this study is an aide to assist churches and religious leaders in the areas where politicians who have membership in that particular church but are unable to align their political behavior with the church's interpretation of Christian scripture.

Evaluating whether politicians have conflict between their Christian faith and political behavior and if that conflict is disguised by the individual's coping mechanisms will help to identify what demographics tend to experience dissonance and why. In the same way, this examination has provided results, which illustrate the politicians' identity that have congruence between their faith and political action. This research describes in detail and characterizes the politicians that are more closely affiliated with the Institutional Christianity cluster and why. On the other hand, this analysis yields an in depth description pertaining to which demographics are categorized within the counter-hegemonic cluster of Natural Christianity, and how they are defined by their faith and political-function. Thus, the purpose of this qualitative study is to understand the congruence or dissonance experienced by the contemporary Arizona Christian state-level politicians as it relates to the most controversial legislation that originates in their State. Moreover, it is necessary to conduct this research to explore what ways the contemporary Arizona Christian politicians defend, enact, and justify their political ideology as worldview, and how they cope and adjust if they knowingly or unknowingly experience dissonance between their faith and political behavior. Finally, this study aides journalists and the media with empirical findings that will help challenge politicians and their

rhetoric to maintain consistency when a politician asserts their Christian identity as inspiration for their political behavior.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY, DATA COLLECTION, AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

This is a phenomenological study that looks at the ways contemporary Christian Arizona politicians defend, enact, and justify their worldviews and policy positions and how some of the participants knowingly or unknowingly cope with cognitive dissonance. This chapter describes the research methodology reviewing the theoretical grounding, as well as the philosophical basis of this approach to employ a scientific methodology of a qualitative research design. I detail the selection of participants, the structured interviews, and analytical lens interpreting the data from the interviews. I discuss my understanding and the validity and reliability of the study and any ethical issues that I had to take into consideration when performing the study. The chapter concludes by way of reviewing my role as the researcher and the special accommodations I had to take into account because the uniqueness of my dual-relationship with the subjects.

Research on the integration of religious and political beliefs of Arizona's Christian politicians is important because of its impact on and implications for legislation in the rest of the country. This study will examine Christian politicians, their salience in Christian identity, their theology, and their political worldview. The purpose of this qualitative study is to understand the congruence or dissonance experienced by the contemporary Arizona Christian state-level politician. Furthermore, by considering

controversial legislation in Arizona, this study explicates the ways in which politicians interpret their religious understandings into political action.

Rationale for Study

Qualitative Research.

Engaging in a research study that looks at human behavior and cognitive schemas, I chose to find a scientific approach that best captured the meaning and identity of my subjects. More specifically, I chose a qualitative scientific research approach that is guided by theories of phenomenology and grounded theory, to conduct this study. Babbie (2001) defines qualitative research as enabling “researchers to observe social life in its natural habitat: to go to where the action is and watch. This type of research can provide a richer understanding of many social phenomena” (p. 274) that cannot be otherwise achieved. Therefore, a qualitative approach assisted me as the researcher to study the phenomenon of cognitive dissonance that occurs amongst contemporary Arizonan Christian politicians between their faith and political behavior. Qualitative research is a tool that improves interpretation amidst differing terminology for either the hegemonic or counter-hegemonic processes (Steensland, Park, Regnerus, Robinson, Wilcox, & Woodberry, 2000). Sutton (1993) provides four points that highlight the use of qualitative research in the social sciences (p. 411):

1. Contextualization – the ability to take into account the environment in which the research was conducted.
2. Understanding – the ability to approach issues of what can be learned through observation and how to explain what was learned.

3. Pluralism – the ability to proffer explanations that are not reduced to one-size-fits-all.
4. Expression – the ability to convey the results of the research.

Theoretical Grounding.

Phenomenology has a foundation in philosophical history. Originally identified in the early 1900s by Edmund Husserl who interjected the philosophical and not the psychological understanding of someone's pure consciousness about the essence of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). Of phenomenology Husserl (1969) writes, "evidence, or the giving of something, itself, as fulfillment, confirmation, verification, cancellation, falsity, practical failure, and so forth, all these are structural forms belonging a priori to the unity of a life; and the investigation of this unity, an investigation paying heed to and clarifying them all, is the immense theme of phenomenology" (pp. 289-290). Husserl's most famous student, Martin Heidegger, added to his teacher's concept, the existential assertion of ontology into phenomenology. Other renowned philosophers, such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Jacques Derrida added to Husserl's existential notion of phenomenology with concepts like nihilism and deconstruction. With such a deep philosophical history, researchers often overlook the benefits of phenomenology, one that helps give meaning and describe individual experiences about a given concept.

There are various philosophical arguments for using phenomenology in research. The foundational philosophical suppositions are that the ideas that one's experiences will be studied. These experiences are believed to be conscious and there will be an analysis of the descriptions of meaning from these experiences (van Manen, 1990; Rehorick &

Bentz, 2008) and an explanation of that meaning. Moreover, there are four primary philosophical assumptions in phenomenology that Stewart and Mickunas (1990) identify:

- To return to the traditional task of philosophy in searching for wisdom, before the obsession with empiricism.
- To maintain this philosophy free from all presumption. To *bracket-out* our individual understandings, perspectives, and experiences.
- To be intentional about the individual's consciousness and the duality of the subject and object in reality.
- To refuse to create a dichotomy between the subject and the object by maintaining the meaning of the individual's experience.

Using a phenomenological method to qualitative research, this study was able to “capture social life as participants experience it rather than in categories predetermined by the researcher” (Schutt, 2009, p. 17). As an approach to this methodology, this study utilized grounded theory. Because there is virtually no research on contemporary politicians and the dynamics that exist between their faith and political behavior, a grounded theory approach allowed me to study this phenomenon without an established framework, but rather letting the themes within the research emerge on their own. Furthermore, the use of a grounded theory approach allowed me to use more of an inductive apparatus, which allows for a more detailed analysis of the data. Creswell (2009, p. 13) finds grounded theory approach useful for the researcher whose strategy is to discover a general “theory of a process, action or interaction grounded in the views of participants”. While the phenomenological methodology employed assisted this research in finding meaning in the shared experiences that politicians have with the dynamics of

their faith and political behavior, a grounded theory approach guided me as how I investigated this topic, the analytic and methodology comes together in positioned epistemology. Grounded theory approach assisted this phenomenological study in not only discovering the meaning behind the cognitive dissonance that occurs amongst contemporary Arizona Christian politicians between their faith and political behavior, but also assisted in the generation and discovery of the theoretical approach to best explain the phenomenon. Grounded theory is a perspective in approaching my theoretical framework to research, by generating theory that organically comes out of my phenomenological methodology, rather than asserting established theory.

Intersectionality

In this study, I challenge hegemonic notions of religious identity and political behavior by unpacking the various ways a politician defends, enacts, and justifies their worldview. Ideally, using an intersectional analysis of a politician's identities in group politics could aide in constructing a more congruent identity, which seeks equality and liberation from the oppressive structures of religious and political dissonance (McQueeney, 2009). Furthermore, "intersectionality might be more broadly useful as a way of mediating the tension between the assertions of multiple identity and the ongoing necessity of group politics" (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1296). By paying attention to the intersecting, multiple identities a politician experiences, the utilization of intersectionality, can help to explain some of the with-in group differences and can assist in negotiating the differences among groups, for instance, with the racial tension within the religious/political clusters that this study is analyzing. This study's objective is to

illustrate how Arizona Christian politicians experience their faith and politics both outside and within the structural and hegemonic power that defines and constructs the dominant ideology.

Chun, Lipsitz, and Shin (2013) wrote about the concept of political intersectionality, in which “all politics are identity politics” (p. 937). Because Religion and political behavior both function as an apparatus of identity in structuring hegemony, they can also serve a similar function to challenge that hegemony. Spade (2013) also sees that the structure of government is the impetus and reinforcement of inequality for certain groups or peoples that deal with multiple axes of identity oppression. It is the goal of this researcher to provide scholarship that is analyzed for its multiple identities in group politics and is transformative (Dill & Zambrana, 2009) to the changing structure in politics and Religion so that Christian politicians can be liberated from the incongruent relationship between their religious theory and political behavior. Furthermore, this research can paint a narrative of liberating action that is compelled by the intersecting identities, challenging a new hope and love to an oppressive world.

To better understand a politician’s gestalt identity, the use of an intersectional analysis is pivotal. Intersectionality as a theory helps to construct an integrated examination of a politician’s identity as it complements or contrasts with other identities, such as race, gender, sexual orientation, and an individual’s group membership, namely political party and Christian denomination. “Intersectional analyses suggest that certain ideas and practices surface repeatedly across multiple systems of oppression and serve as focal points or privileged social locations for these intersecting systems” (Collins, 1998, p. 63). Intersectionality is not only useful in analyzing these interrelating identities, but in

understanding how these various identities “mutually construct one another” (Collins, 1998, p. 62). Furthermore, intersectionality is a theory that is born out of a struggle to seek emancipation from oppression and inequality. Dill and Zambrana (2009, p. 1) write, “Intersectionality as an innovative and emerging field of study that provides a critical analytic lens to interrogate racial, ethnic, class, physical ability, age, sexuality, and gender disparities and to contest existing ways of looking at these structure of inequality.” They further define inequality as “institutional patterns of unequal control over and distribution of a society’s valued goods and resources such as land, property, money employment, education, health-care, and housing” (Dill & Zambrana, 2009, p. 2). As a useful tool to deconstruct identities for a more comprehensive reconstruction of intersecting identities and power dynamics, this analysis attempted to “reformulate the world of ideas so that it incorporates the many contradictory and overlapping ways that human life is experienced” (Dill & Zambrana, 2009, p. 2).

The goal of an intersectional approach in this research would be to better understand the origin of controversial legislation in Arizona, as well as to analyze the identities of elected state-level politicians as they pertain to race, gender, political party, and Christian denomination. “By tracing these categories to their intersections, I (would) hope to suggest a methodology that will ultimately disrupt the tendencies to see race and gender as exclusive or separable.” (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1244)

Utilizing intersectionality in this research to examine the racial and gender dynamics of my subjects as they interact with their professed faith and political identities within a larger social movement structure presents certain problems. In discussing race, gender, sexual orientation and even socio-economic status there could be a potential

breach of confidentiality. By using the multiple axes of intersectionality, there is a greater potential for value-added results, as well as exposing my subjects. As of 2011, an elected state-level politician is defined as members of the legislature, corporation commissioners, governor, secretary of state, treasurer, attorney general, superintendent of public instruction, and mine inspector, and are comprised of 69% male and 31% female. Race is defined as 86% White, 10% Hispanic, 1% Black, 2% Native American, and 1% Asian. Sexual orientation is comprised of 98% publically identifying themselves as straight and 2% publically identifying as gay. The political party breakdown is comprised of 25% Democratic and 75% Republican, with 42% of Republicans self-identifying with the Tea Party. Finally, for the 87% who identify themselves as Christian, 24% identify as Catholic, 26% Protestant, 21% Mormon, 2% with the Native American Church, and 27% as nondenominational Christian. Analyzing the intersecting identities of these demographics is important in finding themes, patterns, and structural oppressive action that exists among contemporary Arizona Christian politicians without jeopardizing the confidentiality assured to each of my subjects when they agreed to participate.

While intersectionality cannot be used to examine respondent's individual data, from the above statistics, the political landscape in Arizona is overwhelmingly dominated by white, male, straight, middle-income identities. Instead my goal is to "emphasize what intersectionality does rather than what intersectionality is" (Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall, 2013, p. 795). A conversation about power, political party, and Christianity can still offer an interrogation of the social plane in which this analytic lies. This study looks to "go beyond the comprehension of intersectional dynamics (and seeks) to transform them"

(Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall, 2013, p. 786). That is to say, the goal of this study is to analyze the layers of political and religious identities that intersect.

Method of Inquiry

This study employed a phenomenology research design, in which in-depth interviews were interpreted hermeneutically. Phenomenological study is aimed at describing the meaning of diverse experiences about a specific phenomenon. Creswell (2007) states that “the basic purpose of phenomenology is to reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence” (p. 58). This research method allows individuals to describe their experiences about a phenomenon so that a broader understanding can be identified (Moustakas, 1994; Givens, 2008; King & Horrocks, 2010).

More specifically, this study approached phenomenological research with a hermeneutical lens. This approach takes into account contextual influences that guide the research and understand the meaning of other’s experiences. A hermeneutical research approach consists of six essential functions (van Manen, 1990). First, the research centers on a phenomenon or the nature of one’s experiences. Next, the researcher is oriented to the phenomenon and then brackets out their assumptions and pre-understandings. Then the researcher investigates the nature of these experiences and details the discovered theme. Along with this written description, the researcher also interprets the meaning derived from the individual’s experiences. Finally, phenomenological research will explain the themes and meanings derived from the research along with the researcher

examining their own narrative as it relates to the phenomenon and studying the phenomenon, which is useful in accounting for researcher bias.

Participant Selection.

This study used a criterion sampling strategy to select participants, to interview. Criterion sampling helps narrow the total population of potential participants to establish an appropriate sample size. It is imperative that all participants in the study have experienced the phenomenon, which can be assured by establishing criteria that participants must meet. Creswell (2007) identifies that for phenomenological research, “criterion sampling works well when all individuals studied represent people who have experienced the phenomenon” (p. 128). To achieve a desired sample size of 16 interviewees (20 percent of the population size), I recruited contemporary Arizona self-identified Christian elected state-level politicians to participate. The sample size must reach at least 10 participants in order to capture the meaning behind this phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). Potential participants were sent letters of introduction followed up by individual phone calls requesting participation. Four criteria were used to select participants. The first criterion is the participant’s political party (Democratic or Republican). The second criterion was the participant’s Christian affiliation, be it Catholic, Protestant, Mormon, Native American Church, or nondenominational. The third and fourth criteria were the participant’s race and gender. These four sampling dimensions assisted in describing the essence of participant experience on the phenomenon of the dissonance or congruence between their religious identity and political behavior.

To narrow the sample size further, I asked all possible participants to self-report salient Christian identity as the sampling criteria for participation, which I discussed at the time of setting up each meeting with the potential participant. The extent of salience in Christian identity was met by the criteria of weekly church attendance, weekly scripture reading, and monthly tithing. The population was narrowed once the dimension of salient Christian identity was met. Of the 88 possible qualified participants, 20 percent were chosen through self-selection. I sent an invitation to the 88 possible participants, followed up with an individual phone call in a random order; the sample size was determined by the first 16 responses in the affirmative I received. Nine respondents were Republican and seven were Democratic.

Data Collection.

Participants in this study were selected based on their experiences with the phenomenon. By focusing strictly on the state of Arizona, state-level politicians are easily located whom have a salient Christian identity, and may have experienced either dissonance or congruence between their religious identity and political behavior. To access this population, I first received permission from the Arizona State University's Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. With their permission granted, I then distributed an invitation by email to all of the possible participants. I was in a unique position to gain access and rapport with possible participants because I served with many of them in the Arizona state legislature and had professional interactions every interviewee. I used a criterion-based purposeful sampling strategy to construct the sample size. This sample size was narrowed down to the desired size of 16 participants

(Polkinghorne, 1989) by using a politically important sampling strategy, which is a sampling strategy that attracts the attention of interested participants based upon the importance of the topic to their own political identity. Data was collected in the form of a semi-structured interview along with a review of public pronouncements, which will include field notes and public statements on policy made by colleagues of the participants.

Interviews.

In order to collect data that would provide ample description and meaning to the experiences in which the participants have experienced with the phenomenon, a semi-structured interview was used. Creswell (2007) states that “for a phenomenological study, the process of collecting information involves primarily in-depth interviews with as many as 10 individuals” (p. 131) and each participant can have multiple interviews. These were elite interviews (Babbie, 2001) with elected politicians that were designed to establish their “political attitudes, values, and beliefs” (Aberbach & Rockman, 2002, p. 673). Creswell also identifies the researcher’s field notes and their self-reflection as an important way of collecting information.

Each interviewee was identified by the purposeful sampling strategy. One-on-one interviews were chosen because they yielded the most valuable data due to the fact that participants can speak freely. The one-on-one interviews were audio-recorded, using lapel microphones for both the participant and the researcher. Also, during each interview I took a spidergram style of notes to aid me in categorizing the data. Each participant was instructed that breaks in the interview were allowed according to each person’s needs.

The participants were provided with a *Consent to Participate* form; each signed prior to the interview. Each participant also provided a pseudonym that each participant got to choose in order to protect their identity. To assist in capturing the essence of the participant's experience with the phenomenon participants were given the opportunity to engage in member checking after their interview was done and transcribed. None of interlocutors chose to read the manuscript of their interview, all asserting that they were comfortable with what was said and there was no need for any edits or amendments to the transcript itself. Member checking is a way for the participants to read and amend their interview transcript if they choose to, in order to maintain more reliable data (Tanggaard, 2008).

I developed my interview instrument (Appendix A) by creating a long list of engaging questions regarding one's identity relating to political service and religion. Through a process of pre-tests with friends, colleagues and professors, I narrowed and refined my questions to better reflect the intent of this research. My interview instrument has nine questions, with question #8 having five sub-questions. These open-ended questions were designed to illicit the participant's honest and intimate response regarding their identity as a Christian and politician. Question #8 asks about the interviewee's interpretation of scripture regarding four issues. These four issues were chosen because of the intensity to which they are discussed and debated in contemporary society, through media and legislative bodies. Furthermore, these four issues were selected because of the breadth of Christian scriptures that refer to them. For example, the topic of "abortion", though a very divisive and hotly debated issue, has little to no direct references within Christian scripture, while the topic of "health care" is sprinkle throughout all Christian

scripture. Before I interviewed my subjects, I answered these questions first from my identity as a Christian politician (Appendix E). The intent of using my responses is to aid the reader in bracketing out my own perspective as well as my own experience with this phenomenon.

The one-on-one interview consisted of thirteen open-ended questions, with a standard form used by the researcher to record notes and comments and took approximately 1 to 2 hours. Generally stated, the interview protocol asked politicians about their experiences with dissonance or congruence between their religious identity and political behavior. The thirteen questions covered certain themes of the phenomenon. The themes of the interview were elicited from a series of questions. The first question was about the participant's Christian identity. The second question was about the participant's political party identity. The third question was on how their identities interact with public policy. The fourth question was about their view and interpretation of the Bible and other Christian scriptures. The fifth question is about the interviewee's view/image of God and eternity; Pastor Rob Bell (Marrapodi, 2011) believes this to be an essential question, one that differentiates an individual's view of love. The sixth question was about their role as a Christian politician serving in government. The seventh question was about the interviewee's philosophy and understanding of justice. Questions eight through twelve were part of a broader question about specific policies issues that ask the participant's view of a specific issue and how their view correlates with what the Christian scriptures say about that issue and how the participant reconciles any difference if there is any. The issues were limited to: immigration and illegal immigration, health care and emergency care, capitalism, private property, and any other issue the participant

wished to discuss. The word “illegal” was used since it was the colloquial term that politicians were using. Would they dismiss it as hurtful and inhumane or would they embrace it as part of their worldview? Finally, the last question was whether or not the participant would like to provide any further information that they feel is important. During the interview, the participant was allowed to use any materials, such as the Bible, Book of Mormon, religious reference guides, or any other material that might aid the interviewee in answering during the interview. Finally, a demographic sheet was provided to gain information about the participant’s gender, racial identity, age, religious identity, Christian denomination affiliation, frequency of church attendance, frequency of scripture study, frequency of individual and family prayer, frequency of tithing, marital status, income, highest level of education, political party affiliation, family’s religious background, and questions ranking socio-political issues that are most important to them.

The interviews took place in an environment the participant deemed suitable, which happened to be each participant’s office. Before the interview took place, the interviewee completed the consent form and demographic form. At the interviewing site, the researcher reviewed the purpose of the study, how long the interview could take, the participant availability for follow-up interviews, and plans for the results of the interview. Each participant was self-assigned a pseudonym before the interview began. Each participant received an email asking if they wished to review the transcript of the interview or wanted to have a follow-up interview.

Additional data were collected through the researcher’s field notes and reflection as well as public pronouncements from the participant’s colleagues. The goal of using public pronouncements is to describe the environment and associated political pressure to

contextualize the research on this phenomenon. Morrow and Smith (2000) highlight the benefits of the researcher reflecting, whereas it allows the researcher to identify prejudices, assumptions, expectations, and reactions about the topic, participants, and research process. This admission of potential research bias is useful in explaining the meaning of the phenomenon and controlling for potential bias in the analysis. Finally, I obtained field notes in the form of a spidergram, which I collected during the interviews and yielded more data ripe for analysis.

Data Analysis.

Before analyzing the data, all interviews, researcher reflections, and field notes were transcribed. The process of data analysis consisted of reorganizing the data into themes, coding those themes, condensing the codes, and then performing the analysis. I read through the data at least four times to become better acquainted with the data, which helped with organizing the data (Reissman, 1993). An initial round of coding was done during the interviews. I used a Spidergram approach (Appendix F) to note the significant statements from each subject when they answered. This assisted in the coding of the transcribed interviews; by comparing the codes from the spidergrams to the codes from the transcription I developed my coding scheme (see Appendix G). This step assisted the researcher in capturing the essence of the data in relating it to the phenomenon. Data management consisted of using Microsoft Word software to hold files of the interviews, reflections, and field notes. These files are stored in a locked file cabinet, as well as saved on the researcher's office computer and are password-protected with a locked door.

Horizontalization.

A key analytic technique employed was the tool of horizontalization, which allows the opportunity to review all the data, in significant statement form, from a position of equality absent of circumstance (Rehorick & Bentz, 2008). This reduction technique allowed me to view the phenomenon from a variety of perspectives and assisted me in truly understanding the essence of the phenomenon. Moustakas (1994) promotes this analytical tool stating, “We can never exhaust completely our experience of things no matter how many times we reconsider them or view them. A new horizon arises each time that one recedes. It is a never ending process and, though we may reach a stopping point and discontinue our perception of something, the possibility for discovery is unlimited” (p. 95). Wolcott’s (1994) analytical strategies were also used, initially highlighting the specific information from the data. Next, I discovered patterns in the data and created themes that were coded. Then the data were contextualized within the framework as part of the broader literature. Finally, the findings were presented comparing cases and using visual representations along with an analysis. Visual representations were used such as matrices that listed and organized the significant statements. Also, Word Clouds were used to provide another graphic of how the data are organized and clustered together.

This study used a thematic analysis on the interviews, reflections, and field notes. Starting the analysis using Griffith’s (1997) notion of “critical empathy”, where I attempted to communicate with accuracy the participant’s perspective and using my own analytical interpretation and critical perspective of others. Then this study utilized, as Martin (1990, p. 355) suggests, seven strategies in analyzing qualitative data, which are:

dismantle dichotomies, examine the silences (what is not said), attend to disruptions and contradictions, focus on the most alien or peculiar elements in the text, interpret metaphors, analyze double entendres, and separate the general and group-specific sources of bias through reconstruction. Moustakas (1994) provides a step-by-step guideline for a phenomenological analysis of the data, using the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method. The guidelines this research followed for a thematic phenomenological data analysis are:

1. Describe my personal experiences with the phenomenon being studied in full detail so that it can be set aside and the focus can remain on the participants.
2. Out of the interviews, develop a list of significant statements about the participant's experiences with the phenomenon and ensure no overlap.
3. Using the significant statement, group them into themes, or larger units of information.
4. Write a *textual description* of "what" exactly the participants experienced (generally recorded verbatim).
5. Write a *structural description* of "how" these experiences happened to participants, focused on the setting and context in which the experience happened.
6. Finally, write a fused description of the textual and structural descriptions about the phenomenon. Here I narrow in on the essence of the phenomenon, describing the "what" and the "how".

Using these data analysis strategies, themes that these data have narrowed down were examined, which are descriptive of both the individuals' response to their Christian identity and political philosophy, along with descriptors of their psychological coping if dissonance is present. The research starts by displaying the difference in how the

participants view simple “Christian Characteristics”. The two sides of “Scriptural Interpretation” are made clear. Then a demonstration between the differences in the participant’s “View of God”. Next, a focus on the political side of their identities that reveals the contrasting sides of the participants “Theories of Government and Justice”. Subsequently, this research then converges the two, politics and religion, in one theme and highlight the participants’ “Primary identity in Politics”, contrasting religious identity and political identity. Then, this study highlights the contrast between the two sides either individualism or collectivism, within their idea of the “Function of a Christian Politician”. Finally, the data using four political issues (Immigration, Health Care, Capitalism, and Private Property, along with any other issue the participants wished to bring up to accentuate this point), and the participants’ understanding of the dissonance or congruence they experience with these issues and their religious/political behavior in order to provide examples and tie all the meaning units together. The grouped data is presented using matrices listed in Chapter 7 and 8 that present a great visualization of the horizontalized data, Word Clouds are employed as another visual representation of the clustered data.

Validity and Reliability.

Reasonable concerns exist about the validity of methods used to gather qualitative data. These concerns help encourage the construction of a credible study; they should not usurp the nature of qualitative research. Putting these terms into perspective will assist with the integrity of a phenomenological study. All researchers have varying perspectives on research methods; this study adopts a postmodern perspective on the concept of

validity and the broader perspective of how validity is defined. Wolcott (1994) discussed this broader perspective in his research as trying to gain an understanding. His intent was to remain true to a phenomenological study and capture the “essence” of the phenomenon. To achieve the level of credible validity, this research used various techniques. One technique was a section about potential biases, the researcher and as a contemporary Arizonan Christian politician, and the experiences that have affected my interpretation and approach to the study. Also, a rich, detailed description of the data allows the reader to understand the individual’s experiences about the phenomenon.

The goal of validity to these data is imperative to this research. I do this first by bracketing out my own biases, and then offer up the statements of the participants in a contextual way that provides rich and detailed description of what and why they said what they said. Some may contend that this research study would look differently if it was written by a Republican Christian politician. This assumption argues that the responses from the subjects would essentially be different depending upon who interviewed them. Rather, as evidenced by the common themes grounded in this research and embedded throughout all the answers and clustered by political party, it is difficult to argue this point. Moreover, the significant statements would also be similar if one employed the same analytic techniques on the data. One would even go as far to say that the interpretation of the meaning units would also be similar, whereas an antithesis of my identity would be equally proud and convinced of their own theological position as correct as I am of mine. The variance is that a Republican may see the Christian Democrat as impractical and utopian. One would guess, based on many of the statements from this research, as well as public pronouncements, that their analysis would be very

different from mine. A Republican may argue that one's faith and religious conviction has no bearing when you are serving as an elected official in government. That as Rep. Montenegro argued in 2009 on the State House floor, that "when you enter this building (State House) you take off your 'Christian hat' which is your identity as an individual and your put on your 'Politician hat' and make decisions for society." I believe that our conclusions would differ, not the content of the research. One potential difference that could be experienced is if the Democratic subjects had a low-salient Christian identity, I believe they wouldn't be as committed to their faith as a guiding principle in their political behavior.

This research ensures strong reliability of the data by taking copious and in-depth field notes by ensuring a high-quality of digital recording, and by transcribing the entire recording. Coding of the transcription can be done "blind" to the identity of the subject, so that the researcher can pull out the significant statements of the interviews and hold no pre-conceived assumptions. Finally, I use a checklist to enhance the reliability, following guidelines from Polkinghorne (1989, p. 57). These guidelines pose five questions to the interviewer:

1. Did I influence the contents of the participant's descriptions so that the descriptions do not truly reflect the participant's actual experiences?
2. Is my transcription accurate and does it convey the meaning of the oral presentation in the interview?
3. In the analysis of the transcriptions, were there conclusions other than mine that could have been derived? Have I identified these alternatives?

4. Is it possible to go from the general structural description to the transcriptions and to account for the contents and connections in the original examples of the experience?
5. Is the structural description situation specific or does it hold in general for the experience in other situations?

Another possible validity issue that could have complicated this research is the pre-existing relationship the researcher had with the participants. This relationship varied in intimacy from person to person and there is an ethical concern that the researcher might have responded or shared his own experiences during the interview process. This personal disclosure may have hindered the information that the participant would have shared or skewed the information to be tailored around the content of the interviewer's experience. As Fenno (1978) recognizes, "A final, less soluble part of the observer-observed, going native problem is that in doing the things that must be done to maintain desirable levels of access and rapport, the participant observer can slowly lose the ability and the willingness to criticize. Some loss of objectivity comes inevitably, as increased contact losing sympathy, and sympathy in its turn dulls the edge of criticism" (p. 277). This delicate balance of sympathy and criticism was controlled for by adhering to a strict use of the Interview Instrument and stating nothing more. The researcher was able to refrain from revealing any personal experiences and when analyzing the data, will bracket-out (Appendix E) his own experiences so that he can construct meaning from the description of the participant's experiences.

A final concern was that the participants may respond as they think the researcher is expecting them to respond. The best way I controlled for this was to eliminate leading

language in the questions. Also, as the researcher I was able to control facial expressions and body language to remain neutral and not give cues to the participants about their responses. Because of the prior relationship between the researcher and participant, it would be impossible to account for all ethical issues. The researcher was able to bracket-out as many personal experiences and participant projections due to the prior relationship from the data. Finally, as the researcher I was able take every precaution available to ensure that the participants felt safe and comfortable and had the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time.

Limitations of the Research

As a continuation of the limitations and challenges already mentioned, other limitations are crucial to emphasize. I allowed the participants to answer each question as they interpreted it. Often times, interviewees would ask me for help or verification of what they are saying as correct and I would have to sit in silence and just look at them. Nevertheless, I was committed to maintaining high reliability in the results of this research by simply asking a series of questions and allowing the participant to respond, free from influence. Another challenge is that I worked with and still serve with many of these participants in subsequent legislative sessions. Many participants still ask about the research and mention they are eager to read the final product. I have taken a concerted effort in approaching the data from a position where each interview is coded in anonymity and not associated with any particular politician whom I have a daily relationship with. Perhaps this is compartmentalization, or more of an examination looking at the relationship between compartments, but I consider this a research

methodology as being intentional and sensitive to the dynamics of power in a social relationship fraught with challenges, whereas I am both and neither at the same time. For example, when looking at a list of significant statements, I first organize, cluster and then apply horizontalization to the data by attributing the statements to “Interview 1” and then I later assigned the pseudonym “Thomas Job” to those statements. After I organize the data, and apply the pseudonyms, I then review the data with demographical information and analyze the intersection of faith and political behavior within their responses and identity. Employing this process recognizes and engages with, to the extent possible, any outside influence of my dual-relationship with these subjects from confounding my data presentation, interpretation, and horizontalization.

In conducting this research, I realize that many interviewees were hoping for a healthy dialogue or debate, which they were disappointed they did not receive from me as the interviewer, as I tried to remain as neutral and detached as possible. Many of these interlocutors had hoped to influence me and change my mind on the issues as well. However, I did not share my own views; it certainly was not a normal human conversation. I made every attempt to keep a flat and blunted affect, and not allow for non-verbal reactions to influence the subjects, however, it is impossible to control for this completely. I do want to alert readers to possible strategic edits embedded in the responses of my interviewees, who may want to distort the data or convolute my process. All the subjects involved in this research were notified of how the material would be employed in this study. When possible, I asked my subjects to review my field notes as well as the chapters in which they were mentioned.

CHAPTER 3
A BIBLICAL / HISTORICAL EXPLANATION OF
JUDEO-CHRISTIANITY IN SOCIETY

Introduction

This chapter examines the historical narrative of political leaders operating from a position of commitment to their interpretation of religious edicts. The first part examines antiquity until the Pre-Modern era, approximately the 1600s, or more importantly defined by the philosophy of a belief in the spiritual and supernatural elements interacting daily in mankind's lives. This study examines the Pre-Modern era examining ancient society within the Septuagint and the Mosaic Law. It reviews the mystics, prophets, Sadducees, and kings, as seen in Old Testament scripture. Moreover it analyzes the most prominent influences of Jesus Christ and the apostles. Finally, this paper looks at extra-Biblical scriptures (Book of Mormon and Apocrypha) that reflect a majority of the participants' faith traditions.

Next, the chapter examines Modernity, which encompasses the Enlightenment to modern day during which a commitment to science above mysticism predominated. The modern era is generally bracketed from 1600s until the present, and is characterized by the formation of various churches and religious sects. This era has inspired some of the most renowned philosophical thinkers, from Descartes, Durkheim, Freud, and Weber, to religious theologians such as Gutierrez, Rauschenbusch, Niebuhr, and King Jr. This study will look at the Age of Enlightenment and its influence upon Christianity. This examination highlights the changes in society by reviewing private property and

consumerist behavior. Furthermore, using modern theorists and the influence from the Catholic Church, we see how Christianity has changed in the modern era.

From modernity, a transition to the contemporary climate of political leaders, which includes elements of postmodernity as well as modernity within their philosophical perspectives, and helps analyze their contemporary political behavior. One such analysis will be of the Reagan administration. Also, this section will review the debate and history of the Church and State argument in the United States. As Bauman (2013), writes, “Even if the idea of modernity and post-modernity as successive historical periods is viewed as contentious (when it is justly pointed out that modern and post-modern practices coexist, though in varying proportion, within each of the two eras, and that one can speak of the domination of one or the other pattern only relatively, as of tendencies), the distinction between the two practices remains useful, if only as ‘ideal types’; it does go some way towards revealing the essence of the current intellectual controversies and the range of the intellectual strategies available” (p. iii). Though no specific leaders seem to stand out, we can look to contemporaries, such as James Dobson³ and Jim Wallis⁴, both of whom use their religious standing to engage politically. This study examines contemporary issues, especially issues that are relevant and common in Arizona.

³ James Dobson is the founder and chairman of Focus on the Family, which is a right-wing non-profit based in Colorado that provides educational materials and actively promotes conservative social views in public policy.

⁴ Jim Wallis is the founder and editor of the Sojourners magazine and community, which produces left-leaning education and advocacy on social justice and peace policy issues.

Interpretation Theories

The Institutional Christianity cluster and the Natural Christianity cluster are distinguished, not only by their theory of justice, but their interpretive approach to Christian scripture. Institutional Christianity takes a literal approach at the interpretation of Christian scripture. Literalism rejects a contextual reading of the religious text, and instead asserts a word-for-word translation, with the absolutism that each word is God's voice recorded on paper, verbatim. Literalism maintains a strict and rigid interpretation of scripture that are led by societal notions of common sense, which helps to maintain the dominant ideology of capitalism and individualism. In contrast, Natural Christianity takes a hermeneutical approach at the interpretation of Christian scripture, one that looks at the cultural dynamics of the time, the differing interpretations of the original script, and the context for which the scripture is written. A hermeneutical interpretation helps reinforce the ideology of communal love and responsibility embedded in the Natural Christianity cluster.

An example of this ideological rift between hermeneutics (contextual) and literalism is seen in the differing interpretations of one of the most important words in Biblical scripture: *agape* (Peck, 1967). Throughout all the early manuscripts and translations, the Greek word *agape* was used to describe "having the true love of God for humanity" and was presented as a charge to all, that we are to show *agape* to one another. However, in the 4th century, St. Jerome translated the Biblical scripture to a new version and instead of using the Greek word *agape*, which appeared 312 times in the New Testament, he instead used the Latin word *caritas* for much of the interpretations, which means individual private almsgiving (Peck, 1967). The Latin word *caritas* now has the

contemporary English meaning in the word: charity, although the original scriptural word used was expressed in Greek, *agape*, and implied a very different meaning. Many literalists have instead adopted a different version of the Bible that uses the Latin word *caritas*, which aids their worldview. In co-opting this word (meaning charity), rather than using *agape* (true love of God), the dominant theoretical/religious cluster of Institutional Christianity has injected the philosophy of individualism into the preaching of Jesus (Peck 1967), where the community is no longer held responsible for the welfare of all. There is now a strong emphasis placed on the individual, and “charity” as only an individual mandate; governments don’t have a role in legislating “personal almsgiving”, nor should any individual be compelled to *caritas* by the government. It seems then that the defense, as seen from the Natural Christianity’s hermeneutical interpretation, for a government-run welfare program that might put into action the word *agape*, is now disputed with the widespread usage of the word *caritas*. As Herzog (1994) writes, “one must know the whole before one can understand the parts” (p. 51). This contrast between *agape* and *caritas* will be highlighted later in this research within the personal narratives of contemporary Christian politicians.

Pre-Modern Era

The internal relationships within each cluster are generally consistent. Politicians, theologians, philosophers, and other contributors to the foundations of each cluster maintain common core beliefs. However, if inconsistencies were to occur, they would be seen at the policy level. Though the fundamental currents within each ideological cluster are consistent, theorists within the clusters may be divided over policy issues where the

Christian scriptures are ambiguous. Regardless of the minor differences within clusters about policy issues, substantial ideological differences obviously exist between the clusters. These differences have historical roots as far back as approximately 1500 B.C. when Moses led the liberation (Exodus) of the Hebrews out of Pharaoh Ramesses II's Egypt. This difference is also illustrated with the biblical story, occurring approximately 855 B.C., where King Ahab and Queen Jezebel stole Naboth's vineyard. A more damning relationship can be seen with the differences between the Pharisees and Sadducees, who were the wealthy religious elite, and how they contrasted with the prophets of the Old Testament, who were generally thought to be modest and simple. But above all else, these differences are epitomized by reviewing the gospel message of Jesus and the apostles and their message of liberation against the ruling tyranny.

The primary difference between the two clusters, as observed by Christian scripture, traces back to inequities dealing with land/private property. Lilburne (1989) highlights this notion that the "Hebrew Scriptures speak centrally of the land, its preservation and proper use" (p. 10). Ancient Hebrews believed in a covenant relationship that God established with them regarding land. This covenant was based on three ideas: "1) The land is God's, it doesn't belong to the Hebrews, it was not theirs by an individual or personal right. 2) Behavior of the people of the land is governed by God. 3) Gift of the land was to the whole community and divided justly, a gift to the entire nation" (Lilburne, 1989, p. 46). Dawsey (2001) observes that "The old Hebrew laws were similar to our modern laws in affirming that people had the right to own themselves and the fruits of their labor. They differ in that God and only God had the right to be the sole and absolute owner of the land" (p. 208). Demsetz (1967) and DiQuattro (1998) further

this argument by adding that the notion of private property ignores the fact of natural right and aboriginal ownership. They see the improbability to have true private ownership, since most of the land had either a natural right, meaning a common ownership for all to use or an aboriginal ownership, in which the land belonged to its original inhabitants.

Mosaic Law.

Christian scripture provides direct account of society's responsibility in dealing with land and private property, namely, the covenant which Moses pens in the Old Testament books of Exodus and Leviticus. Moses establishes the proper relationship with land⁵, which follows Lilburne's three aspects of the covenant. Here Moses directs that the land is God's, that God has specific orders⁶ for the use of the land, and that the land was to be used to benefit all, justly. Moses furthers with humanity's covenant with God regarding land, which states that "you shall sanctify the fiftieth year, and you shall proclaim a remission for all the inhabitants of your land: for the same is the Jubilee. A man shall return to his possession, and each one shall go back to his original family, for it is the Jubilee and the fiftieth year" (Leviticus 25:10 – 11, Catholic Public Domain

⁵ Leviticus 25: 2 – 7: Speak to the sons of Israel, and you shall say to them: When you will have entered into the land which I will give to you, rest on the Sabbath of the Lord. For six years you shall sow your field, and for six years you shall care for your vineyard, and you shall gather its fruits. But in the seventh year, there shall be a Sabbath of the land, a resting of the Lord. You shall not sow your field, and you shall not care for your vineyard. What the soil shall spontaneously produce, you shall not harvest. And you shall not gather the grapes of the first-fruits as a crop. For it is a year of rest for the land. But these shall be yours for food, for you and for your men and women servants, and for your hired hands, and for the newcomers who sojourn with you: all that grows on its own shall provide food for your beasts and cattle.

⁶ Exodus 23:11; Leviticus 19:9-10; Leviticus 23:22

Version)⁷. Moses clearly establishes that a legitimate covenant with God is one that recognizes the natural right of land, which is that land is to be used for the common benefit of all in society. Belo (1981) refers to this as the debt code, the idea that God gave the land to the people, and all are debtors/tenants to the land. Furthermore, the promise of the Law of Jubilee (aboriginal ownership), is a mandatory commandment from God, that all private property of land shall be returned to the original inhabitants of the land every 50 years, because no sale of land can be permanent (Leviticus 25:23). “No one could treat the land as if it were his own private possession, but all had to consider the needs of the neighbor and stranger, and the rights of the unborn who inherent the land” (Lilburne, 1989, p. 48).

One specific Biblical story epitomizes the relationship of conflict regarding keeping God’s covenant with land and the desire for personal gain through private ownership. The story of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, who forcefully took Naboth’s vineyard from him and his kin, best illustrates the differences between clusters regarding private property, a dynamic of the mighty taking from the lowly. Lilburne (1989) critiques contemporary society with this story of Naboth’s vineyard, identifying that “conflicts between tribal peoples and European settlers over issues of land rights have emerged repeatedly in the history of our nations” (p. 14). In the 1 Kings 21, King Ahab, who had all the riches in the land of Canaan and the powers of the throne, was discontent and coveted Naboth’s vineyard. Naboth rejected King Ahab’s request to obtain his land, citing the laws of Jubilee and his desire to be in obedience to God regarding the covenant

⁷ The Catholic Public Domain Version will be used for all the Old Testament, New Testament, and Apocryphal scripture references. I choose to use this version because the Catholic Bible included the Apocrypha, where the Protestant Bible did not. I also had a majority of participants come from the Catholic faith tradition, which justified use of this version.

of the land. King Ahab consulted with his wife Queen Jezebel, who then sent a proclamation to the nobles in the city where Naboth resided, sentencing Naboth to be stoned to death for allegedly cursing God and the King. After King Ahab took Naboth's vineyard, who he murdered it for, the prophet Elijah came to Ahab and Jezebel to prophesize disaster upon him and his descendants. Not only was the covenant of the land and law of Jubilee disobeyed, but the wickedness and sinfulness of selfish and material gain was at the heart of Ahab and Jezebel's actions, and the improper defense of Religion was used as justification for the murder of a righteous man.

With land ownership and private property, clans, families, and tribes of the Old Testament accumulated wealth; those without land or property usually ended up in debt or servitude. Generally those who maintained their land, cultivated it, produced crops, and expanded their territory created safety and stability for their families. However, those who sold their birthright and were left without land were at the mercies of the community as they struggled in poverty. God, as previously mentioned, commanded the laws of Jubilee as an equalizer between the rich and poor, so that every fifty years a family would not be destitute, but have another chance to provide safety and stability for their family. Moses furthers on God's commandments, providing specific instruction of how to treat those afflicted by poverty⁸ by taking them into your house and providing for them without interest. In Exodus 22:25⁹, Moses instructs that "if you lend money to the poor of my people who live among you, you shall not coerce them like a collector, not oppress

⁸ In Leviticus 25: 35-37, Moses writes, "if your brother has become impoverished, or infirm of hand, and you take him in, like a newcomer or a sojourner, and he lives with you, do not accept usury from him, not anything more than what you gave. Fear your God, so that your brother may be able to live with you. You shall not give him your money by usury, not exact from him an overabundance of produce."

⁹ Also in Deuteronomy 23:19

them with usury”. The writer of the Book of Deuteronomy gives instruction as well, commanding that a tithe of produce from the land was to be placed in storage in each town, and that the aliens, the orphans, the poor, and the widows were allowed to go and eat and be satisfied¹⁰. Essentially, Hebrew law mentioned in Christian scripture outlines that if the people would diligently observe the commandments of God (covenant of the land, law of Jubilee, ordinance of tithing, and usury prohibition), then God would bless the people of the land and there would “be no one in need among you” (Deuteronomy 15:4-5).

Prophets and Sadducees.

The times of minor and major prophets throughout the Old Testament represent a post-Mosaic era that saw great wealth and unbearable poverty, an age where the covenant of the land and the laws of Jubilee were not practiced. One of the first eras of prophets occurred under the reigns of King Jeroboam II of Israel and King Uzziah of Judah around 740 BC. Two prophets stand out as influential mouthpieces of God to a wicked society. Though there was relative peace and stability between the two nations, the prophets Amos and Hosea were led by God to condemn these nations who pervert justice and oppress the poor. Amos 8:4 pronounced destruction: “Hear this, you who crush the poor and who make those in need of land to do without”. Though Amos and Hosea were not considered to be “professional” prophets, whom generally were employed by the King, they were called out of humble and meager lives to challenge these nations of decadence and injustice. Dawsey (2001) understood the prophet Amos (2:6-7) to be a battle cry of

¹⁰ Deuteronomy 14:22-29; 26:12

justice, to which God wouldn't revoke his judgment on people who allowed "the righteous to be sold for silver and the poor to be trampled into the dust of the earth". Both prophets cried for the nations to atone for their sins and return unto God; however with their hopes for repentance, both Amos and Hosea prophesized doom and destruction to the nations. In Hosea 12:8, the prophets condemns Israel, which boasts, "I am rich, and I've gotten it all by myself! No, one can say I got it by cheating". To this message of rugged individualism, Hosea then states in 13:16, "because they have rebelled against their God, they will fall by the sword; their little ones will be dashed to the ground, their pregnant women ripped open." In the same way, Amos doesn't spare the graphic details of judgment. In Chapter 4:1-2, he proclaims: "Listen to this word, you fat cows that are on the mountain of Samaria, you who make false accusations against the destitute and crush the poor, who say to your nobles, 'Bring, and we will drink.' The Lord has sworn in his holiness: behold, the days that will overcome you and that will impale you on poles, and that will place what remains of you in boiling pots." Here Amos reminds Israel and Judah of Naboth's vineyard, and how the modern Kings are comparable to King Ahab and Queen Jezebel (fat cows on the mountain of Samaria), and that they too will have impending destruction. Furthermore, both prophets respond to an ancient and contemporary belief of individualism and "pulling yourself up by your bootstraps", stating such beliefs are deceiving to one and condemn those who tout such a view of themselves.

Around 700 BC, the prophets Isaiah and Micah were witnessing the lands of Judah and Samaria turn to foreign idols and gods, preying on the weak for the benefit of the mighty. The prophet Isaiah proclaimed to the Israelites that "the Lord will enter into

judgment with the elders of his people, and with their leaders. For you have been devouring the vineyard, and the plunder from the poor is in your house. Why do you wear down my people, and grind up the faces of the poor, says the Lord, the God of hosts?” (Isaiah 3:14-15). In the same way, the prophet Micah also proclaimed to Judah and Israel, “When you want a certain piece of land, you find a way to seize it. When you want someone’s house, you take it by fraud and violence. No one’s family or inheritance is safe with you around” (Micah 2:2). Once again, the prophets of the land are comparing the contemporary kings to sinful actions of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel. Dawsey (2001) reiterates this dynamic that the Hebrew prophets expressed concern for the proper stewardship of the land, as well as an equitable distribution of the produce of land. The prophets emphasized the social responsibility of *tsedaqah* (Hebrew word for justice), which meant that when people acted justly towards one another, only then were they in a right relationship with God. Prophet Isaiah had some damning words for King Ahaz of Judah stating, “Woe to those who make unfair laws, and who, when writing, write injustice: in order to oppress the poor in judgment, and to do violence to the case of the humble of my people in order that widows may be their prey, and that they might plunder the orphan.” The prophet Micah also condemned the mighty exclaiming, “The rich among you have become wealthy through extortion and violence. Your citizens are so used to lying that their tongues can no longer tell the truth” (Micah 6:12). Furthermore, Isaiah pleaded with the Israelites to provide food to the hungry, to give the homeless a place to live, and to clothe those who are naked¹¹. Because these messages of compassion

¹¹ Isaiah 58:7

and care for the poor and destitute were not followed, Isaiah and Micah both prophesized that Judah would eventually fall into Babylonian captivity, with even more exploitation.

Following Isaiah and Micah, many other prophets took to the ministry; most notably, Jeremiah, Habakkuk, and Ezekiel (625–570 BC) were contemporaries working to save Judah from ruin and destruction at the hand of Babylon while under the rule of King Josiah. During this period, the Sadducees, who were elites of the time, aimed to maintain their upper, priestly casts in society. The Sadducees preached eudaemonism, which advocates that material wealth and accumulation is a sign of true devotion and faithfulness to God. This doctrine was condemned by the three prophets Jeremiah, Habakkuk, and Ezekiel, who decried the actions of the ruling caste and leaders of Israel for their oppressive actions towards the poor. Habakkuk proclaimed to these elites, “Wealth is treacherous, and the arrogant are never at rest. In their greed they have gathered up many nations and peoples” (Habakkuk 2:5). Koch (1984) describes these three prophets as pivotal figures who judged a nation in their treatment of the poor and destitute, not only prophesying destruction upon Judah, but they saw it take place. In referring to the religious leaders (Sadducees), Jeremiah states, “they are all well-fed and well-groomed, and there is no limit to their wicked deeds. They refuse justice to orphans and deny the right of the poor. Should I not punish them for this? Ask the Lord. Should I not avenge myself against a nation such as this?” (Jeremiah 5:28-29). Along the same lines the prophet Ezekiel (22:29), states “the people of the land have practiced extortion and committed robbery; they have oppressed the poor and needy, and have extorted from the alien without redress.” In a final plea to King Josiah, Jeremiah cautions, “woe to one who builds his house with injustice and his upper rooms without judgment, who

oppresses his friend without cause and does not pay him his wages. Yet truly, your eyes and your heart are toward avarice and the shedding of innocent blood, and toward false accusations and the pursuit of evil deeds” (Jeremiah 22:13 & 17). The fight against eudaemonism didn’t end with Israel and Judah’s fall; many more prophets fought against the Pharisees and Sadducees perverted belief in God: that wealth and accumulation are examples of God blessing His righteous.

Jesus’ Ministry.

The ongoing struggle between these two clusters reaches a climax in the historical narrative, from antiquity to eternity, with the birth and ministry of Jesus Christ. His birth and life prophesized¹² as ultimate salvation, where the Son of God came as man to make the final atonement for humankind’s sins, and this final sacrifice would open the door for all to obtain eternal salvation with their loving Heavenly Father. Jesus, though the central figure of Christianity, presents as problematic to the Institutional Christianity cluster when evaluated as a whole. Cadbury (1937) defends the Institutional perspective, citing that Jesus was silent on “rarely, if ever, dealing with social institutions” (p. 95), completely indifferent on social collectives, only dealt with one person at a time (individuals), and never mentions in the Gospels about extracting from others for a social welfare. Herzog (1994) disputes Cadbury’s claims asserting that Jesus went into the Temple and synagogues, Jesus’ use of the household, Jesus’ trial, and the Beelzebul conflict in Matthew 3:22-27 all are social institutions. Moreover, he contends that when

¹² Prophets: Isaiah [Isaiah 7:14, 9:6, 53:10-11]; Jeremiah [Jeremiah 23:5]; David [Psalm 22:16, 68:18]; Micah [Micah 5:2]; Malachi [Malachi 3:1]; Nephi [1 Nephi 11:18-21]; Alma [Alma 7:9-10]; Samuel [Helaman 14: 1-6]; Enoch [Enoch 48: 1-9]

Jesus approached the Pharisees and Sadducees, he wasn't speaking to individuals; he was addressing roles and status within a social system. Finally, Herzog argues that the sole purpose of Jesus alone wasn't individually oriented; it was a social and communal ministry. This problem was highlighted when Jesus prophesized about the rejection of the Gospel, as well as the world's hatred of his followers who kept the covenant of love. In John 15:17-19, Jesus commands his followers to "love one another. If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before you. If you had been of the world, the world would love what is its own". Oftentimes misunderstood that Christians will be persecuted simply for identifying as a Christian, the key to this scripture is that Christians are hated because of their *love*. Jesus establishes a chasm between being Godly and selfless and being worldly and selfish. The Gospel message of self-sacrifice for others, is pivotal thus somewhat unsettling¹³ for many Christians.

The debate about the owning of wealth and the ability to enter heaven, as Weber (1958) wrote about in *The Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism*, has been ongoing with much justification and creative interpretation to condone one's material gain. Walter Wink (1998) writes, "The gospel of Jesus is founded on economic equity, because economic inequalities are the basis of domination. Jesus challenges creditors not only to

¹³ This is evidenced when the *Rich Young Ruler* approached Jesus (Matthew 19:16-22; Mark 10:17-27; Luke 18:21-25) and told him that he has kept all the commandments since his youth and asked him what else he needs to do to obtain eternal life, Jesus said to him: "One thing is still lacking for you. Sell all the things you have, and give to the poor. And then you will have treasure in heaven. And come, follow me" (Luke 18:22). The struggle and rejection of the Gospel by this "Rich Young Ruler" was centered on the debate of being selfless or selfish. Jesus saw the young man reject him because of his own substantial wealth and said, "How difficult it is for those who have money to enter into the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a wealthy man to enter into the kingdom of God" (Luke 18:24-25). The challenge remains to this day; selfless behavior out of love is what Jesus commands and it is what the world hates and fears.

forgo interest, but to ask no repayment¹⁴ whatsoever (Luke 6:34). ‘You cannot serve both God and wealth’ (Matthew 6:24)” (p. 66). Oftentimes when Jesus cautions someone about potential doom and pain, he is referring to an individual¹⁵ who values money above all else such as in his story about Lazarus¹⁶ and the storing of treasures in heaven. “It was not the rich man’s wealth, but his callous lovelessness and impious self-indulgence that are condemned; similarly it is Lazarus’s humble piety that is commended not his poverty.” (Herzog, 1994, p. 127) When asked about one’s accumulation of wealth, Jesus give the parable¹⁷ of the man who tore down his barns only to build bigger ones to store his crop, but died that very night. Jesus elaborates on this giving another illustration¹⁸ that where one’s treasure is, there their heart will also be. In total, “if parabling was a part of Jesus’ public activity that followed with suspicion and eventually deemed actionable,

¹⁴ Jesus illustrates this with his Parable of the Unmerciful Servant in Matthew 18:23-35. Here he reveals a messianic moment of an earthly king forgiving the largest debt imaginable to a top-echelon bureaucrat, who then in turn goes back to his ruthless ways and attempts to extract money from others. This parable highlights the deviousness of those who use their power to oppress others, even though grace was shown to them.

¹⁵ In Luke 6:24, Jesus states, “woe to you who are wealthy, for you have your consolation.”

¹⁶ Jesus tells the story of a wealthy noble man who had much surplus and a beggar named Lazarus. Lazarus would lie at the wealthy man’s gate hoping to “be filled with the crumbs which were falling from the wealthy man’s table. But no one gave it to him. And even the dogs came and licked his sores. Then it happened that the beggar died, and he was carried by the Angels into the bosom of Abraham. Now the wealthy man also died, and he was entombed in Hell. Then lifting up his eyes, while he was in torments, he saw Abraham far away, and Lazarus in his bosom” (Luke 16:19-23). Jesus shocks the crowd by using Abraham to advocate for the poor. Were everyone may have felt that the rich man, who’s earthly blessings showed him worthy of Abraham’s bosom instead of flames, the sin witnessed when the rich man continued his dominating paradigm and issued orders at Lazarus, proving him unrepentant.

¹⁷ In Luke chapter 12, Jesus was approached regarding the redistribution of wealth. Jesus gave this analogy, “the fertile land of a certain wealthy man produced crops. And he thought within himself, saying: ‘What should I do? For I have nowhere to gather together my crops.’ And he said: ‘This is what I will do. I will tear down my barns and build larger ones. And into these, I will gather all the things that have been grown for me, as well as my goods. And I will say to my soul: Soul, you have many goods, stored up for many years. Relax, eat, drink, and be cheerful.’ But God said to him: ‘Foolish one, this very night they require your soul of you. To whom, then, will those things belong, which you have prepared?’ So it is with him who stores up for himself, and is not wealthy with God” (v. 16-21).

¹⁸ In Matthew 6:19-21: “Do not choose to store up for yourselves treasures on earth: where rust and moth consume, and where thieves break in and steal. Instead, store up for yourselves treasures in heaven: where neither rust nor moth consumes, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there also is your heart.”

then his parables must have dealt with dangerous issues, which always means political and economic issues. Since the preservation of power and the extraction of tribute from the peasants dominated the concerns of the ruling elites of the ancient world” (Herzog, 1994, p. 27).

Another scandalous action that Jesus took was dealing with those in the ministry (toll collector), those who were in a position of religious authority, but abused it for their own wealth and benefit¹⁹. John 2:13-16 recounts the story of Jesus brandishing a whip, knocking over moneychangers’ tables and driving out all the businesses using the Temple to make money. Jesus responds to them in verse 16, “Do not make my Father’s house into a house of commerce.” Another example of Jesus’ judgment upon the openly-pious-but-hypocritical is the story of the Good Samaritan. Luke 10:29-37 is a response to a question Jesus receives from a lawyer trying to trap him, “who is my neighbor?” which was a follow-up question to Jesus who cited the Torah about the law: “Love the Lord, your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength and love your neighbor as yourself”. This debate about the word neighbor is significant, whereas the Pharisees of the time, as well as other religious leaders, interpreted the Torah as a neighbor being one of like-ethnicity and Religion²⁰ and not the “sons of darkness” (Marshall, 1978, p. 444).

Jesus teaches a different understanding of neighbor by telling the Good Samaritan²¹

¹⁹ Jesus gives the Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector in Luke 18:9-14. This parable shows a Pharisee in the Temple paying tribute with others. He steps away from the crowd and attempts to shame the toll collector who was there praying in isolation. Jesus uses the toll collector to signify one who is sinful and have cheated many, but instead of running away in shame, he prays aloud for mercy and challenges the Pharisee’s self-righteousness.

²⁰ “Religion” is capitalized to insinuate about the Institution of Religion, while “religion” when lower-cased signifies the express and practice of one’s faith.

²¹ The parable is about a Jewish man who was robbed and beaten and left for dead in the middle of a 17 mile stretch of barren land between Jerusalem and Jericho. As this man lay dying, a priest and a Levite approach him, see him, and pass on the other side of the road, choosing not to help. Jesus, more than likely,

parable. Jesus challenges the Pharisaical notion that only those of similar Religion and ethnicity were considered a neighbor, but instead it is anyone who is in need. Jesus also reserves harsh criticism for the Pharisees and religious leaders that behave as the priest and Levite in this parable. In Matthew 23:14, Jesus states, “woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees. You hypocrites! You devour widows’ houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Therefore you will be punished more severely.” Likewise, Jesus states in Mark 7:6-9 that “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written ‘these people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men. You have let go of the commandments of God and are holding onto the traditions of men. And he said to them: you have a fine way of setting aside the commandments of God in order to observe your own traditions.” This struggle between Jesus and the Pharisees strikes right at the heart of this contemporary argument between the two clusters. He states that they are simply “blind guides” who “strain out gnats and swallow camels” and focus on cleaning the exterior of the cup while keeping the interior filthy and impure (Matthew 23:23-29).

Jesus uses the parables in a subversive way to expose the evils of the agrarian time dealing with unfair labor treatment and with the foreclosing on of land for hoarding. In both the Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16) and the Parable of the Wicked Tenants (Mark 12:1-12), Jesus identifies an elite landowner who is using their position to get what they want and oppress the peasant farmer who work those

was implying that the priest and Levite were coming from the Temple in Jerusalem, where they performed their sacred duties, and were headed to their homes in Jericho (Marshall, 1978). Next, Jesus introduces another character, but rather than saying a Jewish man stopped to help, he introduces a Samaritan, the most hated and despised regional ethnicity by the Jews (John 4:9). Jesus describes that this Samaritan looked upon the beaten man and had pity on him, and so cared for him. He spent his own time and money to heal him, protect him and ensure his full recovery. Jesus then asks, “which of these three men was a neighbor?”, to which the lawyer responded that it was the Samaritan.

fields. With the laborers working the field, the landowner, knowing the desperate economic condition (even though he is producing a luxury, wine) never negotiates payment with the workers and instead blames them for being ungrateful. As Herzog (1994) points out, that this is the generic formula, in which those with power are able to manipulate the situation and blame the victim. In the same way, Jesus uses the story of one who forecloses on land and attempts to take the birthright land from the peasants and turn it into a vineyard (luxury). In this parable, Jesus highlights the people fighting back, but ultimately to their demise when the sanctioned power of the state crushes their revolt. Here Jesus highlights that the “spiral of violence begins in everyday oppression and exploitation of the poor by ruling elites” (Herzog, 199, p. 108) that the peasants were pushed to their breaking point when their subsistence was threatened to be taken away.

Jesus’ sermon on the Beatitudes, or “Blessings”, is one of the most “literary and religious treasures of the human race ... acknowledged by almost everyone to be among the highest expressions of religious insight and moral inspiration” (Willard, 1998, p. 98). In the Gospel of Luke’s account²², Jesus gives a teaching through the use of riddles and paradoxes. Jesus taught in Hebrew parallelism, distinguishing the oppressed from the powerful. Jesus does an amazing analysis by addressing all aspects of a person’s life to emphasize their spiritual future. Jesus uses their material position (wealth vs. poverty),

²² In the Gospel of Luke 6:20-26, he describes Jesus teaching to “a large gathering” about certain blessings and punishments that will come to those who don’t observe the gospel message. In verse 20, Jesus promised that “blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God”, and then in verse 24, Jesus decries “woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort.” Jesus is fulfilling his mission (Luke 4:18) of “preaching good news to the poor” and warning the wealthy that they will receive no comfort in the afterlife. Jesus repeats this parallelism by comparing the “hungry” to the “well-fed”, promising in verse 21 and 25 that the hungry “will be satisfied” and the well-fed “will go hungry”, reasserting Jesus’ message about the poor and rich. Also in verses 21 and 25, Jesus uses those who weep and laugh as a parallelism to describe the comfort to the oppressed and the damnation to the powerful. Finally, Jesus blesses those who are hated, rejected, and despised because of their commitment to God (v. 22 & 23), and calls those who are well-liked and esteemed as false prophets (v. 26).

their physical needs (food), their emotional situation (weep vs. laugh), and finally their interpersonal relations (despised vs. well-liked) as indicators of what is to come in the after-life. The Gospel of Matthew (Matthew 5:1-12) tells of a different time when Jesus was delivering the “Sermon on the Mount” and taught the Beatitudes²³ to the masses. The difference here is that Jesus only spoke about blessings and didn’t mention any punishments. In addition to the blessings for the poor, the hungry, those who mourn, and the hated, Jesus also mentions four more characteristics that will yield blessings. These four characteristics are just as paradoxical as the first four. The most telling is that Jesus wants his followers to be meek²⁴, realizing that they can’t do it all by themselves and pull themselves up by their own bootstraps²⁵. Instead he is calling for those to show humility and gentleness, to not allow a righteous or arrogant attitude to overcome you, but instead emulate modesty as Jesus did. As for inheriting the earth, this imagery is significant to the modern-day Jews who believe that the Messiah is coming to restore heaven on earth and that those who attain a certain status will receive the benefits of heaven on earth, thus explaining why religious leaders were outraged at this claim that the meek would be the ones inheriting the earth. All eight of these Beatitudes fly directly in the face of society, regardless of time or context. These paradoxes that Jesus presented are the foundations for a liberating gospel message, free from oppression. Yet to be poor, sorrowful, meek, hungry, merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers, and hated, one would have to live so

²³ He blesses the meek, “for they will inherit the earth” (v. 5), he blesses the merciful, “for they will be shown mercy” (v. 7). Jesus also blesses the pure in heart, “for they will see God” (v. 8), and he blesses the peacemakers, “for they will be called children of God” (v. 9).

²⁴ Meekness is referring to power under control.

²⁵ The parallelism in the Beatitudes paints a picture that God values selfless, communal, and serving traits over self-preserving and individualistic traits.

counter-culturally in society and face the exclusion and ridicule from the world around them.

Jesus as the central figure to Christendom and humankind's connection to God raises tremendous angst to the "lukewarm" Christians (Revelations 3:16) and Pharisees (Acts 5:26–42), who, as we will see through this research, struggle with "loving things of this world... and the love of the Father is not in them" (1 John 2:15). Because of this middle-of-the-road behavior by Jesus' followers and religious leaders, he gave a parable about judgment. In probably one of the most damning and straightforward parables²⁶, Jesus' parable or prediction of the sheep and the goats, in Matthew 25, represents the crux of Natural Christianity and offers a scathing judgment upon those who misconstrue Jesus' gospel into a selfish individualism. Jesus uses this teaching on the *Sheep and Goats* as his final lesson before preparing to be killed. He ends his ministry of teaching to the masses by instructing them that only those who fed the hungry, provided drink to the

²⁶ Matthew 25:31–46: "But when the Son of man will have arrived in his majesty, and all the Angels with him, then he will sit upon the seat of his majesty. And all the nations shall be gathered together before him. And he shall separate them from one another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he shall station the sheep, indeed, on his right, but the goats on his left. Then the King shall say to those who will be on his right: 'Come, you blessed of my Father. Possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger, and you took me in; naked, and you covered me; sick, and you visited me; I was in prison, and you came to me.' Then the just will answer him, saying: 'Lord, when have we seen you hungry, and fed you; thirsty, and given you drink? And when have we seen you a stranger, and taken you in? Or naked, and covered you? Or when did we see you sick, or in prison, and visit to you?' And in response, the King shall say to them, 'Amen I say to you, whenever you did this for one of these, the least of my brothers, you did it for me.' Then he shall also say, to those who will be on his left: 'Depart from me, you accursed ones, into the eternal fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, and you did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and you did not give me to drink; I was a stranger and you did not take me in; naked, and you did not cover me; sick and in prison, and you did not visit me.' Then they will also answer him, saying: 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to you?' Then he shall respond to them by saying: 'Amen I say to you, whenever you did not do it to one of these least, neither did you do it to me.' And these shall go into eternal punishment, but the just shall go into eternal life."

thirsty, provided shelter to the stranger²⁷, provided healing to the sick, and aided the prisoner would go into eternal life. However, those who saw these needs and did nothing to help the least among them, in the same way ignored Jesus and will be cast into eternal punishment. Matthew 25:31-46 represents a dangerous dynamic to those in power, such as a politician, who has the ability to help those in need, yet chooses to do the opposite.

To support Jesus' mission and work after his death and resurrection, the Epistle of James (whom many believe to be Jesus' brother) paints a similar picture of wealth and direction on how to follow the gospel of Jesus. James recounts Jesus' teaching of the *Sheep and Goats* and writes his letter to the persecuted Christians scattered throughout Assyria and Babylon. James writes, "so if a brother or sister is naked and daily in need of food, and if anyone of you were to say to them: 'Go in peace, keep warm and nourished,' and yet nor give them the things that are necessary for the body, of what benefit is this?" (James 2:15-16). Just as his brother Jesus had done, James extols the followers to not fall into the traps of the rich. James writes, "My most beloved brothers, listen. Has not God chosen the poor in this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom that God has promised to those who love him? But you have dishonored the poor. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you through power? And are not they the ones who drag you to judgment? Are not they the ones who blaspheme the good name which has been invoked over you?" (James 2:5-7). James re-asserts Jesus' message to the world in Luke 4:18, encouraging all by "preaching good news to the poor" and that the followers of Christ were to do the same.

²⁷ Jesus uses the Parable of the Friend at Midnight, Luke 11:5-8 to highlight the challenging acts of the peasants who fought against the dehumanizing efforts of the oppressive elites. They choose not to hoard their position, food, and land and instead participated in small redistributions of wealth.

Extra-Biblical Scripture.

Even other Christian scriptural texts, such as the Book of Mormon and the Apocryphal, highlight these sentiments. To illustrate this point, the following are some selections from the Book of Mormon that highlight Jesus' message of "good news to the poor" and warnings to the rich. The first scripture is the warning that the prophet Nephi gives to the Nephites. In 2 Nephi 20:1-2 (The Book of Mormon), he states, "Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed; to turn away the needy from judgment and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey and that they may rob the fatherless." Nephi's brother Jacob also provides a warning to the people to care for the poor and needy, in Jacob 2:17-19, he writes:

Think of your brethren like unto yourselves, and be familiar with all and free with your substance, that they may be rich like unto you. But before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God. And after ye have obtained a hope in Christ ye shall obtain riches, if ye seek them; and ye will seek them for the intent to do good – to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick and the afflicted.

Mosiah 18:27-29 also has an account of the chief judge Alma commanding the Nephites that:

The people of the church should impart of their substance, every one according to that which he had; if he have more abundantly he should impart more abundantly; and of him that had but little, but little should be required; and to him that had not

should be given. And thus they should impart of their substance of their own free will and good desires towards God, and to those priests that stood in need, yea, and to every needy, naked soul. And this he said unto them, having been commanded of God; and they did walk uprightly before God, imparting to one another both temporally and spiritually according to their needs and wants.

In Helaman 4:12-13, Helaman provides the account of the Nephites who fell into wickedness like the Lamanites because of their selfishness and their lack of care for the poor. It reads:

And it was because of the pride of their hearts, because of their exceeding riches, yea, it was because of their oppression to the poor, withholding their food from the hungry, withholding their clothing from the naked, and smiting their humble brethren upon the cheek, making a mock of that which was sacred, denying the spirit of prophecy and of revelation, murdering, plundering, lying, stealing, committing adultery, rising up in great contentions, and deserting away into the land of Nephi, among the Lamanites— And because of this their great wickedness, and their boastings in their own strength, they were left in their own strength; therefore they did not prosper, but were afflicted and smitten, and driven before the Lamanites, until they had lost possession of almost all their lands.

In conjunction with the scriptures previously referenced above from the Book of Mormon, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints also believe in modern-day revelation. In the Doctrine and Covenants portion of scripture, revelation comes to the early leaders of the Mormon Church. The following are some directives revealed to modern prophets on wealth and poverty. In Doctrine and Covenants 42:30-31,

the prophet Joseph Smith received revelation in the presence of the twelve elders of the church regarding the law of consecration. It reads, “and behold, thou wilt remember the poor, and consecrate of thy properties for their support that which thou hast to impart unto them, with a covenant and a deed which cannot be broken. And inasmuch as ye impart of your substance unto the poor, ye will do it unto me.” With more church members migrating to Ohio to grow in the community of the Latter-day Saints, Joseph Smith gives an egalitarian direction to Edward Partridge to “appoint unto this people their portions, every man equal according to his family, according to his circumstances and his wants and needs” (Doctrine and Covenants 51:3). In 1831, when a group of Saints were to leave to Missouri to spread the gospel there, Joseph Smith provided this order in his revelation: “remember in all things the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted, for he that doeth not these things, the same is not my disciple” (Doctrine and Covenants 52:40). Finally, in perhaps the most damning and poignant revelation regarding riches, Joseph Smith is given revelation from God about creating a *United Order* for the poor and how to meet everyone’s needs. He writes, “behold this is the way that I, the Lord, have decreed to provide for my saints, that the poor shall be exalted, in that the rich are made low... Therefore, if any man shall take of the abundance which I have made, and impart not his portion, according to the law of my gospel, unto the poor and the needy, he shall, with the wicked, lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment” (Doctrine and Covenants 104:16 & 18)²⁸. These verses resonate with scriptures from the Old and New Testaments, all providing direct and indisputable commandments on how one should approach

²⁸ Many of the Doctrine and Covenant scriptures were intended to admonish a particular action for that time and place. Where many may argue that the *United Order* was a way to get the Mormon Church started, or is a futurist hope of how the Church may look once Christ returns. Nevertheless, the themes remain the same throughout all of scripture; there is positionality from those in need and from those in abundance.

money, from the perspective of those in need and from the position of those in abundance. As President Dieter F. Uchtdorf (2010) states in his LDS conference talk, “as I read the scriptures, it appears that those who receive the Savior’s strongest reproach are often those who hold themselves in high esteem because of their wealth, influence, or perceived righteousness.” He furthers that “it is unworthy of us as Christians to think that those who suffer deserve their suffering” (p. 69). A hymn (Crowell, 1936) that best summarizes the gospel message of Jesus sings:

Because I have been given much, I too must give;
Because of thy great bounty, Lord, each day I live
I shall divide my gifts from thee
With ev’ry brother that I see
Who has the need for help from me.
Because I have been sheltered, fed by thy good care,
I cannot see another’s lack and I not share
My glowing fire, my loaf of bread,
My roof’s safe shelter overhead,
That he too may be comforted.
Because I have been blessed by thy great love, dear Lord,
I’ll share thy love again, according to thy word.
I shall give love to those in need;
I’ll show that love by word and deed:
Thus shall be my thanks be thanks indeed.

The similar themes of caring for the needy and poor, not being selfish, and sharing in resources are highlighted in the apocryphal scriptural books as well. In the Book of the Wisdom of Solomon, to which scholars have difficulty placing authorship or an era, much of the purpose is to warn sinful people about their ungodliness and provide prophecy about the soon-coming messiah. Many scholars attribute the authorship to Philo, a celebrated Jewish philosopher in Alexandria, and think that the book was written around the 2nd century BCE. Regardless, this deuterocanonical writing provides insightful prophecy about the coming of the Messiah, whose life will be so counter-culture that the people will be driven to torture and kill him. The Book of Wisdom 2:10-22 predicts the peoples' actions and thoughts against the Messiah:

Let us oppress the poor just man, and not spare the widow, nor respect the aged grey hairs of elders. But let our strength be the law of justice, for what is weak is found to be useless. Therefore, let us encircle the just, because he is useless to us, and he is against our works, and he reproaches us with our legal offenses, and makes known to us the sins of our way of life. He promises that he has the knowledge of God and he calls himself the son of God. He was made among us to expose our very thoughts. He is grievous for us even to behold, for his life is unlike other men's lives, and immutable are his ways. It is as if we are considered by him to be insignificant, and he abstains from our ways as from filth; he prefers the newly justified, and he glories that he has God for his father. Let us see, then, if his words are true, and let us test what will happen to him, and then we will know what his end will be. For if he is the true son of God, he will receive him and deliver him from the hands of his adversaries. Let us examine him with insult

and torture, that we may know his reverence and try his patience. Let us condemn him to a most shameful death, for, according to his own words, "God will care for him." These things they thought, and they were mistaken, for their own malice blinded them. And they were ignorant of the mysteries of God; they neither hoped for the reward of justice, nor judged the value of holy souls.

The Book of Ecclesiasticus, also known as the Book of Sirach, contains Godly direction for mankind to live day-to-day. The author is believed to have been Jesus Ben Sira around 280 BCE, whom scholars believe was a Jerusalem philosopher. This book contains many of the same themes that have been already discussed, from condemning wealthy religious leaders who prey on the weak, to God's preference for the poor. This book is another scriptural reference for the dividing clusters of Christianity, condemning one and condoning the other. To demonstrate this, Sirach 21:5 (Catholic Public Domain Version) discusses God's judgment on the wealthy, stating, "Reproach and injury will make resources useless. And a house that is exceedingly wealthy will become powerless through pride. In this way, the resources of the arrogant will be eradicated." Sirach 29:11-15 gives direction for the treatment of money and the poor, stating, "Be more steadfast toward the humble, and you should not delay in the acts of mercy toward them. Assist the poor because of the commandment. And you should not send him away empty because of his dire need. Lose your money to your brother and your friend. For you should not hide it under a stone to be lost. Let your treasure be in the precepts of the Most High, and it will benefit you more than gold. Store your alms in the hearts of the poor, and it will

obtain help for you against all evil.” Finally in Sirach 34:22-27, warning is given to those who oppress the poor and needy:

The Lord is only for those who persevere for him in the way of truth and justice.

The Most High does not approve of the gifts of the iniquitous. Neither does he

have respect for the oblations of the unjust; neither will he forgive their sins

because of the multitude of their sacrifices. Whoever offers a sacrifice from the

substance of the poor is like one who sacrifices the son in the sight of his father.

The bread of the indigent is the life of the poor. Whoever cheats them out of it is a

man of blood. Whoever takes away the bread of sweat is like one who kills his

neighbor. He who sheds blood, and he who cheats the hired hand out of his

wages, are brothers.

Although these scriptures have canonicity questions, they all are widely regarded from inside and outside rabbinical and theological circles to provide supportive imagery to the message of God from the Old Testament and the works of Jesus in the New Testament. Moreover, these texts illustrate the breadth of evidentiary scripture that substantiates the message of God to care for the needy and poor and not allow the material desire of wealth to corrupt the soul.

This pre-Modern section of the political and religious dynamic has shown only a small sampling of Biblical texts that overwhelmingly condemn a misconception of the gospel message and the judgment to those who oppress. Next, ancient texts highlights the minor and major prophets who prophesied destruction and judgment on the ruling elites and wealthy for their oppression of the poor and needy. Then, the apex of Christian scripture illuminates the gospel message of Jesus, who condemned those that capitalize

upon one another; ignore the needs of the poor, hungry, sick, thirsty, and imprisoned; chastised the religious and ruling powers for their selfish individualism; and maintained a judgment of eternal damnation for those with excessive wealth. Jesus' message is then reinforced by his disciples' and followers' writings to the early Christians. This message of caring for the needy and poor and not storing up excessive wealth and material on earth is also highlighted through extra-Biblical scriptures such as the Book of Mormon and the Apocryphal books. Throughout all the scriptures, there remains the persistent binary relationship the world has with God. Institutional Christianity sees self-interest and self-ambition as positive traits that God will bless. It is the belief that individualists, pulling themselves up by their bootstraps, are true disciples of Christ, and that material wealth and gain is a manifestation of God's blessings upon them. However, in opposition to this stance, Natural Christianity sees Jesus' message as the self-sacrifice and communal care we all must adhere to, in order to show God's perfect love. Natural Christianity sees the wealthy are made low and the humble exalted. It is the message that our job is to care for the poor, needy, sick, thirsty, hungry, and the imprisoned, which is to not only tend to their immediate temporal needs, but to fight alongside them for a systemic justice that will empower them into the fullness of what God wants for them. Then, and only then, will the love of God be properly administered and their spiritual needs be met.

Modernity

Since the time of oral histories and narratives from the Bible, many philosophers and theologians have considered the nature of humanity and the acquisition of

knowledge. Some believe that “the first systematic efforts at social thought were produced in the Greek city-states in the 500s B.C.” (Collins, 1985, p. 6). However, it wasn’t until the Age of Enlightenment²⁹, also known as the birth of the Modern Era, that reason and logic were used as the standard for obtaining knowledge and identifying “scientific” truths based on objective facts and evidence. Until this point, Western history was governed by the pre-Modern era, which consisted of spiritualism, mysticism, and an eagerness to submit to the authority of a Deity. This was known as a time when faith operated as “truth”, when God was the center and creator of the universe. Pre-modernity couldn’t survive in the face of the momentum of science and reason. Immanuel Kant, one grandfather of modernity, responds to the question “*What is Enlightenment?*” (Kant, 1784), saying it is “way out”. In a nonchalant way, Kant reiterated the words of God, referencing humankind’s use of reason from the book of Genesis 3:22: “the Lord God said, ‘See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever’.” Kant describes this notion of enlightenment as a “way out of immaturity” (p. 59), or the ability to abandon a certain state of our will that imprisons our minds to the unquestioning acceptance of someone else’s will, or something else’s authority that directs our steps when reason should. Kant’s words were meant to be a critique of Christianity and any usage of Religion/mysticism to obtain and retain authority over another, without the freedom to employ reason. Since the clash between eras, modernity has been more of an “attitude” (Foucault, 1984, p. 39), where the Modern person “is not the man who goes off

²⁹ During the 17th Century, the notion of enlightenment was used to contrast the change for the dark Middle Ages, where a belief in reason and skepticism won out over the traditional dogmas and superstitions of the times.

to discover himself, but he is the man who tries to invent himself... to face the task of producing himself" (Foucault, 1984, p. 42). Thus, "man" is now the center and creator of the universe. This age of scientific reason is now firmly secure in society as the dominant paradigm shaping worldviews. Any attempt to separate one's way of thinking and behaving or one's "attitude"/worldview (Foucault, 1984) results in tremendous push back, ridicule, and marginalization from hegemonic forces (Kuhn, 1970).

Age of Enlightenment.

The Age of Enlightenment became the backdrop of current hegemony, providing stronger justifications for systems of power and control. René Descartes had a tremendous influence of the changing cultural dynamics that brought about a notion of self-actualization in the modern era. As Ramon Grosfoguel (2008) so eloquently explicates, "Rene Descartes, the founder of modern western philosophy, inaugurates a new moment in the history of western thought. He replaces God, as the foundation of knowledge in the theo-politics of knowledge of the European Middle Ages, with (western) man as the foundation of knowledge in European Modern times. All the attributes of God are now extrapolated to (western) man. Universal truth beyond time and space, privilege access to the laws of the Universe, and the capacity to produce scientific knowledge and theory is now placed in the mind of western man. The Cartesian "*ego-cogito*" ("I think, therefore I am") is the foundation of modern western sciences. By producing a dualism between mind and body and between mind and nature, Descartes was able to claim non-situated, universal, omniscient divine knowledge. This is what the Colombian philosopher Santiago Castro-Gomez called the "point zero" perspective of

Eurocentric philosophies (Castro-Gomez 2003)” (p. 4). Descartes’ insight of the self with “*cogito ergo sum*” “I think therefore I am” became the foundation for all modern human knowledge and philosophical advancement, and some contend still influences contemporary culture with the consideration of one’s self as primal nature (Gillespie, 2008). Eagleton (1994) describes this new era of modernity as “a bourgeois revolution...[and] the brave new epoch of secular, scientific rationality which aims to liberate men and women from their mystifications and irrationalisms, their false reverence for God, aristocrat and absolute monarch, and restore to them instead their dignity as fully rational, self-determining beings” (p. 2). During this time, the dominance of scientific reasoning partnered with nation-states building to broaden their power and economic control. “In a characteristic burst of self-confidence, the thinkers of the time referred to their era as the Enlightenment” (Collins, 1985, p.16). These self-professed “enlightened” thinkers created a sense of superiority over alternative histories, thoughts, and systems of knowledge. However, the greatest imperialistic endeavor was to replace God and spirituality with the dominance of the rational man. To this hubris, Durkheim admits, “we think ourselves rational, masters of our own destinies; in fact our rationality itself is given to us by the social structure we inhabit, a structure that forms us to think in one particular way than another”(Collins, 1985, p. 130). In the same way, Reinhold Niebuhr (2008) critiques modernity, stating, “Modern man lacks the humility to accept the fact that the whole drama of history is enacted in a frame of meaning too large for human comprehension or management. It is a drama in which fragmentary meanings can be discerned within a penumbra of mystery; and in which specific duties and

responsibilities can be undertaken within a vast web of relations which are beyond our power” (p. 88).

Some may argue from a Christian perspective that an individual’s efforts at becoming self-actualized (the goal of agency and awareness in attempts to understand oneself in relation to the universe) forms the genesis of the world. Whether it is a belief in pre-existence, which is “the life before earth life. All men and women lived with God as his spirit children before coming to the earth as mortal beings” (Abraham 3:26, The Book of Mormon). Perhaps it was that God was lonely and needed company, humankind tends to inject itself into the center of the meaning of the universe in a quasi-narcissistic manner. Take, for instance, the Biblical account of the Creation story as a mosaic of written and oral histories that “did not spring in its present form directly from Moses’ pen, as had once been supposed”, but rather a “process of redaction [that] took place ... over the course of the tenth to the fifth centuries before the Christian era” (Frye, 1983, p. 67). Whether perceived as a literal account or a symbolic story handed down through the generations, the Book of Genesis provides a foundation on which most Western traditions base their existential understanding of the past, present, and future. Most notably is the account of the “Fall of Man”, the narrative of Adam and Eve (Genesis 2:4–3:24) in the Garden of Eden. This story describes Adam and Eve’s search for enlightenment, only after contemplating temptation from the serpent, and their journey to understand existence and normalize their human desires. By eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil Adam and Eve became the original examples in history of an individual’s obsession with becoming self-actualized, aware, and gaining agency. They sought to understand why things happen. They sought the ability to employ their logical faculties

by creating differentiation from their own selves, from nature, and from God. In other words, as Fromm (1966) writes, they sought to understand the knowledge of good and evil as an “awakening” (p. 71) to have “complete independence” (p. 13), even “freedom from God” (p. 25). Adam and Eve’s realization of their “physical nakedness”³⁰ and the shame they felt from it led them to try to hide their selves from their vulnerabilities. In the attempt, they became “cognizant of opposites... awareness of the opposites inherent in all beings within the world” (Burber, 1968, p. 17). The Biblical Creation story yields insightful evidence regarding the inherent desires about human nature and behavior.

Private Property.

A significant change that occurred transitioning from a pre-Modern era to Modernity was society’s relationship with private property. Holton (1981) found that initially with feudalism, the notion of profit from humankind’s labor was a way to enable the poor peasant to no longer be indentured to the rich bourgeois. In much of *The Federalist Papers* (Hamilton, Madison, & Jay, 1961), the growing relationship with private property and profit was widely defended as a core attribute to modern society. In Federalist paper #10, James Madison cites that one of the greatest factions known in society is the divide between property ownership. He offers that it “is the primary task of modern legislation to regulate” (p. 79) these competing interests. However, Marx identified that the Modern problem was that the pursuits of profit and the accumulation of wealth became exploitative of the proletariat class (Daya, 1955). Marx (1971) states, “if it is said that, within the limits of free competition, individuals by following their pure self

³⁰ The biblical symbolism of nakedness refers to the ideas that mankind has something that must remain hidden and that with knowledge also comes a loss of innocence.

– interest realise their social, or rather general, interest, this means merely that they exert pressure upon one another under the conditions of capitalist production and that this clash between them can only give rise to the conditions under which their interaction took place” (p. 131). In contrast to Marx, Milton Friedman (Buchanan, 1993; Samuels, 1961), the modern champion of private property, asserts that the state must maintain a freedom of private property without any interfering regulation. He sees that the ability for any human to freely obtain and release their property is a way of assuring each individual’s pure liberty. The economist Lorenz Von Stein (Singelmann, 1986) disagrees with Friedman. He purports that private property is a social structure for those who “have”, at the expense of those who “have not”. In the same way, Ryan (1977) offers that private property is the opposite of liberty, but instead, ambition is what ultimately restricts everyone’s freedom. As with the Pharisees and Prophets of antiquity, the fight over private property ownership lies at the heart of this divide in society, and most notably within a religious/political Christian dynamic.

Consumerist Behavior.

More recently, 20th century Western history reveals narratives where political leaders use scientific reasoning to control mass populations by understanding an individual’s psyche. Veblen (1912) saw this play out in the form of “conspicuous consumption” (p. 83), where the current materialism is understood as a consumerist behavior of the middle class to mimic the spending habits of the wealthy, in which property would be the associating factor that raises one to the upper class. Likewise,

Sigmund Freud identified this behavior in his idea of the “id”³¹ (Freud, 1920/1943; Cohn, 1970), which is the unconscious desires that all humans have but are afraid to acknowledge or openly act upon because of the potentially abnormal or deviant categories they would fall into. Business leaders such as Edward Bernays used his Uncle Freud’s teachings and exported it into the field of advertising and marketing. Bernays found that by appealing to and normalizing the hidden, inner desires of a capitalist target population and associating those desires with various products to buy, candidates to elect, or opinions to have, people would want to buy that product, vote for that candidate, and have shared opinions. This self-serving behavior of the consumer is easily predicted and controlled in a capitalist market. Bernays describes this behavior as “the conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element of a democratic society” (Bernays, 2004, p. 37). Ann Stoler (1997) describes this “psychological and cognitive assessment of human behavior... as analytic strategies that deftly circumvent questions of power” (p. 101), enabling hegemonic processes to flourish. With what appears to be an absence of an internal locus of control³², the public falls into the spectrum of power and control from the manipulated (followers) to the manipulator (leaders). Individuals may acquiesce to their id and follow along to gain in self-confidence by associating with what they are told is the norm. As Cooper (2001) writes regarding this submission to the id as a form of social conformity, “It is the self, fighting with the self, and even the *Me* maybe left out of it” (p. 130).

³¹ This is one of the stages of human personalities that Sigmund Freud uses to describe a person’s *pleasure principle*, one’s desire to seek out pleasure and avoid pain.

³² Locus of control is an idea developed by Julian Rotter (1966), who found that individuals vary in their belief regarding whether they have the ability to control aspects within their life (internal locus of control), or if outside forces such as God, the universe, and powerful people control their life (external locus of control).

Conversely, those individuals who are actually the ones who manipulate and create the social ideas are utilizing their superego³³ (Freud, 1920/1943), that grandiose sense of self-worth and contribution, yields both positive and negative notions of control over the masses. Irving Janis (1954) writes about individuals who have perfected the practice of influencing others have, generally, a higher self-esteem and self-efficacy, along with a commitment to a theoretical framework, in which their actions are pivotal in the advancement of the precepts of that theory. Generally, contemporary American politicians, such as those in this research study, are able to engage in hegemonic processes in order to maintain their elected power and propagate a worldview that reinforces and solidifies the dominant social, economic, and political paradigms.

Modern Theorists.

There are many modern thinkers who influenced the promulgation of one of the two religious/political theoretical clusters on which this dissertation (Institutional or Natural). During the 16th century when many Dominican priests, most notably Bartolome de las Casas, changed their worldviews and started protesting their churches over the brutality of the Catholic Church's conquest into new regions (Dawsey, 2001) is focused. This Natural Christianity view took form as the priests saw rampant racial prejudice, exploitation of labor, and the forced modernization of rural tribes. They simply couldn't sit by idly after reading Ecclesiasticus 34:22 (Catholic Public Domain Version): "the man who takes away his neighbor's living murders him, and the man who deprives a hired man of his wages is guilty of bloodshed". In 1630, John Winthrop wrote about the model

³³ Another one of Freud's stages of human personality, the superego is the ideal of how one should behave and think, referenced by the morals and values one learns from childhood.

that Christian leadership in America should emulate. Winthrop outlined an economically progressive model that would be based “on an understanding of love” and would embed both concepts of “Christian agape and caritas” (Schweitzer, 2005, p. 442). Winthrop saw that the “riche and mighty have a penchant for exploiting the poore, and despised” (p. 447), and thus promoted a Natural Christianity system for the New England commonwealth. In Winthrop’s work, he used both the Greek *agape* and Latin *caritas* to promote “a metaphorical love-based-in-law, to be the foundation of (his) exemplary commonwealth” (p. 463). Stephen Innes (1995) referred to Winthrop’s economic model as “communal Capitalism” (p. 75), a way for spiritual egalitarianism to be integrated into the social, economic, and political program. Just like Winthrop, William Penn in 1660 highlighted a “Quaker doctrine (that) spelled out egalitarian implication of Christian teaching” (Morgan, 1983, p. 295). When discussing Christ as the model, he observed that he “came Poor into the World, and so lived it” (p. 295). Penn wanted to emulate Christ and relate to “the Young, the Ignorant, and the Poor... he gladly assimilated their humility to himself, gladly shared their sufferings, for he was convinced that in doing so he was opening the way for the spirit” (p. 295). This Natural Christianity is what Pennsylvania was intended to reflect, “If his colony turned out as he wished” (p. 310).

The 1700s and 1800s saw substantial change amidst early fundamental Christian society. Most notably were Cotton Mather and his early 1700s sermons, *Durable Riches* and *Honour the Lord with thy Substance*. His sermons provided the “justification for the accumulation of material wealth, which came to be known in later years as the Gospel of Wealth” (Bernhard, 1976, p. 241). Where Puritan society used the ‘jeremiad’ sermons as essential to Christian discipline, preaching the woes of riches, power and individuality,

Mather provided an alternative by using ‘Do-Good’ sermons that “inadvertently reinforce(d) the values – individualism, acquisitiveness, and a competitive spirit – that he hoped to combat” (p. 241). Mather felt that “instead of bewailing present sins, the Do-Good sermons stressed the rewards open to those who dedicate themselves to the doing of good” (p. 227). His approach was an attempt to focus on the blessings of being good and not emphasize the woes of sinning. Cotton Mather argued that there are benefits that good works bring, that “God will grant much prosperity to a town... filled with doers of good” (p. 239). Though the ‘Do-Good’ gospel was not specifically Institutional Christianity, it aided their philosophy and was “carefully wrought linking of piety, charity and prosperity” (p. 226). This transition from ‘jeremiad’ sermons towards ‘Do-Good’ sermons brought a religious justification, just like the eudaemonism of the Sadducees, for wealth, riches and acquisition.

The unintended consequence of Cotton Mather’s ‘Do-Good’ sermons was the start of a shift in theology, whereby American clergy moved from a strict stance preaching self-sacrifice and humility (Natural Christianity) to a relaxed view, interpreting riches and power as blessings from God (Institutional Christianity). Where it once was the Calvinist clergy who “roundly condemned individual profit-making, which they regarded as usurious, sinful, and disunifying” (Schweitzer, 2005, p. 446), Calvinism had “evolved into Protestant humanism” (Howe, 1972, p. 308) and regarded individual profit-making as an example of the Protestant work-ethic (Weber, 1958). This transition took firm root “in the spring of 1812, (where) a Unitarian minister in London named Thomas Belsham produced large group of letters for Boston clergymen. The letters discussed that there was a transition taking place among the clergy from Calvinism to liberal theology

and feared it would spread beyond Boston” (Howe, 1972, p. 312). By the 1820s, Calvinism had been replaced in Christian churches throughout all of Massachusetts with a more liberal theology. “The Boston bourgeoisie eventually wearied of listening to Puritan jeremiads... they were experiencing little guilt at waxing prosperous. The optimistic, energetic ‘merchant princes’ of Boston did not take kindly when Calvinist clergymen informed them they were miserable sinners” (p. 317). Many of these ‘merchant princes’, who made their own fortunes, expected that the same thing would occur with their spiritual salvation. “Surely (they thought) salvation, like earthly prosperity, must be a reward for those ambitious enough to earn it; the Liberal clergy told these men what they wanted to hear” (p. 317). The relationship between the parishioners and pastors became co-dependent. The members who had enough to rent a pew generally had significantly more influence in the doctrine that was preached by the clergy because they essentially paid the clergy’s salaries. “The successful business or professional man... was no longer willing to hear his pastor call him names in church he would resent. He began to disregard exhortations to humility and to ape aristocratic tastes and values. (They) sought to identify with the aristocracy above rather than the petite bourgeoisie below” (p. 321). Niebuhr (2008) saw this “descent from Puritanism to Yankeeism in America as a fairly rapid one. Prosperity, which had been sought in the service of God, was now sought for its own sake” (p. 52). This decline from Calvinism (Natural Christianity) produced a mutated version of Christian morality that flourished throughout American churches. It was a theology that condoned the values of capitalism (Institutional Christianity) and established it as an important value to American culture. (Matthews, 1987; Howe, 1972)

Though this transition was moving at a fast pace within Christian theology, remnants of opposition remained. Alexis de Tocqueville believed that capitalistic individualism is the greatest opponent to Christianity's 'divine liberty' (Heilbroner & Milberg, 1999). Also, the Catholic, Mormon, and Anglican churches maintained a strong suspicion of capitalism throughout this theological transition, mainly because of the resounding differences capitalism had to Christian morality. Other leaders, such as Walter Rauschenbusch (Press, 2005), who led the Social Gospel movement in response to the changing theology, focused on the human condition and stressed that our job was to "repair the world" by bringing spiritual and temporal happiness to those in need. In the same way, Henry George who was a religious political economist around the late 1800s, advocated for equity in basic land ownership, which he saw as the primary key to living out God's principles. Henry George (Dawsey, 2001) found that much of the social injustices in this world are traced back to the issue of concentrated land ownership. He showed how the oppressive, dehumanizing, enslaving, and downright evil economic system of capitalism led to concentrated land ownership, thus producing widespread poverty. The reality of .023% of the world's population owning over 50% of the world's land (Dawsey, 2001, p. 206) highlighted the insidious nature of capitalism. Instead, Henry George believed that God intended the land to benefit all of his creations, not just the elite, and through it, provide social justice to those in need. Finally, the famous American poet Walt Whitman added to this debate over the evils of capitalism and wrote, "ignorant man is demented with the madness of owning things... he is the materialist and infidel" (Pascal, 1989, p. 145).

In the early 1900s, Andrew Carnegie, an American steel tycoon, wrote two philosophical tracts about Religion and wealth. These writings became known as the “Gospel of Wealth” and present as the keystone writings justifying contemporary American capitalism from a Christian perspective, thus adding to the validity of Institutional Christianity. To start, Carnegie (1906a) justifies the differences between the poor and rich³⁴ that it is simply an expression of natural order and should be celebrated. Carnegie cites four primary objectives for living on this earth: “Individualism, Private Property, the Law of Accumulation of Wealth, and the Law of Competition” (pp. 529-530). He states that “not evil, but good, has come to the race from the accumulation of wealth” (p. 529). Carnegie references Jesus Christ as the savior and role-model for all, but he changes much of what that model should resemble. He writes, “The highest life is probably to be reached, not by such imitation of the life of Christ, but by recognizing the changed conditions of this age, and expressing this spirit (wealth)” (p. 534). He also furthers that when giving to others and providing charity, “the main consideration should be to help those who will help themselves” (p. 536). Carnegie reserves poignantly opinionated views on the concept of charity and general welfare, to which he argues that it is better to throw the money away than give it to a lazy person³⁵. In his second tract, Carnegie (1906b) furthers this message to the American people, whom he feels “can be trusted to deal with improper methods of business and excessive wealth accumulation wisely” (p. 1097). Ironically, Carnegie wrote this at the height of the Robber Barons era,

³⁴ Carnegie (1906a) “in the former days there was little difference between the dwelling, dress, food and environment of the chief and those of his retainers... the contrast between the palace of the millionaire and the cottage of the laborer with us to-day measures the change which has come with civilization. This change, however, is not to be deplored, but welcomed as highly beneficial” (p. 526).

³⁵ Carnegie (1906a) states, “it were better for mankind that the millions of the rich were thrown into the sea than so spent as to encourage the slothful, the drunken, the unworthy. Of every thousand dollars spent in so-called charity to-day, it is probably that \$950 is unwisely spent” (p. 535).

which preceded the Great Depression, for Carnegie believed that any attempt to overturn the present conditions is ungodly and unrighteous. He saw that the efforts of those wanting fairness, shared wealth, and communalism generally came along with an incompetent and lazy work ethic. Carnegie (1906b) believed that “in individualism lies the secret of the steady progress of civilization. As civilization advanced men became less communistic and more individualistic” (p. 1097).

In opposition to this belief in every-expanding progress that industrialists such as Carnegie purport, many view it as delaying the inevitable and eventually something has to give. Niebuhr (2008) wrote in response, “For we have thus far sought to solve all our problems by the expansion of our economy. This expansion cannot go on forever and ultimately we must face some vexatious issues of social justice in terms which will not differ too greatly from those which the wisest nations of Europe have been forced to use” (p. 29). Bill Press (2005) emphasizes Niebuhr’s proclamation that Christians must be “a moral man in an immoral society” (p. 22). Lindsay (2007) found that it wasn’t until the failure of the market and a country suffering through its worst economic challenge (the Great Depression) that the message from Institutional Christians started to fall on deaf ears. Furthermore, Institutional Christianity took an even bigger hit during the 1920s, when William Jennings Bryan prosecuted John Scopes in the Scopes Monkey Trial. The Institutional Christianity cluster lost even more ground after the failure of capitalism during the Great Depression and with the nationally public position that evolution theory taught in schools was evil. Because of the Scope Monkey Trial, Institutional Christianity was “ridiculed in the national medias reactionary and anti-intellectual” (Lindsay, 2007, p. 6).

Catholic Church.

Although not based systemically within the Catholic Church, many high-ranking and very influential Catholic leaders decried Carnegie's message as well. These were the priest, bishops, Archbishops, and lay-leaders that helped foster a movement of liberation theology in the neediest of communities. Though "the Vatican has consistently distanced itself from these liberation theologies, liberation theologians, in spite of many personal rejections by Vatican Congregations, continue to play a strong role both in academic circles of the Catholic Church and in the lay circle of Catholic leadership" (Osborne, 2009, p. 6). One of these leaders is Dominican priest Gustavo Gutierrez (1979), known as the father of Liberation Theology, who repudiated the claim that social welfare and charity is solely an individualist effort. Gutierrez (1979) states that "individual almsgiving and social reformism is a type of love that never leaves its own front porch; if you love those who love you, what merit is there in that? On the other hand, my world will change greatly if I go out to meet other people on their path and consider them as my neighbor, as the Good Samaritan did" (p. 8). He saw that oppressive structures were only created to benefit the few, and that the true sin is in the "negation of human beings as brothers and sisters" (p. 21). Gutierrez encourages those who have made a personal commitment to aid in the liberation work of the Gospel, to turn to politics and become influential there, since it "embraces and conditions every area of human life and activity" (p. 10). Gutierrez (1976) cautioned however, that these attempts at liberation will come with resistance. He cites that "human history has been written by a white hand, a male hand, from the dominating social class. The perspective of the defeated in history is

different. Attempts have been made to wipe from their minds the memories of their struggles. This is to deprive them of a source of energy, of a historical will to rebellion” (p. 6). Individuals, such as Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador, who similarly preached a liberation gospel, was gunned down in March of 1980 by these dominions of power, all the while celebrating Mass and preparing the Eucharist. In the same way, Rev. Velazquez Romero, who was gunned down in Tijuana, Mexico, for taking a stand against the corrupt government and drug lords, promoted the motto: “carry a newspaper in one hand, and a Bible in the other – reality and the word of God” (Marosi, 2005). Helder Camara (1971), the Catholic Archbishop to Brazil, found similar frustration within the power structures of society. He wrote, “When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why they are poor, they call me a communist” (p. 53). In his work he focused on seven specific sins that have formed in modern society due to individual selfishness and capitalism. Camara cautioned against falling prey as a society to “racialism, colonialism, war, paternalism, pharisaism, alienation, and fear” (p. 77). These two modern leaders play a pivotal role in the validation of the Natural Christianity cluster and were some of the first to challenge the ruling elite in government and the church, paving the way for many more leaders to find their voice.

Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1982) paints a clear and definitive portrait of God in opposition to the Institutional Christianity perspective. Tutu states, “God is on the side of the oppressed, the marginalized, and the exploited. He is a God of the poor, of the hungry, and of the naked” (p. 36). When discussing Jesus, Tutu writes, “I have never seen anyone who cares so much for people, especially people in trouble. Nowhere are we told that he ever turned anybody away who was in need” (p. 27). Instead, who did Jesus

turn away? He turned away the Rich Young Ruler (Matthew 19:6–22) for not being able to part with his money and possessions. “Jesus revolutionized religion by showing that God was really a disreputable God, a God on the side of the social pariahs” (p. 28). Jesus preached that the sinners, prostitutes, tax-collectors, and lepers would all get into Heaven before the religious leaders. Tutu furthers his discussion about Jesus into the realm of Natural Christianity, citing the Jesus was an heir to the prophetic tradition. That said it is impossible to read the narrative of the prophets without concluding that they all condemned the worthlessness of religiosity without a commitment to changing the socio-political injustices of the time. “It is our Christian faith which determines our socio-political involvement. We ask: is such and such an action, policy, or attitude consonant with our understanding of the teachings of Jesus Christ? How does it square up to what He called the summary of Laws, loving God and loving one’s neighbor: two sides of the same coin” (p. 33). “If certain laws are not in line with the imperatives of the Gospel then Christians must agitate for their repeal by all peaceful means” (p. 34). Tutu critiques the church when it started allying itself with the rich and powerful, and thus condoning capitalism. Tutu writes, “I loathe Capitalism because it gives far too great play to our inherent selfishness. I would look for a socio-economic system that placed the emphasis on sharing and giving rather than on self-aggrandizement and getting. Capitalism is exploitative and I can’t stand that” (p. 100). He furthers that “Capitalism seems to give unbridled license to human cupidity, and has a morality that belongs properly to the jungle. What I have seen of Capitalism and the free enterprise system is quite morally repulsive” (p. 112). Tutu advocates for a society that is more compassionate and caring, that values humanity not because of what you can get out of them, but because they are

children of God, created in God's image and have infinite value. Thus, speaking from a Natural Christianity platform, it is up to us as Christian leaders to fight against oppression and individualism and replace it with a loving communal approach for justice.

In the United States, "Christian compassion has been transformed from 'How can we improve the lives of those less fortunate than we are?' to 'How can we improve our own lives?'" (Press, 2005, p. 25). This all-too-real standard amongst modern American Christianity is highly reflected throughout the Institutional Christianity cluster. Mother Teresa is quoted as saying that "the spiritual poverty of the Western World is much greater than the physical poverty of our people" (Wooding, 2003). What Mother Teresa is criticizing is reflected in an important Institutional Christianity manifesto, entitled "Manhattan Declaration". Robert P. George, a constitutional professor at Princeton University, wrote this 4,700 word manifesto that promised resistance from conservatives to the point of civil disobedience. For the Institutional Christianity cluster, this manifesto is intended on preserving the values of individualism and private property. Robert P. George argues "for the enforcement of a moral code as strictly traditional as that of a religious fundamentalist. What makes his natural law 'new' is that it disavows dependence on divine revelation or biblical Scripture. Instead, George rests his ethics on a foundation of 'practical reason': 'invoking no authority beyond the authority of reason itself'" (Kirkpatrick, 2009). With this reasoning emphasis, George sees these activist bishops and priests as folly and misconstrued in theology. He states that they are "making utter nuisances of themselves about poverty and injustice, like the Old Testament prophets. They should not lobby or advocate for specific remedies or detailed economic

principles like progressive tax rates, higher minimum wage, and, presumably, the expansion of health care” (Kirkpatrick, 2009).

Finally, in this modern section of Natural and Institutional Christianity, Catholic popes play a predominant role in influencing both the public and public policy-makers, though politicians may end up picking and choosing what they want to integrate into their worldview from the pope’s edicts. That said Catholic popes throughout the ages have had extremely poignant opinions regarding the sins of individualism and capitalism. In the *Catholic Documents on Peace, Justice and Liberation*, editors O’Brien and Shannon (1977) review and publish key writings by Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI. In the introduction, O’Brien and Shannon (1977) write that “after the fall of Adam and Eve it became necessary to introduce government and laws to regulate the community and restrain evil” (pp. 19-20). It was St. Thomas Aquinas who promoted the idea that society was an “order existing for the mutual exchange of services for the common good. Government is part of that structure” (p. 19). A primary challenge to the common good is the idea of private property. “Private property and coercive human authority were recognized to derive from human sin” (p. 18). These popes and Catholic leaders saw that new churches were attracting the growing merchant class by preaching a doctrine that promoted hard work and then celebrated the successes of that hard work as a sign that God is blessing you. Therefore, Pope John XXIII, Paul VI, and John Paul II all wrote documents combating this doctrine.

In Pope John XXIII’s message, *Mater et Magistra (Mother and Teacher)* (1961), he writes first for the need for government, especially when dealing with private property, and states that government should not “depart from the requirements of the

common good” (O’Brien & Shannon, p. 75). He states that “the right of private ownership is clearly evident in the Gospels, which reveal Jesus Christ ordering the rich to share their goods with the poor so as to turn them into spiritual possessions” (O’Brien & Shannon, p. 80). When commenting on immigration, Pope John XXIII wrote in *Pacem in Terris (Peace on Earth)* (1963) that “every human being has the right to freedom of movement and of residence. The right to emigrate to other countries and take up residence there” (O’Brien & Shannon, p. 129). Pope John XXIII comments that even though every country must have a ruling authority, that doesn’t mean that they all are appointed by God. Pope Paul VI in *Populorum Progressio (On the Development of Peoples)* (1967) wrote regarding private property that property “does not constitute for anyone an absolute and unconditional right... the common good sometimes demands their expropriation” (O’Brien & Shannon, p. 309). Pope Paul VI writes in *Gaudium et Spes (Joy and Hope)* (1965) that, according to God’s plan, he gives the vocation of men a communitarian nature. He states, “This communitarian character is developed and consummated in the work of Jesus Christ” (O’Brien & Shannon, p. 206). Furthermore, Pope Paul VI preaches that “no one content himself with a merely individualistic morality. Obligations of justice and love are fulfilled only if each person, contributing to the common good, according to his own abilities and needs of others” (O’Brien & Shannon, p. 204). Finally in *Centesimus Annus (One Hundred Year Anniversary)*, Pope John Paul II (1991) quotes Genesis 1:28 regarding private property and states, “God gave earth to man for the sustenance. But the earth does not yield its fruits without particular human response to God’s gift, work. It is through work that man, using his intelligence

and exercising his freedom, makes part of the earth his own, precisely the part he has acquired through work; this is the origin of individual property” (paragraph 31.1).

Current Pope Francis from Argentina is spearheading the way for dramatic and much needed changes to the Church by following the key message of the Gospels as emulated by St. Francis of Assisi. Pope Francis presents a progressive vision and future of the Catholic Church, almost completely opposite of his predecessor Pope Benedict XVI. In a recent interview (Spadaro, 2013), Pope Francis highlighted the work of the church must be to improve the situation for the needy and impoverished. He also took an unprecedented stance on many social issues that the Catholic Church has been dogmatically in opposition to. Pope Francis was asked about some key cultural social issues such as homosexuality, abortion, and the use of contraception. To this end he states, “the dogmatic and moral teachings of the church are not all equivalent. The church’s pastoral ministry cannot be obsessed with the transmission of a disjointed multitude of doctrines to be imposed insistently” (Spadaro, 2013, p. 26). Moreover, the current Pope Francis is making tremendous strides in the changing the tone in which Catholics view women in the church and his emphasis on humility and meekness, reasserting the church’s role in combating poverty and sickness.

Throughout all modernity, the challenge has persisted: does mankind trust the mystery of a religion and God, or yield to the powers of reason and logic. This core debate separates the two competing clusters of Institutional Christianity and Natural Christianity. Institutional Christianity fully embraces modernity and emphasizes that the individualism of man is not a negative or evil thing. Through reason and natural law, Institutional Christianity arrives at the premise that property, wealth, and accumulation

are all signs of blessings by God and should be regarded in such a way. Conversely, Natural Christianity disputes this doctrine and instead reinforces scripture that commands Christians to be communal, sacrificing to the self, and sharing all possessions and riches with those in need.

Contemporary (Postmodernity)

Most contemporary Christian American politicians have been influenced by a Western historical narrative that finds its roots in the Biblical oral histories of the Creation story, through the Age of Enlightenment and the era of scientific reason proclaiming humankind's imperialistic greatness, where man's ability to reason replaces God as the center and creator of the universe. As we have seen, in this age of scientific reason that we are living now, the masses undergo unconscious coercion and consent and the contemporary American politician is either able to find congruence with their religious and political theories or is able to cope with dissonance. Next, this research examines the contemporary climate for the Christian American politician from a justice, religious, and political perspective. From the two political/religious theoretical clusters, this examination reveals how the contemporary Christian American politician either has a congruent identity (counter-hegemonic) with their religious and political worldviews, or experiences dissonance between the religious and political worldviews as a result of that politician's skillful rhetoric and purposeful, deceptive, passive maintenance of hegemony.

Church and State.

The history of America's relationship with Religion has been varied and inconclusive. Scholars agree that "few areas of constitutional law lies in greater confusion" (Ingber, 1989, p. 233) than the first clause of the Bill of Rights, the so-called "establishment clause" (First Amendment, United States Constitution), "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof". With conflicting and ambiguous language by our nation's founders, it is not shocking to see a confused public, as well as a tumultuous relationship between government and Religion. Appearing to be contradicting to the Bill of Rights, the *Northwest Ordinances of 1787* declared in its third article: "religion... being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind... shall forever be encouraged." Although America has had a schizophrenic relationship with Religion, it was not until recently that the defense of religious liberties became polarized in the courthouse. The Supreme Court had only two cases prior to 1944 on the issue of Religion and recently settled on the *Lemon*³⁶ test (purpose, primary effect, and entanglement) as a rubric in interpreting the "establishment clause" (Ingber, 1989, p. 252 & 309; Brown & Bowling, 2003). However, much concern and confusion remains regarding definitions and the role of Religion. Ingber (1989) recognizes that "part of that confusion is due to a lack of a legally functional definition of religion that recognizes the important distinction between religion and ideology" (p. 332). In contrast, when reversing the relationship of Religion to government, there is an overwhelming belief that the authority of government is God-

³⁶ This is associated with the 1971 *Lemon v. Kurtzman* case 403 U.S. 602

ordained and is intended to advance the betterment and safety of society³⁷. Frankel (2001) writes a varying interpretation of the Establishment Clause stating that in observing the liberating actions of Jesus and Moses, priests, bishops, pastors, and other religious leaders, we are compelled to use the Holy Scripture and our faith to preach against blatant political systems of oppression.

In the political arena, religious rhetoric abounds from contemporary American politicians. Whether it is used as a measuring stick during campaigns for determining whether or not the person should be elected, or as the reason why someone takes a certain stand on an issue, almost all contemporary Christian American politicians' political nature is influenced by their religious culture. Whereas most of these politicians use their religious affiliation as a selling point to the electorate, there are some who believe that their candidacy and office is divinely ordained and pre-destined. Numerous examples exist of the failed (as well as the successful) politician who entered a certain political race believing God told them to run for that office. This use of effective political rhetoric ranges from past presidents, such as George W. Bush, who would make statements such as, "I believe God wants me to be president", to the 2008 vice presidential nominee Sarah Palin claiming "it's God's plan" for her to be vice president (Knowles, 2010). Former Sen. Norm Coleman stated before his loss to Sen. Al Franken that "God wants me to serve" (Knowles, 2010). In the recent 2010 elections, failed Senate candidates Christine

³⁷ Scriptural texts, such as Romans 13:1 "Let every soul be subject to higher authorities. For there is no authority except from God and those who have been ordained by God". 1 Samuel 8:22, "Then the Lord said to Samuel, 'Listen to their voice, and appoint a king over them.'" Doctrine and Covenants (The Book of Mormon) 134:1: "We believe that governments were instituted of God for the benefit of man; and that he holds men accountable for their acts in relation to them, both in making laws and administering them, for the good and safety of society." In *Populorum Progressio*, article 84 (1967) Pope Paul VI states, "government leaders, your task is to draw your communities into closer ties of solidarity with all men, and to convince them that they must accept the necessary taxes on their luxuries and their wasteful expenditures in order to promote the development of nations and the preservation of peace."

O'Donnell and Sharon Angle both claimed that God will lead their campaigns to victory (Knowles, 2010). However, one of the boldest statements comes from Rep. Michele Bachmann, who claimed that "God then called me to run for United States Congress" and when asked if she would run for United States President, she stated, "I will not seek higher office if God is not calling me to do it" (Knowles, 2010). There are also examples of high ranking Democrats using Biblical scripture to justify positions on controversial policy. In 2012, Pres. Obama stated in an interview with ABC News (Peralta, 2012) regarding his support for same-sex marriage:

In the end, the values that I care most deeply about and she (Michelle) cares most deeply about is how we treat other people and, you know, I, you know, we are both practicing Christians and obviously this position may be considered to put us at odds with the views of others but, you know, when we think about our faith, the thing at root that we think about is not only Christ sacrificing himself on our behalf, but it's also the Golden Rule, you know, treat others the way you would want to be treated. And I think that's what we try to impart to our kids and that's what motivates me as president and I figure the most consistent I can be in being true to those precepts, the better I'll be as a as a dad and a husband and, hopefully, the better I'll be as president.

On the less demonstrative side of one's expression of faith, many contemporary American politicians maintain a connection with their faith but do not express it as evidence or reason for their stances or candidacy. Many assert that the constitutional separation of church and state restricts religious values from informing one's position or

simply believe that faith has nothing to do with public service. Some politicians take a hard line literal stance that the Establishment Clause means that, as government officials, one mustn't assert their own faith when making decisions because it violates the Constitution (Brown & Bowling, 2003), while other politicians believe that government is a man-made entity and thus is not of God. Therefore, one's philosophy need not be influenced by their religious pretext, but by economics and political theory. Politicians who maintain this divorcing of government and religion generally believe that the relevance of certain commandments to the followers of that faith doesn't apply to one's actions when acting as a leader who dictates the rules and regulations of the secular government; the religious mandates are only applicable on an individual level³⁸. Amongst the various perspectives of politics and faith integration or exclusion, there tends to be many inconsistencies and hypocrisies. A popular cultural Christian fad is the bracelet that reads "WWJD", which means "What Would Jesus Do". Many Natural Christianity politicians hold true to this philosophy and assert that if Jesus was serving in government, he wouldn't ignore God's law and suppress his moral code for the sake of a secular law and political philosophy. Instead, Jesus would pass and promote policies that aid the poor, help the orphan and widow, liberate the prisoner and heal the sick; just as scripture had ordered him too.

³⁸ As mentioned above, most religious leaders from all traditions (Catholic, Evangelical, Mormon, Jewish, etc.) would dispute this individualistic approach and hold that politicians are ecclesiastically responsible for their public policy actions.

Politician Behavior.

Though dissonance or congruence occurs regarding the contemporary Christian politician between their faith and political behavior, a politician's internal motivation is important to examine in order to better understand their behavior. It can be assumed that the nature of a political actor is intended to be wise and virtuous; however, we cannot ignore the overwhelming evidence of the self-interested, ambitious and corrupt politicians. Madison (1961) in the *Federalist Papers* refers to the political actor in this way: "It is vain to say that enlightened statesmen will be able to adjust to these clashing interests and render them all subservient to the public good. Enlightened statesmen will not always be at the helm" (p. 80). Mayhew (1974) kick started this idea that politicians were simply just single-minded re-election seekers. He found that this concept of "position taking" is embedded in every position, vote or action a politicians takes as a symbolic gesture intended to aid in their re-election. Fiorina (1989) adds to this idea that politicians are always acting in their own self interest. He found that since the primary goal of the typical congressman was to get re-elected, that politician would then make laws, have specialized spending projects, and highlight the need for a bureaucratic fixit service to aid their constituents all positioned to aid them in getting re-elected. Anthony Downs (1957) used his economic expertise to describe political behavior. He states that "economists have been content to discuss government action as though governments were run by perfect altruists whose only motive was to maximize social welfare. As a result, economists have been unable to incorporate government into the rest of economic theory, which is based on the premise that all men act out of self-interest" (p. 150). Downs furthers his hypothesis stating that the goal of government and motivation of

politicians is to attain the income, power and prestige that goes along with service in that capacity. Ultimately, politicians are rational actors who generally seek office for the benefits and power that comes with the title and will do, act, or say whatever is necessary to maintain this position, for to do otherwise would be irrational³⁹.

In regards to the rational behavior of contemporary Christian American politicians to position themselves for re-election, there remains a justification by some religious figures to support the Institutional Christianity perspective of a politician and those acting from a Natural Christianity perspective are perceived as irrational. A major proponent of Institutional Christianity in the public is the popular monthly magazine *Christianity Today*, which under the editorship of Carl F.H. Henry used the magazine to unite evangelicals around the Christian doctrine of individualism, wealth and prosperity (Flipse, 2003). Likewise, Christian writers such as Bruce Wilkinson (2000), who wrote the *Prayer of Jabez*, promote a prosperity doctrine that has Christians praying “Lord, increase the value of my investment portfolio”. Television programs such as the Christian Broadcasting Network and the 700 Club also contributed to the growth of Institutional Christianity and informed the public and politicians of what doctrine should be accepted or rejected. “We will continue to see unqualified nonsense as the major product of the Christian churches, Jimmy and Tammy Faye Bakker are only the first clowns to enter the arena” (Deloria Jr., 1994, p. 235). Vine Deloria was referring to the founders of the Christian Broadcast Network, who exited the public eye because of a sex and

³⁹ A fair assumption that politicians seeking re-election will strategically behave in a way that increases their chances at maintaining the power and notoriety that comes with the position. If a politician is seeking a different office, it is safe to assume that their behavior will adjust to increase their chances of winning that position. Moreover, if a politician is retiring, it is safe to predict that their behavior will be different than maintaining power and would instead reflect legacy building behavior.

embezzlement scandal. Jim Bakker would later admit he was wrong and that he “helped propagate an imposter gospel” (Press, 2005, p. 224). The current national leaders of this prosperity doctrine is Pat and Jan Crouch, who are the founders of Trinity Broadcasting Network and make over \$100 million a year doing their televangelism ministry/minstrel show (Breitbart & Ebner, 2004). The couple has been sued countless amount of times for a litany of reasons, and have settle out of court each time. Currently, they are being sued by their granddaughter and son for embezzlement of ministry funds (Goffard, 2012). Press (2005) critiques this Institutional Christianity perspective because of it’s obsession with wealth and power, stating that “religious leaders are letting nationalism, patriotism and partisan politics cloud their vision” (p. 82).

Reagan Administration.

President Ronald Reagan’s presidency was a good example of Institutional Christianity embedded in the policies and actions taken by his administration. “Critics argue that Reagan’s massive military spending and fiscal policies, which widened the gap between rich and poor, were at odds with a Christian approach to public policy. Archbishop Desmond Tutu called Reagan’s support of apartheid in that country ‘immoral, evil, and totally un-Christian’” (Lindsay, 2007, p. 32). Hans (2011) stated that “Reagan dismissed Nelson Mandela’s African National Congress as communist terrorists.” Institutional Christianity leaders such as James Dobson, who is the head of Focus on the Family, was part of Reagan’s inner circle and helped him create and use aggressive political rhetoric such as ‘evil empire’ and ‘axis of evil’ when referring to foreign policy (Lindsay, 2007). When dealing with Latin America, Reagan’s presidency

is mired in corruption and murder. For example, when Guatemalan dictator Efraim Rios Montt, branded the ‘born again butcher’, was exposed by Amnesty International in 1982 for his slaughter and torture of thousands of civilians, Reagan rose to Rios Montt’s defense and criticized Amnesty International for misconstruing the information (Hans, 2011). This occurred often under his presidency, where he would refer to a dictator as an evangelical minister who is following God. Meanwhile, back in the United States, a small group of churches announced that they would offer sanctuary to Central American refugees who were under the oppression of Reagan’s hand-picked dictators in these Latin American countries (Golden & McConnell, 1986). It didn’t take long for Pres. Reagan to “dispatch his prosecutors to destroy the movement” (Tomsho, 1987, p. 5). People such as Jim Corbett, a Quaker in Arizona, Rev. John Fife of Southside Presbyterian Church in Tucson, Sacred Heart church in Tucson, and Rev. Gus Schultz of University Lutheran Chapel in San Francisco all drew the ire of the Reagan administration, and were prosecuted for doing living the Gospel (Tomsho, 1987).

Contemporary Policy.

The issue of immigration has taken front and center stage in American politics, generally dividing party and religious/political theoretical cluster. In committee during the 2010 Congress, Texas Congressman Lamar Smith (R) cited verses from the Bible as reasons to crackdown on illegal immigration. Smith stated, “The Bible contains numerous passages that support the rule of law. The scriptures clearly indicate that God charges civil authorities with preserving order, protecting citizens and punishing wrongdoers” (Silverleib, 2010). Rep. Smith used Romans 13:1 as evidence of this. Then

Rep. Smith mentions Matthew 25:40, where Jesus talks about punishing those who do not show kindness to the least of these. Rep. Smith contends that this scripture “advocates individual acts of kindness (but) does not mandate public policy. Americans need not repent for wanting to uphold the rule of law and provide jobs for legal workers. A truly Christian moral approach would be not to acquiesce to illegal immigration, but to work to end it” (Silverleib, 2010). In the same committee, Rep. Steve King (R – Iowa) noted that “in the land of the Bible the leaders of today’s Israel (have) built border fences to protect their citizens from terrorists or illegal job seekers alike, we should focus on US citizens first” (Silverleib, 2010). This anecdote exemplifies the Institutional Christianity mindset, where a politician uses scripture and twists it, using the Latin word *caritas* over the Greek *agape*, to fit their own worldview.

This concept of the Bible calling on all members to enforce the rule of law is somewhat simplistic and counter-intuitive to the works, teachings and heart of Jesus Christ. Many anti-immigrant legislators use this Romans 13:1 verse to defend their position of arresting anyone who is in the country without proper documents and deporting them back to their country of origin as the Christian perspective. In contrast, Jesus, the Apostles, and the prophets have many examples of recognizing unjust and hurtful laws that sin against God. A perfect example of this is the tax collector Zacchaeus, who was a one of the wealthiest Jews in the land and achieved this by forcibly collecting taxes for the oppressive foreign government in Rome. In Luke 19:1-10, we learn that Zacchaeus was simply enforcing the rule of law when he extorted money from his fellow countrymen. Jesus called Zacchaeus out in public and offered redemption to him for his behavior. Zacchaeus was so compelled by the love of Christ

that he gave half of all his money to the poor and on top of that he repaid four times more all whom he cheated. Jesus then proclaimed to the crowd that “salvation has come to this house” because of his repentant heart, his sacrifice to the needy, atoning for his sins, and finally turning from his sin (which was essentially following the law of the land) and not doing it again. Jesus’ interaction with Zacchaeus presents as a perfect example of even though one is following the secular law, it may not be holy and righteous and could fly in the face of God’s law. Taking money from the poor in Israel to fund the Roman elites was oppressive, just as there are oppressive laws harming the poor and needy in our culture, to which God is calling on those in a position to change them to do so.

Another example of enforcing the law mentality comes from Tony Perkins, the president of the Family Research Council in Washington, D.C., which is a conservative Institutional Christianity think-tank that advocates for unregulated free-enterprise. In his editorial, Perkins (2011) writes about economic policy and how Jesus resembles the free marketer on Wall St. rather than the Occupier on the street. He uses Luke 19:13, the parable of the Talents, to make his point regarding Jesus’ support of Capitalism. In the parable two servants made money for their master, while one just sat on it, accruing no interest. The master rewards those who made profit, but condemns the one that stored it away. Some argue that this parable is intended to be understood as that the “spiritually responsive will receive further insight and further opportunity, while the dull will receive less, perhaps even lose what they have” (Evans, 2003, p. 467). Furthermore, the master was not very well like in the parable, which Evans (2003) believes probably refers to the evil Herodian dynasty that oppressed its people. Now, conversely, Perkins (2011) uses this parable to state that the master is Jesus and that “Jesus rejected collectivism and the

mentality that has occupied America for the last few decades: that everyone get a trophy – equal outcomes for inequitable performance. There are winners and yes, there are losers. And wins and losses are determined by the diligence and determination of the individual.” This illuminates the stark difference between the Institutional Christianity cluster that turns everything into a doctrine of individualism and prosperity versus Natural Christianity that sees parables such as this as a call to use the spirit to save a dying world.

Arizona Policy.

More specifically, this research will be looking at Arizona, where 87% of elected state-level politicians identify themselves as Christian, and the relationship between a contemporary Christian politician’s faith and political behavior is at the epicenter of extreme and controversial legislation in the United States. Issues such as immigration with Senate Bill 1070 (*Immigration; Law Enforcement; Safe Neighborhoods*) captured the attention of the nation. Its broad and strict language, which would force police officers to investigate immigration status and arrest individuals if they cannot demonstrate their legal status immediately, would be mocked by humorists, such as Comedy Central’s Jon Stewart on his April 26th, 2010 telecast stating, “Turns out Arizona is the meth lab of democracy.” Moreover, the Arizona legislature continues its legacy of captivating the rest of America’s attention on the issue of immigration, by being the first state to punish employers who hire an undocumented worker (House Bill 2779; *Fair and Legal Employment Act*). Arizona passed a bill that makes it illegal to be a day laborer soliciting a job at a center or on the public right-of-way (House Bills 2533 & 2042;

Unlawful Roadside Solicitation of Employment). Also, Arizona passed legislation that bans and punishes schools from teaching any ethnic-heritage courses (House Bill 2281; *Prohibited Courses; Discipline: Schools*). Arizona was even the first state to challenge President Barack Obama's citizenship through legislation (House Bill 2441; *Presidential Candidates; Proof of Qualifications*).

In keeping with its aggressive, anti-immigration position, Arizona is the first state pursuing legislation that would change the 14th amendment of the Constitution and revoke the citizenship of any child born in the United States whose parents are not already citizens (Senate Bill 1308; *Interstate Compact; Birth Certificates* and Senate Bill 1309; *Arizona Citizenship*). Along the lines of this type of legislation are bills that would prohibit an undocumented person from using public emergency or non-emergency services, such as emergency rooms and public education. Wherever you stand on issues of immigration, "Arizona has become the center of the immigration debate" ("How Arizona," 2010) and have set the tone for the rest of the country with its aggressive anti-immigration agenda.

The leader of Arizona's anti-immigration policies is former State Senate President Russell Pearce, who was recalled by his district. Before that, Pearce an attendee of the Mormon Church, would use the Church's 13 Articles of Faith as justification for his position to "drive illegal immigrants out of Arizona and keep them from coming here" (Gonzalez, 2010). He stated, "We have a special duty [to] this land, this republic and to the rule of law. Doctrine and Covenants state that 'let no man break the laws of the land, for he that keepeth the laws of God hath no need to break the laws of the land'" (Fletcher Stack, 2010). Pearce "sees nothing inconsistent between the legislation he champions and

LDS teachings, ‘They said enforce the law, read the whole thing, I’m going to enforce the law’ (Del Puerto, 2011). Brigham Young University History professor Ignacio Garcia disputes this opinion, stating “I don’t think the intent of the Article of Faith was to make us vigilantes and gatekeepers and create anti-immigration rhetoric and climate. Circumstance often force people to decide to break one law to obey a higher law” (Fletcher Stack, 2010). The late State Representative Bill Konopnicki, “a Republican from Safford who sponsored a guest worker bill in 2008 stated ‘I had the discussion with (Pearce) four years ago about the church’s policy on it, and he and I had difference of opinion” (Duda, 2011). Members of Pearce’s church have been highly outspoken against Pearce’s actions as well. Nora Castaneda stated to the Arizona Republic (Gonzalez, 2010), “It’s embarrassing to have to defend the church for the thoughts of one man.” Celia Alejandra Alvarez Portugal, a Latter-day Saint undocumented immigrant pleaded for the church to put a stop to him. Jorge Pimienta, a Latter-day Saint mission president stated, “all I know is that what he is doing is not what Jesus Christ taught” (Gonzalez, 2010). In response to the outcry from the Latter-day Saint community regarding Pearce, “Kim Farah, a spokeswoman for the LDS headquarters, said that elected officials who are Mormons do not represent the position of the church” (Gonzalez, 2010). However, the Mormon Church less than a year later, release a position statement on immigration. “The (LDS) statement eschews the church’s public neutrality on the issue of illegal immigration in favor of a higher morality that is defined by the Christian teaching to treat each other as children of God” (Del Puerto, 2011). To this Republican Mormon State Representative Peggy Judd stated, “I don’t want to say anything bad about my church, but I don’t necessarily agree with what they said there” (Del Puerto, 2011).

Arizona is not only known for its immigration controversy, but for active legislation on issues like health care, death penalty, and prison privatization. Arizona made national headlines for attempting to be the first state to opt out of the federal Medicare program, which may result in hundreds of thousands of impoverished individuals losing access to health care (Institute for Research on Poverty, 2011). Also, Arizona is being investigated for inconsistencies and possible human-rights violations due to the drugs used in its lethal injection death-penalty program (Welsh-Huggins, January 11, 2011). Arizona ranks second, behind Texas, in the amount of people they have put to death. The final example is the policy Arizona has adopted with its corrections department. The private-prison industry is growing faster than any other industry in the state, which is associated with the state's growth in mandatory sentencing laws which provide prisoners to those prisons. Meanwhile, to the rest of the country is moving towards repealing mandatory-sentencing laws.

The best example of the Institutional Christianity cluster dominating Arizona politics is seen through the political action of Center for Arizona Policy (a subdivision of James Dobson's national Focus on the Family PAC). In a recent survey of the most influential lobbyists in Arizona, Cathi Herrod, lobbyist for the Center for Arizona Policy, was listed in the top ten (Scarpinato, 2009). As the national mouthpiece in Arizona for the group that epitomizes Institutional Christianity through the theories of Pre-Millennial Dispensationalism and Theological Individualism, the Center for Arizona Policy (Focus on the Family) has taken strict positions supporting the most controversial issues coming out of Arizona. Take, for example, their support for 2010 Proposition 106, which would prohibit Arizona from participating in a federal health care system and would maintain a

de-regulated market on private health insurance companies. When confronting the issue of immigration, past Center for Arizona Policy president and Republican Gubernatorial candidate Len Munsil writes a scathing rebuke for any Christian who tries to seek a “comprehensive immigration reform” and also asserts Romans 13:1-4 as a mandate to obey the current laws from elected officials, because God has placed those “governing authorities” to “punish wrongdoers” (Munsil, 2010). Munsil and the Center for Arizona Policy also provided support for capital punishment and their annual legislative support for increases and mandatory minimums in sentencing as listed on their website azpolicy.org/2011agenda.

Alternatively, groups such as Protecting Arizona’s Family Coalition (PAFCO), that resonate the Natural Christianity cluster, with former leader Timothy Schmaltz, have fought against this type of convoluted doctrine and emphasized Christ’s words to love one another and provide aid to the widow, orphan and poor. In the summer of 2013, Republican Gov. Jan Brewer stood along with PAFCO in support of expanding Medicaid as a moral and Christian action that must be done. However, the Center for Arizona Policy came out in opposition to the expansion of Medicaid, which provides health care to over 300,000 poor people (Duda, 2013). Whether the Center for Arizona Policy is supporting policies such as the death penalty and mandatory minimums or fighting against comprehensive immigration reform or expanding Medicaid, they refer to scripture from Romans 13:1 (let everyone be subject to the governing authorities..) as justification for much of it. Martin (1988) asserts that the “principle of submission to civil authority, becomes a bewildering issues when counter-principle of submission to God’s law is given equal importance. The very structure of society was in opposition to God’s law” (p.

42). Martin furthers this point brilliantly stating, “the historical acceptance of slavery by the Christian church and the doctrine of the divine right of kings are classic examples of a mentality that sought to endow existing social structures with divine approval by invoking the Christian principle of submission to authority” (p. 48). This brings us back to the primary struggle between Institutional and Natural Christianity, where Institutional Christianity manipulates scripture to fit a doctrine of individualism and prosperity, while Natural Christianity maintains its commitment to serving the least in society, fighting for justice and loving our neighbor.

Conclusion

This struggle between religious beliefs and political actions has, and will continue to be, a difficult decision to make for each politician. From the time of antiquity, where pre-Modernity ruled the landscape, to Modernity and the birth of reason, to postmodernity and the dispute of absolute truth, society has always been presented with opposing sides of Christian doctrine. As this research will explore in proceeding chapters, politicians may take the path of Natural Christianity, that infuses the call to “act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly” as Micah 6:8 states. Natural Christianity contends that “we are conditioned to think, what is mine is mine. Just as what is yours is yours. There is a new way of incarnational discipleship we must begin to move towards the sort of interdependence that hospitality suggests” (Lilburne, 1989, p. 126). Contrary, politicians may take the path of Institutional Christianity that highlights wealth, acquisition, and prosperity as signs of God’s blessings. This is a perspective rooted in the notion of individualism and the liberty from any government interference. This research will

explore the dissonance or congruence that politicians experience between their faith and political action by examining their positions and perspectives on certain Biblical principles and how to incorporate them into policy.

CHAPTER 4

THEORIES ON JUSTICE, PSYCHOLOGY, AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

Introduction

The theoretical framework that directs this research is based upon the question of how contemporary American politicians have developed their worldviews and interpretive schemas and have defended, enacted, and justified their positions, knowingly or unknowingly. This research unpacks the relationship of hegemony to the two political/theological clusters, Institutional Christianity (which includes: Pre-Millennial Dispensationalism and Theological Individualism) and Natural Christianity (which includes: Liberation Theology and Social Gospel), which categorize contemporary American politicians. First in chapter 3, this study explores various civil society forces [such as the field of psychology (more specifically, coping methods, such as: confirmation bias, rational ignorance, and self-deception), public relations, public policy, and education], as they intersect with the dominant Ideological State Apparatus, which is Religion (namely, Christianity), a narrative about identity formation will emerge in this research. I intend to examine how, why, when, and based on what logics, the contemporary American politician has a congruent identity or dissonant identity between their religious and political worldview. Theories of justice as well as theological perspectives of scriptural interpretation inform these clusters. Next in chapter 5, from hegemonic to counter-hegemonic, this research will show how these clusters are politically related and how the politician integrates them into their everyday life as a policy-maker. For example, Natural Christianity theory advocates for counter-hegemonic

policies, such as land reform urging community ownership and cancellation of debt, as a way to break the cycle of poverty. In this vein, the contemporary American politician who is able to incorporate core gospel principles and commandments of love and self-sacrifice into their political action maintains a congruent identity and would most likely be grouped into the counter-hegemony political/theological cluster. Alternatively, the contemporary American politician who unknowingly encounters, avoids, or misinterprets the dissonance that occurs between their religious and political worldviews and uses common sense, reinforces the hegemonic political/theological cluster, or as Poulantzas (1973, p. 195) calls it, “bourgeois ideology”.

Identity Formation

An individual’s commitment to their worldview and cognitive schema⁴⁰ produces a delicate identity to which their ‘fragile absolute’ (Zizek, 2000, p. 128) must persevere in order to be satiated by the notions of the “good life” (Scollon & King, 2004, p. 128). By ‘fragile absolute’, Zizek intends that there are deceptive appearances in society that constitute our reality and identity. This perseverance must occur, regardless of the inconsistencies and hypocrisies which are embedded in one’s worldview; an inconsistency of one’s actions that do not fit within the principles of their professed faith and the hypocrisies of picking and choosing when to apply that faith and choosing when not to. For the sake of this study, I am examining the possible inconsistencies and hypocrisies that are embedded in one’s religious worldview. The contemporary battle

⁴⁰ According to Sims & Lorenzi (1992), this is a psychological term that describes the organization of one’s knowledge regarding a particular concept. One’s cognitive schema contains features and attributes that are associated with the person’s category membership.

over ideological rhetoric and public manipulation and control plays out in the chess match of politics by invoking both Western society's fundamental philosophical tenets and the religious precepts and moral theories that influence Western thought. As Eagleton (1994, p. 2) states, "no successful transformation in the sphere of politics can neglect the business of influencing hearts and minds." This relationship can best be described by hegemony. Hegemony is the unconscious coercion and consent of a subordinate group by a dominant group (Simon, 1982). Not to be confused with the concept of 'rule', which Gramsci distinguishes as "direct political" action and "direct coercion" (Williams, 1977, p. 108).

Though the historical references of hegemony can be traced to Karl Marx, who first conceptualized it, and Vladimir Lenin as the "founder of the concept of hegemony" (Simon, 1982, p. 16), it was not until the *Letters from Prison* by Antonio Gramsci (1866/1973) that the concept took on a relevant and social meaning. Raymond Williams (1977) describes hegemony as "a whole body of practices and expectations, over the whole of living: our senses and assignments of energy, our shaping perceptions of ourselves and our world" (p. 110). Gramsci used the notion of the "historic bloc" (Simon, 1982, p. 36) to describe the process in which the contemporary hegemonic class operates and is reinforced from a multitude of allied social forces in civil society. Through systematic construction and constant maintenance, hegemony reproduces itself and its powers and controls. A global conceptualization and general acceptance of capitalism fuels contemporary forms of hegemony. Moreover, a "system of alliances" (p. 26) use varying Ideological State Apparatuses (Althusser, 1971), such as education systems, military, and Religion, to teach a reproduction of skills, ruling ideology, and

submission to rules of the prevailing order. Illich (1971) exemplifies Ideological State Apparatus with the following: “the pupil is thereby ‘schooled’ to confuse teaching with learning, grade advancement with education, a diploma with competence, and fluency with the ability to say something new” (p. 1). Further, the “national-popular dimension” (Simon, 1982, p. 49) that unites the masses’ collective conception of the world, such as nationalistic pride in America as the good in the world and any opposition as terrorism and evil (Huntington, 2002), is a “passive revolution” (Simon, 1982, p. 28) that helps maintain hegemony. It is this type of ideology that works at an individual’s subconscious level “by drawing us into an ‘imaginary’ relation with the social order, which persuades us that we and it are centered on and indispensable to one another” (Eagleton, 1994, p. 14). Finally, contemporary hegemony is strengthened by the absence of an “intellectual and moral” investment in subordinate groups, filled with notions of “common sense”, the uncritical and unconscious submission to the dominant ideology (Simon, 1982, p. 29).

Contemporary American politicians engage in this “war of position” (Simon, 1982, pp. 31-32), or process of hegemony, through the manipulation of religious doctrine to capture the masses’ groupthink⁴¹ and an individual’s imagination. Meanwhile, the public attempts to make an assumed independent and rational choice among the various options in hopes of following an absolute that can reinforce their worldview and satiate their cognitive dissonance. Confronted with these options, the individual will generally choose (or acquiesce) to interpret, or accept an interpretation, of a philosophical or religious text that fits their worldview and cognitive schema. In order to maintain their

⁴¹ Irving Janis (1983) describes groupthink as “the way of thinking where people who are deeply involved in a highly cohesive group abandon their own motivation to objectively decipher through alternatives and instead conform to unanimity of the group”.

identity, they might reject foreign, opposing doctrine. Conversely, if this individual chooses to question the core of their identity (their worldview and cognitive schema) by entertaining foreign and opposing doctrine, they face both spiritual and psychological transformation.

This “specific counter-productivity” (Illich, 1976, p. 8) to one’s worldview and identity elicits constant attempts at subterfuge by hegemonic forces, where the subconscious protects one’s identity by anticipating and responding to the challenges of counter-productivity. Our brains do this instinctively to preserve energy. Questioning one’s identity constantly is exhausting and consuming. In the same way, Bell Hooks (1991) critiques a self-deception brought on by hegemonic forces that has a “coercive power (that) leaves unquestioned the critical practices of other groups who employ the same strategies in different ways and whose exclusionary behavior may be firmly buttressed by institutionalized structures of domination that do not critique or check it” (p. 176). This produces the outcome of the status quo; however, when presented with convincing alternate perspectives, there is either an admission to error and as a result, perhaps a change in worldview; or else there is the inability to cope with dissonance and thus the individual may develop psychosis and other mental illnesses. Robinson (1980) sees the development of psychosis as “the solution [and] ... subjective closure which ultimately expels what Kierkegaard had termed dread and Freud basic anxiety – the inevitable existential injury” (p. 105). This leaves an individual with the existential conflict of dealing with their cognitive dissonance, which is magnified in the political arena where the tension of one’s dissonance can be pushed to its breaking point. Adopting an age-old adage helps describe how the subconscious deals with ignorance;

one either holds true to the idea that ignorance is bliss, or does one eat the fruit from the forbidden tree of the knowledge of good and evil?

Understanding the Human Psyche

Next, to better comprehend the construction and maintenance of one's worldview, it helps to understand the formation and progression of the human psyche. When discussing the nature and etiology of worldviews and cognitive schemas, countless metaphors abound. Whether one is truly standing firm or just firmly standing on falling ground, the commitment to one's worldview, the sophistry of their beliefs, is not easily changed or questioned. Individuals tend to remain stubborn in their loyalty to the foundation on which their house of cards is built; any movement may cause the whole system to collapse. The Western idea of the rational mind acting as a tool to construct knowledge poses many problems. Individuals construct a basis for their psyche based upon the belief that their psyche is already truthful and absolute, thus creating a circular logic that only reinforces itself, rarely doubting itself.

In *The Division of Labor in Society* (1984), Emile Durkheim focuses on the idea that the individual psyche is not an isolated, internally anchored system, but instead part of and influenced by society as a socially constructed entity. Through his observations of the formation of an individual psyche, he discovers a "precontractual solidarity" (Collins, 1985, pp. 133 & 145), where exchanges of the "rational self-interest cannot even take place unless there is a prior framework of values that established the rules within which such exchanges occur" (Collins, 1993, p. 204). Essentially, in the relationship of one's

identity to the self, rational thought is not independent, but instead is a closed loop monitored and governed by hegemony and the “collective consciousness...the currents of ideas and emotions that are generated when people interact and that constrain individuals from outside” (Collins, 1985, p. 135). Any possible challenge to, or deviation from, this closed loop of rationality only threatens one’s worldview and cognitive schema. The dependence of preserving one’s cognitive schema and worldview rests solely upon what Durkheim describes as the strength of one’s “contractual solidarity”, whereas they are “shielded so far as possible from anything that might disturb it” (Durkheim, 1984, p. 316).

When evaluating the human psyche, the intent is not to construct absolutism with Freudian rationale, but instead use the varying notions of the human psyche as descriptions about how an individual may deal with cognitive dissonance⁴² (Festinger, 1957), specifically religious and political incongruence. As Terry Eagleton (1977, p. 3) says, “The scandal of Freud ... is the fact that the human psyche itself can now, apparently, be scientifically dissected like a muscle, in its murkiest unconscious depths.” The idea that one’s psyche may be volatile and frail, fractured and fragmented, reinforced through adaptive and learned behaviors from its formative stages, is counter-hegemonic. It is best described by the French poet Jean de La Fontaine (1668/1997): just as a reed bends to the wind so it is less likely to break, so too one’s psyche adapts to society’s normative standards and thus prevents breaking.

Hoping to have a strong psyche may be the goal for a majority of people, whether they are aware of it or not. One theory in obtaining a strong foundation to one’s psyche

⁴² This occurs when one’s beliefs and behaviors become inconsistent, and leads to significant psychological tension.

and having higher self-esteem states that one must start out by becoming vulnerable and admitting to being frail, fractured, and fragmented, and only then can one grow in self-confidence and strengthen their psyche (Nouwen, 1979). In contrast, some individuals may strive to achieve self-confidence and self-efficacy by receiving acclaim from others, reaching personal accomplishments in their life, and taking pride in their association with systems and/or other individuals that have gained the sought after acclaim. This last point is best described in Chomsky's *Manufacturing Consent* (1988), where group membership and irrational jingoism in group cohesion lead to submission to authority. The jingoistic individual, expressing an intense love for their own identity through association and intense hatred of the other's identity (Hobson, 1901; Wren, 1977) may be able to solidify their self-confidence and strengthen their psyche. The strength to one's psyche that self-confidence and self-efficaciousness brings can produce tremendous amounts of motivation to be excellent, and, regardless of the challenge, an intense focus to execute any task. However, in contrast to one of the distinguishing characteristics of the construction of a strong psyche is that the vulnerable, fractured, and frail individual exhibiting a stronger ability to love others around them. This love is related to the love that they have for themselves. A prideful and jingoistic person will be less likely to operate in this fashion (Nouwen, 1979).

There is good reason to believe that the characteristics of a politician's psyche may also be correlated with their political/religious perspective. For example, a politician whose psyche is reinforced through pride and jingoism often exhibits a Libertarian theoretical framework of justice that is tied to the religious/political theoretical cluster of Institutional Christianity. The ideological theory of Libertarianism acts as the

“cement...that creates social unification” (Simon, 1982, p. 68) and strengthens/supports the process of hegemony. On the other hand, a politician whose psyche is based in their vulnerabilities, and re-constructed with the understanding of just how frail, fractured, and fragmented it truly is, would be strengthened by their ability to love one another as they love themselves. This outwardly “love-centered” approach, versus an inward dynamic desiring to be loved, to building one’s psyche can be exemplified in Egalitarian and Communitarian theories of justice, and is tied to the religious/political theoretical cluster of Natural Christianity. At the same time, it is counter-hegemonic in that a politician who expresses their psyche as flawed, imperfect, and changing is most likely to be labeled as weak and generally not taken seriously. Next, this research will examine the various ways in which an individual’s psyche may be maintained, justified, and defended when dealing with dissonance between conflicting worldviews.

Coping Mechanisms for Cognitive Dissonance

The analysis of contemporary American politicians’ congruence or dissonance between their political/religious theories does not assume the motivation of politicians, nor does it assume that all politicians operate sincerely and with honest intentions. In fact, it can be argued that most contemporary American politicians are primarily salespeople, using the platform of religious rhetoric to garner support in hopes of being re-elected and accumulating political and personal power. Edward Bernays (1947) likens this behavior to “the engineering of consent”, which is “the very essence of the democratic process, the freedom to persuade and suggest” (p. 114). Though the motivations of contemporary American politicians create intrigue, and this is partly due to the expectations people have

for charismatic leaders, this research instead asks if there is congruence or dissonance between politicians professed faith and their political action and beliefs? Three main coping mechanisms (self deception, rational ignorance, confirmation bias) are employed in the process of dealing with cognitive dissonance as the contemporary American politician reconciles the distance between their political behavior and their fundamental Christian beliefs.

To maintain a façade of self-confidence in order to defend one's worldview and cognitive schema, individuals must adapt using coping mechanisms and self-soothing techniques to deflect from any doubt and cling to their idea of the absolute. Put simply, everyone has to live with themselves and try to sleep at night, but not all people look in the mirror and are comfortable with what they see. Robinson (1980, p. 37) describes the challenge of this process when he states it is "difficult to escape the mischievous tyranny of a mind which can not only declare but also sculpture the physique of its error into reality."

Self-Deception.

Self-deception⁴³ (Cowen, 2005) is purposeful deception of one's own mind in order to reconcile two or more incongruent identities. Psychologists refer to these behaviors as dissociative disorder, adjustment disorder, or delusional disorder, depending on the severity of the self-betrayal and delusion (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Self-deception is one of the more debilitating coping mechanisms because it distorts an individual's notion of reality and fantasy and their ability to reconcile the two.

⁴³ Cowen (p. 437) describes self-deception as: "Individuals discard free information when that information damages their self-image and thus lowers their utility".

Furthermore, using evidence and compelling arguments are generally ineffective on those who use self-deception as a way to disconnect societal-defined reality from their identity.

An example of use of this coping mechanism by contemporary American politicians surrounds the issue of war and Religion. Self-deception is a commonly used coping mechanism for the dissonance associated between engaging in war and the many scriptures referenced opposing war in the Christian Bible. Often times, politicians attempt to justify the reasons for war and subtly use self-deception to “fool others and reduce the cognitive costs of deception” (Vedantam, 2007) for themselves. This was the case of former President George W. Bush, who convinced himself that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), harboring known terrorists involved with al Qaeda, and the prospect of establishing democracy in Iraq, even when he was given contradicting information that challenged his perspective. President Bush’s justification provides a great example of self-deception, but one not absent of religious justification (Jervis, 2006, p. 649). Bob Woodward (2004) recalls President Bush in constant prayer for strength to continue doing the Lord’s will of going to war with Iraq. In other circumstances, politicians simply ask for the divine authority to go to war, as was the case of President McKinley who fell to “his knees to ask the Almighty for permission to take Manila” (Grandin, 2006, p. 38), and President Theodore Roosevelt, who said, “we stand at Armageddon, we battle for the Lord” (Reichley, 2001, p. 162). A high-ranking State Department official in the Reagan administration was asked how he can be a Christian and support a U.S.-sponsored government overthrow in Nicaragua. He responded, “My faith has nothing to do with my job. My job is to carry out the foreign policy of the United States. I can’t let Christian faith speak to the morality of my job or

I'd have to quit. It's best to keep these things separate" (Nelson – Pallmeyer, 1986, p. 30). Theologian C.S. Lewis (2001) wrote a fictional novel, *The Screwtape Letters*, analogizing the successful use of nationalism, patriotism, and war as victories for devils and demons in separating an individual from God. Self-deception was the common technique. However, the most poignant description of how a Christian's use of self-deception in supporting war is antithetical to the Christian Bible is by Rev. Amos Dresser. Rev. Dresser (2006): "By searching the scriptures... we find that the Bible regards war as a curse⁴⁴ to all engaged in it [and] we find the Bible regards peace⁴⁵ as a great blessing" (pp. 53-54). This one political issue presents the contemporary American Christian politician with an example of cognitive dissonance regarding their understanding of Christian truth. Self-deception may be a useful coping mechanism for the contemporary American politician who is attempting to reconcile their commitment to Jesus Christ and their support of war, especially when Jesus Christ, vis-à-vis dictates, "But I say to you who are listening: Love you enemies. Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you, and pray for those who slander you. And to him who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also. And from him who takes away your coat, do not withhold even your tunic." (Luke 6:27-29).

Rational Ignorance.

Rational ignorance (Downs, 1957) is the ability to simply not acknowledge any foreign doctrine at all and ignore all inferences to it. This allows the individual to remain

⁴⁴ Biblical verses supporting the claim that war is a curse to all who engage in it are: Jeremiah 24:10, 34:13-20, and 14:12; 1 Chronicles 21:11-12; 2 Chronicles 10:9; Leviticus 26:23-37.

⁴⁵ Biblical verses supporting the claim that God is peace and a blessing: Genesis 49:10; Isaiah 2:4, 9:6; Luke 6:27-36; Romans 15:33, 16:20; Hebrews 13:20; 2 Corinthians 13:11; and 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

committed to their worldview and perpetuate their cognitive schemas. Rational ignorance is generally an internal positioning that individuals use to shield themselves from alternative perspectives. It can also be applied externally, when individuals in privileged positions withhold critical information that would create a level of cognitive dissonance. This technique uses “self-propaganda” (Salkovskis, 1996), which consciously fosters information and views that only support one’s worldview and cognitive schema, all the while completely purging any alternative opinion or source of information. Without critical thinking, individuals soothe their dissonance by committing to and finding pride in their rational ignorance. According to Gramsci, this is the aspect of hegemony that influences “common sense”, or in other words, the “uncritical and largely unconscious way in which a person perceives the world” (Simon, 1982, p. 72), and often contradicts their conscious Religion and ideology. One’s credulity towards their worldview is attributed to lack of emotional energy where individual laziness or an unconscious consent prevails. This taken-for-granted pridefulness prevents and devalues education and ignores any attempt at critical thinking for the purpose of making an informed choice.

An example of this mechanism is used in the social debate between evolution and creationism. The manifestation of rational ignorance and self-propaganda are obvious strategies for those contemporary American politicians who actively promote a public school science education using only Intelligent Design or Evolutionary theory. Washington Times reporter Peter Slevin notes these politicians have become successful in a self-propaganda campaign to teach students the controversies and doubts about the theory of evolution and pair it with new curriculum on Intelligent Design (2005).

Christian-based organizations and think-tanks, such as Focus on the Family and the Discovery Institute, use rational ignorance to provide an abundance of curriculum for the mostly-home-schooled children, but now possibly public schools will teach Intelligent Design. One such Intelligent Design science textbook, *Creation or Evolution: A home-study curriculum* is sold by Focus on the Family (n.d.). Their website touts:

Student-friendly explanations of the fallacies found in evolutionary models of history, children will work through both biblical evidence and refutations of current scientific theory in *Creation or Evolution*. Children will learn why evolution is just a bunch of fairy tales, the untruthful hoaxes found over the years, and how evolution has led to the downfall of society, as well as about the true Genesis account.

On the other hand, the American Academy of Sciences, as well as, other federally-funded science organizations acts as the main think-tanks for pro-evolutionary theory legislation and information, using scientific measures for curriculum and instruction. Both sides of this debate ignore each other and create a hierarchy of value to define the terms of knowledge, even though both sides are trafficking in myths to support and justify their power. The irony is comical with two opposing ideologies operating in rational ignorance, both coming from a variety of locations that contradict and reinforce each other's longevity. This type of insular behavior perpetuates the rational ignorance to future generations, and in this case, reinforces the Christian paradigm versus the science paradigm as absolute.

Confirmation Bias.

Confirmation bias (Nickerson, 1998; Wason, 1960) is the selective and biased interpretation of any evidence or information that promotes one's own preconceived idea.

Stuart Hall (1983) refers to this as “distortions” and a “false consciousness” where “those living their relation to their conditions of existence through the categories of a distorted ideology – cannot recognise that it is distorted” (p. 62). An individual using this coping mechanism will remain committed to their worldview regardless of the argument. This is what Baudrillard (1994, p. 7) attributes to being essentially simulation, where the artificial becomes “hyperreal”. One’s heels can be dug so deep in the sand that they will co-opt an argument made against their worldview and use it as support for their own perspective (Williams, 1977, p. 113). One no longer engages in self-betrayal or the delusions that can be created in the world in order to maintain their self-confidence. One no longer claims ignorance as a virtue and uses it as a source of self-esteem. Instead one takes the argument dead on and skillfully, using confirmation bias fits everything into a box that constructs their absolute.

An effective example of this, and on that this research will explore further, is the current rhetoric surrounding the issues of social welfare programs. Contemporary American politicians often preach the value of capitalistic principles, such as self-sufficiency, being individualistic, and suffering the consequences of one’s actions; thus dissonance occurs when politicians try to incorporate both the precepts of their faith tradition into practice and the ideology of capitalism and apply them to social welfare programs for the downtrodden and oppressed. The inner struggle begins when an individual takes a simple investigation of the Christian scriptures and realizes the vast amount of references to “selling all you have and giving it to the poor”⁴⁶; watching after

⁴⁶ Matthew 6:19-21; Matthew 19:16-22; Luke 12:33; Luke 18:22; Mark 10:21; Act 2:44-45; Acts 4:32-36; 1 John 2:5-6

the “elderly, orphan, and widow”⁴⁷; and caring for the sick, homeless, impoverished stranger, and prisoner⁴⁸ (Echegaray, 1984; Hanks, 1983). Further investigation will find that if these actions are not done, God will judge those to eternal punishment (Matthew 25:46). A contemporary American politician can experience overwhelming cognitive dissonance when they recognize what they are doing and still try justifying their capitalistic actions. According to Nickerson (1998) and Watson (1960), those who maintain hegemony subconsciously employ a confirmation bias coping mechanism to reconcile their incongruent ideology. Another example of confirmation bias occurs despite the factual etiology of the English word “charity”, which has been traced back to the 4th Century when St. Jerome translated the Bible from Greek to Latin as *caritas*, which is a synonym for *agape*, and defined as the private and public relief of misfortune and the sacrifice of oneself for the greater good (Peck, 1967). By taking these themes of charity and integrating them into an argument for capitalism, the contemporary American politician is using confirmation bias to successfully co-opt the argument. This type of strategy has yielded widespread rhetoric that is wrongly attributed to the Christian scriptures with quotes such as: “Give a man a fish, he eats for a day; teach a man to fish he eats for a lifetime”; “God helps those who help themselves”; or “I (Jesus) have come so that you may have life and have it more abundantly, spiritually and physically”. These twists to the scriptures (Elzinga, 2006) are combined with the rationalization that charity is a personal responsibility and not a community (governmental) responsibility; create a

⁴⁷ Exodus 22:22-24; Deuteronomy 14:28-29; Hosea 14:3; 1 Timothy 5:3-10; James 1:27

⁴⁸ Deuteronomy 15:7, 11; Proverbs 14:21, 31; Isaiah 1:17; Matthew 25:41-45; Luke 10:29-37; Luke 14:13-14; 1 John 3:17-18

narrative that justifies the contemporary American politician's support of the hegemonic structure and their professed Christian identity (Weber, 1904/1958).

When presented with notions of cognitive dissonance that threaten one's worldview, cognitive schema, and self-confidence, coping mechanisms essentially link the psychology of the human mind with the internalization of the political perspectives. The maintenance of one's fragile absolute is essential to the self-confidence and self-efficacy of an individual's psyche. This maintenance is best described as the strengthening of the self to hegemony and social forces in civil society. As Veblen (1912) writes, "only individuals with an aberrant temperament can in the long run retain their self-esteem in the face of the disesteem of their fellows. Apparent exceptions to the rule are met with, especially among people with strong religious convictions. But these apparent exceptions are scarcely real exceptions, since such persons commonly fall back on the putative approbation of some supernatural witness to their deeds" (p. 30). When one is confronted with various incongruent identities, the use of coping mechanisms such as self-deception, rational ignorance, and confirmation bias assist the individual in maintaining hegemony via their established psychological categories.

Worldviews of Contemporary American Politicians

By analyzing the political worldviews and concepts of justice of the contemporary American politician, coupled with their self-described identity of faith and religion, two theoretical clusters emerge, creating a dichotomous relationship of opposing worldviews. This paper identifies two mutually-exclusive theoretical clusters, which determine whether a contemporary American politician is able to have congruence with their faith

and political theories acting in a counter-hegemonic way. Contrary, notions of hegemony maintain that the contemporary American politician's faith-infused, political rhetoric is simply a manipulative and coercive hegemonic process to fool and control the public.

A contemporary American politician is in a position of leadership, in as much as the public continues to follow and yield to that position of political leadership and authority regardless of their faith. Cedric Robinson (1980) writes, "Political leadership seems related to political authority which is, itself, related to the larger and inclusive concept: Authority. Authority, in turn, related to Order" (p. 6). He continues, "The leader is an instrument of rational action where rational action is understood as collective action which extends the survival of the community" (p. 40). This rational action by the public, a desire for order through authority, allows what Weber (1914/1968) and Robinson describe as "the charismatic leader gaining legitimacy". Here, the two thinkers separate in their construction of charisma (1980, p. 158), where Robinson (1980) sees the attainment of political authority as alienating the leader from the collective consciousness of the masses, while Weber (1914/1968) sees this authority as an exceptional bond between leader and followers. Hence, the contemporary American politician obtains their authority due to the "natural man's" (Sohm, 1904) desire to be governed, and when "confronted with true freedom...choose against it" (Robinson, 1980, p. 82).

Bringing together the discussion above, this study shift gears to explore how the contemporary American politician fits in with one of the two diametrically opposing theoretical clusters. Through an examination of Christian theology (theories of justice and political theory), an analysis between faith and action and between religion and policy will yield the dichotomy of praxis versus orthodoxy. This is not meant to be strictly a

binary characterization but more of a spectrum highlighting opposing sides. Where one theoretical cluster perpetuates the institutionalization of hegemony, the other's actions attempt to crack the hegemonic facade. One cluster exhibits a "Christian faith lost in purity of inner substance it gained in power of external organization" (Sohm, 1904, p. 42), while the other demands that "the Church must cease considering itself as the exclusive place of salvation and orient itself towards a new and radical service of people" (Gutierrez, 1973, p. 256).

The Institutional Christianity theoretical cluster is made up of the Pre-Millennial Dispensationalism and Theological Individualism theories⁴⁹. Freire (n.d.) refers to this cluster as the Traditionalists, or "world-maintaining" (Berger, 1969, p. 3), which is owned by the elites and is a tool to implement their interests. The Natural Christianity theoretical cluster consists of Liberation Theology and the Social Gospel theories⁵⁰. Freire (n.d.) refers to this cluster as the Prophetic voice, or "world-shaking" (Berger, 1969, p. 101), which serves the interests of transformation and liberation. It is beyond the scope of this analysis to evaluate the minor religious traditions amidst the contemporary American political arena, nor will the atheist perspective be in this evaluation. Instead, its scope of analysis is with regard to the majority religious subscription of the current American political landscape: Judeo-Christian tradition. Analyzing the dominant religious traditions of Christianity and the various sects in conjunction with the political theory of the contemporary American politician may yield a comparison of the dissonant or congruent political/theological worldviews formed.

⁴⁹ Barker & Carmern, 2000; Guth, Green, Kellstedt, & Smith, 1995; Stark & Glock, 1968; Weber, 1904/1958

⁵⁰ Jelen & Wilcox, 1997; Leege & Kellstedt, 1993; Reichley, 2001; Smidt, 1988

Contemporary American politicians generally operate on either the praxis or orthodoxy spectrum with respect to an individual's theology. By voting, advocating, proclaiming, and educating in accordance with one's theoretical cluster as a guiding light brings one's worldview and cognitive schema into fruition. The notion of praxis is essential to the participation and reflection within the Natural Christianity theoretical cluster (Cohn – Sherbok, 1986). Praxis is best described as “faith works through charity: love is the nourishment and fullness of faith, the gift of one's self to the Other, and invariably others” (Gutierrez, 1973, pp. 6-7). Gutierrez (1973) furthers the notion of charity as a “real charity, action, and commitment to the service of men” (p. 11). Karl Marx, in his book *The Grundrisse* (1971), sees praxis as a more complex action and integrated system rather than simply instrumental. He expressed that to see true revolutionary change; praxis would consist of overcoming oppression and also a commitment to learning about a political education. Marx maintained his belief that his utopian possibility is bounded to each individual's commitment to praxis. Miguez Bonino (1983) likens “praxis” to the “account of our walk” (p. 80), and orthodoxy is the account of our talk. Praxis is the prophetic function of speaking a liberating truth to power for the purpose of serving each other in love, thus mimicking God. “We know God by what God has done, not what God has thought” (Bayer, 1986, p. 132). Conversely, the notion of “orthodoxy”, which is the “fidelity to an obsolete tradition or a debatable interpretation” (Gutierrez, 1973, p. 10), has best been used to characterize the Institutional Christianity theoretical cluster. Hall (1983) maintains that this type of “orthodoxy (is) the frozen rituals and intonation of already witnessed truth, and all the other attributes of a theory that is incapable of fresh insights” (p. 43). This sense of orthodoxy is the insular

obsession with the formulation and defense of the group's absolute truths, meanwhile contributing almost nothing towards making the world a better place (Chesterton, 1908).

Another fundamental difference between the two clusters lies in how they interpret and approach scripture. Fiorenza (1988) describes this tension between the two clusters as the difference between a literal model versus the hermeneutical model. She found that under the Institutional Christianity cluster, there would be a “doctrinal approach... that insists on the verbal inspiration and literal-historical inerrancy of the Bible” (p. 4). Along with the literal interpretation model of scripture, an objective reading of scripture is imperative. She identifies the hermeneutical and liberation approach as interpretations that fit under the Natural Christianity cluster. This model “reflects on the interaction between text and community, or text and interpreter” (p. 5) and “recognizes that all theology, willing or not, is by definition always engaged for or against the oppressed” (p. 6). The use the term hermeneutics is from the Habermasian tradition of critical theory and “communicative competence” (Habermas, 1971, p. 250), which is not only the historical understanding of context and conditioning, but also a critical deconstruction and reconstruction of society for the purposes of emancipation and social liberation. This difference in interpretation is a distinct and clear separation between the Natural and Institutional Christianity clusters. The literalists are those who read the religious texts as literal and reject any hermeneutic understanding. Theirs is a word-for-word translation, absolute in the apparent – that is, the “common sense” – original meaning of the script. Those who adopt hermeneutics approach the script as truth when it is read contextually, taking into account the interaction of the script, errors in translation, and its application to create a contemporary meaning. One of the predicting factors of

which theoretical cluster a politician will fall under correlates with their interpretation tool.

The hermeneutic interpretation tool aligns well with the Natural Christianity theoretical cluster and its theories of Liberation Theology and Social Gospel, which is opposite of the literalist interpretation tool that correlates with the Institutional Christianity theoretical cluster and its theories of Pre-Millennial Dispensationalist and Theological Individualism. The literalist interpretation tool [Abbott & Gallagher (eds.), 1966; Novak, 1981] might be justified by the various coping mechanisms discussed previously (self-deception, rational ignorance, or confirmation bias), whereas the hermeneutic interpretation tool (Malherbe, 1977) is a self-admission of one's own weakness in their understanding and knowledge (frailness, fractured, and fragmented) of the scripture and their goal of a more truthful interpretation. The interpretation tool a contemporary American politician uses is the foundation for their defense of their political/theological worldview and their critique of the opposing worldview. More convincing differences between the hermeneutic and the literal interpretation tools are their beliefs in new revelation, insight, and interpretation of religious texts. Where a hermeneutic approach approves and expects contemporary revelation and insight, a literalist would reject and assign as misguided doctrine (Helco, 2001; DeLeon & Naff, 2004). As Herzog (1994) questions, why would Jesus create a parable in such a way that the characters and events contradict the theology generally assigned to them? Thus a hermeneutic approach analyzing what social construction was really being presented in the parables. The dichotomy between the two theoretical clusters has a fundamental

difference in their interpretation tool of the religious scripture, and disrupts each other's patterns in their construction and defense of their political/theological worldview.

Theories of Justice

Literature in the area of religious theory and political behavior focuses on two dichotomous categories of individualism contrasting with collectivism. These categories are best defined by two religious/political theoretical clusters identified by Thorstein Veblen (1912) as *Institutional Christianity* versus *Natural Christianity* (Leathers, 1984). Within the Institutional Christianity cluster exists philosophical strains of Pre-Millennial Dispensationalism and Theological Individualism. In contrast, Natural Christianity has philosophical tenants of Liberation Theology and Social Gospel theory. Some contemporary American Christian politicians are grouped by the Institutional Christianity cluster, where individualism, property, and liberty are of primary importance and essential to living out one's faith. Institutional Christianity is grouped together by the Pre-Millennial Dispensationalists⁵¹ and the Theological Individualists⁵². Meanwhile, other contemporary American Christian politicians are grouped by Natural Christianity, whose values center on the holistic well-being of all in a society and the commitment of oneself to a communal effort and ownership to engender equity for a greater society. Natural Christianity is reflected by the philosophical strains of the Liberation Theology⁵³ and Social Gospel⁵⁴ theory. These two clusters (Institutional vs. Natural) characterize and differentiate the contemporary Christian American politicians and help us to recognize

⁵¹ Abbott & Gallagher (eds.), 1966; Guth, Green, Kellstedt, & Smidt, 1995; Novak, 1981; Novak, 1983

⁵² Stark & Glock, 1968; Webber, 1981; Weber, 1904/1958; Wilkinson, 2000

⁵³ Boff & Boff, 1987; Davis, 2005; Gutierrez, 1973; Litonjua, 1988; McAfee Brown, 1993; Petrella, 2004

⁵⁴ Barker & Carmen, 2000; Dorr, 1983; Jelen & Wilcox, 1997; Leege & Kellstedt, 1993; Reichley, 2001

and understand the congruence or dissonance that occurs between an individual's faith and politics.

Libertarianism and Utilitarianism.

When analyzing the dominant ideology that acts “as cement or an agent of social unification” (Simon, 1982, p. 68) in the contemporary American political theory of justice, the attribute of individualism leads the discussion. Individualism has become the common rhetoric regarding what it takes to achieve the American dream. Citizens take pride in an idea that an individual can pull themselves up by their bootstraps and materialize their own fate. The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) preaches these virtues of individualism, competitiveness, and private property as expression of one's Christian faith (Grandin, 2006). Individualism's fundamental principle of justice is that no person shall be constrained as to what they want to do as long as it doesn't constrain another person. This principle is best described by the theory of libertarianism, stating that each person is the owner of their own life and not of anyone else (Hospers, 1974; Nozick, 1974; Machan, 1989; Bastiat, 1850/1998). There should be no coercion in any way by government, whose singular role is to protect each individual's right to life, their right to liberty, and their rights of property. With no hierarchical distinguishing of these rights, an individualistic notion of justice is that which allows individuals to do as they wish and have this liberty protected without coercion. There is no social responsibility as a collective society to intervene in any way; people must have the liberty to choose to do as they wish with their own money (property).

Institutional Christianity is represented by a theory of libertarianism and utilitarianism. Notions of individualism and personal liberty, defense for the accumulation of wealth and property, and deregulation of industry and environmental policies epitomize the libertarian point of view as well as a defining strand of survival of the fittest. Theorist such as Frederic Bastiat (1998) asserted that “each of us has a natural right – from God – to defend his person, his liberty, and his property...these are the three basic requirements of life” (p. 2). Also, Tibor Machan (1983) states along the same lines, “ultimately, it comes to the fulfillment of the chosen responsibility to enhancing oneself to the fullest, as dictated by human nature and one’ own individual identity” (p. 504). Thinkers such as Ayn Rand (1964) typify this cluster with thoughts on libertarianism and individualism such as, “individualism regards man—every man—as an independent, sovereign entity who possesses an inalienable right to his own life, a right derived from his nature as a rational being. Individualism holds that a civilized society, or any form of association, cooperation or peaceful coexistence among men, can be achieved only on the basis of the recognition of individual rights—and that a group, as such, has no rights other than the individual rights of its members” (p. 129). Institutional Christianity promotes nationalism and Capitalism as inherent American and Christian virtues and dominates the political scene.

The utilitarianism philosophy of Jeremy Bentham (1789) and John Stuart Mill (1871), based in Hobbesian thought, is applied within the constructs of Institutional Christianity that maintains the idea of punishment and consequences for one’s actions. Utilitarian philosophers such as Bentham and Mill maintained that there are expectations of consequence for behaviors that are not in accord with the individual rights afforded to

them. Mill (1871) postulates that justice is “something which it is not only right to do, and wrong not to do, but which some individual person can claim from us as his moral right” (p. 75). Libertarians such as Nozick (1974) incorporate Mill’s axiom of the *Greatest-Happiness Principle*⁵⁵ within the Bentham principle of punishment and consequence to advocate for the perseverance of the utility of one’s life, liberty, and property. The combination of utilitarian principles to seek after the pleasure/utility of consequences for appropriate actions to generate the libertarian mantra of life, liberty, and property unified together help formulate a theoretical foundation for Institutional Christianity.

The libertarian theory of justice also applies to the individualist’s notion of economics, which is laissez-faire free-market capitalism with no government intervention at all (Hudson, 2010). Milton Friedman (1987) asserts that this country is a “collection of individuals” that has individual moral obligations. Thus, Friedman asserts that communities cannot share this moral obligation, and governments must leave morality up to the individual. He states, “One cannot be compassionate by spending somebody else’s money” (p. 99). His brand of individualism is essential to one’s liberty and their choice to be charitable. The epistemological view of humankind is the Lockean and Smithian philosophy of inherent goodness, or at the very least, human nature being a blank slate (Locke, 1690/2004; Smith, 1759/2007). Individualists maintain, through their libertarian theory of justice, the belief that human nature is good, thus all self-interested actions will be for the better of all (Ingber, 1989). Ayn Rand (1957) paints this worldview in her book

⁵⁵ The Greatest-Happiness Principle is “the equal claim of everybody to happiness in the estimation of the moralist and the legislator, involves an equal claim to all the means of happiness, except in so far as the inevitable conditions of human life, and the general interest, in which that of every individual is included” (Mill, 1871, pp. 92-93).

Atlas Shrugged as the motto of John Galt, proclaiming, “I swear, by my life and my love of it, that I will never live for the sake of another man, nor ask another man to live for mine” (p. 993). Libertarianism is an epistemological belief that permeates all institutions in society, most notably one’s view of governance, believing it should be promoting, open, and encouraging. This self-interested behavior is magnified at its core by the fundamental protection of freedom from coercion and constraint. These themes are embedded within the theories of Pre-Millennial Dispensationalism and Theological Individualism, and inform the Institutional Christianity theoretical cluster, while providing rationale for an individual’s self-serving actions.

Egalitarianism and Communitarianism.

With respect to the Natural Christianity theoretical cluster as counter-hegemonic, the notions of communitarianism and egalitarianism helps describe this cluster’s ideological theories of justice and is supported by theories of Liberation Theology and the Social Gospel. As a polar opposite to individualism as a concept of justice, communitarianism and egalitarianism maintains the identity of the social fabric that holds everyone together in common experiences, whether positive or negative (Wren, 1977). Rooted within Natural Christianity and these theories of justice is a view of human nature, best described by Thomas Hobbes (1651/1982) as recognition that the natural self is evil and selfish and thus must be regulated for the betterment of society (Miguez Bonino, 1983). Where the “divine nature is said to be good, essential human nature is not” (Brown, 1981). This view is supported by extensive Christian scripture⁵⁶, but is best

⁵⁶ Genesis 8:21; John 3:16; Romans 5:12; Galatians 6:8

described in the Mormon scripture of Mosiah 3:19 (The Book of Mormon): “the natural man is an enemy to God and has been from the fall of Adam.” With the knowledge that if individuals are left to their own selfish interests, their lives would be at odds with God, communitarianism and egalitarianism therefore seek to regulate the “natural (hu)man” so that God’s love can pervade all of society. Furthermore, Kantian (1785/2012) notions of the social contract contribute to the regulatory notions that formulate this theory. Because human nature is inherently evil, Kant (1785/2012) believes a social ordering is performed through contract. This contract identifies that which is forced upon society from the intent of what is Right, and not as a means for individual benefit.

The Natural Christianity theoretical cluster best exhibits communitarianism and egalitarianism as the defined theories of justice and presents a poignant dichotomy to its alternative. John Rawls (1971) states that “society is rightly ordered, and therefore just, when its major institutions are arranged so as to achieve the greatest net balance of satisfaction summed over all the individuals belonging to it” (p. 22). He theorized that if people acted under the *Veil of Ignorance*, where they didn’t know their own fate, they would make choices that would be to the greatest benefit to the least advantaged; this is known as the *Difference Principle*. Rawls believed that justice occurs when individuals operate from this principle and identify the worst case scenarios in all alternatives and picked the least severe. Rawls (2001) adds to this theory of justice, stating that a core principle of this cluster is the “difference principle... [and] conditions are to be to the greatest benefit to the least-advantaged members of society” (p. 43).

Finally, the justice theories of communitarianism and egalitarianism in defining the Natural Christianity cluster advocate for communal action to: end oppression, ensure

fairness, and equality in the workplace, and to love and serve the other as you would to yourself. Egalitarian theorist Kai Nielson (1986) states, “the goal we are seeking is an equality of basic condition for everyone...everyone, as far as possible, should have equal life prospects” (p. 283). In the same way Selya Benhabib (1994) advocates the need for a stabilized society by proposing three equally important values: democratic legitimacy, collective identity, and economic welfare, that if all conditions were met, society would move closer to harmony. Bayer (1986, p. 53) claims, “Our preoccupation with individualism is one reason why it has been so difficult for the average parishioner to hear the gospel of liberation.”

The recognition that everyone is affected by each other’s actions brings to light the shared responsibility that permeates society. All individuals are equally responsible for the “common good” of the society, both locally and globally (MacIntyre, 1999). This concept of the common good is characterized by the community’s value in equality of basic condition and life prospects for everyone; a commitment to fairness and equity for all members of society (regardless of circumstance); and collective ownership, control, and participation in a more fair and low-risk capitalistic marketplace (Nielson, 1986). Furthermore, this theory of justice doesn’t just settle on the protection of life as the only role of the collective, but rather sees justice as all members contributing to shared education and empowerment for life prospects (Nell & O’Neill, 1972). Also, the theory of justice holds the belief that no person, regardless of life situation, should be denigrated to an inhumane life standard, but instead one of social, cultural, and economic rights that include quality housing, health care, food and water, and commonwealth. Archbishop Rembert Weakland (1980) in purporting a communitarian theory of justice, “argue(s) that

the capitalist system is inherently inequitable and therefore contradictory to the demands of Christian morality, for it is based on acquisitiveness, competition and self-centered individualism (and) must be replaced by a radically different system that abolishes private property, the profit motive and the free market” (p. 128).

Conclusion

This study uses the concepts and processes of praxis and conflict to examine the two theoretical clusters, and analyze politicians’ faith and political action with respect to their Christian theology, theories of justice, and varying political theories. One cluster exhibits a “Christian faith lost in purity of inner substance it gained in power of external organization” (Sohm, 1904, p. 42), while the other demands that “the Church must cease considering itself as the exclusive place of salvation and orient itself towards a new and radical service of people” (Gutierrez, 1973, p. 256). Politicians who typify Institutional Christianity may experience conflict between their political theory and religious beliefs. This conflict can be best understood through their integration of various psychological coping methods, such as confirmation bias, rational ignorance, and self-deception. Some politicians may claim devotion to their faith, when in fact it is a ploy used to garner political support and retain their office. On the other side of the spectrum, politicians grouped in the Natural Christianity cluster may experience praxis, thus making their politics and faith coexist.

Concepts of justice are important in defining the expectations of society and how people interact. When analyzing the contemporary American politician and the dissonance or congruence that occurs between their faith and political theory and action,

an individual's notion of justice helps to predict whether that person will easily integrate their religious beliefs and their political theory or encounter resistance. This research will highlight examples made by the Institutional Christianity theoretical cluster, which is defined by theories of Pre-Millennial Dispensationalism and Theological Individualism, along with libertarian and utilitarian notions of justice. It will also examine various coping mechanisms employed to deal with the substantial divide between an individual's religious beliefs and their political theory and behavior. Furthermore, it will also detail the congruence that occurs when a politician's religious beliefs and political theory and action are in alignment. This stems from a Natural Christianity theoretical cluster that is defined by theories of Liberation Theology and Social Gospel and a communitarian and egalitarian notion of justice. Next, a more detailed look into the primary theories that construct these political/religious theoretical clusters will be helpful in gaining more understanding about the politician's logic, motivation, and influence.

CHAPTER 5

A RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF THE THEORETICAL CLUSTERS

Introduction

When surveying the landscape of contemporary American politics and its religious influence, this research shows that two distinct theoretical clusters emerge. These clusters create a dichotomy and draw a distinct line in the sand separating the opposing sides. As Leathers (1984) writes, “their interpretations of the Christian faith as a political and social ideology and policies are polar opposites on the ideological spectrum” (p. 1160). The various religious factions or faiths are irrelevant to the composition of these political/religious-infused theoretical clusters. Even more important to these clusters are the philosophical notions of individualism or communitarianism. This is illustrated with the politician who upholds and defends the notion of private property and liberty above all else, versus the politician who values shared community property and responsibility to better the community. It is from this fundamental philosophy that the two clusters have evolved. The first, Institutional Christianity, is connected through a commitment to the inherent rights that an individual’s private property and liberty are of primary importance and essential to living out one’s faith. This cluster is grouped together by the theories of Pre-Millennial Dispensationalism and Theological Individualism. The second cluster, Natural Christianity, is entwined with those who value the holistic well-being of all in a society and commit oneself to a communal effort and ownership in order to create equity amongst all for a greater society. This philosophical strain is reinforced by the theories of Liberation Theology and a Social Gospel. These

two clusters will be the foundation in characterizing and differentiating contemporary American politicians for the purpose of recognizing and understanding the congruence or dissonance that occurs between an individual's faith and politics.

Institutional Christianity

Pre-Millennial Dispensationalism.

When analyzing the contemporary American politician who subscribes to, or is categorized by, Institutional Christianity, there are certain common characteristics found to constitute this cluster, namely theories of Pre-Millennial Dispensationalism and Theological Individualism. By separating the theories and looking more specifically at the Pre-Millennial Dispensationalist theory, this research will construct the identifying philosophical notions that inform Institutional Christianity. As mentioned prior, Pre-Millennial Dispensationalism is hegemonic and pervasive amongst most religious contemporary American politicians. Because of this position, many religious contemporary American politicians experience dissonance between their faith and their political theory and behavior. Those who recognize this dissonance utilize a variety of coping mechanisms, aiding them in reconciling the conflicting theories; those coping mechanisms range from self-deception, rational ignorance, and confirmation bias. This section will describe how the religious contemporary American politician explains their Pre-Millennial Dispensationalist position.

Pre-Millennial Dispensationalism maintains a commitment to the literal translation of modern religious text (Abbott & Gallagher (eds.), 1966; Novak, 1981). It is in this vein that political figures use a literal interpretation of the religious text to inform

their position and ideology of public policy. Grasping onto a theological explanation of absolutism regarding a literal translation of the Christian scriptures, the contemporary American politician's rational ignorance is employed and refuses to hear or see alternative interpretations. The literalist approach believes that all scripture was divinely inspired and thus divinely interpreted without flaw. An illustration of this is the famous theologian and founder of the modern day homeschooling movement, Rousas John Rushdoony (Sharlet, 2006), whose publications in the late 1960s advocated for the death penalty for gay men (Leviticus 20:13), blasphemers (Leviticus 24:14), and badly behaved children (Leviticus 20:9). His justifications were found using a literal reading of the Levitical code, and have been since dismissed as "fringe" from the Pre-Millennial Dispensationalist community. This is one example of contradictions that exist within the Pre-Millennial Dispensationalists camp, where a literal reading of scripture creates a socially radical policy that can no longer be defended from within. This has been the historical narrative of this theory, with original beliefs justified by a literal reading of scripture, regarding slavery, women's subservience, and white supremacy. These beliefs are now considered "fringe" and too extreme to be associated with their political theory, which only uncovers more core contradictions and inconsistencies in theory.

Another identifying characteristic of Pre-Millennial Dispensationalism is the orthodoxy in holding true to the principle of literal understanding of the material world. Using the Christian scripture, politicians with a Pre-Millennial Dispensationalist theory justify their participation from a variety of stances on public policy regarding the environment. When approaching issues such as global warming, deforestation, corporate farming, pollution, landfills, air and water quality, land management, toxic waste, and

energy production, many politicians defend their positions both publicly and to themselves by maintaining a literal interpretation of certain religious texts that embellish the imminent destruction of the earth and the creation of a new more perfect earth. For instance, the often-quoted verse from John the Revelator in Revelation 21:1 (Catholic Public Domain Version) states, “I saw the new heaven and the new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and the sea is no more.” Also, the use of a literal reading of the Hebraic creation story in Genesis 1:26–28 states:

And he said: "Let us make Man to our image and likeness. And let him rule over the fish of the sea, and the flying creatures of the air, and the wild beasts, and the entire earth, and every animal that moves on the earth. And God created man to his own image; to the image of God he created him; male and female, he created them. And God blessed them, and he said, "Increase and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and the flying creatures of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.

An individual’s orthodoxy to this literalism might produce a conclusion that all of humankind is empowered to have complete dominion over the entire world and all its inhabitants. This orthodoxy produces a sense of entitlement leading politicians to act in such a way that reflects this dominating worldview (Guth, Green, Kellstedt, and Smidt, 1995). This domination of the earth is justified by the apocalypse and other end-of-the-world beliefs. “The power of apocalyptic and millennial narratives depend on fear, and because fear is undependable, it must be sustained” (Kintz, 1997, p. 9).

Pre-Millennial Dispensationalism finds its notions of justice rooted in the libertarian tradition and the belief that all individuals have certain rights from God, namely life, liberty, and property. As a strain of individualism, a libertarian approach to the temporal world reflects the theological values that have been literally interpreted as a command to take dominion over not just the physical world, but all of society without constraint. With a divergence from Christian theology of human nature and instead using a humanistic belief that all of humankind is inherently good, the Pre-Millennial Dispensationalist advocates for the de-regulation of all markets. By doing so, humankind can trade and develop the most effective and efficient policies about their relationship with the temporal world. To institute an environmental protection policy or commerce regulation is an infringement of liberty on God's chosen and akin to idolatry (Coffman & Alexander, 1992).

The Pre-Millennial Dispensationalist view of de-regulated markets is also influenced by a futuristic perspective. Politicians with a Pre-Millennial Dispensationalist philosophy tend to have a very eschatological mind frame. Eschatology is the philosophy and theology about the world's death, judgment, heaven, and hell in the final days of human existence, and the belief that the end is near (Guth, Green, Kellstedt, & Smidt, 1995). Those who hold true to this theory are committed to a relationship with the temporal world in which the apocalypse is coming and morality is spinning downward until God's triumphant return to reclaim the kingdom. "Michael Novak, of the American Enterprise Institute, who spiritualizes the multi-national corporation, states 'it's their religious and moral duty to export free, unregulated enterprise to the rest of the globe'" (Kintz, 1997, p. 217). For example, former President Reagan's Secretary of the Interior,

James Watt, justified the lack of an environmental protection policy in the Reagan administration saying, “How many future generations can we count on before the Lord’s return?” (Guth, Green, Kellstedt, & Smidt, 1995, p. 368). By having a futuristic outlook that the world’s end is coming soon, and believing that this end will result in tremendous destruction and barrenness, Pre-Millennial Dispensationalist politicians enact and create policies that lead to the exhaustion of all the natural resources for temporal use and profit.

When members of the Vatican’s Pontifical Academy of Sciences visited President Ronald Reagan in 1981, imploring the President to end the United States’ nuclear weapons program, President Reagan read aloud Revelations 16:16-21 and assured the delegation that God will be the one ending the world, not he (Berryman, 1989). This theological justification for nuclear weapons proliferation was expanded to other controversial issues and associated with the idea of patriotism. Christians were subtly encouraged that by supporting these policies, they were being patriotic and were in God’s will (Ingber, 1989). Former presidential candidate and televangelist Pat Robertson exemplifies this Pre-Millennial Dispensationalist attitude, using God-ordained rights to justify the exploitation of workers in his diamond mines in Africa and oil refineries in Central America (Roth & Schoeller, 2002). Pat Robertson has also stated that “the 8th commandment is God’s recognition of private property, ‘Thou shalt not steal’ is about taxes. God forbids to take from the rich and give to the poor” (Kintz, 1997, p. 43).

Popular media was also responsive to the rhetoric of end times, apocalyptic theory. The famous book by Hal Lindsey (1970), *The Late Great Planet Earth*, set off mass-hysteria during the 1970s regarding when the apocalypse was going to occur, leading to yearly-published books predicting when the end of the world would come

(Kintz, 1997). Most recently, the current six-book best seller *Left Behind* series, by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins, has reignited the mass-hysteria of the rapture and the coming destruction of this world. This sense of fatalism is best explained by the Pre-Millennial Dispensationalist view of evangelism, in which LaHaye and Jenkins justify their work. With direct theological spiritual lineage, through mentor Francis Schaeffer, a disciple of Rousas John Rushdoony, LaHaye and Jenkins write from a literalist interpretation of Christian scripture about God's punishment and thus the need to save the world from eternal damnation (Sharlet, 2006).

Another Pre-Millennial Dispensationalist perspective in evangelism is the appropriate use of war. Michael Novak (1983) justifies war in explaining that “no one in the New Testament thinks of telling the Roman centurions to give up their military careers – neither Jesus (Matthew 8:5-13), nor John the Baptist (Luke 3:14), nor St. Paul (Acts 22:25)” (p. 360). Also, using an ethnocentric reading of Matthew 12:30 (New International Version), “He who is not with Me is against Me”, has been the Manichaean rallying cry to war, such as in Central America, by Evangelical leaders like Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson (Grandin, 2006). The support for war by Pre-Millennial Dispensationalists comes from a shared “crisis-ridden view of the world and a sense that America was in decline... and evil existed in the world” (Grandin, 2006, p. 232). Thomas Hanks (1983) even goes as far as to infer that Pre-Millennial Dispensationalism is to blame for this decline, linking “decline” to the non-white racial demographic explosion in the United States.

Historically, Pre-Millennial Dispensationalism has had an evangelistic justification in support of imperialism and colonialism. “It was thought permissible

during the colonial period to enslave, economically exploit, torture, and even kill person while you were ‘saving’ them. Physical well-being was unrelated to the religious task of ‘converting condemned souls’ to Christ” (Nelson – Pallmeyer, 1986, p. 19). This type of rationale is found amongst many Pre-Millennial Dispensationalist politicians in America, who believe that “in order to save the village, we must destroy it” (Sharlet, 2006, p. 42). Since the end of the world is near, Pre-Millennial Dispensationalism believes that the literal sword is justification to rid the world of all sin and bring salvation. As Pastor Rusty Thomas from *Operation Save America* preaches, two wicked acts are believed to be responsible for the decline of America: gay sex and abortion. His message of apocalypse is an expectation for the salvation of this country, stating, “We may need another 9/11 to bring about a full spiritual revival” (Sharlet, 2006, p. 43).

To act in faith on this theory that we live in the end times is a gamble in forfeiting the future sustainability and peace of the environment for the short term consumption of these temporal resources. Responding to the eschatological impressions of the New Testament writers, Ernst Kasemann (1964) claims, “You do not write the history of the Church, if you are expecting the end of the world to come any day” (p. 28).

Contemporary American politicians who have an Institutional Christianity theoretical framework and subscribe to the hegemonic Pre-Millennial Dispensationalism theory pursue and implement policy that mirrors a libertarian philosophy of justice and the theological literal command to have dominion over the Earth. With a pulse of jingoism, these politicians use a variety of coping mechanisms to deal with the dissonance that occurs between their conflicting political and religious theories so that they can maintain their support for war, exploitation of natural resources, and deregulated markets.

Theological Individualism.

Following along the same characteristics of Pre-Millennial Dispensationalism, the contemporary American politician with an Institutional Christianity theoretical framework is also informed by a Theological Individualism theory, which holds true to a literal interpretation of religious texts, as it is supported by the dominant paradigm. From this absolutism in literal translation, the theory of Theological Individualism holds to strict legalism.⁵⁷ A legalistic commitment to the religious scripture views them as inerrant and truthful with complete absence of doubt in their literal and divinely-inspired interpretation. With this style of interpretation comes a commitment to orthodoxy of the religious association, whether through churches or larger sectarian denominations. Also with orthodoxy comes the unyielding defense of tradition and common sense, with favorably biased perspectives towards one's religious organization.

The pivotal philosophy of Theological Individualism is the emphasis on personal liberty and deservedness in relationship to God, whereas, each person is responsible for their own salvation and thus their choices on earth must be judged individually and they must be held responsible for their own choices and actions. It is a philosophical commitment to individualism and the rejection of a communitarian theory of justice. "Individualism has its price in the lives of all citizens and fosters fear and distrust of other human beings, because they are viewed as threats and competitors" (Amanecida Collective, 1988, p. 94). Along these lines, Ayn Rand (1964) presents that "altruism permits no concept of self-respecting, self-supporting man – a man who supports his own

⁵⁷ Legalism is the opposite of grace when referencing God's judgment. Legalistic Christianity tends to not only interpret the texts literally, but to place extreme emphasis on discipline as a principle of redemption. Legalism is abiding by the letter of the law rather than by the spirit of the law.

life by his own effort and neither sacrifices himself nor others...it permits no concept of benevolent co-existence among men, it permits no concept of justice” (p. ix). However, in exposing hypocrisy, Scott McConnell (2010) points out in his book, that nearing the end of her life Ayn Rand accepted this altruism from the society that she once criticized by collecting social security to aide her in paying for doctor expenses. Moreover, it is because of this position that most religious contemporary American politicians experience dissonance between their faith and their political theory and behavior. Of course when dissonance occurs, this position is reinforced by ideas circulating that have congealed and come to dominate using various coping mechanisms such as rational ignorance, self-deception, and confirmation bias in dealing with alternatives that are conflicting. “Many leaders in government give their blessings to those conceptions of faith that uphold individual rights (largely belonging to white, propertied males) and prevent solidarity among oppressed people” (Amanecida, 1988, p. 53). The next section will describe the historical construct of Theological Individualism and how a religious contemporary American politician justifies their Institutional Christianity position.

Theological Individualism derives its theory of justice from libertarianism. As with Pre-Millennial Dispensationalism, this philosophical foundation to libertarianism holds the core belief that essential to humankind’s existence are the God-given rights to life, liberty, and property. This belief that God gave us these core liberties is traced back to Frederic Bastiat (1850/1998, p. 3), who is known as the grandfather of libertarianism, and states that “each of us has a natural right, from God, to defend his life, his liberty and his property.” He wrote these words at a time when his family’s business was being regulated by the French government, causing them to lose significant profits. Along with

this dedication to a philosophy of libertarianism is a strong commitment to a laissez-faire approach to economics (Nozick, 1974). A free-market economy is essential to the God-given rights of liberty and property. In the same way, this is a belief that the individual is deserving of their temporal blessing and earned benefit because of their efforts and works for God. One's fame, fortune, health, riches, and property are a result of their piousness and an exhibition of their holiness, blessed by God. Theological Individualism views the rational economic individual as essential to being a strong and faithful reflection of God (Wilkinson, 2000).

The religious justification for Theological Individualism finds its roots in a quasi-Calvinistic doctrine that teaches that a spirit of capitalism is a Christian value endowed by God. Prior to John Calvin's theological discovery, from 700 to 500 B.C., the earliest notions of wealth accumulation were seen in ancient Religion. Family tombs, where ancestor worship took place, were where individuals and families would store up their wealth and display it in the form of boundary stones to proclaim blessings from God and protect their property (Fustel de Coulanges, 1980). Then from 500 B.C. to 70 A.D., the Sadducees under Maccabean rule maintained a theological justification regarding their "riches as an expression and constituent part of salvation" (Finkelstein, 1938, p. 4). Because of their ranking hierarchy in society, the Sadducees used very oppressive means to both create and maintain their wealth. This Sadducean belief that one's wealth was a sign of divine favor from God was known as eudaemonism (Maynard – Reid, 1987). It wasn't until conflicts with Jesus (Luke 4:18; Matthew 12:21) that eudaemonism was challenged as a false and perverted doctrine. Eudaemonism is manifested in today's society through the lens of the Prosperity Gospel, which, in the same way, justifies

capitalism and the accumulation of wealth as a sign of God's blessings. "Prosperity Gospel is the belief that poverty is just a matter of bad faith and negative thinking. It is the mirror opposite of Social Gospel. One says our mission on earth is to imitate Christ by serving others. The other says our mission on earth is to imitate Christ by serving ourselves with unlimited personal wealth" (Press, 2005, p. 219).

Next, this research will examine the Weberian analysis of Calvinism and how it manipulated an "anti-mammonist doctrine" (preaching against wealth through dishonesty or the expense of others) towards one that regurgitated the philosophy of eudaemonism – "the spirit of capitalism" (Weber, 1904/1958, p. 259). Sociologist Max Weber (1904/1958) was very interested in the relationship between Religion, politics and economics. Moreover, he also was interested in and wanted to trace the "process of secularization" within Protestantism, "occurring in a slow gradual evolutionary manner from the sacred to the profane" (Goldstein, 2005, p. 116). This process of secularization was evident in the Calvinist tradition, where he provides an example of the famous preacher John Wesley. Wesley, although recognizing that "wherever riches have increased, the essence of religion has decreased in the same proportion" (Weber, 1904/1958, p. 175), had to reconcile the fact that his Methodist church was swiftly fading away because of this position and decided to "exhort all Christians to gain all they can, and to save all they can; that is, in effect, to grow rich" (p. 175) in order to save the church. To Weber, it was astonishing that rationalizing capitalistic behavior was able to gradually change the core merits and doctrines of contemporary Religion.

Max Weber was heavily influenced by the life circumstances of his upbringing. He watched his father play the political game in Germany and his mother partake in

Christian social welfare as the Religion's response to the worker's socialist movement (Collins, 1985). Weber never considered himself religious, but was extremely inquisitive as to the force of Religion in society and "was concerned with the background of capitalism... and how it came into existence in the first place" (Collins, 1985, p. 83). His analysis of capitalist-infused Religion was centered on this idea of the Protestant work ethic, which derived from a specific doctrinal strand on Protestantism and is the backbone of Institutional Christianity to this day.

The doctrine of Calvinism put forward that "some human beings are chosen to be saved from damnation, the choice being predetermined by God" (Weber, 1904/1958, p. 5). Those who are predetermined for salvation are considered the elect and are expected to "increase (the) glory of God by fulfilling His commandments to the best of his ability" (p. 108). An individual can increase the glory of God through their callings in life, be it a job, relationship, or civic participant. To be successful in one's calling was "regarded as a 'sign' of being one of the elect" (p. 5). Material wealth and accumulation, so long as one wasn't being idle, was the measuring stick for a successful calling. Weber (1904/1958, p. 182), commenting about this change in Religion, states that "the idea of duty in one's calling prowls about in our lives like the ghost of dead religious beliefs." Instead of a feeling of duty to the broader community, Weber cites how Calvinism defends the Augustinian belief that "God helps those who help themselves" (Weber, 1904/1958, p. 115).

Theological Individualism is based upon Calvinism and the idea that "the surest and most evident proof of rebirth and genuine faith... is the spirit of capitalism" (Weber, 1904/1958, p. 172). John Calvin, who was suspicious of emotions, derived his doctrine

not from a religious experience like Martin Luther, who would have repudiated Calvin's work, but from his ability to reason and use logic. Calvin looked to the story of Job in the Old Testament as the perfect example of God's elect being blessed with tremendous material wealth, as well as having to endure God-allowed trials and tribulations. Calvin believed that the elect of God were called to greatness and labored to show their riches as evidence of their faith. As stumbling blocks to the elect, idleness and wasted time were considered "the first and in principle the deadliest of sins" (Weber, 1904/1958, p. 157). These beliefs were also pervasive amongst the "founding fathers". In defending his Calvinistic upbringing and participation in the capitalistic economy, "Ben Franklin quotes from the Book of Proverbs 22:29, 'Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings'" (Weber, 1904/1958, p. 53). This focus on acquisition of wealth and success through capitalism became "the ultimate purpose in life" (Federici, 2004, p. 135).

The theological tenets constructing Theological Individualism have grown from the influence of Calvinism to a deeper and stronger sense of an individual's private relationship with God. Where faith was once a community activity operating in the public eye, now, in contemporary society, it has been defended as an individual's private action and relationship with God (Federici, 2004). Because of this individualism-integrated-into-faith paradigm, religious leaders found it easier to justify hierarchies and social orders as natural. Catholic leaders continued to espouse similar beliefs. For example, "Pope Benedict insisted that a diversity of classes in society was part of the natural order and was willed by God" (Dorr, 1983, p.55). He was later criticized by Pope Leo XIII for lending his authority as Pope to promote a "mythological basis of the capitalist order"

(Dorr, 1983, p. 56). Unfortunately, this historical integration of Religion validating capitalism and individualism into the dominant paradigm was the justification for Nazi ideology and imperialism (Miguez Bonino, 1983). This has long been the dilemma, where a secular society persistently attempts to collude with religious leaders in order to justify their exploitive actions. By claiming that God intended for a natural order, now capitalists can explain social ills, such as slavery, poverty, and wealth. Contemporary religious leaders, such as Jerry Falwell, the leader of the largest Evangelical movement in the country and CEO of the most prosperous Christian company, *Moral Majority, Inc.*, have boldly asserted: “The free enterprise movement is clearly outlined in the Book of Proverbs in the Bible. Jesus Christ made it clear that the work ethic was part of his plan for man. Ownership of property is Biblical. Competition in business is Biblical. Ambitious and successful business management is clearly outlined as a part of God’s plan for His people” (Webber, 1981, p. 27).

Theological Individualism is manifested in the political arena, where politicians defend personal property rights as essential to the blessings endowed by God. The contemporary American politician that holds strong and fast to an Institutional Christianity framework maintains a Theological Individualist perspective and generally advocates for a reduced and limited role of government, being that government’s only role is to protect one’s personal property and liberty and to not infringe on the choices that the individual makes regarding their property (Stark & Glock, 1968). The manifestation of Theological Individualism amongst contemporary American politicians is correlated with debates about the role of the state in society and reflects (but is not limited to), these political issues: low taxes, eliminate rules and regulations on private

property, moral restrictions (abortion, gay marriage, death penalty, school prayer, and drug use), gun rights, wealth accumulation, and manifest destiny. A politician may defend their decisions and views on these various issues by citing specific religious texts as absolute and literal mandates that God commands society to obey. Politicians use this circular logic or solipsism, in defending certain laws that might contradict certain principles of their faith. An example of this is the former State Senate President of the state of Arizona, Russell Pearce, who is one of the leaders in America on anti-immigrant policy and rhetoric justifying his position using Religion. When questioned about his individual political policy and worldview contradicting his religious position on immigration, Senator Pearce used religious scripture that encourages individuals to not break laws, but instead to respect the laws of the land. Senator Pearce used a verse from the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenant 58:21, and from the New Testament, Romans 13:1, to support his claims on anti-immigrant policy (Fletcher Stack, 2010; Gonzalez, 2010).

The specific stances that Theological Individualism sustains are justified by few literally interpreted religious texts which elevate the individual ethic above all else and dismiss the value of a communal ethic. Moreover, hegemony reinforces these methods of interpretation and individualism leading towards a Biblical inference of Theological Individualism. An example of this Calvinist doctrine is found in Galatians 6:4-5, which says, “So let each one prove his own work. And in this way, he shall have glory in himself only, and not in another. For each one shall carry his own burden.” To this end, the notion that God will judge and bless each according to their own individual action by the fruit of one’s labor is the guiding principle of the Protestant ethic: each individual

should be responsible for their own actions. Individuals deserving of punishment or reward shall be evaluated from an individual level of analysis, not a communal one. Individuals have no place interfering with the God-given right of one's own life, liberty, and property. When reflecting on this cooptation of the world and church, which has occurred in most Christian traditions, Lord Alfred Tennyson writes:

So false, he took himself for true;
Whose pious talk, when most his heart was dry,
Made wet the crafty crowsfoot round his eye;
Who, never naming God except for gain,
So never took that useful name in vain;
Made Him his catspaw and the Cross his tool,
And Christ the bait to trap his dupe and fool. (Sea Dreams; 1860)

In other words, as best described by Nietzsche (1883/1978), the Church has become precisely that institution that Jesus wanted to abolish.

Natural Christianity

Social Gospel.

On the other side of this theological and philosophical cluster is the Natural Christianity theoretical framework, along with the non-fundamentalist religious theories of the Social Gospel and Liberation Theology (Reichley, 2001; Jelen & Wilcox, 1997; Leege & Kellstedt, 1993). Focusing on Social Gospel, this section will highlight its specific principles, demonstrating how this cluster is diametrically opposed to the

Institutional Christianity cluster that embodies Pre-Millennial Dispensationalism and Theological Individualism. The Social Gospel interprets that “religious–political neoconservatives have essentially created a mix of politics and faith that is used to support oppression” (Amanecida, 1988, p. 52). As a counter-hegemonic theory, the Social Gospel establishes itself as a social force. This makes it more difficult for the dominant paradigm to co-opt or claim as its own. Individuals who prescribe to the principle of the Social Gospel understand that their lives are frail, fractured, and fragmented, and that humility and love are the primary virtues from which they operate. However, though their spiritual mindset is to remain humble, their social mindset is to become active.

A key principle of the Social Gospel is to live out one’s faith every day in every step one takes. This is the concept of praxis, the true essence of Jesus Christ’s love, which is the giving of one’s self unto the other. The Social Gospel’s impulse, intuition, and inspiration are to give. It is a perpetual action of love, where each and every person is treated in the manner that the same individual would treat one’s self. Operating from this theoretical perspective is seamless and effortless when integrating one’s faith and political action. Yet, despite positive theoretical symmetry the Social Gospel presents between faith and action, there exists tremendous social pressures from all aspects of society to change. As Soren Kierkegaard (1854/1968, p. 45) wrote, “One can be a Christian only in opposition” to hegemony.

Standing in the face of Institutional Christianity, the Social Gospel theory rejects the selfish nature that is preached in libertarianism and replaces it with a communitarian and egalitarian theory of justice (Leege & Kellstedt, 1993; Barker & Carmen, 2000). This

theory of justice is best illustrated by a politician's commitment to fight for fairness and equity in all situations, always fighting for the common good of the community so that all may prosper. John Rawls (2001) best contextualizes this theory of justice, arguing that when one is blinded by the "veil of ignorance" as to their "original position", one would always adopt the "difference principle" of providing the most benefit to the least advantaged members in society. Along this line, the Social Gospel theory strongly rejects and condemns a philosophy of individualism and selfishness. Just as Bakunin (1883/1970, p. 14) laments, "I do not want to be I, I want to be We." In the same way, Jesus' words (Luke 9:23-24), though not taken literally, of dying to oneself so that one may have everlasting life are realized in the selfless acts and abounding love of Social Gospelites committed to giving to their community.

The Social Gospel got its birth from theorists and activists, such as Walter Rauschenbusch, Josiah Strong, Washington Gladden, Susan B. Anthony, and Frances Willard, who helped formulate an active and passionate expression of Christianity and provided the groundwork for contemporary theorists and activists to emerge. Like the other clusters, this trajectory of religious thought used moral values found in the Bible. Specifically, with regards to Christ's teachings, these folks located a foundation for their beliefs in "fight[ing] the social, economic and political ills that are associated with capitalism" (Reichley, 2001, p. 159). Social Gospel theory asserts that the "Gospel is a political tract or it is nothing at all" (p. 167), in contrast to Institutional Christianity, which believes that the Gospel must stay out of government and should only apply to one's individual salvation. Cussianovich (1979, p. 139) argues that all Christians need "a commitment to turn (their) human love into a collective experience from which there is

no turning back.” A foundation for this belief is that if one suffers, all suffer. Everyone is interconnected as a larger community and responsible for each other (Jelen & Wilcox, 1997).

The theory of the Social Gospel is rooted in a contextual and hermeneutical interpretation of primarily Christian scripture. With the hopes of understanding the heart and spirit of what God is asking of the world, a Social Gospel theorist believes that the good news⁵⁸ of Jesus Christ is relevant in modern culture. Individuals practicing a Social Gospel theory believe that doctrinal documents like the Bible are infallible, but should be read with a cultural relevance so that one can understand the true intended meaning. As Malherbe (1977, p. 17) encourages readers of the Bible and other scriptures, “We must read them with a sensibility to their social dimensions before we hasten to draw larger patterns.” The theological basis that contemporary American politicians adhere to in the Social Gospel is that God has predestined all, but also gave free will to all individuals. They believe that this free choice may lead people to act in the way God desires. This is interpreted to mean loving and caring for others through all actions, in the same way that Christ has loved us (John 13:34-35). Not unlike the notion of work ethic in Calvinism, Social Gospel theory interprets an individual’s actions of love and charity to their immediate and larger communities. An important difference is that their view of accumulation of wealth is not a sign of an individual being faithful and obedient to God, nor is it an indication of one’s humility and love. Furthermore, most contemporary American politicians that adhere to Natural Christianity and a theory of Social Gospel

⁵⁸ The Gospel message of Jesus Christ is also called the “good news” throughout scripture, which is a promise of eternal salvation for all who accept Jesus as Lord and Savior.

assert that society must be structured in a way that will encourage individuals to make these choices to love others and put their faith in action, praxis.

The essence of the Social Gospel's response to the individualism and capitalism found in Calvinism started from Jesus' words (Matthew 6:24; New King James Version), "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and mammon." The word *mammon* is highly significant to the message of the Social Gospel, whereas it is the traditional Jewish word for material wealth and gain at the expense of others. Mammon is the action of one's accumulation of wealth coming at the expense of others living in poverty. In describing this "spirit of mammon" that Jesus was talking about in Matthew 6:19-24 and Luke 12:21-33, Hugo Echegaray (1984, p. 45) claims that "the rich lost their chance of knowing God; their minds were beclouded by the desire to enrich themselves, a desire that led inevitably to an insensitivity toward the brother in need." Dostoevsky (1879/2003) saw the accumulation of wealth and power as a symbol of man's rebellious pride against God. Instead, the Social Gospel theory encourages one's view of individual faith to be expressed in one's love for one another and how one treats the least among them (Jelen, 1992). "The life that God gives and promises is essentially a shared life – as the poor share their food, though little it may be. The idols of the 'free enterprise system' promise life for the happy few that will 'trickle down' to the many. But this promise is false. That system does not feed the hungry: it needs to exploit them" (Amanecida, 1988, p. xv). An example of this is to contextually interpret the Book of James; Social Gospel theory reveals how the whole letter not only speaks of God's condemnation of the rich, but also a rebuke of simple orthodoxy of faith. And instead

issues a mandate of praxis, which is to be sensitive and act in a way that defends the poor (Maynard–Reid, 1987).

Social Gospel theory encourages political activism and sees systematic change as the positive influence of love over the hearts and minds of those serving in government and running for government office. Bayer (1986) rebukes those who call for a divorcing of religion and politics, stating, “To turn our backs on the political remedies essential in addressing economic problems is both sophistry and a recapitulation of the docetic⁵⁹ heresy. It is to deny that Jesus came in the flesh” (p. 30). The Social Gospel teaches individuals that by learning from the poor, one will find that the basic problem is structural, and to be committed to the poor as Jesus was is to be committed to political reformation. The Catholic Church believes only political structural changes could ensure that the economic rights of the poor were protected (Dorr, 1983). Those who claim noninvolvement in politics because religion and politics don’t mix only do so as subterfuge, to keep hegemony in place (Gutierrez, 1973; Tutu, 1985). The contemporary American politicians who come from the Natural Christianity framework with a Social Gospel tradition realize that their role is “not to bring in the kingdom, that is, to perfect society, but to give evidences of its coming” (Bayer, 1986, p. 134) by showing glimpses of what heaven would look like down on earth.

The Social Gospel theory outlines extensive policy mandates from the Christian scriptures that must be implemented in society so that individuals can be in obedience to God. Contrasting theories focus solely on individual mandates that are mentioned in scripture, but pay no merit to the societal commandments located in scripture. The first

⁵⁹ Docetism is the religious belief that Jesus’ physical body was only an illusion to humans and he really didn’t die, since he was only a spirit. This belief is considered to be heretical by most Christian traditions.

principle highlighted by the Social Gospel known as the Year of Jubilee, states that land must be redistributed every fifty years in order to correct the inequalities of a concentrated land ownership (Leviticus 25:10; Amos 5; Isaiah 3:12–15; 5:8–10; Luke 4:18–19). This redistribution of land is perceived as true liberty for all, whereas America’s founding fathers engraved on the Liberty Bell the words of Leviticus 25:10 (New International Version), “Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a year of jubilee for you; each one of you is to return to his family property.” Another principle is that of the Sabbatical Year, which holds that every seventh year all debts are forgiven, slaves are freed, and the land is to lie dormant so that fertility may be restored (Deuteronomy 15:1–6, 12–18; Leviticus 25:2–7). In early Christian communities, many of the apostles encouraged believers to sell all possessions and share all they have, living collectively in unison for the common good (Exodus 16:17–21; Proverbs 30:8–9; Acts 2: 44–45; 2 Corinthians 8:13–14; 1 Timothy 6:7–10). This was called the *Law of Consecration* and was practiced on a larger scale up until the early 1900s, most notably by the Mormon Church (Bushman & Bushman, 2001). It is still practiced in smaller communities in monasteries and kibbutzim. These God-ordained laws were implemented by many biblical government leaders and early church leaders such as Paul, who knew that the economic system would eventually create inequities in wealth. The early church created certain land reforms and cancellation of debt as institutional mechanism designed to break the cycle of poverty (Nelson–Pallmeyer, 1986). Even Pope Paul VI, in his writing *Populorum Progressio*, “denounced the monstrous injustice according to which the present policy of international trade is organized” (Camara, 1971, p. 28).

To many contemporary American politicians, the Social Gospel is a form of evangelism, understanding that in order to save the spirit, you must alleviate oppression. From the evangelical perspective, the missionary response is to denounce oppression and actively work to end poverty. Radical evangelism is more than acts of personal charity; it is instead using those acts as “the building blocks erected on the foundation of decisive liberation – for social and structural changes” (Hanks, 1983, p. 13). Evangelism is a key component of Social Gospel theory, but it means nothing if it is not done correctly.

McElvaney (1980, p. 88) so eloquently states:

Evangelism is escapist if it has nothing to say to the affluence of the privileged and prosperous amid Third World starvation. Evangelism is expedient when it traffics in easy formulas and safe doctrines instead of calling us to a discipleship of transformed values. If evangelism conceals the cost of discipleship when it should reveal the call to obedience, are we going to rejoice in a quantitative kingdom of business as usual?

This evangelism in changing social structures is a goal of the Social Gospel in advancing the kingdom of God. For if those social structures do not change, individuals are in dire circumstances, and church leaders like those in the Vatican Council writing in *Gaudium et Spes* can say that “a person in extreme necessity has the right to take from the riches of others what he himself needs. For remember the saying, ‘Feed the person dying of hunger, because if you have not fed him you have killed him’” (Dorr, 1983, p. 122).

“Poverty kills just as surely as the most bloody war. Poverty does more than kill, it leads

to physical deformity, to psychological deformity, and to moral deformity” (Camara, 1971, p. 25).

Politicians who follow a Social Gospel theory generally hold common beliefs with one another. These stem from the value of religious freedom, as long as that value is not oppressive (Dowbiggin, 2002). For example, issues such as public school-sponsored prayer, teaching Creationism, prohibiting Native American religious use of peyote, and vouchers for religious schools all violate the intent of the Establishment Clause and threaten the expression of religious freedom for all (Deckman, 2002; Jelen & Wilcox, 1997). Most Social Gospel contemporary American politicians believe that issues such as abortion, gay rights, euthanasia, and alcohol-use are not absolute and are undefined in religious scripture, thus needing to be judged and interpreted contextually (Helco, 2001; DeLeon & Naff, 2004). Social Gospel politicians practice their philosophical values of humanitarianism and egalitarianism. These guide them to promote policies such as a living wage as the minimum wage; taxes as an expression of communal tithe to assist the needy through state welfare; labor regulations as essential to protecting worker safety and well-being; and foreign affairs from the perspective of peace and global social equality (Barker & Carmen, 2000; Reichley, 2001; Helco, 2001). Minority rights are essential and have been advanced as far back as Social Gospel leaning politicians urging President Lincoln to emancipate the slaves (Thompson, 1986). Another example of the contemporary American Social Gospel politician exercising their beliefs is in the view of being mindful of the earth and protecting and being a good steward of the environment (Berry, 1988; Guth, Green, Kellstedt, & Smidt, 1995).

The Social Gospel theory, as one part of the Natural Christianity theoretical cluster that informs contemporary American politicians, provides a communitarian and egalitarian perspective of justice. By approaching religious scripture through contextual and hermeneutical interpretation, Social Gospel theory mandates a counter-hegemonic praxis of government participation in overcoming oppression through love and hope. Social Gospel theory urges Christians to look outside of the individualism that plagues society. It rebukes those who, even though they practice a “compassionate charity which relieves the worst distress and helps individuals better themselves, (still) see no reason for redistribution, positive discrimination or other fundamental changes in the social structure” (Wren, 1977 pp. 105–106). Moreover, all are called to reject the root cause of humanity’s problems (Isaiah 53:6): the deceptive Christian economy of capitalism, a Christian capitalism theorized and defended by Calvinism (Hanks, 1983). The contemporary American politician who labors daily to aid the oppressed, spread love to all of God’s children, and create institutional mechanisms that guard against inequalities in wealth, embodies Natural Christianity and the Social Gospel theory and maintains congruence between faith and politics.

Liberation Theology.

Finally, the last political theological theory that is non-fundamentalist and which the contemporary American politicians of the Natural Christianity cluster may subscribe to is Liberation Theology. Those Natural Christianity politicians who practice Liberation Theology have congruence between their core religious beliefs and their political theory and action. Therefore, though an individual’s psyche is humbled in its fragility, it is

strengthened by the peace that comes with the ability to politically practice the core tenets of one's faith. Along with the Social Gospel theory, the theory of Liberation Theology is unwilling to compromise to the process of hegemony. Liberation Theology is formed by an egalitarian and communitarian theory of justice. It is a theology "rooted in three assumptions: 1) The present situation is one in which the vast majority live in a state of underdevelopment and unjust dependence; 2) This is a sinful situation; 3) It is the duty of Christians in conscious to commit themselves to efforts to overcome this situation" (Galilea, 1979, p. 167). This theory of justice can best be described by a politician's commitment to fight for fairness and equity in all situations, always fighting for the common good of the community so that oppression ceases. Along with this theory is a strong rejection and condemnation of the selfishness of individualism. With this is a reaction to the evils of capitalism, where Liberation Theology stands as a moral reaction to the dominant ideology of capitalism (Petrella, 2004). Finally, Liberation Theology, along with the Social Gospel, approaches all religious scriptures contextually and hermeneutically. Individuals practicing Liberation Theology are focused on how they might be able to understand the heart and spirit of what God is asking of them, so that they might liberate the oppressed and spread love to both the oppressed and oppressor, without giving expressed manifestations of such.

The birth of Liberation Theology is considered to be in the 1950s and 60s. Though Liberation Theology may not be uniformly acknowledged in popular religious circles, certain themes can be gleaned by the actions of various politicians who may be influenced by it. Liberation Theology generally refers to a revolutionary movement by Catholic priests in Latin America. Within Catholicism, this movement was the byproduct

of the Second Vatican Council, with priests being given more freedom and the ability to be creative with their practice (Boff & Boff, 1987). The monumental Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1968 in Medellin, Columbia, highlighted Liberation Theology. Within the Catholic Church, the gathering resulted in controversy around this theory. Liberation Theology grew from the many priests and bishops living amidst insurmountable poverty in Central and South America, who found their faith tested within the Catholic Church's practice of wealth accumulation. These religious leaders demanded liberation from the structural injustices besetting the people they were sent to save. Because of this collective action by Latin American priests in Medellin, Pope Paul VI attempted to include ideas from Liberation Theology in his *Octogesima Adveniens* and mainstream them within the Catholic Church, but was ultimately unsuccessful in the long-term due to the culture of capitalism that had already taken root within the church (Dorr, 1983).

A common misconception regarding Liberation Theology surrounds the perceived philosophical influences. Many contributors to Liberation Theology have other philosophical influences outside of theology, such as Kantian thought and Existentialism. Perhaps the most common amongst Liberation Theology contributors is Marxism, but as D.D. Webster (1984) highlights, to say that Liberation Theology is based in Marxism would be wholly inaccurate. Similarities do exist between Liberation Theology and Marxism, such as both advocating for theoreticians becoming practitioners to change the world around them, as well as a class analysis of the oppressed and the oppressor with the hope of ending injustice and exploitation. However, these connections are nothing more than illusory and can be attributed more to them being widespread beliefs that pervade

many philosophies. What is more telling is how Liberation Theology and Marxism diverge. “Unlike Marxism, Liberation Theology turns to the Christian faith as a means for bringing about liberation.” (Webster, 1984, p. 686) Furthermore, Liberation Theology agrees with Marxism in the understanding of exploitation and alienation, but only Liberation Theology sees this as sin and essentially alienation from God, which confronts both the oppressed and the oppressor as needing eternal and temporal salvation and not simply reduced to economics (Miranda, 1977).

The pivotal notion of Liberation Theology centers upon one primary belief: the preferential option for the poor (Gutierrez, 1973). This concept of preferential option for the poor is in every book and article that examines Liberation Theology, either promoting it or critiquing it. Eventually becoming part of Catholic Church doctrine, the term preferential option for the poor was coined by Gustavo Gutierrez in his influential book, *A Theology of Liberation* (1973), which was written after his attendance at the Conference of Catholic Bishops at Medellin, Columbia, in 1968. Gutierrez’s term was highlighted by the Boff brothers, Leonardo and Clodovis, both Catholic priests from Brazil who attended the conference in Medellin. Preferential option for the poor is a moral and political reaction to the existential crisis of how to have faith, find salvation, and be a Christian in a world of poverty, social injustice, and destitution. In their book, *Introducing Liberation Theology* (1987), the Boff brothers give a description of what option for the poor means. They cite Christ’s sermon on the Beatitudes, in which He states, “Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God” (Luke 6:20; Catholic Public Domain Version). This has become the singular capstone verse on which theologians build Liberation Theology. To Gutierrez (1973), the preferential option for

the poor is the essence of praxis. An individual's faith is not just the orthodoxy of theory. More importantly, it is the actions, practice, and complete integration of one's own life with the poor and applying "one of the principles of Liberation Theology (that) states that the poor are the teachers" (Amanecida, 1988, p. xi). Liberation Theology is to have praxis in every aspect of life, to make the problems of the poor our own problems. It is the conception of solidarity with the poor and a commitment to their struggle (Dorr, 1983). Essential to salvation, Liberation Theology encourages this praxis as the arena in which each individual "works out, along with others, both their destiny and their life of faith" (Gutierrez, 1973, p. 49) with the oppressed and impoverished.

Cesar Chavez is quoted as saying, "We look at His [Christ's] sermon (Sermon on the Mount) and it's very plain what he wants us to do: clothe the naked, feed the hungry, and give water to the thirsty. It's very simple stuff and that's what we've got to do" (Garcia, 2007, p. 32). In Reginald Davis' book, *Frederick Douglass: A Precursor of Liberation Theology* (2005), he discusses the illumination that Douglass received about the gospel of Jesus being radical. Frederick Douglass is seen as a harbinger of the Liberation Theology movement, as he emphasizes that the true gospel of Christ is for the poor and the oppressed. His mission in fighting for the freedom of the slaves shows that anything less than the liberation of the oppressed is un-Christian, and he proves his preachings by using stories from biblical scripture, such as the Beatitudes.

The use of Biblical stories is widespread in creating justification for Liberation Theology. Many use the parable of the Good Samaritan as an instrument in highlighting the Golden Rule commandment from Christ to care for those who are oppressed, despised, marginalized, and defenseless (Litonjua, 1998, p. 33; Boff & Boff, 1987, p. 48;

McAfee Brown, 1993, p. 36). In Luke 10:25-37, Jesus confronts the Pharisees and challenges them to keep the commandments. He first confirms that to obtain eternal life, one must “love the Lord your God from your whole heart, and from your whole soul, and from all your strength, and from all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself” (Luke 10:27). The significance of this verse is instrumental for the Liberation Theologian’s justification of the revolutionary nature of Jesus. In these two greatest commandments, Jesus rebukes the legalism of the Pharisee’s doctrine and orthodoxy, via the Ten Commandments from Moses, by transforming doctrine and orthodoxy into praxis. This praxis is the essence of Christ’s love, a “love that is the nourishment and the fullness of [one’s] faith, the gift of one’s self to the Other, and invariably to others” (Gutierrez, 1973, p. 6).

Jesus then challenges the legal and theological scholars of the time with, “Who is my neighbor?” (Luke 10:29). Next, Jesus tells the parable of the Good Samaritan, a story where a Jewish man was robbed, beaten, stripped, and left for dead. The man is passed by a Jewish priest who does nothing. A Levite (known for their Godly service) did nothing as well and passed by the beaten man. However, a Samaritan (known enemies to the Jews) cared for the beaten man and ensured his recovery. Jesus states in Luke 10:37 that the beaten man is our neighbor and “the one who acted with mercy toward him” is the model of “treating your neighbor as yourself”. Jesus commands them to “go and do the same.” As mentioned in Chapter 3, this parable of the Good Samaritan epitomizes the theory of Liberation Theology and the manner in which the contemporary American politician who holds to Natural Christianity behaves: treating your neighbor as yourself is

interpreted within the hermeneutics of the scripture as meaning a commitment to helping and fighting for the oppressed.

Leonardo and Clodovis Boff (1987) build upon the teachings of Christ and reference Jesus' preaching about Judgment Day when Jesus spoke to the crowds and those who would listen to Him. Jesus urged them to surrender their own material possessions, selling them and giving the proceeds to the poor who are in need. In Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus tells of how He and the Father will be the judges for eternal life. He states to the ostensible righteous, "For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger, and you took me in; naked, and you covered me; sick, and you visited me; I was in prison, and you came to me" (Matthew 25:35-36). The seemingly righteous then asked when they might have seen Jesus this way, to which Jesus replies, "whenever you did this for one of these, the least of my brothers, you did it for me" (Matthew 25:40). Jesus continues by chastising those who thought themselves righteous. He says that "whenever you did not do it to one of these, neither did you do it to me" (Matthew 25:45). Jesus then states that those who seem righteous but do not serve those who are oppressed, despised, marginalized, and defenseless, will go away into eternal punishment.

In addition, the Boff (1987) brothers reference the second chapter in Galatians where Paul and Barnabas were approved by the leaders of the church (James, Peter, and John) and validated for their ministry of the gospel. The one mandate that the church leaders sent to Paul and Barnabas was that they must help the poor (Galatians 2:10). These are some of the more direct and poignant examples of scriptural mandates about God's preferential option for the poor; moreover, the Torah, Old and New Testaments,

Apocrypha, Book of Mormon, and even the Quran - all have many other verses that correspond with the nature of these passages. The Boffs say that the preferential option for the poor is when “the living God sides with the oppressed against the pharaohs of the world” (Boff & Boff, 1987, p. 53). This is the best illustration of what Gustavo Gutierrez (1973) was alluding to when he proclaimed that there is a preferential option for the poor and all who profess to carry the cause of Christ must embrace it.

Robert McAfee Brown (1993), a Presbyterian minister, wrote about the preferential option for the poor, but defined it as a question that all people must ask themselves: “Will or will this [action] not improve the situation of the poor?” In McAfee Brown’s book, *Liberation Theology: an Introductory Guide* (1993), the author emphasizes that all individuals are doing one of two things with every single action in life: they are either mocking God or showing God’s face. Since it is agreed upon by most theologians that God loves all, the contemporary American politicians who adhere to Natural Christianity and a theory of Liberation Theology acknowledge that essential standards of living, such as food, shelter, jobs, and safety, must be for everyone and not just for the privileged. “Jesus walks among us and awakens the marginalized of society to throw off the yoke of oppression; Jesus was the liberator who drove the money changers out of the temple, fed, clothed, healed, and listened to the poor, and bade us to seek justice” (Amanecida, 1988, p. 49).

Yet another powerful example in Christian scripture that emphasizes an option for the poor is discussed in Gerald West’s chapter in the *Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology* (1999) entitled “The Bible and the Poor: A New Way of Doing Theology” (p. 135). In this chapter, West focuses on a passage in the book of Mark that

emphasizes the commission to all the followers of Jesus. This commission is not just an individual mandate, but as societal one as well. West discusses the passage in Mark 10:17-27, where Jesus is confronted by a man asking what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus discusses the commandments; the man replies that he has kept all the commandments. Jesus then looks upon the man and lovingly says, “One thing is lacking to you. Go, sell whatever you have, and give to the poor, and then you will have treasure in heaven. And come, follow me” (Mark 10:21). At this point, the man walks away sorrowful as to this instruction. Jesus refers to this situation when addressing the disciples and crowds around him. He states, “How difficult it is for those who have riches to enter into the kingdom of God!” (Mark 10:23). He follows up by proclaiming, “It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for the rich to enter into the kingdom of God” (Mark 10:25).

West (1999) stresses the pain felt by the man in the previous passage – he rushed up to Jesus, pleaded with him that he has followed every commandment and wants confirmation of his eternal existence. Jesus looked upon him with such love and gave him one more single piece of instruction, to which the man turned away, devastated by the huge sacrifice that lay before him in order to enter Heaven. In this parable, a commonly made misconception is that the “eye of a needle” is a literal needle; however, some debate that this refers to one of the entrances to the city of Jerusalem. The “eye of a needle” was a small gate where the servants and the animals would get down on their hands and knees and crawl through to enter Jerusalem. It is widely believed that the only transportation animal unable to enter the “eye of a needle” is a camel, mainly due to the anatomical humps on their backs, which may signify the earthly possessions humankind

carries as a burden and obstacle from praxis. Nevertheless, this instruction from Jesus challenges those who possess riches and refuse to abandon them for Christ.

Amongst the biggest critiques of society from contemporary American politicians who are influenced by Liberation Theology is directed at the Calvinist justification for an unbridled economic system (Howe, 1972). A core belief of Liberation Theology is that the modern day economic system (or as Jewish culture referred to it, mammon) of unbridled capitalism is antithetical to the message of Jesus. Moreover, as has been previously explained and defended in Christian scripture, for one to engage in this type of market is to engage in sin. The book *Liberation Theology after the End of History: the Refusal to Cease Suffering*, by Daniel M. Bell, Jr. (2001), highlights this dynamic of practicing and following the teachings of Jesus, and compares it to living in a hegemonic, capitalist system. In his book, Bell makes two primary assumptions. First, that capitalism is sinful and the opposite of one's desire for God. Second, that capitalism has pervaded every element of society and has destroyed the "self's" ability to desire God (Bell, 2000, p. 1). **This desire to sin is the technology of capitalism**; it "captures and distorts human desire in accord with the golden rule of production for the market" (Bell, 2000, p. 3). This desire to sin is central to the unspoken agency of human nature. It becomes the dehumanizing method of seeing others as means to one's ends and not as Jesus would have one do, which is how one can be a servant unto the other. As Heyward (1988) describes, "to be in God's image... involves struggling to transform, not to take pleasure in, systems of violent domination and dynamics of coercion" (p. 88).

McAfee Brown (1993) uses the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus to underscore the rebuke of a capitalist system and the repercussions that come with it. Ecclesiasticus 34:18–22 (New Oxford Annotated Version) reads:

A sacrifice from ill-gotten gains is tainted, and the gifts of the wicked win no approval. The Most High has no pleasure in the offerings of the godless, nor do countless sacrifices win his forgiveness. To offer a sacrifice from the possessions of the poor is like killing a son before his father's eyes. Bread is life to the destitute, and to deprive them of it is murder. To rob your neighbor of his livelihood is to kill him, and he who defrauds a worker of his wages sheds blood.

This passage accentuates the fundamental structure of how God would have his people interact with those who are poor. The statement, “offers a sacrifice from the possessions of the poor”, is a straightforward reproach of those who exploit the poor for the accumulation of their own wealth, and emphasizes the rejection of mammon, capitalism. It also states that those who oppress the poor through exploitation or support of the status-quo are likened to the equivalent of killing a son before his father's eyes. This passage mentions the importance of providing food to everyone, as well as the fair actions of an employer and the wages they provide to their workers. Furthermore, Proverbs 19:17 (Catholic Public Domain Version) adds a positive perspective as to how God would have his people behave amidst poverty: “Whoever is merciful to the poor lends to the Lord. And he will repay him for his efforts”.

These two verses in Christian scripture paint a clear and unwavering directive for contemporary American politicians from the Natural Christianity cluster and theoretical perspective of Liberation Theology: to practice endless giving, persistent forgiveness, and cessation of self-interest. “From a Liberation Theological perspective, the peoples’ forgiveness of their oppressors is based on their trust in the relational, communal fabric of both divine and human life well-lived.” (Amanecida, 1988, p. 123) These politicians believe that God clearly mandates that the poor are to be helped, cared for, loved, and assisted in any way possible by his followers, as if you were doing it unto yourself as it is embedded in one’s life. As Robert McAfee Brown (1993) states, we are to “serve the lives of the oppressed or become accomplices in their deaths” (p. 37), which sums up the basic thrust of the two previous verses. The hope is that we are to act, not just philosophize, as individuals, communities, and as a government to end oppression for those being oppressed and liberate the oppressor from their sin.

Frederick Douglass, the Grandfather of Liberation Theology (Davis, 2005), proclaims a similar message. Most notably, he uses the book of Isaiah, a prophecy book. This is important because the relationship that the prophet Isaiah had in warning the people of Judah mirrors, the prophet Frederick Douglass warning the people of the United States of America about their oppressive actions. In the first chapter, he discussed God’s impending judgment (Davis, 2005, p. 75). Frederick Douglass speaks about how God has grown tired of meaningless sacrifices and observations, especially when one has “blood on their hands”. Isaiah 1:11-17 (New International Version) states:

What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? Says the Lord; I have had enough of burnt-offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; I do not

delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats. When you come to appear before me, who asked this from your hand? Trample my courts no more; bringing offerings is futile; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and calling of convocation – I cannot endure solemn assemblies with iniquity. Your new moons and your appointed festivals my soul hates; they have become a burden to me, I am weary of bearing them. When you stretch out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow.

This is the essential verse Frederick Douglass uses to expose the problematic nature of ethnocentric Christians who profess sacrifices and offerings to God, yet their hands were full of blood. The closing sentence of this passage elucidates the theme that Liberation Theology theory aims to explicate regarding the practice of one's faith: the mandate of liberation. As Walter Wink (1998) puts it, the "Bible doesn't say to run away or take it in dealing with evil. It says to resist. King James knew this and wanted to prevent an uprising, so he had the Bible translated to re-interpret the Greek word *antistenai*, literally means "to stand against", but is historically and hermeneutically interpreted to mean a "violent opposition, a bloody battle" (pp. 99-100). The task of a contemporary American politician who follows a Liberation Theology viewpoint is to seek justice by rescuing the

oppressed, defending the orphan, and pleading for the widow as laid out in the passage, and to neglect this is like walking into the courts of God with bloody hands.

Liberation Theology provides contemporary American politicians the opportunity to find congruence between their faith and politics, as well as challenging hegemonic facades. Liberation Theology takes the contextual and hermeneutic interpretation of the religious scriptures and puts them into practice. This action is called praxis, and it is the unyielding commitment of solidarity with the poor and taking up their problems and making them one's own. One of the most important critiques of Liberation Theology is directed toward individualism and the justification for capitalism. Liberation Theology bases its theory of justice and policy in the theories of communitarianism and egalitarianism. For one to act in love and to put the 'Other' first are the core principles directing those who are informed by Liberation Theology.

Synthesis of Religious and Political Clusters

Evaluating the dichotomy between the Institutional Christianity cluster and the Natural Christianity cluster, it is apparent that these two political/theological clusters create very different political and historical narratives that give meaning to contemporary hegemonic American society. When examining the different theoretical interpretations, one political/theological cluster dominates most of mainstream American culture, while the other is counter-hegemonic and has characteristics that defy the normalized perspectives of society. The importance of these theoretical clusters is pivotal, being that their relationship to contemporary culture reveals one of two things about an elected official: **either one's political/theological expression of theory is a product of the**

world and dissonant with one's faith, or is hated by the world and is congruent with their faith. One either views human nature as inherently good and/or neutral with no need for morality imposed by a god, while the other views human nature as inherently sinful and seeks after the righteousness of God and God's laws.

In tracing the development of the dominant cluster of Institutional Christianity and its theories of Pre-Millennial Dispensationalism and Theological Individualism in contemporary American culture, we find the starting place not simply at the collusion of government and Religion, but of politics, economics, and Religion, as in the development of rational capitalism (Weber, 1904/1958). With so much attention surrounding the fear of government infringement upon religious freedom, religion lets its guard down to the allure of individualism and accumulation of wealth. Theological Individualism justifies the acquisition of wealth and riches using John Calvin's logic as an expression of being chosen as God's elect and as blessings given by God for hard work. The religious justification for wealth ownership and accumulation is not new to Calvin. The Sadducees in 500 B.C. engaged in eudaemonism, which is the belief that one's wealth was a sign of righteousness and faithfulness to God. The Pharisees were active mammonists in 30 A.D., which is the acquisition of wealth to the detriment of others. Thus, intertwined Religion and economics of modern culture as prescribed by Calvin is nothing new and is now the primary justification for the contemporary American hegemony.

Coupled with this perspective is the Pre-Millennial Dispensationalist view of eschatology, which is the belief that the end of the world is near and the creation of a false sense of urgency to abandon control of the material and simply focus on the eternal. Pre-Millennial Dispensationalism justifies humankind's domination over the world and

all that lay in it, from a literal scripture interpretation from the Book of Genesis. Pre-Millennial Dispensationalism contributes to hegemony by using Religion to justify a mindset of individualism, domination, and selfish behavior. By holding to these beliefs embedded in Institutional Christianity, these contemporary American politicians are able to justify their actions and policy with their core religious beliefs, regardless of the amount of dissonance. It is because of this work that the theoretical cluster of Institutional Christianity has become dominant in American culture.

Standing in opposition to what many theologians consider to be oppressive, the Natural Christianity theoretical cluster, with Liberation Theology and Social Gospel theories, operates through praxis demonstrated through an individual's unending commitment to the poor and oppressed. Taking the hermeneutical interpretations of religious scriptures and accepting them as the work God has called all to partake in, these contemporary American politicians make the problems of the poor and least among them their own. Their praxis is working to alleviate the pain which so many experience in this life. It is an action that pleads that "we must die to such things as racism, false patriotism, greed, homophobia. We must, in short, die to the Domination System in order to live authentically" (Wink, 1998, p. 95). Liberation Theology and Social Gospel theories, as the foundation of Natural Christianity, both reject the individualism and selfishness evident in capitalism, and instead promote a more peaceful society that is informed by communitarian and egalitarian principles of justice. Contemporary American politicians participate in this counter-hegemonic mission by making the world as close of an example of heaven as possible, in hopes of approximating God's love. However, this love is not generally accepted by the world and living a Natural Christianity framework is

realizing that Jesus told his disciples that if you practice this love (Matthew 10:22; New International Version) “all men will hate you because of me.”

Conclusion

In conclusion, the contemporary American politician has developed their worldviews and interpretive schemas and has defended, enacted, and justified their positions, knowingly or unknowingly. Politicians who come from the Institutional Christianity theoretical cluster defend the conflict between their political theory and religious beliefs through various psychological methods, such as confirmation bias, rational ignorance, and self-deception. Politicians may claim devotion to their faith, when in fact they might use it as a simple ploy used to garner support and stay in office. On the other side of the spectrum, politicians who come from the Natural Christianity theoretical cluster tend to experience congruence in one’s psyche, thus their politics and faith easily co-exist.

A contemporary American politician’s worldviews are separated into these core clusters, which are informed from differing theories of justice. Institutional Christianity, representing the theory of libertarianism (characterized by notions of individualism and personal liberty, defense for accumulation of wealth and property, de-regulation of industry and environmental policies), is epitomized by the Pre-Millennial Dispensationalism and Theological Individualism theories. The other cluster, Natural Christianity, informed by the justice theories of communitarianism and egalitarianism, takes action towards a communal responsibility to end oppression, ensure fairness and equality in the workplace, and love and serve the other as you serve yourself. These

characteristics resonate in the Liberation Theology and Social Gospel theories. The dichotomy that exists between these theoretical clusters is alive and well in American politics. Particularly, Institutional Christianity and its theories of Pre-Millennial Dispensationalism and Theological Individualism have maintained their hegemony within various institutions of society and utilized the social forces associated with nationalism and capitalism as inherent American virtues. The theoretical fight hinges on the assignment of being labeled a faithful Christian in contemporary American society. Both clusters have an internal view that constructs this outward label of being a faithful Christian. This research hopes to attain a description of the contemporary American politician within both clusters, and whether they are able to identify the congruence or dissonance that occurs between their faith and political action. This would reveal whether a politician's expression of their faith in politics has a worldly influence and is dissonant with the core tenants of their faith, or is congruent with their faith and is hated by the world.

CHAPTER 6

THE RESULTS: A DISPLAY OF WHAT WAS SAID OR CAPITALISM... A RIGHT GIVEN TO THEM BY GOD

Introduction

This chapter tells a story of a small sampling of high profile, state-level, elected Arizona politicians and their experience with the phenomenon of being a Christian and serving in government. The data collected from this open-ended interview, phenomenological research study are significant to the fields of justice studies, political science, psychology and religious studies. Moreover, these research data are generally not readily available in the detail and length in which I was able to generate them. This next section will provide a brief narrative and description of each interview and participant and provide the significant statements of what was said. Due to the loquaciousness of each participant, the entire 1 to 1.5 hour interview will not be presented, but rather, I will offer the significant statements from the answers to the questions that were asked. Significant statements were determined based upon the directness of the answer to the question, weeding through the filler statements. In this chapter the data will stand independently of the other participants, but in the next two chapters, horizontalization of the data will be employed to better cluster and present the data. The questions from the Interview Instrument (Appendix A) will not be displayed fully, but rather I will refer to them numerically or provide a vague inference (i.e. responding to their view of God...) to the question. I will go in the order in which I conducted the interviews.

Interviews

#1 Thomas Job.

My first interview subject was Thomas Job. Thomas Job is a male Democrat serving elected office in 2011 in the Arizona State Government. He states his family was based in the Religion Science Christian denomination, but he is a member of the Episcopalian Church today. He attends church weekly, has weekly scripture study, prays each day and tithes to his church annually. He states that his top issues, in no particular order are: Education, Public Transportation and traffic, Poverty, Environment, and growth. A couple of significant interactions which I noticed and commented on during the interview are that Thomas Job laughed a lot throughout the whole interview. Some of his laughter appeared to be nervous laughter since he laughed when he was talking about difficult situations. Some perhaps came from his comfort with the interviewer as he was simply cracking jokes. Thomas Job was clearly emotionally invested in the interview and his identity of being a Christian and politician, as evidenced by him becoming teary-eyed when he discussed inheriting his grandmother's Bible and her life and death. He got choked up and teary-eyed again when he talked about embracing all people as the face of God and loving them. He started crying during the interview when he talked about taking his first communion as an adult and cried later again when he talked about what his mother meant to him and her death. Thomas Job exhibited meekness and humility throughout the interview, saying how he doesn't know everything and wants to be open to God to love others.

#1 On what a Christian is:

“Humility is a major part of it, forgiveness is a huge part of it, not assuming you know everything or anything. It’s trying to model yourself after the life of Jesus knowing you will never get there, but trying anyway.”

“The most important commandment of all as Jesus said to love one another without exception. It is the most difficult thing a human being can do and the most liberating if it is possible. The whole turn the other cheek stuff is tied into that and is really hard.”

#2 On what a Democrat means:

“I agree with John Boehner when he says that Republicans are the party of ideas and Democrats are a party of people. That’s an essential difference is that Republicans believe that ideas are more important than people. That’s why they are willing to take down the United States economy for an idea. While Democrats are willing to look at things as they come along and feel what’s behind the issues and try to understand and think what the best decisions is and make the decision based on the facts at hand and the people at hand.”

“Jesus himself was radically welcoming as scripture makes very, very clear.”

#3 On being a Christian and Democrat:

“Being a Christian influences me being a Democrat and being a Democrat influences me being a Christian. I mean they are intertwined. I think the most important thing about this is the concept of ‘love one another without exception’”

“My view of Jesus as the one who challenges us all to love one another without exception.”

“You try to understand that person and you try to see the goodness in that person even if they are going after you unmercifully and in a mean way. You try to have dialogue and you try to embrace that person as the face of God the same way you embrace the people you love.”

#4 On interpretation of Christian scripture:

“It’s so important to be able to read the Bible in context”

“There is obviously a huge difference between fundamentalists who take it as literal word; I’m not sure how they deal with the contradictions therein. Maybe if you look at one piece at a time, through one piece of Scripture at a time through tunnel vision... It’s trying to find what’s really being said between those words.”

“I see the Scripture less as a dead document that sits there and tells you what to do and more as an incredibly engaging paradoxical dialogue over millennia that challenges you to think about what it means for you, your life and your world and God and engages you incredibly because it is complex and contradictory and difficult and you’re not even sure which parts of it were written in what language or by which person.”

“It’s an exploration.”

“The Bible is a gray area to me, other people think it’s the clear and unambiguous word of God, but I don’t think those are people who have read the whole thing.”

#5 On God:

“Accepting and loving”

“God is the entirety of being and non-being all at once, is everywhere you look, is everything you feel, that is the face of God.”

#6 On the role of a Christian in government:

“The goal as I see it for a Christian is to embody that sense of love of one another.”

“You've got to deal with poverty, you got make sure that people have the ability to love one another without being crushed by other people, whether economically or public safety anything like that we need to be able to give voices to the voiceless. We need to serve; we need to get a sense of service, rather than domination.”

“That radical welcoming thing is that Jesus welcomed to himself those of no account and our job is to stand up for those of no account.”

“Einstein said the greatest life goal in an individual was service to the community.”

“The highest life goal is the individual service to community. It's that same sort of duality, the paradox kind of thing which we are all individuals but we are all one.”

#7 On Justice:

“The general sense the Old Testament has come to mean to us is judgment and righteous fury, it's not what it's about, and it's not what Jesus said.”

” We need to have somebody speaking on behalf of those who do not have power and we need to do it in a way that can be effective it is not just that those who were connected or

are wealthy or powerful are the only ones that have access to our democracy or to our economy or happiness it's not the way things were or should be."

"Those who serve, those who suffer, those who work very hard to try to help the community should not be crushed by others who don't."

#8a On Immigration:

"I have a really hard time understanding how you can be so anti-immigrant in the state and still call yourself a Christian. Jesus was most radical welcoming person imaginable. The parables about the other are so clear the good Samaritans is obviously one of the bigger ones. You embrace those who believe in you, you don't push them away because they are other; we are all children of God, which includes people who may be trying to cross the border from Mexico. We need to embrace everyone in the world and everything this world as God or else we are rejecting God."

"One of the most powerful ways you can motivate people is through fear. It's not nearly as powerful as love, but easier to do."

"If we could approach the immigration issues and the real problems that come relating to that from a perspective of love we could solve this thing very quickly."

"I just do not see that Jesus would be saying build a wall. I don't see that, Jesus broke down walls and turned over moneychangers tables and he's not about building walls, he's not about dividing us."

#8b On Health Care:

"I don't remember Jesus asking for a healthcare card when he cured anybody."

“I see that turning down healthcare for those who are sick is not a Christian value.”

“We have an obligation to one another we are all one of God’s children together and it comes back to that again. It helps our society in so many other ways to have a healthy population as opposed to one that gets sick and dies.”

“There’s no division in God’s kingdom between the rich and the poor, except for one that maybe gives a little bit of extra boost to the poor, if you are looking at the Sermon on the Mountain. Those who can afford healthcare in this life, they’ll find it hard to get into heaven in the next life, than a camel through a needle’s eye.”

“I think a lot of this (scripture) informs my view and the view informs my belief that’s usually the way it works. I see that turning down healthcare for those who are sick is not a Christian value.”

#8c On Capitalism:

“So it I think in that way we are not inconsistent it’s a recognition that we are not perfect, however unfettered free-market capitalism without regulation is letting those instincts run rampant and wild without having a regulated capitalism.”

“The moneychangers weren’t looked too kindly on for taking advantage of the poor.”

“The Gates Foundation is certainly doing amazing things, so he isn’t just making billions, he’s also giving it back. I do think he has too many bedrooms in his mansion.”

#8d On Private Property:

“Private property becomes something that builds up a tremendous amount of resentment when you have a tremendous amount of split between those who have it those who don’t

and you have that division between the very wealthiest in our country and everyone else.”

“That is not a good thing to be hoarding it it's not a good thing to be keeping for yourself and not giving to others when you have something you should give it to those who need it.”

“I think of those anti-tax people will probably say then Jesus is saying you can individually give it to people who are in need who you encounter. Those of us who believe the government has a role in helping those who cannot help themselves we can say that Jesus was saying that as a society all of you together collectively as part of God need to help the rest of you as part of God and you do that collectively and yes you should tax the rich. They're not going to do it themselves.”

“(Christ) did not believe that you should be wealthy, he didn't have a lot of love for the rich and every time he had something he gave it away, including his life.”

“We have to struggle with the fact that Jesus was a socialist and we have to know that expects the capitalism thing is that he did believe that there was, that we should give unto those who do not have, from those who do.”

#9 On anything else:

“I have been threatened by another Christian member, in the past, because my votes on abortion were not seen as Christian by her despite my attempts at engaging her and explaining how my vote was very consistent with my view of Christianity.”

“I was struggling with how I could love Jared Lee Loughner on that day, and part of that struggle that really intensified for me on January 8th I've been trying to now embodying

in all of my political life is how do I love Russell Pearce how I love a colleague that called me Satan.”

#2 Bernie.

My second interview was with Bernie. Bernie is a male Republican serving elected office in 2011 in the Arizona State Government. He states his family was based in the Methodist denomination, but he is a member of the Catholic Church today. He attends church weekly, has weekly scripture study, prays each day and tithes to his church weekly. He states that his top issues, in no particular order are: Economics, States Rights, Freedom, Education, Civil Justice and Criminal Justice. A couple of significant interactions that I noticed and commented on during the interview are that Bernie was a straightforward, blunt, to the point kind of guy. He showed no noticeable emotion during the interview, only responding passionately when he talked about the criminal justice system. He had a very direct and loud tone when he spoke. He looked at his phone a couple of times throughout the interview and even answered once. He apologized for it stating it was work related. He was very gracious about the interview and respectful to me.

#1 On what a Christian is:

“To live my life following the gospel of Christ and try to live Christ-like.”

#2 On what a Republican means:

“Being a Republican is to believe in a strong Constitution of this country.”

“I believe in strong local government, we believe in state’s rights, and we believe that individual freedom...government is the problem, not the answer.”

#3 On being a Christian and Republican:

“Christ would say what can we do to make people more free...and the right to conduct their lives as they may want.”

#4 On interpretation of Christian scripture:

“I take (Scripture) as symbolism, I’m not one of these Christians that say ‘okay, this is exactly what happened.’ But I think the message is there and I, we should look at the message more that really what the Bible says is to be the truth. Even though it’s the truth, it may be symbolism for the truth”

“The scriptures say ‘give unto Caesar what is Caesars’, that is to say that you obey the law of the nation and that way we Christians must do that, do so.”

#5 On God:

“Ever-powerful, ever-living. Creator of man, creator of the universe.”

“God put man on earth to make his own decisions.”

“I believe God gives us freedom to make the choice in our lives to do what we think is right. And if we don’t do what is right then we’ve got his sanctions, which would be living eternity in hell.”

#6 On the role of a Christian in government:

“One, is it the right thing to do? Secondly, is it constitutional and third is it going to raise taxes and fourth who’s it gonna’ hurt and who’s it gonna help. That’s kinda my guidelines of how I look at legislation.”

#7 On Justice:

“If we don’t do what is right then we’ve got his sanctions, which would be living eternity in hell.”

“Justice is giving a fair punishment for those who deserve it, helping the victim, and making sure in the future that we give a deterrent to people who want to commit that particular crime.”

#8a On Immigration:

“Now, and in regard to illegal immigration, number one, it is, quote, illegal. It’s a crime. Justice should be to protect the victims and the victims are the citizens of the United States. I support strict laws to prevent that (illegal immigration) from happening.”

“God wants us to do the right thing, and God does not want us to violate the law ...they’re violating our laws when they shouldn’t be.”

“I think there’s no contradiction there. I think, you being humane is the fact that you protect this country, and somebody’s gonna violate this country, commit a crime against the country (illegal immigration), they have to be punished.”

#8b On Health Care:

“You also have your duty and responsibility as a Christian to take care of yourself and take care of your family... the responsibility does not rest with the state, it rests with the individual person themselves.”

“I don’t think there’s anything in the constitution that mandates that you get free healthcare from the government.”

“I don’t think I can tell you what, or point to the scriptures as far as healthcare.”

#8c On Capitalism:

“The scriptures themselves say that you’re responsible for your own deeds, you’re responsible for your own acts... The scriptures are telling you that you’ve got to take care of yourself and be responsible. That you can’t expect the state to take care of you, because the state’s not going to save your soul. You’ve got to save your soul yourself. Christianity depends upon your own self-initiative.”

“I don’t think the scriptures themselves say anything (on capitalism)... I’m not a historian to pinpoint the scriptures, but I think that the scriptures themselves say that you’re responsible for your own deeds.”

#8d On Private Property:

“As a Christian, I believe that we all have the right to private property that we can obtain private property ourselves, and we shouldn’t, unless it’s legally or constitutionally, the state shouldn’t take the property away from us. I think we’ve built upon the idea of the sanctity of private property. I think that’s part of the free enterprise system.”

“The concept of the Bible is to require people to be responsible for themselves, that, in turn, represents symbolism for people being able to own private property.”

#8e On another issues Bernie wants to talk about:

“I’m passionate about, trying to do something to be fair, but also be just; both to the system and to the victims, but also to the individual who commits the crime.”

“We’ll be punished by God for what we do, but God also will be merciful, and I think government should, in some cases, be merciful in the manner in which we treat people.”

#3 Teddy Niles.

My third interview was with Teddy Niles. Teddy Niles is a male Republican serving elected office in 2011 in the Arizona State Government. He states his family was based in the Methodist denomination, but he is a member of the Presbyterian denomination today. He attends church weekly, has weekly scripture study, prays each day, but does not tithe to his church. He states that his top issues, in no particular order are: Education, Immigration, Growth and Economic stability. A couple of significant interactions that I noticed and commented on during the interview are that Teddy Niles appeared to be hesitant throughout the whole interview. Perhaps he was worried about saying something wrong to me. He would always stop and consider what he is going to say, before he actually says it after each question I ask. When he started talking about immigrants, his tone changed significantly to one demonstrating more care and sincerity. He tended to laugh when talking about the nature and dynamics of politics at the legislature.

#1 On what a Christian is:

“You should have a certain way of living that exemplifies a follower of Christ.”

#2 On what a Republican means:

“(It’s) a belief in smaller government, in a capitalistic system, free markets. Belief in freedoms, freedoms of choice, and responsible government, a government that responds to the people.”

#3 On being a Christian and Republican:

“Being a Republican versus a Democrat is less a faith issue and more of a practical issue. I think what philosophy governs best. In fact I got into a disagreement with our pastor, I said about an issue ‘that’s an economic issue, and economic debate not a religious debate’ and he disagreed.”

#4 On interpretation of Christian scripture:

“I don't believe that scripture is inerrant word of God I think scripture is the word of God. But I think it's interpreted and we have to understand it through the times that it was written and the fact that it was the product of human hands and minds, divinely inspired...understanding that there are some areas that are in conflict one with another that are in the Bible and that’s okay to me.”

#5 On God:

“Image of God is certainly of a parent. Confusing because God is all-powerful yet allows us to make our own foolish mistakes. And so my view is hazy. God is real. God is a spirit.”

#6 On the role of a Christian in government:

“The responsibility to govern, I think that's the thing no matter who you are. A person of faith or not or whatever the faith is. As I said earlier, your faith certainly informs your decisions it doesn't dictate your decisions as we've found out, I think that was addressed by President Kennedy when he was running and I think that issue was finally resolved at least in the minds of most people that if a Catholic is elected president the Pope is not going to be giving the dictates of how the United States is going to be run.”

#7 On Justice:

“I don't think Jesus ever said that the government should not penalize people that have committed crimes. I think he was talking about in personal relationships. And war of course is another issue that I think a nation has a right to go to war to protect itself and in that instance you're certainly killing other people and I think that's just.” “Jesus taught us to turn the other cheek, but I think that's in personal dealings... I don't believe that it is what is should be in affairs of state.”

#8a On Immigration:

“I don't interpret that as meaning that today should have open borders and just let anybody in that wants in. I think we have a right to protect our borders. I believe that we have a right to have rules about citizenship and who we let into our country and who we do not... This is not a religious question but a practical one.”

“There's always a potential for compromise and sometimes you have to compromise on public policy issues. You should never compromise on fundamental moral issues, but very few things we do in the legislature are fundamental moral issues.”

#8b On Health Care:

“It's not the government's responsibility to provide healthcare for everybody. I think that's a personal responsibility.”

“I think there is a conflict in determining where does your Christian faith bring you on that.”

#8c On Capitalism:

“I do think that unfettered capitalism could be dangerous. I think greed could take over and run amuck so I think there needs to be some regulation, restrictions, but as modest as necessary.”

“I don't know what the scripture says; I don't know that it says a lot about business one way or another. I don't know of anywhere where, other than the moneychangers in church, but I think that was a different issue.”

“I don’t think there’s a conflict. I mean, there could be. The greedy capitalist has no consideration for the rules and only consideration for themselves and what’s good for their bottom line, it’s not a very Christian attitude.”

#8d On Private Property:

“In the Bible, don't hoard up treasures on earth, amassing all the private property and wealth that you can, I think that conflicts with Christian principles.”

“I don’t think what is meant by that is that you can’t be rich and a Christian. Greed is certainly not consistent with Christian principles, look at Bill Gates. He’s as rich as anybody has ever been...he does good things that would be consistent with Christian principles.”

“I think there’s a potential for conflict. I don’t think there’s anything wrong with having a nice care, having a boat, having a nice home, I think that’s all fine.”

#9 On Anything Else:

“What I find difficult as a Christian, you get caught up in the game down here. I have to struggle to remember why I’m doing what I’m doing and not just get caught up in the pace of it and the deal-making and the compromising and all of that.”

#4 Greg.

My fourth interview was with Greg. Greg is a male Republican serving elected office in 2011 in the Arizona State Government. He states he grew up in and he is a current member of the Mormon Church. He attends church weekly, has daily scripture

study, he prays and tithes as well. He states that his top issues, in no particular order are: Criminal Justice, Health Care, Jobs, and the Budget. A couple of significant interaction that occurred during the interview are that Greg was very intelligent about Religion; he was quoting scripture and speaking at length about a variety of issues that he cared about. Regarding his affect, he presented with a flat and very straightforward characteristic, with little inflection or change to his tone throughout the whole interview. Greg appeared extremely confident about his political views and scripture.

#1 On what a Christian is:

“Emulating the life of Christ to extent possible that I can, keeping the commandments of God.”

#2 On what a Republican means:

“I believe in as small a government as is necessary. I believe that freedom is a very important part of being an American and that the government should not interfere with that freedom.”

“Republicans stand for small government, the protection of our liberties, abiding by the constitution... the concept of personal responsibility and accountability for people.”

#3 On being a Christian and Republican:

“The most important principle in my faith is free agency... God doesn't direct our actions he acquiesces to whatever actions we want to do. And we can choose to do good things

or bad things and so when we start forming a government what is not Christian to me is to force people to do things that they otherwise would not do.”

“People should be free to choose how they want to live their life without infringing upon someone else.”

#4 On interpretation of Christian scripture:

“The word of God, it’s what he wants us to have as a written direction.”

“(It’s) an article of faith says that ‘we believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates and in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.’”

“One of my favorite verses, for example, is Romans 15:1, it says: ‘We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves.’ See, I think that’s an individual admonition, I don’t think that’s a admonition to the government.”

#5 On God:

“He is a perfect man. Omniscient and omnipotent.”

“Our destiny, if we are obedient, is to be like him.”

#6 On the role of a Christian in government:

“There are certain policy issues that I’m there to represent the best interests of my constituents.”

#7 On Justice:

“I look at justice really as having to deal more with the law than with a concept of religious justice, we try to make laws that are applicable to everybody and then you enforce them evenly...with consequences and punishment.”

#8a On Immigration:

“Scriptures say that we need to obey the law. And he that obeys the laws of God hath no need to break the laws of the land. I’m someone who tries to follow the law even when I don’t agree with it.”

“Scriptural injunction is to obey the laws of the land.”

“I support legal immigration...I oppose illegal immigration... I don’t think that as a nation we can sustain our standard of living if we just have open borders.”

“There are legitimate state interests for prohibiting immigration, health, crime, terrorists, are just the number of people from any one culture, the United States has a right to preserve its culture.”

“No. My Church (Mormon) just put out a statement on immigration. I think we have the right to make laws to protect our nation. We have a Christian obligation, a moral obligation to treat each one of them as children of God, with kindness, with charity. That’s not in conflict with having laws to protect your nation.”

#8b On Health Care:

“I think every man is responsible for his own life and he’s responsible to take care of himself and those he brings into this world... it’s not the obligation or responsibility of government to do that.”

“Should an ER doctor have a legal obligation to treat people? And I don’t think he should, it’s a form of slavery, ‘cause they’re required to render services without compensation.”

“The Good Samaritan, did he help the man on his own, or did he go and get the government to help, of course, he helped him on his own.”

“I don’t like society to impose, to require people to be good. I think it still has to be their choice.”

“Each person has that obligation himself to do what’s right, to help others.”

“Scripture admonitions are for us individually, We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves.”

“What’s an appropriate amount of indulgence? You know I drive a Lexus, should I be driving a Ford and giving’ more money to the poor? Maybe. But, there’s a certain amount of ego and pride that enter into a lot of decisions.”

“Scripturally I can’t think of other than love your fellow man and do unto others and you know, generally the scriptures like that, those put on us a duty to act, but they don’t compel, it means we should act voluntarily not be compelled to act.”

#8c On Capitalism:

“The whole gospel is about us individually becoming, we work out an individual salvation, we don’t work out a salvation for a group or for anybody else really besides ourselves.”

“Of course in my faith we have scriptures that talk about a united order, which is more of a socialistic approach, although the difference being that one enters into that united order voluntarily and can exit voluntarily, whereas in socialism, communism, there’s compulsion.”

“Capitalism is the best system because it requires the most personal responsibility.”

“I don’t, I’m trying to think of the scriptures, I don’t see any conflict. I think capitalism is congruent with scripture.”

#8d On Private Property:

“The parable of the talents, I guess that’s as probably good of a comparison to capitalism, a man increased his talents or two of them increased their talents and one man hid his talent and I think the Lord expects us to be the best stewards with what we have. And so what’s mine is mine and what’s yours is yours. We should have the right to own property private.”

“I feel like what I’ve accumulated is rightfully mine, let me rephrase that, it’s the Lord’s and I am the steward over that.”

“I don’t think there’s any conflict in the scriptures with concept of owning private property.”

#8e On another issues Greg wants to talk about:

“If Malachi were speaking to the poor he would say ‘will you rob your country, would you rob this land that people have died for by not paying taxes, by overburdening those who have earned the right to money or maybe they inherited it’.”

#5 Harry Wheeler.

The fifth interview I completed was with Harry Wheeler. Harry Wheeler is a male Democrat serving elected office in 2011 in the Arizona State Government. He states his family was based in the Catholic Church, now he is a member of the both the Catholic and Unitarian churches. He does not attend church with any regularity, seldom reads scripture or tithes, but he does pray each day. He states that his top issues, in no particular order are: Constitution, Education, Alcohol and Drug Treatment, Human Services, and State Agency functions. A couple of significant interactions that I noticed and commented on Harry Wheeler are that he was very calm and introspective. He spent a lot of time reflecting on the questions and processing out loud before he responded. When he responded he provided a detailed and thoughtful answer to the question. Harry Wheeler constantly sought approval from the interviewer throughout the whole interview. He kept asking if his answers were correct. He wanted me to engage with him in the interview, I had to resist in responding to his requests or rescuing him⁶⁰ and instead stay silent.

⁶⁰ An example of this is: *“So I think the reconciliation is that we take the best stab at it that we can to create a law that is just to the extent that we can as just it can be in God’s eyes. Right? I mean, isn’t that what we do Ed?”*

#1 On what a Christian is:

“To do as Christ would teach us, to see the good in others.”

“Live a life in the context of Christian teaching and the context of the teachings of Jesus Christ.”

“See the good in others... core in Christ’s teachings, that we are a community in a universal sense.”

#2 On what a Democrat means:

“Give everybody not the money but the chance, the opportunity to get from one end of this nation to the other.”

“We care about those who are less fortunate, people who are hungry, people who are naked, people who are without shelter, people in need.”

#3 On being a Christian and Democrat:

“Religious affiliation has no place in governance, none whatsoever.”

#4 On interpretation of Christian scripture:

“First of all the word of God in the context of scripture, can never ever really truly be understood by man...we have certain understandings.”

“So as profound as the Bible is it isn’t too easy to interpret. As rich as it is, and its wealth is tremendous, you should hesitate before you take every single word as being absolute.”

“I think its (Bible) an instrument of universal understanding and truth but not absolute.”

#5 On God:

“Receptive, compassionate, understanding. So that’s my image of God.”

#6 On the role of a Christian in government:

“When I have an opportunity to make a decision as it may affect other lives that it does reflect, if you will, my Christian faith; the values of my Christian faith.”

#7 On Justice:

“Justice is absolute fairness.”

“Justice in the eyes of God is simply a matter of rendering dignity to each and every human being. God does not care what country you’re from. God only sees your soul and has compassion for all the struggles that you endure and always gives you some path no matter how difficult that path may be to peace.”

#8a On Immigration:

“Conflicting is God’s justice. Understanding that, in a brazen example, if a young man who has a family and starving children and a starving wife has no opportunity in the country or the community in which they live, and in order to feed them and to serve their family or their extended family they must break the law to work in the United States, they are very just in doing so.”

“The scripture of the Good Samaritan, people who walked by, people who ignored the man who was beaten and suffering beside the road, God’s words to all of those who

walked by paid him no attention, was harsh, mean, judgmental, absolute close to damnation. Yet the Good Samaritan who stopped and served him received great praises from God through scripture. So here we have a sea of people who are hungry, who are sick, and starving, and our law says no (to) people who will subsequently children will suffer, people will starve in the worst human conditions and we ignore it.”

“We could never organize ourselves in the absence of government.”

“In terms of the law and government structure is in violation of Christian scripture.”

“So I think the reconciliation is that we take the best stab at it that we can to create a law that is just to the extent that we can just as it can be in God’s eyes.”

#8b On Health Care:

“I believe that there is a marriage between God’s law and man’s law. What is interesting is that if we would take care of everyone as much as we can, we literally would reduce disease and suffering...To me that example is one of the most revealing of Christ’s teachings.”

“So here’s Christ’s teaching said to heal everybody. He never asked a question about immigration status. He tried to bring good health to everyone. And to me, and then Christ’s teaching if you serve them they will serve you it will serve you. If you serve them it will serve you.”

“There’s no distinction” [when asked on difference between his view and scripture]

#8c On Capitalism:

“The other thing that Capitalism brings as a Christian you need to watch is that the (self) righteousness, those who have wealth and power can realize in their own mind that not only what they’re doing is right, but no matter what they do is right. Money corrupts every person that I know. It corrupts churches, it corrupts priests, it corrupts virtually every institution.”

“Capitalism is the larceny in the act of charity. Capitalism in its pure sense is based upon greed. In the sense that someone’s got money, you need to survive, so you have to do something to get their money so you can be more comfortable.”

“Capitalism in itself and unregulated is dangerous and sinful. Regulated Capitalism brings some sense of social justice so that people who would be victim of unconscionable business practices.”

“Bill Gates, is there anybody more generous, but when you talk to people who had competing patents, when you talk about how he squeezed them there isn’t anybody more ruthless in his area of industry than he was. Yet, he’s a very generous man. Government had to stop him otherwise he would do many unchristian unjust things.”

“Well Christian scripture clearly outlines the dangers of wealth.”

#8d On Private Property:

“A Christian context to private property is that it’s an illusion to think that we own anything. We may use things, the only reason we are given title to anything is to simply keep order. Private property is not a God given right. Private property under the law is established only for civil order... That land in our use, we are using as a steward of the

earth and to God. Once our government goes should it evaporate, no one owns any property. No one has title.”

“To me there’s no correlation between property rights and God.”

#8e On another issue Harry Wheeler wants to talk about:

“If we want to fight abortion it would be to assist every young woman who is pregnant to live a fulfilled life and for their child to have a fulfilled life. Our energies should not be applied to judge people. It should be applied to compassion. Our fight is to be compassionate to young, vulnerable women who get pregnant, who have sex that we don’t approve of and get pregnant. Our collective sin as a society that we shame them, go after people who by providing abortion is providing much more compassion than we are to a young woman who’s pregnant. And it sickens me.”

“No I don’t think so. The example I would use is the attempted stoning of Mary Magdalene by the Pharisees. All Jesus said was who among you haven’t sinned? So what he said in my view was there’s no sin that’s greater or less. Society says this (abortion) is a greater sin than not.”

#6 Gary Harris.

My sixth interview was with Gary Harris. Gary Harris is a male Republican serving elected office in 2011 in the Arizona State Government. He states his family was based in the Mormon Church, of which he is still member. He attends church weekly, has daily scripture study, prays each day and tithes to his church. He states that his top issues, in no particular order are: Obama Care, Jobs, National Debt, and Same-Sex Marriage. A

couple of significant interactions which I noticed and commented on are that Gary Harris is very smart and knowledgeable about his faith. He was very engaged in the interview and spoke quickly about the topics and in-depth regarding the content. Although he was extremely intellectual about the topic, he showed no emotion or feeling when discussing faith and politics. I also noted that he had a great memory and recalled and quoted scripture on the spot.

#1 On what a Christian is:

“One who keeps God’s commandments, restricting or using self-restraint on one to adhere to principles.”

#2 On what a Republican means:

“Efficient and cost-effective taxes, are we getting what we are paying for.”

“Efficient, effective government with reasonable taxes that gets out of the way and allows business to do what it does best and that is create jobs and move forward.”

#3 On being a Christian and Republican:

“I think people should receive a hand up not a hand out. I think there needs to be accountability.”

“We work to get what we need, you want a helping hand look at the end of your own arm...I am responsible for me.”

“Part of my Republican principles, part of my Christian belief”

“God will hold us accountable for the decisions that we’ve made.”

#4 On interpretation of Christian scripture:

“I believe it as far as it is translated correctly, as far as it has been interpreted correctly.”

#5 On God:

“God is our Father in Heaven...and we are created in his image.”

#6 On the role of a Christian in government:

“There are groups that want to take away individuals that want to take away our rights to act for our self, and to be able to choose for our self, I think God says it in the Old Testament that he gave Adam his agency, the right to choose, in the garden. We have the same right to choose but for some reason, there seems to be an endless stream of people who want to take away that right. Adolf Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, all of these individuals are ones that for some reason want to prevent people from making their own decisions.”

“William Penn, founded Pennsylvania, Philadelphia particularly... It was most productive, it was very, economically viable, while the other colonies struggled because they tried to define for other people what was best for them.”

#7 On Justice:

“Ultimately (God) will hold us accountable for what we do”

#8a On Immigration:

“Abide by the laws as abiding by the laws in order to get in legally.”

“You need to follow the rules.”

“Scripture comes back and asks us for example to be honest. Don’t bear false witness.”

“I think it is a root problem that is when it became federal law that a hospital emergency room could not deny service because a person didn’t have the means to pay for it.”

“When there is no penalty for violating the law, or the penalty’s not enforced for violating the law then there is no law and nobody cares.”

“When it comes back to Christian view, I look at it from a perspective of if someone wants to be upwardly mobile, if they want to improve themselves, then they should have the opportunity.”

“I don’t think there’s a conflict in my mind.”

#8b On Health Care:

“There’s only so long that you can continue at your own expense to help somebody else before you can’t afford to do it either. And I think that’s one of the challenges that we have is at what point do we stop being the Good Samaritan and say that’s a matter of personal responsibility. You need to stand up and take the responsibility for that and pay for your bills and take responsibility for yourself, and your spouse and your family.”

“That we have a cost shift from those who have chosen to roll the dice, take a chance; play the system, to those who are taking the responsibility.”

“There’s a limit to the Good Samaritan. The person still needs to comeback and be responsible for themselves.”

“I think you can go back and just about prove anything with scripture one way or the other. My interpretation my understanding of both the New Testament the Old Testament is that one takes care of their duties and responsibilities. In the scripture, the New Testament, one that does not provide for his own family is worse than an infidel.”

“Now the question come back here is that scripturally based, it is an undertone, I think in the scripture that one provided for themselves.”

#8c On Capitalism:

“The parable of the rich man who says, ‘hey I’ve got an awful lot of abundance, what am I going to do, he says well I’m going to tear down my barns and build bigger and he does that and he puts it in there and the Lord comes and says ‘fool, today thy soul will be required of thee.’ Now the man didn’t get there by being lazy, he was industrious, he was productive, but he placed his heart upon the material things.”

“Bill Gates, who’s giving back to the community or is making education possible for people...that’s a wise use of his surplus resources.”

“I think it parallels it, you’ve got the principle of agency there the choice you get to choose for yourself, but you also get to have the consequence of it so.”

#8d On Private Property:

“As far as private property is that I have the responsibility to be a steward over that property.”

“They didn’t help you make it; they shouldn’t have the right to take it...If you buy it, you pay for it, you own it, I don’t think you should lose it.”

“Contrary to popular opinion the LDS community did not believe in socialism, there’s a huge difference between communism and the united order or the law of consecration.”

“I don’t think there’s a disparity between what the scriptures have to say. But it’s thin. That’s one of those deals that you can interpret it to mean whatever you want it to mean.”

#8e On another issue Gary Harris wants to talk about:

“Obama Care... how does this instill the principles of Christianity to make them want to be self-reliant to be able to be promoting themselves or be working to improve themselves. It destroys; it becomes a disincentive rather than an incentive, because now people think that they’re entitled to it.”

#7 Veronica.

The seventh interview for study which I completed was with Veronica. Veronica is a female Democrat serving elected office in 2011 in the Arizona State Government. She states her family was based in the Catholic Church, which she is still a member of today. She attends mass once a month and tithes as much as possible. She states that her top issues, in no particular order are: Poverty, Reproductive Rights, and Education. A couple of significant interactions which I noticed and commented on Veronica are that she was very engaged in the interview process and was really excited to talk about her faith and politics. She often talked about her internal debate and dialogue about answering these questions, because she is torn about the divide between church and state. She stated that she felt these questions were really hard and that she was humbled by her

lack of mastery of the scripture. When giving her answers she was hesitant, and constantly asking the interviewer if she was making sense and her answers were right. I had to sit silent to her requests and allow her to move along without any prompts outside the Interview Instrument.

#1 On what a Christian is:

“As a Catholic I feel strongly in my upbringing was kind of the call to social justice and taking care of those that are the least among us, that’s kind of the strongest piece of my Christian identity... taking care of the least among us is really because that’s what Jesus did.”

“A call to social justice and taking care of those that are the least among us.”

#2 On what a Democrat means:

“My identity growing up as a Catholic and that kind of reaching for social justice and working to bring about social justice, and to me the Democratic Party is the party that most espouses those values.”

#3 On being a Christian and Democrat:

“Being a voice for people that don’t have a voice, the people that are poor and don’t have high-paid lobbyists to help address their needs and I feel compelled to sort of be a voice for those.”

“It’s about equality and helping people achieve getting out of poverty and equal opportunity through education.”

#4 On interpretation of Christian scripture:

“A lot of parts of the Bible are stories that help people interpret and give meaning to things that happened at the time, they’re not necessarily meant to be interpreted literally. It can get really dangerous, because if you literally interpret one part of the Bible then you have to go and apply it and we would have laws about stoning people.”

#5 On God:

“God is compassionate.”

#6 On the role of a Christian in government:

“I definitely see that people’s religious views or spiritual views have an influence in who they are as people both privately and as elected officials.”

“Growing up Catholic has definitely influenced who I am in all areas of my life and why I want to have this role in public policy.”

“I think that there are a lot of people who are kind of really hypocritical about their faith and what it calls them to do as an elected official.”

“I don’t think Jesus would like be cutting whatever they’re cutting at the federal level right now for the debt ceiling deal. I don’t think that here in Arizona we would be making the cuts to AHCCS and to transplant funding.”

#7 On Justice:

“So how do really create that level playing field for everyone?”

“Going back to Jesus and his words of doing unto others as you would have them do unto you I think that right there is the really core of what justice is about.”

#8a On Immigration:

“I think Jesus would have embraced the foreigner you know love your neighbor as yourself, do unto others as you’d have them do unto you.”

“I’m not a Bible scholar...but if Jesus ran the world there wouldn’t be any borders”

“There’s a need for borders and a need to know who is going across...In that regard I think there is some difference.”

#8b On Health Care:

“I believe healthcare is a right that everyone’s entitled to, it contributes to improving people’s quality of life... emergency care should be rendered without question on anyone’s eligibility for it or not.”

“I think my views probably pretty close in terms of (health care) everybody having access because it’s a right and not a privilege.”

#8c On Capitalism:

“I think unregulated capitalism is not necessarily good.”

“Jesus went in the temple and crashed all the tables down and threw them out... because of greed and not looking out for the needs of the consumers.”

“I think Jesus was more of a communist, I don’t necessarily know what scripture say, but they’re pretty close.”

#8d On Private Property:

“The role for government is to balance people’s individual property rights with kind of the needs of the community.”

#8 Bob Mack.

My eighth interview was with Bob Mack. Bob Mack is a male Democrat serving elected office in 2011 in the Arizona State Government. He states his family was based in the Catholic Church, which he is still a member of today. He attends mass weekly and he does pray each day. He states that his top issues, in no particular order are: Education, Health Care, Racial Justice, and Economic Justice. A couple of significant interactions which I noticed and commented on Bob Mack are that he was generally contemplative of each question. After I ask him the question, he would sit back in his chair, put his hands together and collect his thoughts and then answer. However, he was also very straight to the point. All of his answers were short and sweet, very matter-of-fact like. I noticed that he asserted some emotion when talking about the poor. He seemed very hopeful about faith and politics.

#1 On what a Christian is:

“My behavior towards my fellow man is looking out for the less fortunate in our society so the poor, the downtrodden, the persecuted... it’s how I treat others”

#2 On what a Democrat means:

“Concern in some ways with people that are working class...with people that are poor and striving to facilitate, their dreams, their expectations, their notion of succeeding in life. Providing the opportunity that creates a situation for people that are poor and persecuted.”

#3 On being a Christian and Democrat:

“I think that being a Christian...it’s bigger than being a Democrat. I think for me growing up Catholic, in the church we were taught as a whole, as a community and that influences how I vote because I think as how is this going to affect the community”

#4 On interpretation of Christian scripture:

“Christian scripture is a guide of how we’re supposed to live our lives. Obviously you can’t take things too literal because there are certain portions of the Bible that were relevant in their time.”

#5 On God:

“God is a loving...who knows all, sees all, but is a caring and forgiving God.”

#6 On the role of a Christian in government:

“You walk with the Lord all the time, and as a legislator you have to try to do the same consistency.”

“Your willingness to understand, your openness, your acceptance, your forgiveness and always, always, not making an assumption of the other person. Always trying to understand and do what Jesus would do.”

“A Christian serving in government is to I believe live by the values of Jesus Christ. Taking care of the poor, the wretched, the people that need help.”

#7 On Justice:

“Justice is... everyone having a chance a chance an equal chance at fulfilling their full potential. It is also the treatment of our fellow man and what we would expect the Lord to either look favorably or unfavorably on us.”

#8a On Immigration:

“We have to change the laws to make it easier and a more secure manner for people to come to this country legally. Though comprehensive immigration reform, the Dream Act ...as a Christian it does not give us the right to treat them (illegal immigrants) in an inhumane manner or pass laws that are inhumane, which is against what Jesus Christ would want us to do and in line with scripture.”

#8b On Health Care:

“If we took care of people as we would take care of our own brothers. Make sure that they’re doing well, that they’re eating well, that they’re exercising well, that they’re all of those aspects; we would do to ourselves, to our loved ones.”

“Everyone should have equal access to emergency care to ensure that somebody survives. Everyone should have an adequate amount of healthcare to have a healthy life and a healthy family. It makes me think of rendering to the poor, the story of the Good Samaritan and is consistent with the Bible.”

#8c On Capitalism:

“Capitalism needs to be regulated to make sure that its excesses do not affect the Christian followers or people in general.”

“I see a Bill Gates... I guess if Christianity’s talking about wealthy people that it’s very difficult to get through the eye of a needle. I wish that people can begin to see the better way and that is to help our fellow man and to help them through sharing with our wealth, which is Biblical.”

#8d On Private Property:

“Private property is that part of being a good Christian it’s not to be all about you and selfish and to instead share with your fellowman.”

“Problems with the whole idea of somebody having so much and someone with so little and that can’t make anyone fulfill themselves as a society or as an individual. How can someone be happy about all of the success, all of the property, all of the wealth and yet, down the line someone near to them will suffer.”

#9 Tina.

My ninth interview for this study that I completed was with Tina. Tina is a female Democrat serving elected office in 2011 in the Arizona State Government. She states her family was based in the Catholic Church, of which she and her family are still members. She attends mass once a week, has weekly scripture reading, and prays each day. She states that her top issues, in no particular order are: Homelessness, Economy, Health Care, Racial Justice, and Education. A couple of significant interactions which I noticed and commented on Tina are that she was generally thoughtful and contemplative, talking out loud about her logic path regarding those who suffer and how can she help them. She was introspective when it came to the Bible, talking about her actions in life, testimony of the gospel, and whether or not she is hypocritical. Tina brightened up when she talked about the work of God and his power to change this hurting world. She exhibited tremendous passion about the issues discussed during the interview and expressed much sympathy for those who are struggling with pain and turmoil. Many times during the interview, she got teary-eyed when she spoke about the struggles of so many and the oppression of those in need.

#1 On what a Christian is:

“My guidance of who I am as a person...being kind to others.”

#2 On what a Democrat means:

“I’m fighting for people who maybe don’t have a voice in regards to whether it be education, health, welfare, social injustice, to me it seems like I’m a voice for those who don’t feel comfortable having a voice or maybe don’t have the will to.”

“To promote our community, our society by helping others who are maybe not as advantageous as others.”

#3 On being a Christian and Democrat:

“Trying to help out my community as best as possible... I feel that my faith it guides me.”

#4 On interpretation of Christian scripture:

“I take them as the truth as they did truly happen; they tell a story of how you know they would like us you know to portray ourselves now in this day and age.”

#5 On God:

“God is peaceful, caring, kind... sacrifice for the greater good.”

“Nonjudgmental, loving, forgiving, a good teacher.”

#6 On the role of a Christian in government:

“I don’t think you know being an elected official and being Christian should be too separate, I think they should be able to flow you know with your regular life and if you’re a caring individual that wants to serve its community it’s kind of like you know serving at your own home but you’re taking it to a different level as far as serving your community.”

But I would say the same Christian values and priorities should still come into play as an elected official.”

#7 On Justice:

“Justice is fair and balanced, a solution...where people are not treated cruelly or unkindly.”

#8a On Immigration:

“I’m sympathetic to people who do want to come here to America to achieve the American dream.”

“Christianity values...of not be judgmental to people who do come from a different country because you never know what a person has gone through ‘cause you haven’t really walked in their footsteps.”

“To treat people with respect and humanity, keeping their dignity in place and not trying to belittle them.”

“I think there is a correlation with how I take away from what I’ve learned from scripture and how I present it in my everyday life.”

#8b On Health Care:

“With the issue of health care...(about transplant cuts) if you’re Christian why wouldn’t you want these people to survive and have a second chance at life? So I think to me that was frustrating when other people who said they were Christian didn’t believe that these people should have a second chance at life.”

“My Christian scripture and values that I’ve been taught they definitely do correlate knowing that everyone does that right.”

#8c On Capitalism:

“As an elected official, a sense of community, you’re not doing it to get rich, you’re not doing it to profit, this is similar what the work of God is that at times is thankless.”

#8d On Private Property:

“You see this mostly with the Republican Party and the right to bear arms... the key is not to take advantage of others.”

“I would say my understanding of both what the scripture say and what I believe in are very similar.”

#10 Sissy.

For my tenth interview, which I completed for this research, I interviewed Sissy. Sissy is a female Democrat serving elected office in 2011 in the Arizona State Government. She states her family didn’t grow up in a specific church, but now she is a member of the Nazarene denominational Church. She states that she seldom attends church services, but tries to say her prayers everyday. She states that her top issues, in no particular order are: Social Issues, Environmental Issues and Education Issues. A couple of significant interactions which I noted and commented on Sissy are that she exhibits humbleness and meekness. I was amazed by how many times she stated that she was limited in her answers, because her lack of Biblical mastery and knowledge about the

context of many of the Gospel stories. She reiterated that she feels that she has a sense of what the scriptures say and more importantly that God is love, which she notes, allows her to provide an answer to the questions. She presented as being highly intelligent and well-versed, with a breadth of academic and personal experiences. Sissy exhibited much passion and excitement regarding this research and the content of the interview. She mentioned on several occasions how important faith is, but that it is actually followed and not used as a guise.

#1 On what a Christian is:

“Treating people the way you would want to be treated, part of it is living the kind of life that God would want you to live. There are a lot of people who confess to be Christians that don’t live a Christian life.”

#2 On what a Democrat means:

“It means looking out for everybody not just big corporations and rich people. It means caring about individuals and the concerns that they have. It means caring about the earth and environment that we’re leaving behind for our fellow man.”

“To become whatever they want to become and providing the resources that will allow them to do that. It also means not being self-centered and not having self-gratification for the job you’re doing. There are too many people who come into politics and mostly Republicans who are self-serving.”

#3 On being a Christian and Democrat:

“(My faith) influences everything I do, not just politically but how I treat people.”

#4 On interpretation of Christian scripture:

“You don’t interpret it literally. You can’t interpret it literally. It just doesn’t work.”

#5 On God:

“God created this whole world and the characteristics of God, which is simply the characteristics of love, are the same ones that you should try and mimic.”

#6 On the role of a Christian in government:

“I have a really hard time with politicians who profess to be Christians but, don’t live a Christian life and don’t treat individuals or people the way that they should be treated, with the same respect that is given to them.”

“Make sure government provide for all the people. You don’t give it away so that everybody’s living off of the government, but government is here to help and politicians are here to serve.”

#7 On Justice:

“Justice isn’t always allowed to work the way it should... it’s been sabotaged... I don’t think everybody gets a fair shake.”

#8a On Immigration:

“I have a problem with the fact that our system is broken. I have a problem with a fact that it takes nine years for a Mexican school teacher to become a U.S. Citizen. I have a problem with money dictating who becomes a citizen and who doesn't.”

“(As a Christian) it's hard for me to justify what we do to people who are innocent that come across our border... God created every man equal and that they should have the opportunity.”

“I don't know if it is consistent”

#8b On Health Care:

“Everybody in this country should have access to affordable healthcare.... do unto others as you would have others do unto you.”

“I am not sure if this is consistent”

#8c On Capitalism:

“Capitalism to the point where you're hurting others because of greed and there's where the scripture comes in, is greed, then it's wrong. Everybody has the right to make a living, but that's where capitalism is now, is the haves and the have not... There are people who live in squalor and all because those who pursue the almighty dollar, which is greed, and that I can't handle. And neither can scripture. It's almost like slavery.”

#8d On Private Property:

“(With private property) greed comes into it again, because the poor go without, and the rich have it all.”

#8e On another issue Sissy wants to talk about:

“There is the story of Jesus teaching the people how to fish instead of giving them all the fish, teaching them how to grow wheat to make bread instead of just feeding them.”

#11 Jose Hector.

My eleventh interview was with Jose Hector. Jose Hector is a male Republican serving elected office in 2011 in the Arizona State Government. He states his family was based in the Assemblies of God denomination, but today he is part of a non-denominational congregation. He attends church weekly, seldom has scripture study, prays each day and tithes to his church. He states that his top issues, in no particular order are: Pro-Life, National Security, Traditional Values, and Fiscal Conservatism. A couple of significant interactions which I noticed and commented on are that Jose Hector seemed uncomfortable throughout the interview, as evidenced by him squirming in his chair and making jokes about how the interviewer might use the information against him. I suspected that Jose Hector was probably uncomfortable throughout the interview because of the fact that he was being interviewed by me and the party difference and political experiences that occurred between us. I noted that he used a lot of humor, jokes, and laughed a lot throughout the interview, which I would assign to his discomfort because they happened when he was talking about personal topics. Jose Hector presented with

humility when he talked about issues that he wasn't knowledgeable regarding scriptures. He also presented a lot of enthusiasm and passion when he talked about issues that he cared about.

#1 On what a Christian is:

"It means striving to be more like Christ."

#2 On what a Republican means:

"Fiscally conservative, socially conservative, believe in a strong national defense, national sovereignty...generally believe in the defense of Israel."

#3 On being a Christian and Republican:

"Win the battle within our party platform and then it's very easy to come to advocate for public policy."

#4 On interpretation of Christian scripture:

"My personal belief is that all 66 books of the Bible are the word of God."

"I usually take everything literally."

#5 On God:

"God like us, he's omnipotent and everywhere."

"Relationship with us established through his Son, Jesus Christ, die on the cross for our sins, if we accept Christ as our Savior."

#6 On the role of a Christian in government:

“One of the major distinctions between Christian Republicans and Christian Democrats, is when Jesus said whatever you’ve done unto the least of these you’ve done unto me, he’s talking to his followers, not the Roman Government.”

#7 On Justice:

“To treat others as you would want to be treated yourself.”

“Establishing criminal laws you try to make sure that those that are falsely accused have an avenue to be shown to be innocent.”

#8a On Immigration:

“As for illegal immigration, my view is that we require people to follow laws.”

“The only place I think where you can find something in the Bible that talks about being hospitable to your neighbor that is an alien in your country. Though, I don’t think the Bible says illegal alien, but it does say an alien.”

“I see a difference not necessarily in how I feel, but I see a difference.”

#8b On Health Care:

“Churches should step up, the members should give to the church so that their church can step up and try and be a beacon. More charity should be done through the churches, which really requires people to tithe to their church.”

“Christ tells the parable of the Good Samaritan (implying it’s an individual’s responsibility)”

#8c On Capitalism:

“Christ tells the parable of the three servants... they were supposed to be investing his money... so I do believe in Capitalism.”

“I feel like I’m being greedy a lot with my time and other resources.”

#8d On Private Property:

“You have a right to keep your private property. You have a right to defend your private property; government should not be used to take your private property.”

“My view of private property is the position of the U.S. Constitution; I don’t think there is a difference.”

#8e On another issue Jose Hector wants to talk about:

“Taking the life of a child before born is a sin, obviously as a Christian I feel like that’s an issue that is implied in the Bible, just couldn’t point to a scripture.”

#12 Elizabeth.

The twelfth interview for study which I completed was with Elizabeth. Elizabeth is a female Republican serving elected office in 2011 in the Arizona State Government. She states her family was based in the non-denominational church, and today, she still attends a non-denominational church, just different from where her parents attended. She

attends church services four times per year, does not read scripture, tries to pray each day and varies in her tithing habits. She states that her top issues, in no particular order are: Conservative Issues, Jobs, Economic Development, Taxes, and the Budget.

A couple of significant interactions which I noticed and commented on Elizabeth are that she became so overwhelmed and nervous about answering these questions that she spoke at such length to ensure that her point was getting made. She spoke at such length about each question that it was very confusing for this researcher, and I had to review her interview eight times, which is four more than any other interviewee, to ensure I was capturing what she wanted to say. One thing I noticed when reviewing her interview was that she started confusing herself within each question, and often took logic tangents that had nothing to do with the questions that were being asked. When I asked her questions about any potential dissonance that she may experience with her faith and political views, she spoke at length about something not even connected to that question and never answered the question, even when I restated it to her. Elizabeth went into great detail about her background and personal story attempting to contextualize why she views the world in the way she does. She spoke about herself as a child and being given the option to no longer attend church and how she chose not to and then later attended when she was an adult. She spoke about her family being judgmental towards her and how that turned her off from Christianity. Elizabeth presented with lots of passion throughout the interview. She exhibited anger and frustration when she talked about lazy people, people who took from others, and people who abused the system. She

stated that it's not fair for the tax payers to have to suffer for all these people's bad decisions.

#1 On what a Christian is:

"Having faith in God, believing in the Bible and the scripture."

#2 On what a Republican means:

"Being conservative, having strong Christian values, fiscal values, moral values."

#3 On being a Christian and Republican:

"I'm one of those people that says then why should the taxpayers should continue to fund your bad decisions."

"Is this something that is in our constitution, is this something that the government was intended to do to begin with?"

#4 On interpretation of Christian scripture:

"You're supposed to take it word for word."

#5 On God:

"Almighty spirit, lives within all of us... he also gives us the opportunity to make some decisions for ourselves."

#6 On the role of a Christian in government:

“I’ve always talked about personal responsibility.”

#7 On Justice:

“It’s about being just and fair for everybody no matter what the crime is no matter what the penalty is.”

#8a On Immigration:

“First of all we follow our rules, we follow our laws... argue about jobs, gangs, higher crime, taxing our financial system, you can argue about all those things that we hear every day about illegal immigration.”

“God expects us to follow the rules.”

“I cannot cite the exact scripture, but I know that there is a scripture and it’s in the Old Testament where it actually says God said that you’re supposed to obey other people’s rules.”

#8b On Health Care:

“I think God intends us to have personal responsibility for our lives and our actions.”

“Because there’s always going to be somebody that going to need some transplant... and some advocacy group is going to stand up and say how dare you be selfish and not save this person’s life... we have to go back to basic responsibility.”

“What I disagree with is that again, back to personal responsibility, is that those that never have taken the personal responsibility to have a doctor, they get to walk into the emergency room, which is more expensive than going to a local medical doctor.”

“That means now you’re going to have to take that money from something else, you get back to those Christian moral values. You are going to end up taxing everybody so much that we will not have to freedoms and choices, because we will be like communism, we will be so poor, the government will end up taking everything and leaving us very little to live on...they will take over our churches.”

“No. It’s pretty integrated.”

#8c On Capitalism:

“I believe in Capitalism. I believe in God has given us all the ability to make good decisions.”

“Capitalism is the individual right to be free to be able to make our own decisions, to have that drive to be able to advance in your life, and not depend on government for my mere existence... That’s my definition. And I think God supports it.”

“Do I think (Jesus) expects us to continue to fork out money to those who have no desire to help themselves? That are just too lazy, uncaring, no drive... No! I personally don’t.”

“Enough is enough, you have to stand up and live on your own two feet... If they wanted to eat, they worked.”

“Taking your God-given gifts and turning them into something that produces things...I believe it correlates very well.”

#8d On Private Property:

“I believe in private property rights. I’m a staunch supporter of private property rights.”

“I’ve never really thought about how that (Private Property) associates with religion...

I’m kind of at a loss here, because I just believe that God believes that we should have private property rights.”

#13 Rebecca.

My thirteenth interview for this study that I completed was with Rebecca.

Rebecca is a female Democrat serving elected office in 2011 in the Arizona State Government. She states her family was based in the Baptist and Catholic Churches; however, she and her immediate family are members of the Baptist denomination. She states that she tries to attend church daily in one function or another, three times a week she has scripture devotions, she prays each day, and tithes regularly to her church. She states that her top issues, in no particular order are: Senior Issues, Family Security and Child Welfare Issues. A couple of significant interactions which I noticed and commented on Rebecca are that she took this interview very seriously, whereas she made it quite clear that her faith is tantamount to any other identity she might have. She exhibited tremendous passion about her belief in Jesus and his redeeming powers for this world. She was explicit in that everything she does is correlated to her faith, that throughout her whole life her faith in God and Jesus is essential. She became emotional at times and even cried a couple of times when she spoke about Jesus and her salvation. I was taken a back at just how deep and rooted her testimony of God’s power is in her life and how she incorporates her faith into every political choice in her life.

#1 On what a Christian is:

“Just means every aspect of your life trying to be more and more like Christ.”

#2 On what a Democrat means:

“Simply looking out for the needs of people, those who are vulnerable, and not know exactly how to fight for themselves, the ones that many people just walk by on the street and ignore.”

“It is up to us to be able to fight for them, to show where the disparities are, and how we can help fill in those gaps and help make things better on an even playing field.”

#3 On being a Christian and Democrat:

“The less fortunate getting better healthcare, those who are less fortunate having better education, every child has just a fair chance in life.”

“We should take care of our most vulnerable, our seniors, and our children.”

“I put my faith first, I’m not compromising that.”

#4 On interpretation of Christian scripture:

“The scripture is a road map to life, it gives you choices.”

“You have got to make sure you know when to apply these things, you know when not to, to treat others with the respect as God would.”

“If we were to literally interpret the Bible with everything we would probably be stoning people, you have to understand what the context is, what was going on during that time... literal interpretation can be dangerous.”

#5 On God:

“Omnipotent, the Alpha and Omega. I look at God in everybody that I see and love them as God loves them, the creator.”

#6 On the role of a Christian in government:

“Christians are needed in politics; it’s the conscience of what goes on here, in politics.”

“People should know you as who you are, they know you’re a Christian by your love.

Love is mentioned over 4,000 in the Bible.”

#7 On Justice:

“Our pledge, is “justice for all” ... to truly feel that they’re getting a fair shake.”

“Justice is making sure that no one is walked over, no one is ignored, and no one is forgotten about intentionally.”

#8a On Immigration:

“An interpretation of the verse in the Bible that talks about how we should treat those who are foreign in coming to us that we are to treat them, like our brothers and sisters, we are to help them.”

“Much of the dialogue that’s going here is disappointing, it’s disheartening, and they profess to be true Christian. If you’re truly a Christian, you will listen to what the Bible has directed us to do, and that’s to take care of the widowed, that’s to take care of the orphans, and those that are here as foreigners. If we talk about illegal immigration aside from the American Indians, and the African Slaves, everyone was illegal.”

“My view is pretty consistent with what the Bible says”

#8b On Health Care:

“Healthcare should be something that everyone should have. It’s not a luxury, it’s a necessity. It’s about helping your fellow brother and fellow sister, to be able to provide for their families.”

#8c On Capitalism:

“We’re all supposed to be there to take care of one another... You have a tendency to use your resources up, human and as well as natural resources. It’s got to be a little better balance than what’s happening.”

“It’s just this strict capitalism; folks are going to get left behind. They’re going to get left behind. And that’s where you’re going to have situations of some people being completely destitute.”

“It’s not much difference... too many folks not looking at their Bible.”

#8d On Private Property:

“The whole issue of gluttony, greed, it’s a sin and that is in the Bible and you can look at that in different ways, it’s not just about how much you’re eating, but it’s also about not being so greedy.”

“You take care of it and you leave it in good standing for someone else to be able to use after you’re gone. But my favorite is on the scripture about the wealthy man who, wanted to collect everything in the world, and in the end, the statement came that it’s easier for a poor man to walk just into heaven, a humble poor man that has lived his life serving God than it is for it’s just as easy for a camel to get through an eye of a needle than it is for that wealthy man that only put the wealth and greed ahead of God to get into heaven.”

#8e On another issue Rebecca wants to talk about:

“Love is the concept in the Bible... it would be nice if decisions could be made based on love.”

“I do not think that those that are professing to be Christian are really looking at the scripture, because the orphans can be described in a lot of different ways. With this state cutting out payments, you’re taking away respite, and it’s causing people that are related to throw up their hands and say I cannot do this. Therefore you’re going to have kids growing up in group homes... This is not what God intended.”

#14 George Washington.

My fourteenth interview was with George Washington. George Washington is a male Republican serving elected office in 2011 in the Arizona State Government. He

states his family was based in the Church of Jesus Christ and Later-day Saints, which he is still a member of today. He attends church weekly, has daily scripture study, prays each day and tithes to his church once a month. He states that his top issues, in no particular order are: Freedom and Property Rights. A couple of significant interactions which I noticed and commented on are that George Washington was very rational and logical. He was straightforward and blunt, spoke about these issues from a matter-of-fact tone. His political and Religious intelligence was obvious, for each question he responded in a lot of detail, background and context, all which added to his point. He was able to quote scriptures, cite stories from scripture, and quote famous philosophers with ease.

#1 On what a Christian is:

“To believe in Jesus Christ, that he is the Son of God, and follow his teachings. That he has certain authority and powers.”

#2 On what a Republican means:

“It means individual responsibility, that the only way for us to really be truly free is to have the right to make decisions regarding our own destiny, to control our property, and to have the opportunity to make bad choices and to fail and deal with the consequences that come with that freedom and with that responsibility.”

“Conservative values and limited government... 80% of what we do in government is not the proper role or is directly unconstitutional.”

#3 On being a Christian and Republican:

“There are some rights that we’ve been given by God, the right to life, to liberty, and the right to control your property.”

“The teachings of Christ are conservative. The teachings of Christ are freedom, they are agency, and I’ll use an example. Many people refer to the Good Samaritan when they want to show that forced government welfare is something that Christ had advocated, and yet I defy any of them to show me where Christ in the parable of the Good Samaritan showed any government intervention at all, let alone forced care by government. In fact, what it teaches is that you have an individual who individually had a responsibility... It’s a fallacy that force through government to take care of other people is something that Christ taught. I don’t see it anywhere in the scriptures... That is where you see very consistent philosophies between Christians and the Republican Party.”

#4 On interpretation of Christian scripture:

“I believe in absolute truth, and I believe that there is right and wrong, I don’t believe in moral relativism or context.”

#5 On God:

“Perfect man, who is omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent.”

“Gives us the gift of agency or freedom... we can make choices that allow us to make good or bad decisions and through that there are consequences.”

#6 On the role of a Christian in government:

“Our role is to adhere to the Constitutional limitations, to defend the freedoms and liberties of the people, to allow them to make the choices.”

#7 On Justice:

“Law has to proscribe a punishment and a reward. If there were not a punishment and a reward, then the law is ineffectual... When we transgress that law or we break that law, we make a bad decision and decide we’re not going to be obedient then there has to be a punishment. Justice dictates that that punishment is meted out.”

#8a On Immigration:

“We have a Constitutional duty to establish our borders and the terms by which people can immigrate to this country, then we ought to require people to adhere to that law and we ought to enforce that law... We have to protect the borders and the sovereignty of this country, this is not negotiable.”

“I believe that God has been very clear that we have an obligation to obey the laws. I believe that God instituted this Constitution for a purpose that is to protect our freedoms and liberties.”

“No, I don’t think so. I think that my interpretation of scripture, I don’t think that there’s any inconsistency in my view of scriptures. You have to look at the totality of what’s being taught and what God expects... You have to reconcile them all and upholding the Constitution and the rule of law is not inconsistent.”

#8b On Health Care:

“Medical care is not the role of government, that’s an individual responsibility and obligation.”

“Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine of Covenants, it all shows that that’s an individual responsibility, and I don’t know of anywhere that it says government should coerce people to take care of each other. I believe that that’s contrary to God’s plan, because God’s plan is agency and freedom.”

“Healthcare, emergency care and what I believe scripture tells us is in consistency with my views...they never talk about government helping the poor. They never talk about the coercion of government forcing us to help the poor, helping the poor which would include medical care.”

#8c On Capitalism:

“That’s what America was founded upon. That’s what made this country great, was the idea of individualism and the individual right to defend and to control property... on a scriptural basis, capitalism is a very fine form of an economy.”

“Capitalism would say I have the right to make decisions regarding my own property, and I think that is very consistent with the scriptures... and a right that was given to them by God.”

“I think it’s very, very founded in scripture. What Capitalism tends to do is it says, you can choose to work hard, use your talents, take risks, and you’re going to gain reward that comes from that.”

#8d On Private Property:

“I believe that property rights were paramount to freedom.”

“The gift of agency or freedom is by controlling our property, thus I think it is very consistent with scripture.”

“I think property ownership has been shown, it’s replete throughout the scriptures, and some very good things have been done by people who owned property. Not the least of which is their able to support their families. And so I think private property rights should be defended at all costs.”

#15 Lloyd.

My fifteenth interview was with Lloyd. Lloyd is a male Republican serving elected office in 2011 in the Arizona State Government. He states his family was based in the Lutheran denomination, which he is still a member of today. He states that he attends church weekly, reads scripture, prays, and tithes to his church. He states that his top issues, in no particular order are: Fiscal Responsibility, Education, Children, and Economic Development. A couple of significant interactions which I noticed and commented on are that Lloyd was very straightforward and to the point. He was forthright with his information, providing background to his answers and details so that I would understand. At times he became very introspective about the questions, delving into deep thought before answering.

#1 On what a Christian is:

“If you’re going to talk the talk you better walk the walk, and so following those precepts of Christianity.”

#2 On what a Republican means:

“Being a Republican is a way to, on a broader spectrum; define what my personal political vision is...conservative and individual rights.”

#3 On being a Christian and Republican:

“I don’t think my being a Christian defines my political positions that I take.”

#4 On interpretation of Christian scripture:

“I believe they were all divinely motivated, so I don’t take them verbatim, I take them for the learning, the teaching they provide.”

#5 On God:

“When you try to conceive of God and the universe, it’s like trying to get your mind around infinity.”

#6 On the role of a Christian in government:

“I think, fundamentally, when you are making your decision you have to reach back into yourself and your values. Sometimes we have to make short term decisions that we are

conflicted with, because they do conflict with our values. And a hope and belief that the long term result or the end result will not be in conflict, that it will achieve results that will then make it consistent with your belief system.”

#7 On Justice:

“It has to be a balance between the victim and the criminal as to achieving justice.”

#8a On Immigration:

“I don’t think immigration is an issue that is Biblical.”

“There’s plenty of places in scriptures where protecting of geographic areas, your resources whether it be water or farmland or other types of wealth, you find it throughout the Bible and it’s consistent there. Even see consistency in there in areas of conquest or re-conquest or reacquire territories.”

#8b On Health Care:

“These are personal decisions that we can all make... I don’t feel an obligation that I have to necessarily have to help them.”

#8c On Capitalism:

“I believe capitalism is fundamental to our Republic... capitalism inspires dreams because it’s possible.”

“I believe strongly in capitalism... capitalism, when properly married to Christianity and Christian precepts, then it can leverage that into the greater good for society.”

#8d On Private Property:

“I don’t believe there’s an inconsistency there, you see throughout the Bible instance where the respect for a person’s property.”

#16 Trisha.

My sixteenth and final interview for this research study was with Trisha. Trisha is a female Republican serving elected office in 2011 in the Arizona State Government. She states her family was based in the both the Catholic and Mormon churches, yet today, she is just a member of the LDS church. She often attends church, often reads scripture, prays often, and tithes. She states that her top issues, in no particular order are: God-Given Rights, Punishment, School Choice, Family Strength, Individualism, Hand-up not Hand-out. A couple of significant interactions which I noticed and commented on Trisha are that she was extremely energetic, engaging and enthusiastic. I was personally very comfortable, as she was extremely warm and complimentary to me. She laughed a lot throughout the interview, cracking jokes and poking fun at the legislature and people in it. I also had to resist in rescuing her. Often times she was ask me if she was right or she checked in to see if what she said was sufficient or enough. I simply had to sit a smile after each interaction and only repeat what was on the Interview Instrument. Trisha acknowledged that she had a hard time knowing that a lot of her views were different from what scripture said on them. She recognized that her political ideology trumped her theology.

#1 On what a Christian is:

“Everything that I do... reflects what Jesus would want me to do, it’s a cliché but it’s true. It means loving people and being kind and accepting and giving them treating them, serving them, as Christ would if he were on the earth. It also means being obedient to the commandments.”

#2 On what a Republican means:

“I work hard and take care of myself, my family; make responsible choices... to help and support that allow individuals to gain as much as they can on their own.”

“The right to make their own choices and to not be held back by government regulation or held up back by government handouts.”

#3 On being a Christian and Republican:

“To make decisions and then suffer the consequences or be rewarded; it’s their responsibility to pick themselves up.”

“The Christian side of me wants to make sure that people are safe and protected and served and loved...but the Republican side of me, we have to let people make their own choices and be responsible for where they are in life and what they’ve done.”

#4 On interpretation of Christian scripture:

“I look at it literally as history... and it is God. You know, it’s what he wanted us to know or it wouldn’t be written in those books.”

#5 On God:

“He’s a real person. He’s the Father, a loving father, and he literally created all of us.”

“Someday we can be like him.”

#6 On the role of a Christian in government:

“You know there’s a lot of contemplation a lot of quiet a lot of serious times and you have to listen. The Holy Ghost is a still small voice and you have to listen, and so I listen a lot more when I’m working. When I’m carrying out my duties as a representative. And I have to hear all their voices too. But I’m able to be empathetic. And I think that’s directly related to my religion and the way, I mean I want to serve people.”

“I told you I’d sound like a Democrat before I was over.”

#7 On Justice:

“There is a certain amount of punishment that has to be given; they’ll receive the punishment for what they’ve done.”

#8a On Immigration:

“I don’t think they (immigrants) should break the law... We’re rewarding people for bad behavior, and I don’t think that’s Christian, I really don’t, I don’t think Christ would have done it.”

“I don’t think it’s a good idea to make people citizens when they’re born; it encourages young girls that are just about to have a baby to make a trip.”

“I don’t like the idea that we give them free medical and food and college educations and all that free because that encourages them to come.”

“I think we’ve created an environment where we’re not only giving a little bit too much to our citizens who probably are neglecting to work or move ahead in their lives because they get it for free, why should I do anything. We’re also giving it to people that are even aren’t our own citizens and thereby jeopardizing the money that we have to take care of our own, because we are taking care of Mexico citizens as well, and that’s encouraging them to come.”

“Not necessarily with my viewpoints... I think that some people that would have dissonance... I don’t feel any dissonance actually, I can say none.”

#8b On Health Care:

“People should be responsible for themselves... the more that you give to people for free the more likely they are to live a little bit more dangerously.”

“People knowing that they can get something for free they won’t take care of themselves.”

“Probably there’s a limitation... I have to say there’s a little bit of a difference.”

“I am so not saying the Democrats are less religious or less Christian. I know better. In a way you’re more Christian.”

#8c On Capitalism:

“I think Capitalism is the result of the upper echelon of that success in our country, and I’m very pleased that we have those top 10% that own 90% of the money or whatever. That doesn’t bother me.”

“Yeah definitely (there is a difference)... we can’t do Christian on the nation, because they are not, unfortunately, not really a Christian nation anymore.”

#8d On Private Property:

“Is there any private property in the scriptures? I don’t know. I don’t think so, they were all communal. You farmed and it was a communal thing, there wasn’t any private property. I think that’s something we invented. I think we do have to have stewardship over what we’re given, but we don’t necessarily have to have ownership, we just need to be responsible... everything we have is given to us by God.”

Conclusion

This chapter was a display of the raw data I accumulated from doing this research. The significant statements presented here are extremely meaningful to the subjects and the themes that they construct navigating through the political/religious landscape. In concluding his interview GREG had this to say about the process of interviewing with me: *“This has really been great to be able to not have you argue with me the whole time, because you’re a liberal Democrat, who believes in entitlements and helping, you’re a bleeding heart liberal, that’s why you’d argue with me.”* Also, THOMAS JOB stated, *“This is going to be something to be interesting as it goes along ‘cause you know those of*

us who are elected officials are trained constantly that you don't answer the questions, you tell what you want them to hear." Even one interviewer commented on this research's contribution to academia, BOB MACK state's in his closing: *"Thank you. I think you have quite an important topic. That consistency again, from what our values are to what we're doing and what would help us. So congratulations."* The entire interviews couldn't be displayed, due to the length of each of them; however, these significant statements represent the heartbeat and worldview of each of the interviewees. By weeding through the filler statements, ramblings, and tangents, I was able to capture the pulse of each of my interlocutors and display their statements. An overwhelming amount of these statements are consistent within a meaning unit, however, I displayed the anomalies too, which were few, so that the reader can fully grasp the internal struggle many of these subjects went through.

In the next chapter, all of these raw, significant statements become more meaningful and understandable in the broader context of politics and religion at the governmental scale of analysis, using a process of horizontalization to the data to group them into core themes of the phenomenon. By grouping the combination of the structural and textural data into themes, this study will highlight a clearer description of the essence of this phenomenon. The themes are generally binary positions that categorize the subject into either the Institutional Christianity cluster or the Natural Christianity cluster.

CHAPTER 7

THE ANALYSIS: A DISPLAY OF WHAT THIS MEANS

Introduction

In this chapter and in Chapter 8, this study makes these raw, significant statements more meaningful and understandable within the broader context of politics and religion, using a method of horizontalization to group the data into core themes. The intent of grouping the significant statements together and creating meaning units are to offer a clearer picture of the essence of this phenomenon. Each theme is a binary relationship that categorizes the subjects into either the clusters of Institutional Christianity or Natural Christianity. Moreover, by applying a form of an intersectional analysis of theology and philosophy, these clusters will become more relevant within the social context of political discourse.

Christian Characteristics

The first theme that contributes to this difference between religious and political clusters is the core idea of what it means to be a Christian. For the first question to each interviews, each participant was asked, “What does being a Christian mean to you?” In Table 1, Christian Characteristics, I have consolidated the subject’s significant statements into meaning units, and applied horizontalization to their statements. The statements are attributed to the participants numerically and the political party they are affiliated with⁶¹.

⁶¹ For example, #2 Rep, is referring to the second interview I did, which was with Bernie who identifies as a Republican. I did this with all of the matrices in order to make it easier on the reader to understand the matrix.

Table 1 Christian Characteristics

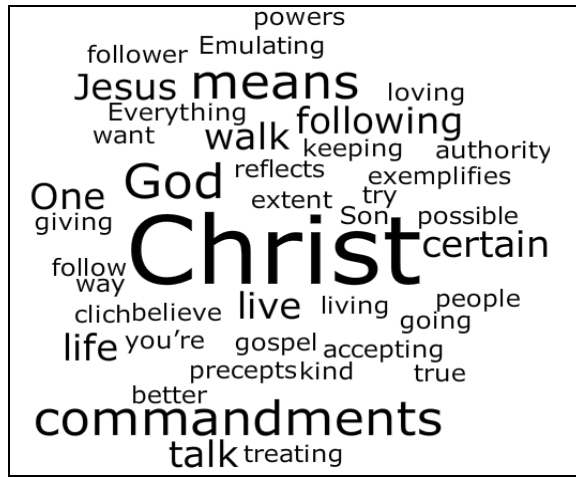
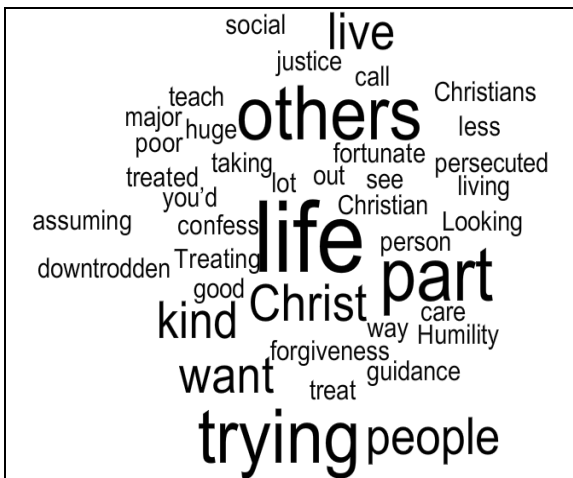
	Beatitudes/Selflessness	Christ-like	Rule of law
#1 Dem:	Being humble; Having forgiveness; Not assuming you know everything.	Model yourself after life of Jesus.	
#5 Dem:	To see good in others.	Do as Christ would teach.	
#7 Dem:	Call to Social Justice. Caring for the least among us.		
#8 Dem:	Look out for less fortunate, poor, downtrodden, persecuted. It's how I treat others.		
#9 Dem:	Being kind to others.	Who I am as a person.	
#10 Dem:	Treat people the way you want to be treated. Too many who confess to be a Christian, but don't live as a Christian.	Live a life God would want you to live.	
#13 Dem:		Be more like Christ in every aspect of life	
#2 Rep:		Follow the Gospel; be	

#3 Rep:		Christ-like. Exemplifier as follower of Christ.	
#4 Rep:		Emulate life of Christ.	Keep God's commandments.
#6 Rep:			Keep God's commandments; Restricting and self- restraint to adhere to principles.
#11 Rep:		Be more like Christ.	
#12 Rep:		Faith in God; Believe in Bible.	
#14 Rep:		Believe in Jesus; follow his teachings.	God has authority and power.
#15 Rep:		Follow precepts of Christianity.	
#16 Rep:	Loving people; Being kind; Accepting; Giving; Serving.	Everything I do reflects what Jesus would want me to do.	Obedient to commandments.

Along with a matrix for each theme, an illustrated word cloud⁶² will be provided for each meaning unit, displaying the most common words used amongst Republicans and amongst Democrats when responding to these questions. This provides another angle on the data reinforcing the primary claim of this research, which is that the divide between Republicans and Democrats is vast along with how each adjusts, defends, reinforces, and justifies one's dissonant political ideology. For instance, the top five words used from the Democratic subjects are: Life (17)⁶³, Others (11), Trying (10), Kind (9), and People (8); the top five words used from the Republican subjects are: Christ (19), Following (7), Commandments (6), God (6), and Life (5). These word cloud groupings closely follow the narrative that is being told in this study, where the responses mimic the binary nature

Democratic Christian Characteristic

Republican Christian Characteristics



⁶² Many of the word cloud illustrations have differing fonts, this was neither intentional nor purposeful, but rather the unintended product of the application which generated each word cloud.

⁶³ These numbers after each word represent how many times they were mentioned by members of that political party for the corresponding question.

of Christianity where the Apostle John is believed to encourage believers not to love worldly things for those who do, God's love is not in them⁶⁴. This binary between the world and God will be further examined in the proceeding meaning units; however this question stills highlights the divide between clusters. The Democratic respondents identified the Christian characteristics as a life where you are serving, humble, and kind to others and helping the poor. The Republican respondents identified Christian characteristics such as following God's authority and keeping the commandments and precepts.

When evaluated as a larger theme, it is quite clear that there is significant difference in the responses based on the political party to which each participant associates. The intersection of one's political party identity and religious identity will be a common analysis throughout this research. There were essentially three responses to this first question. Both Republican and Democratic respondents shared a mutual description of what it meant to be a Christian, which is essentially to be and behave like Jesus Christ. However, there is a divide in the other characteristics that the respondents gave. Strictly along party lines, the Democratic interlocutors responded with characteristics of selflessness and ones that mirrored the attributes of the Beatitudes, which Jesus preached about. Characteristics such as being humble, kind, loving, fighting for righteousness and justice, caring for the less fortunate, essentially living the Golden Rule. As for the Republican participants, many of these descriptors were absent in their responses, and

⁶⁴ "Do not choose to love the world, nor the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, the charity of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world is the desire of the flesh, and the desire of the eyes, and the arrogance of a life which is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world is passing away, with its desire. But whoever does the will of God abides unto eternity." (1 John 2:15-17, Catholic Public Domain Version).

instead they asserted attributes of upholding the “Rule of Law”, such as following the commandments, self-restraint, adhering to God’s principles, and following God’s powers and authorities. There was one exception to the Republican responses, which is respondent #16, Trisha. Her responses throughout this research tended to be the anomaly within the Republican cluster and gave statements that fit in the Natural Christianity cluster. Her worldview and responses can best be described by her own words, *“I told you I’d sound like a Democrat before I was over. I just have that in my family and I can’t help it. That’s the way I was raised.”*

Though not explicit as other themes, the responses that being Christian translated into being selfless in a manner that exemplified the Beatitudes reinforces the theological foundations of Natural Christianity. Examining the Democratic responses, they are enacting policy guidelines that reflect a hermeneutic interpretation of scripture. Their commitment to the Christian virtues, as James the brother of Jesus wrote in James 2:14-20⁶⁵, that faith apart from any action to help the needy is a dead faith. In the tradition of James, Natural Christianity is characterized by social action to create equality for all and to consider the plight of downtrodden first; the Christian Democratic responses align with this theology. On the other hand, the Institutional Christianity cluster resonates with beliefs in individualism and being responsible for oneself. Analyzing the responses of the Christian Republicans, their statements characterize Christianity as following the

⁶⁵ James 2:14-20, “My brothers, what benefit is there if someone claims to have faith, but he does not have works? How would faith be able to save him? So if a brother or sister is naked and daily in need of food, and if anyone of you were to say to them: “Go in peace, keep warm and nourished,” and yet not give them the things that are necessary for the body, of what benefit is this? Thus even faith, if it does not have works, is dead, in and of itself. Now someone may say: “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without works! But I will show you my faith by means of works. You believe that there is one God. You do well. But the demons also believe, and they tremble greatly. So then, are you willing to understand, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?”

commandments, being obedient, having self-restraint and adhering to the principle of God. These attributes of being responsible for one's own self by obeying what God commanded us to do or not do and the lack of communal responsibility in their responses epitomizes Institutional Christianity and finds justification within a literal interpretation of 1 Peter 2:13-16⁶⁶. Where, taken literally, they see Christianity as obeying the law and commandments. However, their defense doesn't take into account the words Christ used in Matthew 23:1-8⁶⁷, who, as the Apostle Peter also exhorted, chastised those who preach the law, but have no works of caring for the poor to show. This theme illustrates the divide between the two religious/political clusters that are associated with one's political party and also explicates a modern-day argument of Republicans advocating the observance of the law as one's faith, while Democrats advocate that a faith without the works of caring for the poor is dead.

Scriptural Interpretation

The theme of scriptural interpretation is essential to this analysis of the divide between the two political/religious clusters of Natural versus Institutional Christianity. In

⁶⁶ 1 Peter 2:13-16, "Therefore, be subject to every human creature because of God, whether it is to the king as preeminent, or to leaders as having been sent from him for vindication over evildoers, it is truly for the praise of what is good. For such is the will of God, that by doing good you may bring about the silence of imprudent and ignorant men, in an open manner, and not as if cloaking malice with liberty, but like servants of God."

⁶⁷ Matthew 23: 1-8, "Then Jesus spoke to the crowds, and to his disciples, saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees have sat down in the chair of Moses. Therefore, all things whatsoever that they shall say to you, observe and do. Yet truly, do not choose to act according to their works. For they say, but they do not do. For they bind up heavy and unbearable burdens, and they impose them on men's shoulders. But they are not willing to move them with even a finger of their own. Truly, they do all their works so that they may be seen by men. For they enlarge their phylacteries and glorify their hems. And they love the first places at feasts, and the first chairs in the synagogues, and greetings in the marketplace, and to be called Master by men. But you must not be called Master. For One is your Master, and you are all brothers."

question #4 I asked the participants to “tell me about your view of Christian scriptures (i.e. Bible, Book of Mormon, Apocryphal, others)? How do you interpret their meaning?”

Table 2 is a matrix of the subjects’ significant statements to this question. Each participant mentioned in their answers that they see scripture as the word of God, which is to guide them. I did not include those responses because to some extent it is assumptive that a Christian politician will see scripture as the word of God and a guide on how to live.

Table 2 Scriptural Interpretation

	Hermeneutical Interpretation	Literal Interpretation
#1 Dem:	Read the Bible in context; Scripture is not a dead document; Rather than tell you what to do, it challenges you to think what it means for your life and world. The Bible is a gray area. Fundamentalists take it as literal word; they have tunnel vision, not sure how they deal with the contradictions. I try to find out what is really being said, between the words.	
#5 Dem:	Is not easy to interpret; don’t take every single word as absolute;	

	instrument for understanding and truth but not absolute. Live in the context of Christian teachings.	
#7	The stories help give meaning and	
Dem:	interpret what happened at that time; Not meant to be interpreted literally. If you literally interpret the Bible, we would have laws about stoning people.	
#8	It's a guide, not to be taken too	
Dem:	literal, portions that were only relevant in their time.	
#9	It tells a story of how we should	
Dem:	portray ourselves in this day and age.	
#10	Don't interpret literally, it doesn't	
Dem:	work.	
#13	Make sure you know when to apply	
Dem:	these things and when to not; Understand the context, what was going on during that time; literal interpretation can be dangerous,	

	probably be stoning people.	
#2 Rep:	Bible is symbolism for the truth.	Scripture says “give unto Caesar what is Caesars” means we must obey the law of the nation.
#3 Rep:	Understand it through the times that it was written and was the product of human hands.	
#4 Rep:		It is direction that says we are to be subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates and obey, honor and sustain the law. Romans 15:1 says “we then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak”, that says it is an individual admonition not one for the government.
#6 Rep:		I believe it was translated and interpreted correctly.
#11 Rep:		All 66 books of the Bible are the word of God, take everything literally.
#12		Supposed to take it word for word.

Rep: #14		Believe in absolute truth, right and wrong. I don't believe in moral relativism or context.
Rep: #15	I don't take them verbatim.	
Rep: #16		I look at it literally; It is what God wanted us to know or it wouldn't be written in those books.

The word clouds displayed illustrate the commonly used words by the research subjects grouped together by political party. The Democratic subjects' top five most commonly used words for this meaning unit are: Bible/Scripture (47), Interpret (23), Context (14), People (13), and Time (era) (10). The top five most commonly mentioned words for this meaning unit by the Republican subjects are: Believe (28), Word (24), God (22), Truth (10), and Take (literally) (9). These words dovetail with the narrative that Christian politicians from each political party interpret scripture very differently. The Republicans take scripture literally and they believe the word of God is word-for-word truth. The Democrats interpret the Bible/Scripture hermeneutically, within its context and time and always thinking of how to help others.

Democratic Scriptural Interpretation

Republican Scriptural Interpretation



When broadly analyzed, the responses to how these subjects interpret Christian scripture present a stark contrast based on one's political party. There are two possible responses to this question. First, a subject could read and interpret the scripture as the literal message in which God wants them to understand, where they are taking each scripture, word for word, as the verbatim word of God onto paper and therefore interpret the words as absolute truth. Second, a subject could read the scripture from a hermeneutical perspective, where they take the context in which it was written, keeping in mind the time, place, language and culture and in conjunction with the broader message of what God is saying. From this perspective, there is also the understanding that humans were involved in the writing, retelling, translating and interpreting of ancient script and that humans are prone to error. They still believe that scripture is inspired by God, but needs context when interpreting. This theme presents as another clear divide between how members of each political party approach scripture. All the Democratic respondents stated that when reading and interpreting scripture, it must be in the context

of which it was written, understanding that it is not easy to interpret, and therefore should be a guide rather than a script for how to portray ourselves, that is flexible and not an absolutism. Moreover, some Democratic respondents (Veronica and Rebecca) asserted that in no way should scripture be taken literally, otherwise we would have laws that commanded us to stone people. Meanwhile, most of the Republican respondents, with the exception of two, #3 Teddy Niles and #15 Lloyd, state that they approach the scriptures literally. The uniqueness of Teddy Niles (subject #3) and Lloyd (subject #15), is that of the nine Republicans, they are the only two participants that come from a Reform⁶⁸ Christian denomination tradition, the rest are Mormon, Catholic or Anabaptist, which could be the reason⁶⁹ why they believe Christian scripture should be interpreted hermeneutically. The Republican responses asserted that they believe that God intended each word for word to be taken literally and the translation is correct and absolute because it is what God wants us to know, verbatim. The two Republican respondents, who deviated from their Republican colleagues and instead promoted a contextual interpretation of scripture, can best be explained by the influence of their Reform Christian tradition.

These two categories, though not exclusive to one party, presents with another characterization of the two political/religious clusters. Natural Christianity adopts Jurgen Habermas' (1971) notion of hermeneutics as a tool for approaching religious scripture. One that not only approaches the script in the context of its era, location, and culture, but also critically deconstructs the scripture for the purpose of emancipation and liberation,

⁶⁸ Teddy Niles is a Presbyterian and Lloyd is a Lutheran.

⁶⁹ The Reformed tradition in Christianity is the belief that the Church is always reforming, which means that a scriptural interpretation must reflect the "literary forms and *historical context* in which it was written" (PCUSA website, www.covnetpres.org).

mirroring what Christ did to the Law during his earthly ministry. The cluster of Natural Christianity is much more reflected in the responses of the Democratic participant, while the cluster of Institutional Christianity is more closely aligned with the responses from the Republican subjects. The Institutional Christianity cluster is reflected in the literal understanding and interpretation of scripture. As Firoenza (1988) describes that Institutional Christianity “insists on the verbal inspiration and literal-historical inerrancy of the Bible” (p. 4). Furthermore, the literal reading of religious scripture and seeing it as absolute truth is a common thread of Republican responses and one that highlights the Institutional Christianity cluster. This notion of religious scripture interpretation is another point of deviation that separates the respondents based on political party and ideology into one of the two political/religious theoretical clusters.

View of God

The third theme and the last one that is strictly about theology, is the theme of the respondent’s view of God. The fifth question from the Interview Instrument asks, “What is your image/view of God?” This question intends on understanding how each of the respondents see and understand God. According to Pastor Rob Bell (Marrapodi, 2011), someone’s view of God generally corresponds with their notion of love. One’s view of God, and thus consequently one’s view of love, is a determinant of which political/religious cluster they might be aligned with. Table 3 analyzes this dichotomy, grouping the significant statements of each of the respondents organized by political

Table 3 View of God

	Personal and Loving	Freedom and Judgment
#1 Dem:	Accepting and loving; Everywhere and in everything is the face of God.	
#5 Dem:	Receptive, compassionate, understanding.	
#7 Dem:	Compassionate.	
#8 Dem:	Loving, caring and forgiving.	
#9 Dem:	Peaceful, caring, kind, and sacrifices for all of us; Nonjudgmental, loving, and forgiving.	
#10 Dem:	Characteristics of love.	
#13 Dem:	God is in everybody that I see. God is love.	
#2 Rep:		Allows us the freedom to make our own decisions. Bad choices lead to his sanctions, which is eternity in hell.
#3 Rep:		A parent. Allows us to make our

#4 Rep:		own foolish mistakes. If we are obedient, we can be like him.
#6 Rep:		Holds us accountable for the decisions we make.
#11 Rep:		Relational if we accept Jesus as savior.
#12 Rep:		Gives us the chance to make our own decisions.
#14 Rep:		Gives us agency and freedom. Allows us to make our own good or bad decisions, and deal with the consequences.
#15 Rep:		God is impossible to understand.
#16 Rep:	Loving.	Parent. We can be like him.

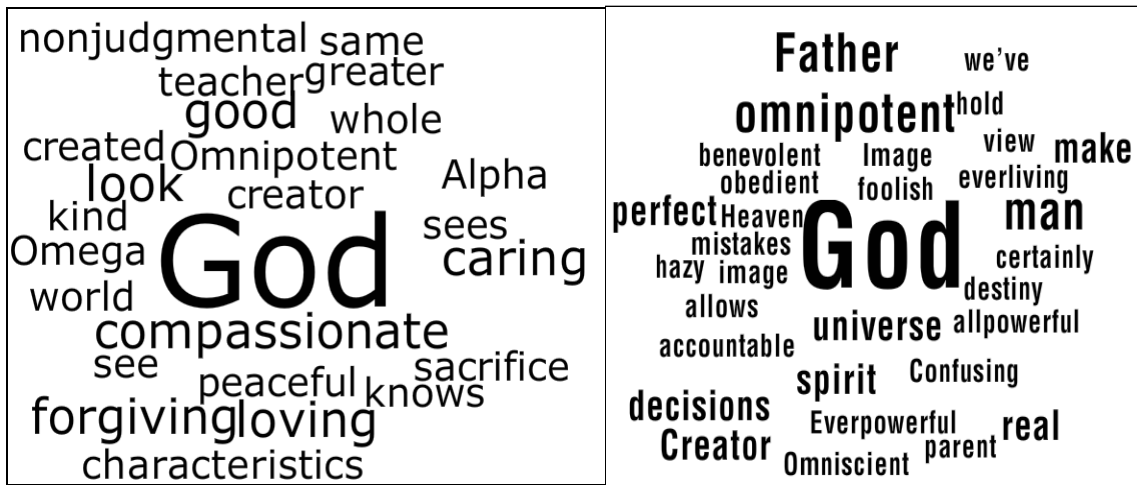
party. This study excluded a third category from the matrix regarding the participants' view of God. Every respondent stated that they view God as omnipotent, omnipresent and the creator of the world. Because every respondent had these attributes in their view of God, it provides no differentiation between the subjects, nor does it shed any light on which political/religious cluster a subject might align with.

The word cloud is obviously dominated by the word "God", but some the other significant words that appear for the respondents from each political party are, for the

Democrats: Caring (14), Compassionate (14), Loving (11), Forgiving (8), and Non-Judgmental (6); while the Republicans are: Father (14), Omnipotent (8), Perfect Man (11), Accountable for Decisions (12), and Creator (6). These words are glimpses that allude to the overall narrative dividing Christian politicians by party affiliation and political/religious clusters. The Democrats describe a view of God who is loving, caring, compassionate, forgiving and non-judgmental. The Republicans have a view of God like a parent/Father who is a perfect man, creator of the world, omnipotent, and one who holds us accountable for our decisions. The Siltan, Flannelly, Galek, & Ellison (2010) study examines this binary, arguing that a punitive and judgmental view of God is positively associated with mental disorders, such as, anxiety, paranoia, obsessions, and compulsions, while a benevolent and loving view of God is negatively associated with these mental illnesses.

Democratic View of God

Republican View of God



When the significant statements from these interviews are compiled together and analyzed through the intersection of politics and religion, there are two themes which the subjects might fall into. A subject either views God as a personal, loving, forgiving and

gentle God or they view God as distant, hands-offs, allowing us the freedom to make our own choices and providing judgment and consequences. While many of these attributes are not mutually exclusive, the interviews reveal that almost no respondents included characteristics from both sides in their description of God. The only subject who presented both sides is #16 Trisha. Trisha gives multiple responses to many of the questions that fit within both clusters, as she stated in Question #6 *“I told you I’d sound like a Democrat before I was over. I just have that in my family and I can’t help it. That’s the way I was raised.”* Trisha described her view of God as *“a loving parent”* which implies both categories. She also added that if we make the right choices in life, *“we can be like God”*, which falls under the Freedom and Judgment category. What is telling about these results is that is that once again, when analyzed from the subject’s political party there is a clear divide. All the Democratic respondents had very personal and loving attributes in their characterization of God. Moreover, all the Democratic subjects had an absence of any judging attributes or descriptions of the freedom to make bad choices. One respondent, #9 Tina, stated that an attribute of God is that he is *“nonjudgmental”*. An analysis of the Democratic subject’s results offers an understanding of their process as to how they adjust their political behavior to reflect a service and love to those in the community and advocate for policies that help those in dire need. Meanwhile, all the Republican subjects described God as one who gives us the freedom to make our own decisions and based on our decisions, God casts judgment upon us. One subject, #2 Bernie, even stated that the ultimate sanction for our bad choices is hell, which corresponds with the notion that God is vengeful and judging. Their results explicate an

understanding of their process of political action that reflects government only being useful to protect and punish, and allow personal charity to be practiced without coercion.

Like previous meaning units, these two characteristics are also aligned to one of the political/religious clusters, Natural or Institutional Christianity. The attributes of a personal, loving, and forgiving God are most closely aligned with the precepts of Natural Christianity, where communitarianism is the mechanism that God asks of us to relate to each other. Also, the characteristics of compassion, forgiveness, peace, and love are core to the theories of Liberation Theology and the Social Gospel, which are imbedded theories within Natural Christianity. These characteristics provide another reflection of Natural Christianity amongst the Democratic Christian politicians. While on the other end of the spectrum, Institutional Christianity is embedded in the responses of Republican Christian politicians. Their descriptions of God being one who gives an individual the freedom to make choices and have to suffer the consequences is consistent with the theories of Theological Individualism and Pre-millennial Dispensationalism.

Theory of Government and Justice

The fourth theme that contributes to the essence of the phenomenon of religious identity in political behavior now addresses the political theory side, which is the participant's view of government and justice. This is the theme of how each participant approaches and understands government, where they translate their Christian beliefs into a strategy of governance and administers justice in their role as a politician. This theme is supported by two questions from the Interview Instrument. The first is Question #2, "What does being a (Republican/Democrat) mean to you?" and the second is Question #

7, “How do you interpret and understand justice?” By asking about the participant’s association and view of their political party will help to describe how they view government and its proper role. Furthermore, asking how each subject understands justice as a function of government will also contribute to which political/religious cluster they align with. Table 4 also displays the data in a horizontalization manner. A simple glance at the matrix reveals a separation between the political and justice theories.

Table 4 Theory of Government and Justice

	Egalitarian / Communitarian	Libertarian / Punishment
#1 Dem:	Greatest goal in an individual is to serve the community. Even though we are all individuals we are all one. Speak up for those with no power, government needs to help not just the haves, but have-nots too. There is a general sense the Old Testament is judgment and righteous fury, it is not, it’s not what Jesus said.	
#5 Dem:	See good in others, which is core to Christ teachings, that we are a community. Everyone has an equal chance. Need government to help us organize ourselves.	

<p>#7</p> <p>Dem:</p>	<p>Striving for equality, to help people get out of poverty through education.</p> <p>Government's role is to balance individual property rights with the needs of the community.</p>	
<p>#8</p> <p>Dem:</p>	<p>Provide opportunities to aid the working class, poor, and persecuted.</p> <p>An equal chance. To treat our fellow man the way the Lord expects us to.</p>	
<p>#9</p> <p>Dem:</p>	<p>Fighting for those who don't have a voice, be it education, health, welfare, social justice. Stand up for those who don't have the will to. Help our community by helping those less advantageous. All are treating fair, kind and not cruelly.</p>	
<p>#10</p> <p>Dem:</p>	<p>Government looks out for all, not just big corporations and the rich. Cares about everyone, the earth and environment. Not being self-centered or self-gratifying, mostly Republicans are self-serving. Provide resources to</p>	

<p>#4</p> <p>Rep:</p>		<p>As small a government as necessary.</p> <p>Freedom is essential to being an American, government should not interfere with that freedom. Protect our liberties, abide by the constitution, and hold the concept of personal responsibility and accountability for all people. Makes laws with consequences and punishment.</p>
<p>#6</p> <p>Rep:</p>		<p>Efficient and effective government that gets out of the way and lets business move forward. Some people want to take away our right to choose for our self. God gave Adam the right to choose, his agency. But people like Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin and others want to prevent people from making their own decisions. Ultimately God holds us accountable. When there is no penalty for violating a law, no</p>

<p>#11 Rep:</p>	<p>Treat others as you want to be treated.</p>	<p>one cares. Fiscal conservative, social conservative, strong national defense, national sovereignty, defense of Israel.</p>
<p>#12 Rep:</p>		<p>Being conservative, strong Christian, fiscal and moral values. Fairly applied penalty for a crime.</p>
<p>#14 Rep:</p>		<p>Individual responsibility, only way to be free is to control own destiny, control property, chance to make bad choices and deal with the consequences. Have a limited government, with conservative values, 80% of what government does is unconstitutional. Protect rights given by God, right to life, liberty, and to control your property. Law determines punishment and reward, otherwise it is ineffectual. If we make a bad choice, there is a punishment for that.</p>

<p>#15 Rep:</p>		<p>Being conservative and having individual rights. Having a balance for justice.</p>
<p>#16 Rep:</p>		<p>To work hard, take care of myself, my family and make responsible choices. To support individuals to gain as much as they can. Right to make own choices and not be held back by government regulations or government handouts. Punishment has to be given for what they've done.</p>

The word clouds give a small sample about each political party respondent's theory of government and justice. The Democrats top five words are: Justice (33), Community (30), People (29), Chance (22), and Opportunity (13); while the Republicans top five words are: Punishment (18), Law (15), Government (16), People (15), and Freedom (10). These words highlight the core difference between the two clusters. Republicans see government and justice as a law and punishment system giving people ultimate freedom. Their responses are rooted in libertarian and utilitarian theories of justice. Democrats see justice and government as community centered, where all people are given an equal and fair chance and opportunity at living. Their statements are reflected in communitarian and egalitarian theories of justice. Nevertheless, there is one

in need. They talked about fighting for those with no voice or status, fighting for social justice, and sacrificing one's selfishness in order to help the community. Meanwhile, the Christian Republican subjects had significant statements to these questions that allied them with the libertarian/utilitarian theory. The Republican subjects talked about government being problematic, that it needs to be smaller with very limited functions. That government should only protect individual freedoms, liberties, and property rights and punish those who are deserving of it. They all highlighted the idea of having personal responsibility and not relying on others, but being accountable and having consequences for your own actions. There was one detraction from the overwhelming consistency from both sides of this theme, respondent #11 Jose Hector, a Republican, commented that part of his view of government is the Christian principle of "*treat others as you want to be treated*". This philosophy is generally associated with the principle outlined within egalitarian theory to consider how you would want to be treated, before applying that treatment to others. However, #11 Jose Hector, also asserted that government should reflect "*fiscal and social conservatism with a strong national defense*". As a possible explanation of Jose Hector's conflicting views of government, one Democrat, #10 Sissy, went as far as stating that most of the "*Republicans are self-serving, which contradicts with their Christian view of how we all should be*". An analysis of Jose Hector's dissonance could be attributed to normal political behavior, by using ideological sloganeering and positioning with ambivalence to the consistency of such statements.

These two meaning units that encompass the subjects' view of government and justice align with one of the two political/religious clusters, Natural or Institutional Christianity. Leathers (1984) highlights the stark contrast between these clusters where,

“their interpretations of the Christian faith as a political and social ideology and policies are polar opposites on the ideological spectrum” (p. 1160). The first cluster of Natural Christianity has its political foundation in the political and justice theories of egalitarianism and communitarianism. Natural Christianity supports the goal of creating equality for all, ensuring that each person has an equal opportunity and equal resources at succeeding, and placing the goals of the community ahead of any individualistic or selfish motive. The second cluster of Institutional Christianity is embedded in the political and justice theories of libertarianism and utilitarianism. Institutional Christianity promotes the notion of individualism, where one’s liberty, life, and property are placed as the primary God-given right to all. If there is any infringement upon one of these rights there is a consequence for that action by the government. Where Institutional Christianity presents as hegemony in contemporary American culture, with the ubiquitous value in capitalism and individualism, Natural Christianity as counter-hegemony, presents with the foundational Biblical values of community, selflessness, and equality.

Primary Identity in Politics

The fifth theme that is addressed in this research is the divide between which primary identity is dominant when serving as an elected official. This is the ever-constant debate about which frame of reference takes precedence when functioning as a political actor. Does political behavior reflect the core of one’s religious convictions and teachings, or does it mirror political party and political ideology or is it a mixture of the two? This theme was initiated by Question #3 from the Interview Instrument, which is: “How do you think being a Christian and a (Republican/Democrat) influences your

decisions on public policy?” This question intended to draw out of the respondent an understanding of which identity influences them more when sponsoring, advocating, and voting on legislation.

Displayed in Table 5 there are essentially two camps in which a subject could respond. First is that their faith and Christian identity is so salient that it dictates and guides all of their political decisions making, the “Faith over Ideology” category. The second is that one’s faith informs them individually and expects them to act only in their

Table 5 Primary Identity in Politics

	Faith over Ideology	Constitution over Faith
#1 Dem:	Democrats are the party of people. People are more important than ideas. Being a Christian influences me being a Democrat, they are intertwined.	Republicans are the party of ideas; they believe that ideas are more important than people.
#5 Dem:	When I make (legislative) decisions that affect others, I ask, does it reflect my Christian faith.	Religious affiliation has no place in governance.
#7 Dem:	My identity as a Catholic and reaching and working for social justice. Being a Catholic influences who I am in all areas of life and why I am a politician. There are a lot of	

	<p>people who are hypocrites about their faith and what it calls them to do as an elected official.</p> <p>#8 Dem: Being a Christian is bigger than being a Democrat. Growing up Catholic, in the church, we were taught as a community and that influences how I vote, thinking how is this going to affect the community.</p> <p>#9 Dem: My faith guides me, I am trying to help my community as best as I can. Being an elected official and being a Christian should be able to flow if you're a caring individual that wants to serve your community.</p> <p>#10 Dem: My faith influences everything I do, not just politically.</p> <p>#13 Dem: My faith is first, no compromises. Christians are needed in politics; it is the conscience of what goes on in politics.</p>	
#2 Rep:		I believe in a strong constitution.

<p>#3 Rep:</p>		<p>When making legislative decisions, guidelines are: 1. is it right to do, 2. is it constitutional, 3. is it going to raise taxes, 4. who does it hurt and who does it help. There is nothing in the constitution about mandating that people get free healthcare.</p> <p>Being a Republican or Democrat is less a faith issue, it is more of a practical one. I choose what philosophy governs best. I got into a disagreement with my pastor about an issue. I said it is an economic issue and debate not a religious one, which he disagreed with. Faith informs, not dictates your decisions as a politician.</p>
<p>#4 Rep:</p>		<p>I'm there to represent the best interests of my constituents. We have scriptures that talk about issues, but it is from an individual perspective, not government compulsion.</p>

#6 Rep:		Part is my Republican principles, part
#11		is my Christian faith.
Rep:		I follow my party platform, and
#12		advocate for public policy.
Rep:		I ask, is it in our constitution, is it
#14		something that the government was
Rep:		intended to do to begin with?
#15		Our role is to adhere to the
Rep:		constitutional limitations, defend
#16		liberty and freedom and allow people
Rep:		to make their own choices. We have a
#17		constitutional duty to establish our
Rep:		borders, protect our borders and
#18		enforce the law.
Rep:		I don't think my being a Christian
#19		defines my political positions I take. I
Rep:		don't think immigration is an issue
#20		that is Biblical.
Rep:	I'm not saying Democrats are less	The Christian side of me wants to
#21		ensure people are safe and loved, but
Rep:	religious or less Christian, I know	the Republican side of me mandates
#22		that we have to let people make their
Rep:	better, in a way you're more	
#23		
Rep:	Christian.	

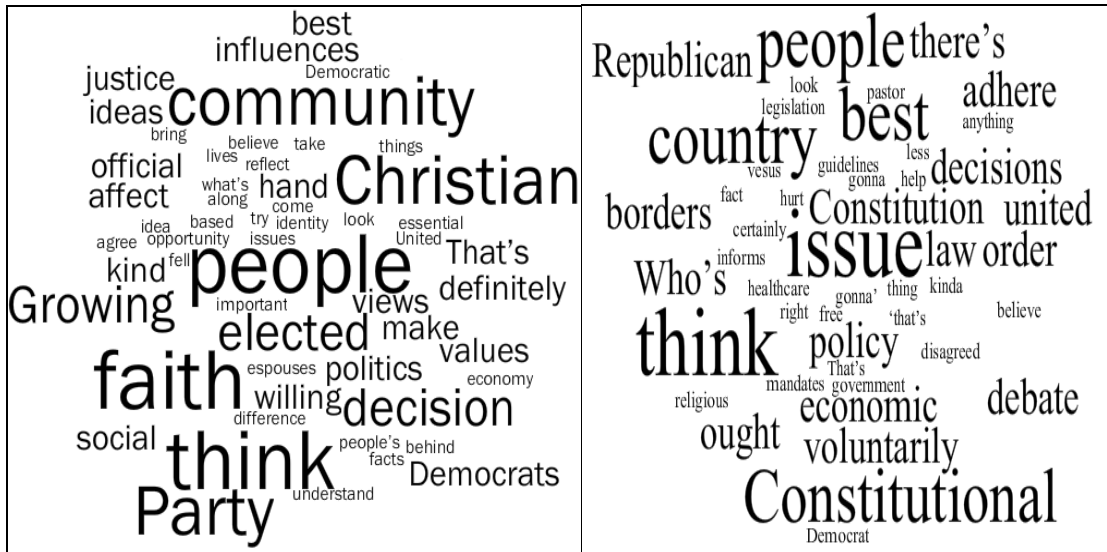
		own decisions and be responsible for what they have done.
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private life, where one’s political service is informed by their political ideology. In this second category, the common theme is the constitution, in that the political decision-making of a politician is the rooted in the theme of “Constitution over Faith”. The meaning units “Faith over Ideology” and “Constitution over Faith”, though not a mirror image of language, were chosen because these were the words which the subjects used in their interviews. Democrats kept talking about that their faith was more important than any ideology, while the Republicans state in their interviews that the Constitution holds supremacy over any other perspective as well as their individual expression of faith.

The word clouds for this theme reveal the most common words used by subjects of each political party when responding to the question about their primary identity in politics. The top five words are for Democrats: Faith (16), People (16), Christian (12), Community (10), and Growing (8); while the Republicans are: Constitution (9), Country (6), People (9), Law (7), and Issue (6). These word clouds expose the central difference between a Christian Republican and Christian Democrat and what they think their primary identity in politics tends to focus on. For a Democrat, it is to follow their Christian faith always thinking about all people and growing the community. For a Republican, it is to hold the constitution and laws of this country as the central issue in their political action. This belief goes back to the idea that the constitution and laws of this nation are God-inspired and therefore are righteous.

Democrat's Primary Political Identity

Republican's Primary Political Identity



Many of the significant statements that make up this matrix come from Question #3 of the Interview Instrument, however, there were quite a few times when a subject responded in a subsequent question about what influences them when making decisions on policy. Participants either noted that their Christianity is the primary influence over their public policy, or that their political affiliation and ideology is their primary influence over public policy. Meaning that their Christianity is used in a radical praxis of counter-hegemony, serving others and speaking love to a world indulged in the self (Gutierrez, 1973); or it is that their Christianity is an orthodoxy embedded in the solipsism of Christianity as philosophy (Sohm, 1904), which constructs law and abdicates the need for belief, interpretation, and action. One side preaches the notion that one's Christian identity should never be masked or ignored. This side believes that all philosophies in the world are secondary, when compared to the guiding principle of one's

Christian faith. While, the other side sees Christian identity solely as a personal and individualistic endeavor that should never be imposed on the collective. Instead, this side sees that the best philosophy of how to govern should, which is following the Constitution, should be the primary driving principle of all elected officers.

All Christian Democratic subjects responded overwhelmingly that their faith is tantamount to any political ideology and guides them in their public policy decision-making. The Democratic subjects talked about how having Christian faith directs everything they do. When deciding what to do, they consider whether or not it reflects their Christian faith and then make the political choice that best emulates their Christian principles. Subject #7 Veronica provided a judgmental critique of many of her colleague at the Capitol, stating that *“I think there are a lot of people who are kind of really hypocritical about their faith and what it calls them to do as an elected official.”* Those in the category of Christian Democrats are committed to the theology of Christianity that supersedes all. Those who are categorized as Republican Christians mention that they are influenced by the United States Constitution and the practical philosophies of how to govern and that their Christian identity only applies in their personal life. They mentioned that being guided and dictated by our constitution is essential, that this is less of a faith issue and more about which philosophy of how to govern is best. They responded that one’s faith might inform, it shouldn’t dictate one’s decisions and that their faith is for individual application anyhow, not to be delivered through government compulsion. This is expressed through a commitment to constitutional mandates presented as causality for the lack of integrated religious expression from this group. While some expressed struggle between the two identities, *“part is my Republican principles, part is my*

Christian faith” (Gary Harris) and *“The Christian side of me wants to ensure people are safe and loved, but the Republican side of me mandates that we have to let people make their own decisions and be responsible for what they have done”* (Trisha). Lloyd put it bluntly, *“I don’t think my being a Christian defines my political positions I take.”*

Democratic respondent Harry Wheeler stated that he believed that one’s religious affiliation should have no place in governance, later stating that we shouldn’t discriminate each other based on what church we attend. Finally, Trisha provided another interesting statement, about the debate between the political parties. She stated that she’s *“not saying Democrats are less religious or less Christian, I know better, in a way you’re more Christian.”* Trisha described her background as Democratic and tries to negotiate her positions between her historical narrative (Natural Christianity) and her contemporary identity (Institutional Christianity) within these questions.

The meaning units of the primary identity theme when making legislative decisions, matches well with the two religious/political clusters. This identity difference is deconstructed essentially to the differences between a Christian’s praxis versus orthodoxy. Where Institutional Christianity has its roots in orthodoxy which is one’s worldly philosophy creating the guide for practical life and one’s religious identity used as more of an association. This connection of Republican Christians to Institutional Christianity through the notion of orthodoxy is meaningful in understanding how their identity is shaped toward the salience of their political philosophy over religious precepts. Orthodoxy is obsessed with the insular defense of the group’s absolute truth, such as the view of human nature being good and the governing constitution of society. As Gutierrez (1973) states, that this perspective is an identity committed to “obsolete tradition and

debatable interpretations” (p. 10) such as eudaemonism and individualism based in natural law. On the other hand, Natural Christianity finds its foundation rooted in the praxis of faith and action (works as described in James 2). Praxis is reflected in the statements of the Democratic elected officials, who integrate their faith into every part of their being and identity. These Democratic respondents see their service as the essential action, commitment, and charity through love to all people, especially those who are suffering and need to witness the loving hand of God. They implied supremacy of Christian scripture to all other documentation (Constitution) and asserted a commitment that their Christian faith is unable to be separated from their state function. Bonino (1983) best illustrates the difference of Natural Christianity and praxis is seen through one’s walk, while Institutional Christianity and orthodoxy is seen through one’s talk. This duality is reflected within the significant statements given by the subjects, and perpetuates the divide between the Democrats association with Natural Christianity and the Republicans association with Institutional Christianity. Jesus told his followers in John 13:34-35⁷⁰ that as a Christian, the only way one will be identified as a disciple of Christ is by their love for the “other”. This love is reflected in one’s actions and works, which are the policies a politician votes for, advocates for and proposes.

Function of a Christian Politician

The sixth and final theme before analyzing specific political issues that are examples of all of these themes in action is the underlying question of this research: what

⁷⁰ John 13:34-35, “I give you a new commandment: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, so also must you love one another. By this, all shall recognize that you are my disciples: if you will have love for one another.”

is the role and function of a Christian politician who is serving in government? In determining what one views their role and function as an elected official with a Christian religious identity we are presented with the crux of this research question and the apex of their identity. For how they express their role individually yields tremendous insight into their worldview, their eternal view, and which cluster they associate with. This theme could be found in all of the questions from the Interview Instrument, however, I intended question #6 to specifically address this theme. Question #6 simply asks, “What is the role of a Christian serving in government?” My hope was to be as open and honest about the direction of this research and allow the subjects to make their own choice when answering these questions. Also, I anticipated all of my subjects answering honestly, but had to account for their reasons for being so straightforward. Perhaps the subjects would answer honestly, because this was their chance to have a debate about the issues and win because I could not respond back to them. On the other hand, I suspected that some would want to impress me because of the prior relationship they had with me or simply they were acting on this internal desire to be liked, which tends to be a subconscious motivation for most people when entering politics. In addition, some subjects could simply be unwaveringly committed to their belief and offered their perspective without any worry about how it may be construed. In Table 6, the matrix shows two possible categories that a Christian politician could fall into regarding their view of what their role and function is as an elected official who identifies as Christian. The first group is defined by the theory of collectivism. The second group is defined by the theory of

Table 6 Function of a Christian Politician

	Collectivism	Individualism
#1 Dem:	<p>Most important commandment, to love one another without exception; Turn the other cheek; Be radically welcoming; Embrace all people as the face of God, treating them the same way you treat someone you love; Stand up for those of no account; To deal with poverty, give a voice to the voiceless, to serve our community; To help those who suffer and serve; Struggle with the idea that I could love Jared Lee Loughner, love those that call me Satan, love people like Russell Pearce.</p>	
#5 Dem:	<p>Care for the less fortunate, poor, hungry, naked, homeless, all people in need. Render dignity to each and every human being. God sees our soul and compassion and grants us peace.</p>	

<p>#7</p> <p>Dem:</p>	<p>It is a call for social justice; To take care of those that are the least among us, just as Jesus did; Be a voice for the voiceless and the poor; Jesus would not be cutting AHCCCS or transplant funding; Create an even playing field for everyone by doing unto others as you would have them do unto you.</p>	
<p>#8</p> <p>Dem:</p>	<p>Look out for the less fortunate in our society, the poor, the downtrodden, and the persecuted; To be understanding, open, accepting, forgiving, and not make assumption about others; To live by the values of Jesus Christ by taking care of the poor, the wretched, the people in need.</p>	
<p>#9</p> <p>Dem:</p>	<p>Being a Christian and elected official should flow together, where you are a caring individual that serves its community. Christian values and</p>	

<p>#10 Dem:</p> <p>#13 Dem:</p>	<p>priorities come in as an elected official.</p> <p>I have a really a hard time with politicians who profess to be Christian, but don't live a Christian life or treat others with respect and the way Christ wants them treated. Government is to provide for all people, not giving it all away, but instead helping through service.</p> <p>Helping the less fortunate by providing healthcare, education, and giving every child a fair chance. Care for our most vulnerable, the seniors and children; People should know we are Christian by our love for one another, love is mentioned over 4,000 times in the Bible.</p>	
<p>#2 Rep:</p>		<p>Christ would say, what can we do to make people more free, to have the right to conduct their lives the way they want? God put man on earth to</p>

#3 Rep:		<p>make his own decisions; God gives us the freedom to make our own decisions.</p> <p>Responsibility to govern; Like President Kennedy, who resolved in peoples minds that being a Catholic and the President, the Pope wasn't going to be dictating your decisions for you; Your faith informs, not dictates your decisions.</p>
#4 Rep:		<p>Most important principle in my faith is free agency; We choose what we want to do without being infringed upon; It is unchristian is when a government tries to force people to do what they would not do.</p> <p>People should receive a hand-up not a hand out; There needs to be accountability; One should work to get</p>
#6 Rep:		

<p>#11 Rep:</p>		<p>what they need; you want a helping hand, look at the end of your own arm; I am responsible for me.</p> <p>The main distinction between Christian Republicans and Christian Democrats is when Jesus said to do anything; he was talking to his followers, not government.</p>
<p>#12 Rep:</p>		<p>Taxpayers shouldn't be forced to fund your bad decisions; I always talk about personal responsibility.</p>
<p>#14 Rep:</p>		<p>The teachings of Christ are conservative; they are about freedom and agency. An example is when people want to talk about forced government welfare they use Christ's parable of the Good Samaritan. Yet, Christ never showed any government intervention or forced care by government. Instead, it teaches individual responsibility. It's a fallacy that Christ taught force through</p>

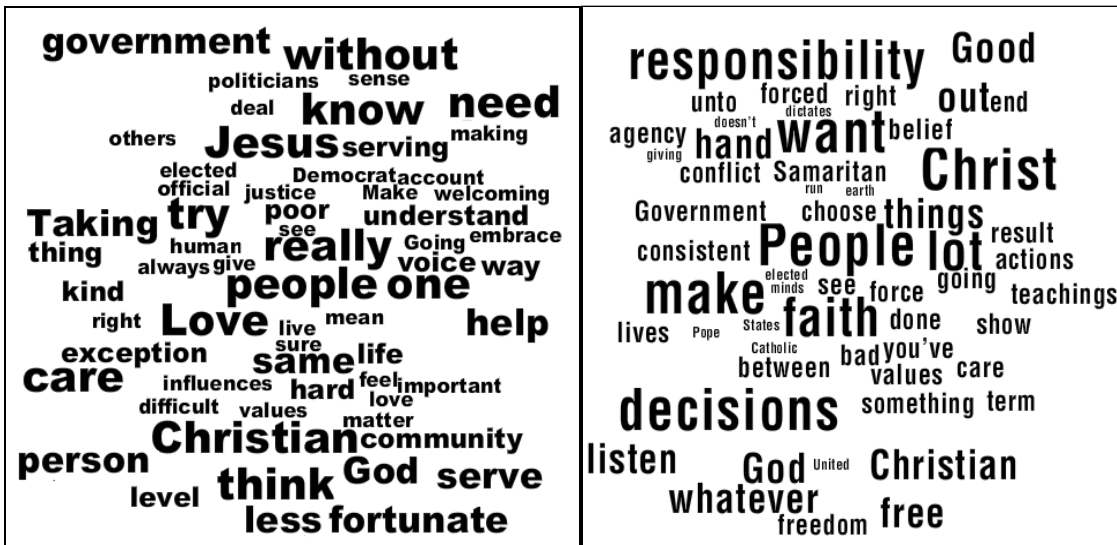
<p>#15 Rep:</p>		<p>government to care for people. This is the consistent philosophies between Christians and the Republican Party. Make decisions by looking into yourself and your values, but you might have to make decisions in the short term that are conflicted with your values.</p>
<p>#16 Rep:</p>		<p>Individuals are to make decisions and suffer consequences or be rewarded. They are responsible to pick themselves up.</p>

individualism. These categories were birthed out of the significant statements collected from the subjects. When I reviewed their interviews transcribed verbatim, I had to eliminate much of the tangents, fillers, and ramblings. I tried to observe for tactical pauses or misdirection by the subjects, to which I feel that all my subjects were more invested in promoting their ideas and wanting to talk about the questions rather than deceive the interviewer. Weeding through lengthy interviews multiple times, I pulled out all the significant statements that each subject provided me, verbatim. Specifically for this theme, it became apparent the contrasting two sides would be defined as, the Republican responses had a connection to individualism, and the Democratic responses were anti-individualist but also fit within collectivism.

The word clouds for this theme capture the most common words within the two cluster’s significant statements on their function as a Christian politician. The top five words for the Democratic respondents are: Love (8), Care (7), Christian (7), Need (7), and Serve (6); contrasted with the top five words for the Republican respondents are: Responsibility (11), Decisions (10), Christ (9), Freedom (6), and Faith (4). These word clouds alone offer significant data showing the difference between how a Christian Democrat approaches politics versus how a Christian Republican approaches politics. The Democrats are focused on the values of loving, caring, and serving the needy, as a core function of their behavior as a Christian politician. Meanwhile the Republicans are focused on the individual, whom maintains freedom from coercion and the freedom to make your own decisions and being held responsible for their actions as the philosophy that guide their core function as a Christian politician.

Function of a Democratic Politician

Function of a Republican Politician



Collectivism is essentially the social behavior of interconnected individuals who define themselves within one or more group identities and are governed by the norms and

expectations of the group. They sacrifice their own personal goals/identities for the goals of the collective and emphasize the interdependence of each and every member of the collective (Triandis, 1995). In analyzing these responses, Christian Democrats highlight the virtue of love throughout their collectivist perspective. A belief that is embedded in their interpretation of what Jesus instructed to them, to love God and each other more than anything else⁷¹. Subject #1, Thomas Job, who responded with this: *“I was struggling with how I could love Jared Lee Loughner on that day, and part of that struggle that really intensified for me on January 8th I’ve been trying to now embodying in all of my political life is how do I love Russell Pearce how I love a colleague that called me Satan.”* Democratic interviewee #13, Rebecca, talked about the power of love throughout her whole interview, she first states, *“People should know you as who you are, they know you’re a Christian by your love. Love is mentioned over 4,000 times in the Bible.”* She later gives an example of the hypocritical action that occurs in government, *“I do not think that those that are professing to be Christian are really looking at the scripture, because the orphans can be described in a lot of different ways. With this state cutting out payments, you’re taking away respite, and it’s causing people that are related to throw up their hands and say I cannot do this. Therefore you’re going to have kids growing up in group homes...This is not what God intended.”* In the same way, subject #7, Veronica stated, *“I don’t think Jesus would like be cutting whatever they’re cutting at the federal level right now for the debt ceiling deal. I don’t think that here in Arizona we would be making the cuts to AHCCCS (Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System) and to transplant funding.”* Finally, Democratic respondent #10, Sissy, characterized the

⁷¹ Matthew 22:36-40

hypocrisy this way, *“I have a really hard time with politicians who profess to be Christians but, don’t live a Christian life and don’t treat individuals or people the way that they should be treated, with the same respect that is given to them.”*

Individualism is the social behavior of people, who view themselves as being independent, fundamentally motivated by their own, needs, wants, desires, and urges being legally supported through natural rights and constitutional contracts. They prioritize their own goals, by serving themselves first and expecting others to be responsible for their own selves. It is a behavior rooted in the rational analysis of the calculated costs of associating and interacting or disassociating and withdrawing from others (Triandis, 1995). It is a commitment to the assumption that their individualism is based in meritocracy and exceptionalism. Each subject comments how their faith identity might provide information about how to make a decision but it certainly doesn’t dictate to them what decision to make. The Republican subjects comment about the lack of religion in their political decisions and instead assert all the attributes of individualism. They talk about the essential attributes of freedom, the right to make ones own choices and decisions without being infringed upon. They advocate the responsibility to provide good governance and accountability to the citizenry, by emphasizing personal freedoms and agency, all the while seeing government intervention and intrusion as evil and ungodly, except to protect one’s natural rights. A perfect example of all of this is from interviewee #14, George Washington, who stated, *“The teachings of Christ are conservative. The teachings of Christ are freedom, they are agency, and I’ll use an example. Many people refer to the Good Samaritan when they want to show that forced government welfare is something that Christ had advocated, and yet I defy any of them to show me where Christ*

in the parable of the Good Samaritan showed any government intervention at all, let alone forced care by government. In fact, what it teaches is that you have an individual who individually had a responsibility... It's a fallacy that force through government to take care of other people is something that Christ taught. I don't see it anywhere in the scriptures... That is where you see very consistent philosophies between Christians and the Republican Party." Likewise, subject #6, Gary Harris reiterates this individualism, stating *"I think people should receive a hand up not a hand out. I think there needs to be accountability. We work to get what we need, you want a helping hand look at the end of your own arm...I am responsible for me."* Participant #11, Jose Hector, elaborated on the difference between what a Christian Democrat and a Christian Republican's role in government is, he states, *"One of the major distinctions between Christian Republicans and Christian Democrats, is when Jesus said whatever you've done unto the least of these you've done unto me, he's talking to his followers, not the Roman Government."*

The two meaning units of collectivism and individualism add to the essence of the phenomenon which is studied with this research. These units are established as the backbone of the two political/religious clusters, where collectivism is the foundation for Natural Christianity and individualism is the foundation for Institutional Christianity. The concept of collectivism is a key attribute throughout all of the religious theories of Liberation Theology and Social Gospel, where both theories promote putting the needs of the community first especially as Jesus talks about in Matthew 25, the needs of the lowly, the poor, orphan, widow, oppressed, naked, homeless, hungry, and prisoner. The concept of collectivism is also a key attribute of the political theories of egalitarianism and communitarianism, where both theories promote political and government action to

benefit the least in society, which would in turn benefit all; also advocating for the consideration of meeting the needs of society first before addressing the needs of the individual. By combining both these religious and political theories, the cluster of Natural Christianity is established along with the core principle of collectivism.

The concept of individualism is the primary characteristic found amidst both religious theories of Pre-Millennial Dispensationalism and Theological Individualism. Both of these religious theories promote the idea that the gospel is an individual document, intended to be interpreted individually, and applied individually. Therefore, the virtues of selfishness, self-responsibility, and self-ambition are seen as godly and essential to Christianity. When these religious theories, laced with individualism are paired with the political theory of libertarianism and utilitarianism, the cluster of Institutional Christianity emerges. The core premise of libertarianism is the idea that the individual must be able to do whatever they see fit with their life, liberty, and property without infringing on others or being infringed upon by others (Hospers, 1974; Nozick, 1974; Machan, 1989; Bastiat, 1850/1998). This fundamental duality lies at the heart of this research, where the identity of Christianity and political service are promoted, yet two opposing actions and behaviors are witnessed. Though this binary exists throughout history and society, what separates this research is that these political figures are held to a higher expectation and standard. As Jesus said to Peter in Luke 12:48, “So then, of all to whom much has been given, much will be required. And of those to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be asked”.

Conclusion

In this chapter we explored six themes that contributed to the narrative of the binary political/religious clusters, Natural and Institutional Christianity. This chapter highlighted Republican Christians who use their political theory and philosophy initially as their function as a politician and then adjust to fit Christian scripture into their political position, while the Democratic Christians uses their Christian faith initially behaving as their function as a politician and promoting their political position. These data explicated an analysis that we may be able to predict how a politician would interpret scripture based on their political party, where the Republicans took the word-for-word literal translation, while the Democrats looked at scripture in the context of the culture, history, and related Biblical books, chapters and verses. There was a differing tone to the view of God between each cluster, Democratic Christians tended to see God through the lens of being kind, loving, and forgiving, while Republican Christians tended to see God through the lens of punishing, judgmental and paternal. Also, this chapter covered the differing characteristics of what each sides sees a Christian being, where the Republicans see the characteristics of Christianity as obeying the commandments and being responsible for oneself, while the Democrats see the characteristics of Christianity in relation to the other, of how one can serve and love the other in society. Finally, this chapter highlighted the inherent difference between the two clusters and their theories of justice. Democratic participants promoted theories of egalitarianism and communitarianism, which they practiced through their belief in collectivism. While the Republican participants promoted theories of libertarianism and utilitarianism, which they illustrate with their belief in individualism. In the next chapter this study explores the debate between the two

clusters, of whether one's faith should inform or dictate a politician's behavior on certain issues, namely, immigration, health care, capitalism, and private property.

CHAPTER 8
THE ANALYSIS PART II: SHOULD FAITH INFORM OR
DICTATE PUBLIC POLICY?

Introduction

After exploring the theological and philosophical meaning units that embody these Christian politicians, this next chapter analyzes how they adjust these perspectives into policy. To understand these significant statements within the larger scale of analysis of governance, this study will provide real-life, tangible differences between the clusters and the ramifications of those worldviews upon society. However, much of what is provided is a sealed narrative, a script, from sound bites to slogans, sometimes exposing the lack of knowledge behind the theory and thinkers that construct their meaning of the issue. Yet, by grouping these significant statements together, this study offers a clearer view of the essence of this phenomenon between a politician's faith and political behavior. The binary relationship is important to this overall analysis; it highlights the dissonance embedded within some of the respondents' answers, which may be simply calculated misinformation or a strategic approach to opposing doctrine. This chapter analyzes the issues of immigration, health care, capitalism, and private property, which are thoroughly present and replete throughout Christian scripture. More importantly, the subjects were asked if there is congruence or dissonance between their view and what they think scripture says on each issue.

Immigration

The first of the issue to be explored, which Christian politicians are wrestling with in today's era, is the issue of immigration. Immigration is referenced throughout Christian scripture, and has an analytical path that leads us to believe that it was a hotly debated issue in the time of kings, prophets, Jesus, and the apostles whom all have commented on it, just as it is today. These contemporary issues help to illustrate the vast divide between political/religious clusters discussed throughout this research. Question 8.1 asked, "What is your view on Immigration and Illegal Immigration? How does that view correlate with what you interpret the Christian scriptures say on Immigration and Illegal Immigration? How do you reconcile the difference (if any)?" The intent of this question, and the next three questions, is to establish a pattern of public policy positions that highlight the opposing political/religious clusters and, if there were any, the cluster's ideological connection to scripture. I included both policies that address legal immigration and illegal immigration together. Even though they are separate issues, they are tied together both historically and conceptually within public policy, which is why they are included together; you cannot address one without talking about the other.

Each participant is asked in the interview what their view on immigration and illegal immigration is. Next, they are asked how their specific view correlates with Christian scriptures. Finally, if the respondent states that there is a difference between their view and what they think scripture says on immigration and illegal immigration, they are asked how they reconcile that difference. Table 7 is broken up into two primary positions on immigration as well as two columns on whether they experience dissonance

or congruence. The first immigration position is titled as “Pro-Immigration”, and added the “Spirit of God’s Law” as a sub-title. This description was a reflection of all the

Table 7 Immigration

	Pro – Immigration / Spirit of God’s Law	Congruence	Anti – Immigration / Letter of Man’s Law	Dissonance / Don’t Know
Dem #1:	<p>How can someone be so anti-immigrant and still call themselves a Christian.</p> <p>Jesus was most radically welcoming person. We are all children of God, we must embrace all or else we are rejecting God.</p> <p>Approach this issue from love and not fear. Jesus broke down walls, not built them; he’s not about dividing us.</p>			
Dem #5:	<p>Conflicting is God’s justice, if a family in grave need must break the law to find opportunity, they are</p>	<p>Our law is in violation of scripture.</p> <p>We need to</p>		

	<p>just in doing so. Just like the Good Samaritan, God judged those harshly who ignored the needy man. In the same way we have a sea of people who are suffering, how can we ignore them.</p>	<p>reconcile it the best we can to make it just in God's eyes.</p>		
Dem #7:	<p>Act as Jesus did, embrace the foreigner, love our neighbor, and treat others as we want to be treated.</p>			<p>Not a Bible scholar, there might be.</p>
Dem #8:	<p>As Christians, we must be humane and change laws to make it easier and safer for people to come to this country.</p>	<p>I think it is in line with Bible.</p>		
Dem #9:	<p>Help all achieve American Dream. Our Christian values of not judging others treat people with respect and humanity.</p>	<p>Yes, there is a correlation with scripture.</p>		

Dem #10:	As a Christian, I have a hard time that our laws harm the innocent. God created everyone equally; all should have the same opportunity.			I don't know.
Dem #13:	Bible tells us, we must treat the foreigner like our brother and sister, we are to help them. If you're truly a Christian you will listen to what the Bible says and care for the widow, orphan, and foreigners.	Not much if any. People need to look at their Bible.		
Rep #2		No contradiction. You are being humane by protecting this country, they have to	It is illegal, it's a crime. Justice should protect victims, which are US citizens. I support strict laws preventing illegal immigration. God doesn't want us to violate the law and they	

Rep #3		be punished.	<p>are violating our laws when they shouldn't be.</p> <p>We shouldn't have open borders and just let anybody in. We have a right to protect our borders. Not a religious question, but a practical one.</p>	<p>You have to compromise on public policy issues.</p>
Rep #4		<p>No. We have a right to protect our nation.</p>	<p>Scripture says we must obey laws of the land. Nation can't sustain standard of living if we have open borders.</p> <p>Legitimate state interests for prohibiting immigration, they are: health, crime, terrorists, the US has a right to preserve its culture.</p>	
Rep #6		<p>I don't think there is a</p>	<p>Abide by the laws, follow the rules.</p>	

<p>Rep #11:</p> <p>Rep #12:</p>		<p>conflict in my mind.</p>	<p>Scripture asks us to be honest. The problem is that federal law mandates that hospitals can't deny services to people who have no means to pay.</p> <p>Require all people to follow the law. Bible says you should be hospitable to alien, it doesn't say illegal alien.</p> <p>God expects us to follow the rules and laws. Immigration brings job loss, gangs, higher crime, taxed financial system. In the Old Testament it says you are supposed to obey other's rules, not</p>	<p>I see a difference.</p> <p>I cannot cite exact scripture.</p>
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Rep #14:		No inconsistencies by upholding the constitution.	sure where though. God is clear, we have obligation to obey laws. God instituted constitution for a purpose.	
Rep #15:		There is consistency in Bible about protecting one's land.	Immigration isn't a Biblical issue.	
Rep #16:		I don't feel any dissonance.	They shouldn't break the law; we are rewarding people for bad behavior, which is not what Christ would have done. Not a good idea to have citizenry through birth it encourages anchor	

			<p>babies. I don't like that we give them free medical, food, education, it just encourages them and jeopardizes what we have to take care of our own.</p>	
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significant statements that fit under the Pro-Immigration label as a common theme that established the category, but also differentiated itself from the opposing view. The second immigration position is titled “Anti-Immigration”, with a sub-title of “Letter of Man’s Law”. The two sub-titles provide a more descriptive position regarding these two meaning units. The Pro-Immigration responses all talk about God’s law and his spirit of love, acceptance, and forgiveness. Meanwhile, the Anti-Immigration policy responses all had the common denominator of upholding the letter of man’s law and the constitution, along with consequences for breaking the law. Two other columns reflect the participant’s response on whether they feel their views on immigration are congruent with Christian scripture or that their views are dissonant with scripture. Those who responded that they “did not know” were put into the same column with those who had dissonance.

There are two word clouds that capture each of the clusters most commonly used words in giving their perspective on immigration. For example, the top five words used

by Democratic respondents are: God/Jesus (57), People (38), Come (36), Children/Family (17), and Starving (8); compared to the top five words used by the Republican respondents: Law (57), Rules (42), Illegal (41), Citizens (28), and Follow (15). This display of commonly used words alone tells the narrative of two distinctly different and opposite worldviews. Democrats expressed concerned about how Jesus would treat the people who come here who are starving and trying to better their family and children. The Republicans stated concerns with following the laws and rules of this nation and how illegal immigration hurt the citizens.

Democratic view on Immigration

Republican view on Immigration



Examining the data that encompasses these two categories, the significant statements grouped together by political party wholly reflects the essence of each category. The Christian Democratic subjects' responses typified the idea that all are God's children and everyone should be afforded an equal opportunity to pursue their dream "with respect and humanity" (Tina). Their responses included thoughts that when we reject a person, because of citizenship, we are rejecting God; that Jesus broke down

barriers that divided people, he never established any. Jesus embraced the foreigner and expressed love to all. According to their responses, the role of a legislator is to be loving, non-judgmental, and humane, creating laws that make it easier and safer to become part of our community. Many of the Democratic respondents expressed frustration at other Christian politicians who vote and advocate for anti-immigrant legislation. Many couldn't believe one could call themselves a Christian and be so hurtful towards immigrants with their rhetoric and vote.

In examining the opposing meaning unit of Anti-Immigration / Letter of Man's Law, every Republican response highlighted the notion of following the law of the land and that God expects us to follow the law, to follow the rules. This perspective was overwhelmingly mentioned throughout all of the Republican significant statements. Many Republicans asserted that immigration is not a religious or Biblical issue, that it is simply a practical governance problem. Also, quite a few Republican respondents defended their position by stating that with more immigrants this country will have higher crime, more gangs, more terrorists, job loss, and a taxed financial system, where the immigrants are getting free food, education and medical care, without having to be responsible to pay for it. There were no anomalies or exceptions with this topic, all the Republicans fit within the Anti-Immigrant / Letter of Man's Law category, while all the Democrats were aligned with the Pro-Immigrant / Spirit of God's Law category.

The other interesting aspect about this matrix is where the subject aligned regarding their psychological congruence or dissonance between their Christian belief and political action on Immigration. A large majority of the Democratic respondents felt that their position on immigration is congruent with what scripture says on it, only a

couple of the Democratic respondents felt that they didn't know enough scripture to determine one way or the other. The self-reporting congruence certainly fits with the analysis of the Christian Democrat acting from a Natural Christianity perspective using contextual interpretation tools to adjust with incorporating historical edicts within contemporary legislation. However, with the recognition of congruence, there is also an acknowledgment that adjustments had to be made. Veronica, one of the "I don't know" respondents had this to say about a more Christian immigration policy, *"So I think that in general there wouldn't be borders. If Jesus ran the world there wouldn't be borders and everybody would be happy."* To this conclusion, she also offered, *"There's a need for borders and a need to know who's going across them and I think in that regard then that's probably a little bit different than maybe these were in Biblical times or how things would have been addressed."* While, Christian Democrats identify congruence between their faith and politics, there exists an element of dissonance, which is embedded in notion that God never intended for people to be divided based on geography. The Apostle Paul (Galatians 3:26-29)⁷² addresses the problem in which society is trying to divide each other, and asserts that everyone is a descendant of Abraham, that we are all God's children and each should be treated in such a way. This explicates the notion that elements of dissonance remain within the Christian Democrats cluster, even though they report none, they adjust their worldview to fit their identity of being a Christian politician in modern society. However, their adjustment is similar to Jesus' adjustment to the

⁷² Galatians 3:26-29 (Catholic Public Domain Version), "For you are all sons of God, through the faith which is in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized in Christ have become clothed with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither servant nor free; there is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then are you the offspring of Abraham, heirs according to the promise."

cultural dynamics of his time. He couldn't explicitly condone slavery⁷³ or demand equal rights for women⁷⁴ in his time; he might be been laughed out of town or killed a lot sooner. Instead, Jesus performed acts of civil disobedience⁷⁵ to speak justice to power. Christian Democrats hold congruence in upholding an open-borders society, one that would best reflect the heart of God; instead they operate within the culture promoting their subversive acts of liberation for the oppressed immigrants seeking refuge.

Also, Christian Republican respondents stated that they think their view is consistent with scripture; however, they qualified their congruence within their answers. When arguing that their Anti-Immigration political position is congruent with Biblical principles, they state that scripture gives us a right to defend our land, which is what they believe they are doing with their views on immigration. These Republican subjects that assert congruence, may exhibit this consistency with their institutional notions of Religion. This research provides data that explicate their interpretative schemas as congruent, even though a Biblical/historical analysis may show otherwise. The Christian Republican respondents used Romans 13:1⁷⁶ as the justification for upholding the laws of the land. A defense of Anti-Immigration policies doesn't take into account the preponderance of scripture⁷⁷ that teaches that one should welcome the sojourner, immigrant, stranger, foreigner to the land. The analysis of their dissonance shows a

⁷³ Matthew 10:24-25; Luke 12:47

⁷⁴ Matthew 19:1-9; Mark 10:1-12

⁷⁵ Matthew 8:5-13; John 13:3-5; Matthew 12:42; Matthew 13:33; Matthew 24:41; Luke 4:26; Luke 15:8-10; Luke 18:1-8; Luke 21:1-4

⁷⁶ Romans 13:1, "Let every soul be subject to higher authorities. For there is no authority except from God and those who have been ordained by God."

⁷⁷ Leviticus 19:33-34 & 25:35, Matthew 25:35, Exodus 22:21-23, Malachi 3:5, Hebrews 13:2, Jeremiah 7:5-7, and Ezekiel 47:22 as well as Alma 27 and 3 Nephi 24:5 from the Book of Mormon

utilization of the coping mechanisms⁷⁸ in order to justify their identity. This dissonance is even more exposed with the responses of their fellow Republican colleagues who self-report that they see dissonance between their Anti-Immigration worldview and what Christian scripture says on immigration.

Contradicting their fellow Republican colleagues, a couple of Republican respondents recognized that their views are inconsistent with scripture, and stated that it is a compromise that needs to be made to protect our nation. Teddy Niles, subject #3, stated, *“I don't interpret that as meaning that today should have open borders and just let anybody in that wants in. I think we have a right to protect our borders. I believe that we have a right to have rules about citizenship and who we let into our country and who we do not... This is not a religious question but a practical one.”* Though he recognized that there is dissonance, he constructs a defense of his position stating, *“There's always a potential for compromise and sometimes you have to compromise on public policy issues. You should never compromise on fundamental moral issues, but very few things we do in the legislature are fundamental moral issues.”* Also, subject #11, Jose Hector stated, *“I see a difference not necessarily in how I feel, but I see a difference.”* When he was asked how he adjusts in coping to this perspective, he states, *“The only place I think where you can find something in the Bible that talks about being hospitable to your neighbor that is an alien in your country. Though, I don't think the Bible says illegal alien, but it does say an alien.”* In examining the significance of these responses, it highlights the strategic positioning that some Republican members engage in so they can placate two contrasting identities. While the argument for ambivalence can be made with this analysis that

⁷⁸ Self-deception, rational ignorance, and confirmation bias

suggests Christian Republican politicians are posturing from a theoretical sense and using coping mechanism to psychologically adjust with dissonance. Also, Republican subject #12, Elizabeth, stated that she didn't know nor could they cite scripture on the issue. She said, "*I cannot cite the exact scripture, but I know that there is a scripture and it's in the Old Testament where it actually says God said that you're supposed to obey other people's rules.*" The nature of this statement explicates that her dissonance is rooted in the rational ignorance of the interpretive schema that she "*doesn't know where it is, but it is there*" conviction.

The two meaning units that emerged from this question on immigration provide even more analyses of the clear divide between the two political/religious clusters. The issue of immigration is an exemplar of the contrasting worldviews and Christian interpretation between Natural Christianity and Institutional Christianity clusters. First the Pro-Immigration / Spirit of God's Law meaning unit advocates for the acceptance of all into society along with the inclusion of the immigrant and foreigner into society. This belief is embedded within the Liberation Theology and Social Gospel doctrines of Christian theology, supporting the cluster of Natural Christianity. It is a mutual justification of the action to promote legislative reform, aid for the immigrant and a global love of all, not restricted by borders. With these globalization worldviews comes a broader capitalistic marketplace, one that produces substantial wealth. It also opens up the labor market for more workers seeking higher pay that drives productivity and capital. This cluster is based in Biblical precepts⁷⁹ of welcoming the stranger, the foreigner, and

⁷⁹ This perspective is based in the Biblical verses: Leviticus 19:33-34 & 25:35, Matthew 25:35, Exodus 22:21-23, Malachi 3:5, Hebrews 13:2, Jeremiah 7:5-7, and Ezekiel 47:22 as well as Alma 27 and 3 Nephi 24:5 from the Book of Mormon.

the sojourner into your land and to treat them as a native to the land, moreover if this is not done, God will send his judgment upon those who thrust aside the stranger to the land.

Secondly, the Anti-Immigration / Letter of Man's Law meaning unit bases its Biblical premise on the scripture that instructs the followers of Christ to obey the law of the land. This belief is embedded within the Pre-Millennial Dispensationalism and Theological Individualism doctrines of Christian theology, supporting the Institutional Christianity cluster. This worldview provides justification to their anti-immigration position by asserting a circular logic that God wants people to support the laws of the land, thus creating the rationale for the politicians to propose anti-immigration bills. The economic impact of such protectionist's law is significant. Creating labor shortages and closed markets is not a good formula for a healthy marketplace. Yet their perspective is rooted in Romans 13:1 that "everyone is subject to governing authorities", and that each person must obey or else they are disobeying God. These two perspectives are far apart in their interpretation and understanding of what God expects of his followers regarding the immigration policy issue. Where the Democratic respondents, illustrating Natural Christianity, find convincing Biblical reference for the acceptance and love of all, especially the stranger, foreigner, sojourner, for they never know when they might be entertaining angels. On the other hand, the Republican respondents exemplify Institutional Christianity, with their position that God gave authority to those in charge and who make the law, and if the law is broken there must be punishment. This type of divide will be witnessed three times more, next by looking into the issue of health care.

Health Care

The second contemporary issue that Christian politicians are debating is the topic of health care in this country. Since the passage of the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obama Care, health care has been hotly debated. Just as with the topic of immigration, and with the next two topics, health care is an important issue in contemporary society as it was in the times of Jesus and the apostles. With the stories of Jesus healing sick people, Jesus' parables about caring and healing the sick, and the apostle's works where they cared and healed the sick, today's debate on the responsibility of Christians when it comes to health care is significant.

In question 8.2 each participant was asked, "What is your view on Health Care and Emergency Care? How does that view correlate with what you interpret Christian scriptures say on Health Care and Emergency Care? How do you reconcile the difference (if any)?" The intent of this question is to continue the pattern of public policy positions that highlight the opposing ideologies and the ideology's connection or supposed connection to scripture. Each subject is asked what their view on health care and emergency care is, allowing them to discuss anything related to this topic. Then they are asked about how their view lines up with what they think Christian scripture states on health care and emergency care. If the respondent states that they see a difference between their view and what scripture has to say, then they are asked how they reconciled that difference. In this study health care is used to highlight the divide between those from the Natural Christianity cluster from those who embody Institutional Christianity. As shown in Table 8, the difference in opinion and belief regarding health care is vast. The table is broken into two primary categories, the first being "Government Assistance

for All” and the second being “Personal Responsibility”. The table also has two categories that deal with the subject’s psychological connection of their views and

Table 8 Health Care

	Government Assistance for All	Congruence	Personal Responsibility	Dissonance
Dem #1:	<p>Jesus never asked for a health care card when he cured anybody. Turning down health care to the sick is not a Christian value. We have an obligation to one another, we are all God’s children, it helps to have a healthy population as opposed to a sick one. God gives a little extra boost for the poor, perhaps those who can afford healthcare in this life, might find it hard to get into heaven in the next, a camel through a needle’s</p>	<p>Scripture informs my view, denying healthcare is not Christian.</p>		

	eye.			
Dem #5:	Christ's teaches us to heal everybody, no questions asked. If we take care of everyone as much as we can, we would reduce disease and suffering.	There is no distinction.		
Dem #7:	Healthcare is a right entitled to all, rendered without question.	My view is pretty close.		
Dem #8:	Care for all like they are own brothers. All should have access to adequate care, like the Good Samaritan.	I think it is consistent.		
Dem #9:	As a Christian, why wouldn't I fight for these people to survive? It's frustrating to see people who say they are a Christian but don't care.	There is a correlation.		
Dem	Everyone should have			I don't

<p>#10:</p> <p>Dem</p> <p>#13:</p>	<p>access to health care; do unto others as you would have done unto yourself.</p> <p>Everyone should have healthcare, it's not a luxury it's a necessity. It's about helping your brother and sister out.</p>	<p>No difference, lots of hypocrites.</p>		<p>know.</p>
<p>Rep #2:</p> <p>Rep #3:</p> <p>Rep #4:</p>			<p>Duty as a Christian to care for yourself and your family. It is an individual responsibility, not the states.</p> <p>Not the government's responsibility, it a personal responsibility.</p> <p>Each person is responsible for own life and family, not the government's responsibility. No ER doctor should be obligated to treat, it's like slavery,</p>	<p>Can't find scripture that point to it.</p> <p>I think there is a conflict.</p> <p>Scripture doesn't say much on it, other than to love your fellow man.</p>

<p>Rep #6:</p> <p>Rep #11:</p>		<p>Scripture says that one provides for themselves.</p> <p>Good Samaritan is an individual</p>	<p>they are required to render services without compensation. The Good Samaritan helped the man on his own, he didn't get government help. Scripture admonitions are individual.</p> <p>What is an appropriate amount of indulgence? I drive a Lexus, should I drive a Ford and give more money to the poor?</p> <p>It's a matter of personal responsibility. The Good Samaritan is an individual response. One must be responsible for their self and family.</p> <p>Churches should step up; charity should be done through churches.</p>	
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Rep #12:		responsibility. It's integrated. If not, you tax a lot and government takes over church.	God intends for us to have personal responsibility; somebody always needs something to save their life, it has to go back to basic responsibility.	
Rep #14:		It is consistent with my view; scripture never talks about government helping the poor.	Medical care is not the role of government, that's an individual's responsibility. Scripture shows that it is an individual's responsibility, I don't know of anywhere that scripture says government should coerce people to care for each other.	
Rep #15:			It's a personal decision; I don't feel I am obligated to help them.	

Rep #16:			People should be responsible for themselves; if they know it's free they won't take care of themselves.	Little bit of difference.
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scriptural precepts, the first category highlights their “Congruence” of their own personal view and what scripture says; the second category shows their “Dissonance” or “Unknown” connection between their views and scriptural edicts. The meaning unit of “Government Assistance for All” was reflected in all of the significant statements that Democratic Christian participants provided. The meaning unit of “Personal Responsibility” was exhibited in all of the significant statements that the Republican Christian interviewees gave when they answered about health care.

The two word clouds on this theme support this clustering and reveal the opposing nature between Democrats and Republicans on Healthcare. Democrats had words such as: Serve (16), Care/Health (34), Everyone (12), Christ (12), and Poor (4). The Republicans had words such as: Personal (34), Responsibility (30), People (27), Obligation (14), and Take Care (13). These word clouds lend to the idea that the Democrats are more focused on Health Care for everyone, serving the poor, and emulating Christ. It further explicates that the Republicans are more focused on a personal responsibility to take care of oneself, that people have an obligation to their families and themselves.

Christian are fighting to repeal and defund these vital programs. Another common theme was that health care was viewed as an essential right to humanity, not a privilege or luxury. Democratic respondent #1, Thomas Job, went as far to say, *“Those who can afford (private) healthcare in this life, they’ll find it hard to get into heaven in the next life, than a camel through a needle’s eye”*.

Dissimilar to the Democratic responses, the Republican Christian respondents provided one basic answer, that health care is the individual’s responsibility, and not the government’s responsibility. All nine Republican answers included both elements of health care as not something the government should be doing and it is solely an individual’s responsibility to take care of themselves and their family. Economically, this perspective poses complication to the workforce, where individuals left to their own health care responsibility could perpetuate sickness, lack of productivity, and smaller profit-margins. Quite a few of the Republican subjects comment that parables like the Good Samaritan and other scriptural admonition are intended to be interpreted from the individual level of analysis, and not applicable as a societal mandate. Republican respondent #14, George Washington stated, *“Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, it all shows that that’s an individual responsibility, and I don’t know of anywhere that it says government should coerce people to take care of each other. I believe that that’s contrary to God’s plan, because God’s plan is agency and freedom”*. With an even more graphic description, Republican subject #4 Greg asks, *“Should an ER doctor have a legal obligation to treat people? I don’t think he should, it’s a form of slavery, ‘cause they’re required to render services without compensation”*.

The clear and obvious contrast between political parties and religious integrated political theory is undeniable. Christian Democrats maintain that God's plan is to heal and care for all, and it is the responsibility of society to uphold these virtues. Almost every Christian Democrat stated that their view is in complete congruence and supported by scripture, only one Democratic subject responded stating that she "didn't know". Respondent #10, Sissy, adjusts her perspective to faith with claims of "not knowing" what scripture says. She states, *"Everybody in this country should have access to affordable healthcare.... do unto others as you would have others do unto you."* However, she qualified that perspective with, *"I am not sure if this is consistent"* with Christian scripture. The Democrat's meaning unit of "Government Assistance for All" is supported by the Liberation Theology and Social Gospel religious theories. These theories preach a gospel of universal love, one that asserts the love of God that is within us, cannot simply allow another to suffer in sickness and pain instead one must act to alleviate and heal. Liberation Theology and Social Gospel, as part of the Natural Christianity cluster, identifies the healing works of Jesus as an example of what actions we must do. Moreover, Jesus was also critiquing Roman government for not caring and healing the sick, thus it took miracles from God, performed by Jesus and the apostles, to care and heal the sick. Both theories assume this calling for all Christians, to behave as Christ did, to mimic his action in whatever role in life you are placed in, which applies to Christians in politics too.

Democratic respondents support their theological perspective as congruent, in which following Christ's example and doing what Jesus did is a consistent display of Christianity. The Democratic subjects cite the healing and caring for the sick scriptural

references (Matthew 4:23, Mark 6:56, Luke 9:11, Act 10:38) as well as the apostle Paul's healing works (Acts 19:11-12). Moreover, they contend that a congruent political display of faith would reflect Jesus' mandate to care for the sick and the warning of eternal punishment if we don't do that (Matthew 25:31-46). Furthermore, Christian Democrats posit that one only has the love of God within them and is truly a Christian if they heal and care for those in need (Matthew 25:31-46, Mark 16:17-18, 1 Thessalonians 5:14). As Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a representative of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in the Church of Jesus Christ and Latter-day Saints, stated at the spring General Conference in 2010 in his talk titled "Healing the Sick" that as followers of Christ we "believe in applying the best available scientific knowledge and techniques. We use nutrition, exercise, and other practices to preserve health, and we enlist the help health care practitioners, such as physicians and surgeons, to restore health." For Liberation Theology and the Social Gospel ties these gifts of science and knowledge that God has provided society of the mandate in 1 John 3:16-19, that if we have the means to help, heal, and care for the sick and we do not act, then God's love is not in us.

On the other hand, the Christian Republican subjects all have a core belief that God wants everyone to be responsible for themselves, thus health care is not the responsibility of the government and is completely and individual's responsibility. Half of the Republican Christian participants identified that their personal responsibility position on health care experiences some dissonance when compared to what scripture says on health care; meanwhile, the other half assert that their view is consistent with Christian scripture. Subject #14, George Washington defend his position in this way, "*What I believe scripture tells us is consistent with my views... they never talk about*

government helping the poor. They never talk about the coercion of government forcing us to help the poor, helping the poor which would include medical care.” The Republican subjects solidify their belief that they are congruent with scripture by asserting that each person is responsible for themselves and that it is against God’s plan to be coerced into caring for one who wasn’t as responsible. This opinion is based in the libertarian philosophy of not being forced into doing anything, especially in giving up resources. Some of the subjects alluded to a scriptural basis for this congruence, participant #6 Gary Harris talked about one who doesn’t care for themselves and their family is worse than an “*infidel*”, which comes from 1 Timothy 5:8. Participant #14 George Washington talking about carrying one’s own burden, which comes from Galatians 6:5. These specific verses, isolated from the rest of the text and taken literally add credibility to their claims and justify their congruence. However, when read contextually, with the rest of the chapter; it is easy to see that these verses could actually create dissonance⁸⁰ with their views.

This analysis provides the significance of four Republican subjects who identified that their political view on health care is not congruent with Christian scripture. Subject #3, Teddy Niles, stated, “*I think there is a conflict in determining where does your Christian faith bring you on that*”. Subject #16, Trisha stated, “*Probably there’s a limitation... I have to say there’s a bit of a difference.*” She followed with, “*I am so not saying the Democrats are less religious or Christian, I know better. In a way you’re more Christian.*” Subject #2, Bernie, adjusted his analysis using Constitutional provisions,

⁸⁰ Paul in his letter to Timothy starts chapter 5 by establishing that all people are part of our heavenly family, thus we must provide care for all, which reinforces a Natural Christian perspective. Also, in Paul’s letter to the Galatians, in the 6th chapter, he actually starts off by mandating that we carry each other’s burdens and be humbled knowing that we can’t bear our own burdens alone. Again, when taken contextually, the 6th chapter of Galatians contradicts Institutional Christianity and actually states that those who think they are somebody and can do it all themselves, is a fool and mocks God.

stating, *“I don’t think there’s anything in the Constitution that mandates that you get free healthcare from the government. I don’t think I can tell you what, or point to the scriptures as far as healthcare.”* Subject #4, Greg, expressed his dissonance in a more indirect way, he stated, *“You know I drive a Lexus, should I be driving a Ford and giving more money to the poor? Maybe. But, there’s a certain amount of ego and pride that enter into a lot of decisions.”* He then justified his worldview stating, *“Scriptures... put on us a duty to act, but they don’t compel, it means we should act voluntarily not be compelled to act.”* This contrast will be further illuminated in the next section, when we analyze the respondents view on capitalism.

Capitalism

The third contemporary issue is a debate around the economic system of capitalism. Although most, if not all contemporary politicians would state their support for the economic system of capitalism, **it is how this economic theory is administered that differentiates the clusters.** Politicians in this study are divided based on their theory of the marketplace implementation. Either they advocate for an unfettered, free-market or they promote a regulated marketplace. While the larger theoretical debate between the two clusters might be elevated to vastly different systems of economy, it is unlikely that contemporary American Christian politicians would advocate for something other than capitalism and still be in the position of power that they are in today. What is more telling is examining the debate surrounding economic systems during the times of Old Testament prophets and Jesus. Their unequivocal condemnation for those who not only cheat the system and capitalize on others in order to profit, but the damnation promised

for those that have built a surplus and not shared in their wealth. Moreover, the countless verses, parables, and prophetic mandates of what one should do with their excess are revealing to the type of economy that might be realized in society. This theme of capitalism helps in providing another piece to the essence of this phenomenon of a Christian politicians’ congruence or dissonance with their faith and political behavior. In question 8.3 the participants were asked, “What is your view on capitalism? How does that view correlate with what you interpret the Christian scriptures say on capitalism? How do you reconcile any differences (if any)?” Each subject was asked what their view on capitalism is, letting them discuss anything related to this economic theory. Then they were asked about how their opinion corresponds to what they think Christian scripture states about capitalism. Each then were asked how they reconciled that difference. In Table 9, it shows a difference between the two political party affiliations and the meaning

Table 9 Capitalism

	Regulated Markets/Anti-Greed	Congruence	Free Markets/Individualism	Dissonance
Dem #1:	Must have regulated markets, unfettered free-markets lets our instincts run wild. Moneychangers weren’t looked too kindly on for taking advantage of the poor.	Jesus was a socialist.		

Dem #5:	Capitalism brings about self-righteousness; money corrupts every person and institution. It is the larceny in the act of charity. It is based in greed. Unregulated capitalism is dangerous and sinful.	Christian scripture outlines the dangers of wealth.		
Dem #7:	Unregulated capitalism isn't good; Jesus threw out the moneychangers and crashed the tables in the temple because of their greed.	I think Jesus was more of a communist.		
Dem #8:	Needs to be regulated because of the greed and excess.	My view is in line with scripture.		
Dem #9:	Do your work not to get rich or for profit, but for the community.	My view is congruent.		
Dem	Scripture tells us that when	My view is		

<p>#10:</p> <p>Dem</p> <p>#13:</p>	<p>it gets greedy and hurts others it is wrong. Scripture criticizes the haves who live in greed and the have-nots who live in squalor. People are slaves to money.</p> <p>We need to take care of each other and be balanced with our resources. It is wrong that in capitalism people get left behind and are destitute.</p>	<p>what scripture tells us.</p> <p>No difference, it is in the Bible.</p>		
<p>Rep</p> <p>#2:</p> <p>Rep</p> <p>#3:</p>	<p>Unfettered capitalism could be dangerous, greed could</p>		<p>Scripture says that you have to be responsible for yourself. You have to save your soul yourself. Christianity depends upon your own self-initiative.</p>	<p>I don't think there are scriptures on capitalism.</p> <p>I don't know.</p>

Rep #4:	take over and run amuck, need some restrictions.	I think capitalism is congruent with scripture.	The whole gospel is about individual salvation, we don't work out salvation for a group, only ourselves. Capitalism is the best system it requires most personal responsibility.	
Rep #6:		Capitalism parallels scripture.	Parable of rich man who had abundance and tore down barns to build bigger ones. The man didn't get there by being lazy. He was industrious and productive.	
Rep #11:			I believe in capitalism, Christ gives the story of the three servants investing his money.	I feel like I am greedy a lot of the time.
Rep		I believe it	I believe in capitalism,	

#12:		correlates well	<p>God gave us ability to make good decisions. It is individual right to be free make our own decisions and not depend on the government. I don't think Jesus wants us to continue to fork out money to those who have no desire to help themselves, they are too lazy, uncaring with no drive. If they want to eat, they have to work.</p>	
Rep #14:		Capitalism is founded in scripture.	<p>Capitalism is based in scripture, the idea of individualism and right to control and defend property. Capitalism is given by God.</p>	
Rep #15:		Capitalism can be	<p>Capitalism is fundamental; it inspires</p>	

Rep #16:		properly married to Christianity.	dreams to become possible. It doesn't bother that the top 10% own 90% of the money I am pleased with it.	Yes, there definitely is a difference.
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units they are categorized in. The two primary clusters that differentiate one's response on capitalism are "Regulated Markets/Anti-Greed" in contrast to "Free-Markets/Individualism". The meaning units of regulated markets versus free markets are obvious to this theme, however the addition of anti-greed and individualism were added to the meaning units because of the frequency in which the subjects from their respective groups mentioned them. While, the Christian Democrats overwhelming exhibited the meaning unit of advocating for a regulated marketplace along with condemning greediness, conversely, the Christian Republicans mostly advocated for free-markets and the virtue of individualism.

Also in examining this divide, the two word clouds displayed two opposing perspectives on capitalism. The Democrats top five words about capitalism are: Greed (8), Corrupts (6), Regulated (6), People (6), and Sense (5); while the Republican top five words about capitalism are: Right (15), Believe (14), Individual (15), Money (10), and Decisions (8). The narratives painted by these word clouds are similar to the overall difference between the clusters. Democrats see capitalism as corrupted by greed and hurtful to people and a system that needs regulation. The Republicans believe in

Democratic subject identified one common negative trait that pervades capitalism, which is the sin of greed. Democratic respondent #5, Harry Wheeler stated, *“Capitalism is the larceny in the act of charity. Capitalism in its pure sense is based upon greed. In the sense that someone’s got money, you need to survive, so you have to do something to get their money so you can be more comfortable.”* The Democratic subjects talked about how there needs to be a balance and that if capitalism in the free-market, unregulated, unfettered form is promoted and instituted through government, it is a sin unto humanity and God.

All seven Democratic subjects also stated that they believe their views about capitalism are congruent with Christian scriptures; a couple of subjects even identified Jesus’ economic theory as being “socialist” and “communist”. This congruence is displayed throughout all the Democrat’s responses. They all asserted that fighting against the sinful product (greed & poverty) from capitalism is in alignment with scripture. However, an analysis of their responses still projects them condoning some sort of capitalistic system, one with heavy regulations though. This response is dissonant with their admission that Jesus probably operated under a totally different type of economic market, something more communistic. The adjustment the Democrats make could be attributed to the realization that capitalism is now globalized and universally accepted. Perhaps, their adjustment is a recognition of culture and society, but acting politically to fend off the ills produced the by the capitalistic system.

In divergence from the Democrats, all except one of the Christian Republican subjects gave significant statements about capitalism as a virtue embedded in each individual that should not be restrained or regulated. Many of the Republicans responded

that capitalism is fundamental to their faith that it is given by God as a core attribute of being personally responsible and working out your individual salvation. They argued that capitalism is God-inspired and reflects the core principles of scripture, which is individualism. Respondent #6, Gary Harris reflects this meaning unit, where he took Jesus' parable in Luke 12 and did not focus on the fact that God took the rich man's life, because he tore down his barns only to build bigger ones to preserve his surplus (greed). Instead, Gary Harris identified the characteristic that the man didn't get there by being lazy, that he was "*industrious and productive*", implying that society should do the same. Respondent #12, Elizabeth, had this poignant significant statement regarding capitalism and Christianity: "*Do I think he (Jesus) expects us to continue to fork out money to those who have no desire to help themselves? That they are just too lazy, uncaring, no drive, No! I personally don't.*" Taking a different approach, subject #16, Trisha, stated, "*I think capitalism is the result of the upper echelon of that success in our country, and I'm very pleased that we have those top 10% that own 90% of the money or whatever. That doesn't bother me.*" Just as a frame of reference, of the nine Republican respondents five of the respondents identified themselves as middle socio-economic status, while the other four identified themselves as upper socio-economic status. I am not sure if this view on wealth is a product of their own economic position or what Veblen (1912) describes as a "conspicuous consumption" mentality. In contrast to these eight responses, one Republican respondent #3, Teddy Niles, saw that "*unfettered capitalism could be dangerous. I think greed could take over and run amuck so I think there needs to be some regulation, restriction, but as modest as necessary.*" This one anomaly flies in the face of his fellow Republican respondents.

When asked about their congruence or dissonance of their view of capitalism and Christian conviction, five of the Republican respondents stated that their view is consistent and embedded in scripture, while three identified that their view on capitalism probably is different from what scripture mandates. Teddy Niles, subject #3, stated he didn't know. Three Republican respondents acknowledged that dissonance exists regarding their perspective on capitalism. Republican respondent #2, Bernie, used rational ignorance as a defense when asked about dissonance, he stated, "*I don't think the scriptures themselves say anything on (capitalism)... I'm not a historian to pinpoint scriptures.*" Republican respondent #3, Teddy Niles, was not as ambiguous, but still used the ignorance defense stating, "*I don't know what the scriptures says; I don't know it says a lot about business one way or another. I don't know of anywhere where, other than the moneychangers in church, but I think that was a different issue.*" When asked if he experiences dissonance, he responded, "*I don't think there's a conflict. I mean, there could be. The greedy capitalist has no consideration for the rules and only consideration for themselves and what's good for their bottom line, it's not a very Christian attitude.*" Republican respondent #11 was more blatant when asked about his potential dissonance, he stated, "*I feel like I'm being greedy a lot with my time and other resources.*" Though this self admission of dissonance, he also justified capitalism using Jesus' parable of the Talents. Finally, Republican respondent #16, Trisha, stated, "*Yeah definitely there's a difference*". When asked how she copes with the dissonance, she states, "*We can't do Christian on the nation, because they are not, unfortunately, not really a Christian nation anymore.*" These admissions to dissonance complicate the Republican respondents who identified congruence between a capitalist worldview and Christianity. Perhaps the five

Republicans that see congruence are true believers, or in explicating their responses, they employ an ambivalent attitude in order to strategically use a Christian capitalist identity to their political advantage.

Serving as a perfect example of the difference between the Institutional Christianity cluster and the Natural Christianity cluster is respondent #11, Jose Hector's, citation of the parable of the three servants as evidence that God believes in capitalism. He cited the parable of the three servants from Mathew 25. Here he reads the literal, word-for word, translation and determines it is a literal account of how one should live. Jose Hector stated: *"Well, Christ tells the parable of the three servants. He gave one talent, denomination of money, I'm sure you knew that already, one talent to a servant, thought, well I'd better make sure I don't lose this because my master's very harsh, he buries it in the ground or something and then doesn't earn any interest for his master with it. They were supposed to be investing his money. Another I don't know what happened to, was it one or is there two servants or three? There's three okay, so the other servants tried to earn money, so for their master with the money that they're entrusted with. So I do believe in Capitalism, but as far as when somebody is earning money"*. Jose Hector, read this and determined, as did Tony Perkins in his article regarding Wall Street (2011), that the actions of investment, usury, accumulation of wealth, and being a slave-driver are the values (capitalism) that Jesus wants us to emulate in life. Perkins (2011) stated when referencing the Parable of the Talents that "Jesus rejected collectivism and the mentality that has occupied America for the last few decades: that everyone get a trophy – equal outcomes for inequitable performance. There are winners and yes, there are losers. And wins and losses are determined by the

diligence and determination of the individual.” An analysis of this interpretation highlights that this subject doesn’t read this parable in the context to what else Jesus was saying.

To start off, in Matthew 24, we learn that Jesus’ followers came to him on the Mount of Olives and asked how will we know about the “sign of your coming” and the “end of the age”? Jesus responds with quite a few parables, one of which is the parable of the three servants. So first of all, the parable of the three servants was used by Jesus to illustrate the signs of the times when the end of ages will occur and he will return. Jesus also specifically differentiates two key phrases, one that the “kingdom of God” refers to the spiritual world, and in contrast the “kingdom of heaven”, refers to the physical world, in which he discusses these parables. Jesus states that the “end of days” will be as the “kingdom of heaven”, which refers to our world, and then establishes his argument by giving a parable of the fig tree, alluded to his followers that you will know that the end is to come when you see these things. Jesus then continues to talk about destruction, trials, tribulations, all of which will be occurring prior to his return. He then gives a parable of the faithful servant and the evil servant (Matthew 24: 45-51). This is important, because he provides a characteristic of the faithful servant as one who is caring for the master’s people, and is caught doing so and is rewarded for his love. Then Jesus characterizes an evil servant as one who oppresses the masters’ people and becomes greedy and indulgent. To this servant, Jesus states there will be eternal punishment. This parable is important because it comes almost right before the parable of the three servants. Why would Jesus give two parables about servants that are contradicting? Jesus continues with the parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25: 1-13). This is a warning that Jesus provides to the world to be ready and prepared for the time when he returns. Jesus then states, in the same way,

the kingdom of heaven is just like the parable of the three servants. In analyzing Jose Hector's literal interpretation of this parable, reveals incongruence, one that could be taken as possible confirmation bias in order to justify a capitalistic perspective. The incongruence is that Jesus, more than likely, used this parable to describe the unjust and unfair attributes of the economic system occurring at the "end of days" "where the rich get rich and the poor get poor", or in other words, as condemnation of capitalistic behavior. Where Jose Hector interpreted the third servant as the evil and bad servant, it is more than likely Jesus uses this parable and the third servant as a subversive critique of capitalism. Contextually read, the third servant stands as the faithful one, the one that didn't use his one talent to capitalize on others and increase the "hard" master's wealth. This incongruence in interpretation and understanding is profound to the outcomes of a Christian politician's behavior with economic policies. Rather than reading the narrative that the Apostle Matthew wrote in context, Institutional Christianity finds its capitalism justification by taking isolated verses and applying them literally to one's life. Moreover, when those verses happen to be a parable, a riddled allegory told by Jesus to make a point, as is in this case with the Parable of the Three Servants, a literal interpretation seems even more suspect.

More than how Institutional Christianity interprets this parable as literal, they also provide a glimpse on their view of God. They see the characteristics of God in the role of the master who is a "hard man" who reaps where he does not sow (makes money without working), and gathers where he didn't throw seed (theft); a man who scares his servants and expects them to engage in usury, breaking the law of the old covenant. Moreover, Institutional Christianity ignores the conjunction in verse 31, where Jesus says, "but" as a

negating factor to the pain which the third servant experienced from the master, and proclaims that the Son of Man comes in all his glory and separates the “sheep from the goats”. Jesus more than likely transitions here to his final statement about the end of times. In the analogy of the sheep and goats (Matthew 25:42-46), Jesus explicitly lays out his judgment upon those who behaved in the way that the “master” from the Parable of the Three Servants did, condemning them to eternal punishment⁸¹.

This is the perfect juxtaposition between an Institutional Christian’s worldview, where one takes a literal understanding of one of Jesus’ parables, where they assign negative characteristics to God that don’t appear anywhere else in scripture, moreover, where they believe wealth and accumulation is a gift from God. Then contrast that with a Natural Christian’s worldview that contextually reads all of scripture, especially the parables, fixates on the characteristics of God being love and embodies the attributes proclaimed in 1 John 4, that self-sacrifice, service, and sharing are the true gifts of God. This divide between interpretations is rooted in the 4th century philosopher, St. Jerome, who applied a new translation of the Bible, using Latin. As Peck (1967) spells out, one of St. Jerome’s greatest errors is his transition of the word *agape*, which is Greek for “true love of God” and appears 312 times in the New Testament alone. Instead of keeping the meaning of *agape*, he used the Latin word, *caritas*, to imply “personal almsgiving”. In English, the word is *charity*, and is used by the Institutional Christianity cluster to defend their belief that God calls for us to have an individual responsibility at charity and to

⁸¹ “For I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.’ Then they themselves also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?’ Then He will answer them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’ These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” (Matthew 25:42-46)

dispel the notion that God expects the collective to act in that way. Natural Christianity contends this point, asserting that the original Greek word, *agape*, intends that in order to have the “true love of God”, we individually and collectively are responsible for each other. These two clusters truly represent what the Apostle John wrote about in 1 John 4:5-6, “They are of the world. Therefore they speak *as* of the world, and the world hears them. We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.” This differentiation between clusters based on capitalism, is further illuminated when we analyze the next and final policy position of private property.

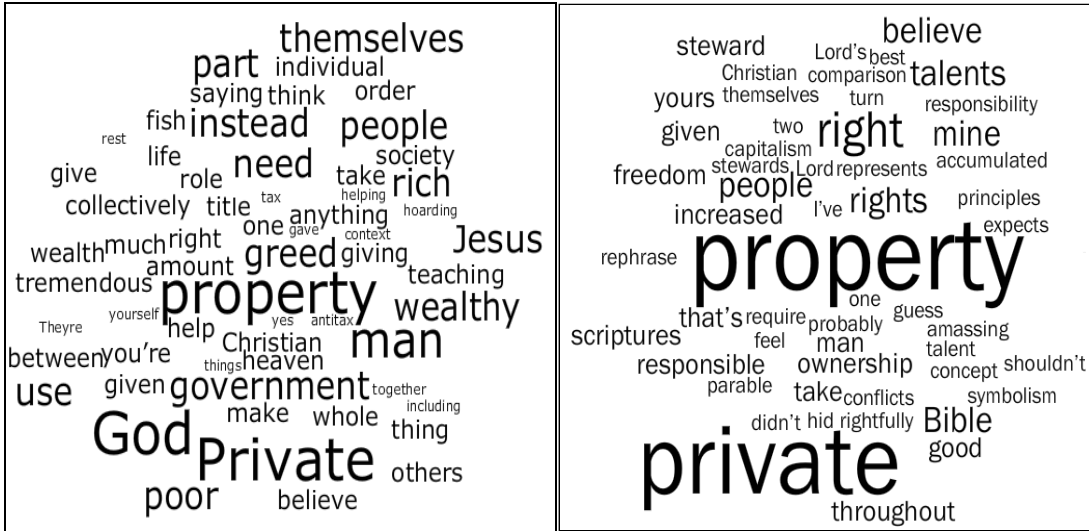
Private Property

The final public policy issue that gives meaning to the dynamic actions of a Christian politician is the debate over private property. Property rights issues are essential in one’s ability to accumulate wealth; moreover they create a boundary of protection for the owner. This issue is scattered throughout all of scripture, with much debate and two sides emerging as to the Godliness of private ownership of property. Private property extends back to the Old Testament with the Laws of Jubilee and the Covenant with the Land, both of which are direct orders and commandments that God gave his people in dealing with the land. In chapter 3 we also see this issue in the story of Naboth and King Ahab, to the many more proclamations by the prophets who warned nations and kings of their abuse and treatments of land and property. We also explored in chapter 3 the issue of private property in the New Testament, with Jesus’ words for the Rich Young Ruler, his story of Lazarus, his condemnation of the Pharisees, and his Sermon on the Mount.

Many of Christ's followers preached about this issue of private property as well, such as James' recounting of Jesus' parable of the Sheep and Goats. There is no doubting that the issue of property plays a central role in the dynamic of God's people and those who intend on leading their nation. The public policy of private property presents politicians with a choice of how do we interpret and reconcile private ownership and collective responsibility. This difference is displayed in the two word clouds one each from the Democrats and Republicans with their most commonly used words when answering about private property. The Democratic respondents' top five words are: God (16), Wealthy Man (10), Rich (7), Greed (4), and Need (6); while the Republican respondents' top five words are: Right (22), Believe (14), Talents (13), Mine (6), and Steward (6). This final word cloud expression coincides with the narrative being written between the Natural and Institutional Christianity clusters separated by political parties. A narrative that has Democratic subjects viewing all property as God's and that the wealthy man, the rich, the greedy are condemned in scripture, but instead using property to help the needy. In contrast, the Republican subjects held a view that they believed in private property as a right and that what's mine is mine and we are entrusted to be good stewards over it, using their interpretation of the parable of the talents from Jesus as justification for this view.

Democratic View on Private Property

Republican View on Private Property



There are two vastly different perspectives regarding private property that is presented in this research. A Christian politician may echo the libertarian mantra, tied with capitalism that God gave us certain inherent right, the rights of life, liberty, and property. In contrast, a Christian politician might believe that the land is God's and for all of us to share and make the world a better place, one that best reflects the notions of love. This divide is best illustrated using the Law of Jubilee and the Covenant with the Land. The Covenant with the Land given to Moses was essentially that God owned all of the land; he dictated our behavior with the land; and mandated that the land be divided justly amongst all for its use. Moses furthers this covenant with the Law of Jubilee that gives very specific mandates of land usage, one of which is the return of all land back to the aboriginal ownership of the clan/family that first occupied it. The Law also has restrictions on when to reap produce from the land, when to not work it and let it rest and replenish, also not to impose usury tactics to those who are without. It is from this Christian baseline that the two sides justify, interpret or ignore in order to maintain their

worldview. This theme of private property helps in adding another piece to the essence of this phenomenon of a Christian politician’s congruence or dissonance with their faith and political behavior. In question 8.4 participants were asked, “What is your view on Private Property? How does that view correlate with what you interpret the Christian scriptures say on Private Property? How do you reconcile any differences (if any)?” Each subject was asked what their view of private property was, and then followed up with a question connecting their professed view and how it might be reflect within Christian scripture. If there was a notion of difference between one’s view and what scripture says, a follow-up question was asked about how the person reconciles the difference between their view and what scripture has to say. In the Table 10, there is a difference between the two political party affiliations and the meaning units that categorize them. The two primary clusters that differentiate one’s answer on private property are “Shared Collective Ownership” in contrast to “Private Material Ownership”. The meaning units of

Table 10 Private Property

	Shared Collective Ownership	Congruence	Private Material Ownership	Dissonance
Dem #1:	The divide between the very wealthy and those who don’t have anything creates tremendous resentment. It is not good to hoard and just keep for	Jesus expects us to struggle with capitalism as he did;		

	<p>your self and not give to those who are in need. The anti-tax people probably say Jesus is saying to give individually. I believe Jesus was saying that together collectively as part of God, we need to help the rest of God in need, you do that by taxing the rich, they wouldn't give themselves. Christ did not believe we should be wealthy, every time he had something he gave it away, including his life.</p>	<p>we are to give to those who do not have from those who do.</p>		
<p>Dem #5:</p>	<p>We don't own anything, God owns it all, and we are just stewards over the earth. Private property is not a God-given right, it must be shared.</p>	<p>There is no correlation to property rights and God's kingdom.</p>		

Dem #7:	Government's role is to balance private property with community needs.	Jesus was a communist.		
Dem #8:	Private property as a Christian is not yours, it's to be shared. With people who have so much and people who have so little, society can't be fulfilled.	It is in line with scripture.		
Dem #9:	Republican party is hyper-focused on private ownership, right to bear arms; the goal is to not take advantage of it.	Very similar with scripture.		
Dem #10:	Comes back to greed, the poor go without, while the rich have it all.	I think it is.		
Dem #13:	Private property comes back to gluttony and greed and is a sin in the Bible. Jesus stated that it is easier for a camel to pass through	No difference, people need to read and understand		

	the eye of the needle, than for a rich man to get into heaven.	their Bibles.		
Rep #2		There is nothing that says not to.	Bible requires people to be responsible, which is symbolism for people being able to own private property. The state shouldn't take property away from us, the sanctity of private property and free enterprise system.	
Rep #3		I don't think there is anything wrong with having a nice car, boat, home.	Private property rights are fundamental to our society. Ownership is part of the freedom to succeed or fail.	Potential for conflict. Don't hoard up treasures on earth.
Rep #4		I don't see any conflict	Jesus parable of the talents (three servants)	

Rep #6		<p>in scripture</p> <p>in owning</p> <p>private</p> <p>property.</p> <p>I don't think</p> <p>so, but the</p> <p>disparity is</p> <p>thin.</p>	<p>is justification for</p> <p>capitalism and private</p> <p>property. What's mine</p> <p>is mine, yours is yours.</p> <p>We should have the</p> <p>right to own private</p> <p>property. What I have</p> <p>accumulated is</p> <p>rightfully mine.</p> <p>Malachi speaking to</p> <p>poor saying, "will you</p> <p>rob your country by not</p> <p>paying taxes and</p> <p>overburdening those</p> <p>who have earned or</p> <p>inherited money?"</p> <p>I have responsibility to</p> <p>be a steward over my</p> <p>property. Government</p> <p>didn't help you make it,</p> <p>they shouldn't have the</p> <p>right to take it. LDS</p>	
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			<p>church doesn't believe in socialism, there is a huge difference between communism and the United Order/Law of Consecration. Penn, founder of Pennsylvania, most productive & economically viable colony, no regulation or coercion.</p>	
Rep #11:		I don't think there is a difference.	You have right to keep and defend your private property, government should not take it.	
Rep #12:		God believes we should have this right.	Private property is a right. I am a staunch supporter of this right.	
Rep		Private	Private property rights	

#14:		property has been shown, it's replete throughout scriptures.	are paramount to freedom. Gift of freedom is controlling your property and is consistent with scriptures. Private property should be defended at all cost.	
Rep #15:		Nothing inconsistent.	Throughout the Bible it shows respect for a person's private property.	
Rep #16:	We don't necessarily have ownership.		We have stewardship and need to be responsible over what is given to us.	Don't think private property is in scripture, they were all communal.

collectivism and shared wealth versus libertarianism and individualism are central to this topic as well as this research. The Christian Democrats gave answers that all fit within the Shared Collective Ownership category, while all but one Christian Republicans provided responses that fit within the Private Material Ownership category. One subject #16,

Trisha, gave answers that fit into both categories. Finally, there are two columns that give the significant statements provided by the interviewees on either their congruence or dissonance.

Each of the seven Christian Democrat interlocutors gave answers regarding private property that talked about shared and communal property as well as a balance that allows all to be fulfilled in society. The Democrats' answers reflected the Covenant with the Land that we don't own anything and God owns everything. Also, just as we have shared ownership, we too have a shared responsibility to ensure the divide between the haves and have-nots doesn't increase, but rather lessens. The best way to do this is collectively help all of God's children and since the rich won't do it themselves, society needs to tax the rich to help the poor. Democrats also identified a sin embedded in the ownership of private property, the notion of greed and gluttony are parts of that ambition to accumulate property. Subject #13, Rebecca quotes Jesus stating that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of the needle than a rich man to get into heaven as evidence of their worldview. All of the Democratic respondents also stated that they believe that their views are congruent with scripture, often times citing scripture to justify their belief. Subject #1, Thomas Job, stated that "*We have to struggle with the fact that Jesus was a socialist and we have to know that expects the capitalism thing is that he did believe that there was, that we should give unto those who do not have, from those who do.*" These Democratic respondents cite congruence; however in examining the data and the Biblical history of this issue, these respondents are making some sort of adjustment. Their dissonance is made obvious, when the reality of what they advocate for is not being administered fully. While, the Democratic subjects express a shared collective ownership,

how many of them actually practice what scripture instructs of them? Perhaps this adjustment is an adaptation to contemporary norms and society, nevertheless, this behavior does not fully reflect the heart of God, even though their advocacy may.

The Republican subjects took the opposing perspective on this issue. Another great example of this difference is the fact that subject #4, Greg used the same parable of the three servants that subject #11, Jose Hector did in responding to capitalism. Greg gave exactly the same response about how the third servant was the evil one, because he didn't show diligence and hard work like the first two for the master who was God. Greg doesn't end there, he states "*what's mine is mine, and what's your is yours. We should have the right to own private property. I feel like what I've accumulated is rightfully mine.*" He then uses Malachi 3:8 to justify individualism and private property, he states, "*If Malachi were speaking to the poor he would say, 'will you rob your country, would you rob this land that people have died for by not paying taxes, by overburdening those who have earned the right to money or maybe they inherited it.'*" If Malachi was read and interpreted contextually, we find that in Malachi 1:6-8 it clearly shows that the prophet Malachi was stating these condemnations not to the poor, but to the Levites, Priests of Israel, and the leaders of the land who were robbing from God both with their tithes and offering and by their oppression of the poor. Most of the Republican respondents stated that they felt God has given private property as a symbol of who will be a responsible steward over it and prove worthy of even more blessings from God. Also, most of the Republican subject stated that the government has no right to take away anyone's private property, regardless of the reasoning. Only one Republican subject diverted from the theme, respondent #16, Trisha, stated that "*we don't necessarily have ownership*" over

the property, but she brought her thoughts back to the responsibility to be good stewards over the land.

Only two Republicans identified potential conflicts and dissonance in their worldview. Subject #3, Teddy Niles saw a potential for conflict, citing scripture that mandates us not to store up treasures on earth. When asked about if he experiences dissonance, he states, *“I think there’s a potential for conflict. I don’t think there is anything wrong with having a nice car, having a boat, having a nice home, I think that’s all fine.”* However, he later states that, *“In the Bible, don’t hoard up treasures on earth, amassing all the private property and wealth that you can, I think that conflicts with Christian principles.”* Subject #16, Trisha, also saw some dissonance between her view and scriptures unsure of what scripture says specifically, she mentioned that she believed that they were all communal. She states, *“Is there any private property in the scriptures? I don’t know. I don’t think so, they were all communal. You farmed and it was a communal thing, there wasn’t any private property. I think that’s something we invented... Everything we have is given to us by God.”* When I asked how she copes with the dissonance, she stated, *“I think we have to have stewardship over what we’re given... we just need to be responsible.”* The rest of the Republican interviewees all stated that they believed their view of private property was in complete congruence with Christian scripture, believing that God intends for us to own and defend our private property. The dissonance embedded within the Republican responses of congruence reveals both a misunderstanding of the scripture and a commitment to their notions of self-deception or perhaps, even ambivalence to the dissonance itself. An explication of these data reveals

an adjustment of theology in order to defend a worldview that takes two incongruent pieces and makes them fit.

Subject #6, Gary Harris, who is Mormon, added a twist to his interpretation to his church's position on private property. He states, "*contrary to popular opinion the LDS community did not believe in socialism, there's a huge difference between communism and the United Order or the yeah law of consecration*". As with the parable of the three servants and other Republican subjects, this too provides at least a deeper look to determine congruence or dissonance. In the 42nd chapter of the Doctrine and Covenants, Joseph Smith along with the twelve elders set forth the laws governing the church. One of these laws is the law of consecration, which states "and behold, thou wilt remember the poor, and consecrate of thy properties for their support that which thou hast to impart unto them, with a covenant and a deed which cannot be broken. And inasmuch as ye impart of your substance unto the poor, ye will do it unto me" (Doctrine and Covenants 42:30-31). Joseph Smith follows with further instruction regarding property as revealed from God to Edward Partridge stating, "appoint unto this people their portions, every man equal according to his family, according to his circumstances and his wants and needs" (Doctrine and Covenants 51:3). Though many associate this phrase with the famous Marxian quote from *Critique of the Gotha Program*, "from each according to his ability to each according to his needs" which has been a popular socialist slogan. The foundational roots of this phrase dates back to the historian Luke and his writings about the early church in the Book of Acts. In Act 4:32-35 it states, "Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. With great power the

apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need." Then Joseph Smith received a revelation from God about how to help the poor and meet everyone's needs in what he called the United Order, which is another set of laws to govern the Church. He writes, "behold this is the way that I, the Lord, have decreed to provide for my saints, that the poor shall be exalted, in that the rich are made low... Therefore, if any man shall take of the abundance which I have made, and impart not his portion, according to the law of my gospel, unto the poor and the needy, he shall, with the wicked, lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment" (Doctrine and Covenants 104:16 & 18). It is quite evident that the interpretation that Gary Harris is purporting does not fit with the theological foundations of his reference. Though, scripture never mentions a specific economic system, it does rebuke certain practices (usury, property and wealth hoarding, not paying fair wages) and it does promote certain systems of behavior, as we have seen above. Gary Harris provides another questionable quote, when he brings up William Penn and his philosophy in founding Pennsylvania, he states, "*it was the most productive, it was very, economically viable, while the other colonies struggled because they tried to define for other people what was best for them.*" Conversely, William Penn was a strong Quaker who advocated the egalitarian teachings of scripture for his Common Wealth. Morgan (1983) stated that Penn's goal for this colony was to emulate Christ and commune with "the Young, the Ignorant, and the Poor... he gladly assimilated their humility to himself, gladly shared their sufferings, for he was convinced that in doing so he was opening the way for the

spirit” (p. 295). William Penn wanted nothing more than a society that shared in its wealth and provided for all, an economic philosophy that perhaps Gary Harris doesn’t support.

The meaning unit of “Shared Collective Ownership” is categorized by the Democratic Christian respondents and has a belief that society must be structured in a way to protect from greed and hoarding, to aid the needy, and to advance the collective as a whole. This meaning unit is part of the narrative constructing the Natural Christianity cluster. The central hope of Natural Christianity is to observe the covenant with God regarding the land and uphold the Laws of Jubilee and the Law of Consecration. This Shared Collective Ownership takes its roots from God’s words to Moses on not just how to take care of the land, but also how to preserve the integrity of the benefits of the land for all; that no one can use the land as it was their own private possession, they must first consider their neighbor, the stranger among them and the future generations⁸². Natural Christianity sees the evil that occurs when one becomes oriented on self-survival and greed, instead of thinking outwardly and helping the poor. This rebuke of self-interest and hoarding has occurred through out Christian scripture⁸³, especially with the prophets speaking to those with power to change behavior, give unto the poor, end suffering caused by their actions, and a create society that doesn’t trample on the weak and lowly. During Jesus’ ministry, he best encapsulates this theme embedded in Natural Christianity, as something more than what is right to do and wrong not to do, but is more of a desire and thirst for justice and righteousness. Jesus urged others to love each other, to love with

⁸² Leviticus 25:2-7; Exodus 23:11; Leviticus 19:9-10; Leviticus 23:22; Leviticus 25:10-11; Leviticus 25:23; Doctrine and Covenants 42:30-31; Doctrine and Covenants 52:40

⁸³ 1 Kings 21; Amos 2:6-7; Amos 8:4; Hosea 4:1-2; Hosea 12:8; Hosea 13:16; Isaiah 3:14-15; Isaiah 58:7; Micah 2:2; Micah 6:12; Habakkuk 2:5; Jeremiah 5:28-29; Jeremiah 22:13 & 17; Ezekiel 22:29

everything that you are, and to love without assurance that tomorrow is promised. This desire that Jesus preached was illustrated in many parables and lessons about overcoming the love of worldly things such as private property and instead using those as tools to show love to others as an example of our Heavenly Father. This is evident through the Gospels, from Jesus' interaction with the Rich Young Ruler (Matthew 19:16-22; Mark 10:17-27; Luke 18:21-25), to the story of the wealthy man and the beggar Lazarus (Luke 16:19-23), to Jesus' analogy of tearing down your barns to build bigger ones to store your accumulation (Luke 12:16-21; Matthew 6:19-21), to Jesus driving out the money changers from the Temple (John 2:13-16), to the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37), the parable of the Sheep and Goats (Matthew 25:31-46), and the Sermons on the Beatitudes (Luke 6:20-26; Matthew 5:1-12); these are just small sample of Jesus' words and actions that promote this perspective embedded in Natural Christianity.

The meaning unit of "Private Material Ownership" is almost fully shared by all the Christian Republican respondents. It is a belief that God has given us agency and freedom to make our own choice, live our own lives, and working out our own salvation. That private property is a sign of blessings by God throughout Christian scripture and should not be seen as negative or wrong. That no one or no institution has the right to take away any private material or property that you own. Private property is a right and God expects us to be good stewards of that property entrusted to us. These beliefs are fundamental to the Institutional Christianity perspective. This perspective took root in contemporary society at the turn of the 17th century, when preachers and churches started changing their interpretation on riches. Theorists such as Cotton Mather (Bernhard, 1976), Thomas Belsham (Howe, 1972), and most notably Andrew Carnegie (1906) all

brought a religious justification to the accumulation of wealth, riches and property, highlighting it as a blessing and gift from God for the work and piety of his people. Max Weber (1958) wrote about this transition, he witnessed a change from a gospel of humility and poverty to a gospel of material wealth and riches. This divide between Christianity as: self-sacrificing, sharing-wealth, and community responsibility versus individualism, wealth accumulation and personal responsibility is what spurred Thorstein Veblen (1912) to categorize the two vastly different types of Christianity (Institutional and Natural) he saw birthed out of these two logics. Private property is perhaps the most profound meaning unit that characterizes the two clusters of political/religious behavior, as well as a signifier of where our religious and political culture is today.

Other Issues

The last question asked to each participant was a very general open-ended question allowing the subjects to talk about any other policy issue or topic they would want to talk about. Only seven subjects provided a response to these questions. They were asked as a follow-up to the four public policy questions, is if there was “any other issue that you would like to tell me about?” Then in question #9, they we asked “is there any other information that you would like to tell me that you feel is important?” There were not enough significant statements to identify a common theme or meaning unit, so there is not a matrix to present the data. Rather, this study examines the data in the larger context of how these significant statements contribute to the narrative that constructs one or the other political/religious clusters.

The first topic that came from these significant statements is the public policy of abortion. Democratic respondent #1, Thomas Job, stated “*I have been threatened by another Christian member, in the past, because of my votes on abortion were not seen as Christian by her despite my attempts at engaging her and explaining how my vote was very consistent with my view of Christianity.*” Democratic subject #5, Harry Wheeler also commented on abortion stating, “*If we want to fight abortion it would be to assist every young woman who is pregnant to live a fulfilled life and for their child to have a fulfilled life. Our energies should not be applied to judge people. It should be applied to compassion. Our fight is to be compassionate to young, vulnerable women who get pregnant, who have sex that we don’t approve of and get pregnant. Our collective sin as a society that we shame them, go after people who by providing abortion is providing much more compassion than we are to a young woman who’s pregnant. And it sickens me.*” He follows when asked if his view contradicts scripture, “*No I don’t think so. The example I would use is the attempted stoning of Mary Magdalene by the Pharisees. All Jesus said was who among you haven’t sinned? So what he said in my view was there’s no sin that’s greater or less. Society says this (abortion) is a greater sin than not.*” Only one Republican brought up abortion as an issue that they wanted to talk about.

Republican respondent #11, Jose Hector, stated “*taking a life of a child before born is a sin, obviously as a Christian I feel like that’s an issue that is implied in the Bible, just couldn’t point to a scripture.*” These were the only responses on this topic and even though abortion doesn’t correlate to either political/religious cluster, the interpretation of scripture and the inductive logic of the debate lend itself to one of the meaning units and scriptural interpretation themes.

The abortion issue is so contentious and heated, rarely invoking a calm, rational discussion. Moreover, as Jose Hector implied, nowhere in Christian scripture is there a direct discussion of birth control or a medical procedure to stop pregnancy. Many Pro-Life politicians use Psalms 139:13-14 as justification that a terminated pregnancy is a sinful thing, it reads, “for you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” This verse, along with other verses, alludes to abortion claiming that because God values life, abortion is wrong. This is an example of a literal reading of scripture that reinforces the Institutional Christianity cluster. However, Pro-Choice politicians are quick to point out that this isolated verse was used as song that David sung unto God, thanking him for his protection. In contrast, many Pro-Choice Christian politicians identify the ambiguity throughout scripture regarding the sanctity of life. From God sending the Angel of Death to kill the first born children in Egypt (Exodus 12:29), to the prophets proclaiming death and destruction upon wicked nations by killing their infant children (Hosea 9:14-16; Hosea 13:16; 2 Samuel 12:14). But what is more difficult to this debate is that God places a value on children older than 1 month, and assigns no value to children less than a month or in the womb. When the Levitical census was taken, “the LORD spoke to Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai, saying: “Number the children of Levi by their fathers’ houses, by their families; you shall number every male from a month old and above” (Number 3:15-16). Leviticus 27 has the same theme, when God told Moses the financial value of life instead of a sacrifice all humans have a monetary value, except those 1 month and younger. Finally, in Exodus 21:22-23, God gives two different judgments for the loss of a life; for a fetus, it is a financial penalty, for a grown life, it is another person’s life. These

are examples of the contextual interpretation that many Christian politicians use in determining their political actions, thus fitting perfectly in the narrative of a Natural Christianity cluster.

Fitting within the cluster of Institutional Christianity, subject #6, Gary Harris critiques Obama Care as anti-Christian. He states, *“How does this instill the principles of Christianity to make them want to be self-reliant, to be able to be promote themselves or be working to improve themselves. It destroys; it becomes disincentive rather than an incentive, because now people think that they’re entitled to it.”* Here Gary Harris repeats the mantra of Institutional Christianity in practice within government urging personal responsibility rather than aid, individualism rather than collectivism, and self-preservation over self-sacrifice. Republican respondent #2, Bernie, added a follow-up to his interview, stating *“We’ll be punished by God for what we do, but God also will be merciful, and I think government should, in some cases, be merciful in the manner in which we treat people”*. This significant statement appears to emulate aspects of Natural Christianity, with themes of mercy and kind treatment by the government, however, he does qualify this statement by saying *“in some cases”* and earlier in his interview he certainly identified that God’s mercy through government shouldn’t be afford to the immigrants. He stated, *“God wants us to do the right thing, and God does not want us to violate the law, they’re violating the laws when they shouldn’t be. I support strict laws to prevent that from happening”*.

Fitting with the themes of love and loving others in the Natural Christianity cluster, two Democratic respondents used this question to highlight and talk about love.

Democratic respondent #1, Thomas Job had these departing comments: *“One of the most powerful ways you can motivate is through fear. It’s not nearly as powerful as love, but easier to do.” “I was struggling with how I could love Jared Lee Loughner on that day, and part of that struggle that really intensified for me on January 8th, I’ve been trying to now embody in all of my political life is how do I love Russell Pearce, how do I love a colleague that called me Satan.”* While Democratic subject #13, Rebecca stated, *“love is the concept in the Bible, it would be nice if decisions could be made based on love.”*

These three comments nestle perfectly within the Natural Christianity cluster that advocates for the rule of love to be the measuring stick for all behavior and policy action. Rebecca furthered her concluding comments, by advocating for children, namely the orphan, saying *“I do not think that those that are professing to be Christians are really looking at the scripture, because orphans can be described in a lot of different ways. With this state cutting out payments, you’re taking away respite, and it’s causing people that are related to throw up their hands and say I cannot do this. Therefore, you’re going to have kids growing up in group homes, this is not what God intended.”* Democratic respondent #10, Sissy, closed her comments talking about ultimately how she sees her role influencing government to help all of God’s children. She spoke about empowering the community by giving them the skills and tools they need to grow; she likened it to *“the story of Jesus teaching the people how to fish, instead of simply giving them all the fish, teaching them how to grow wheat to make bread instead of just feeding them. Jesus did both, gave and taught.”*

Conclusion

This chapter provided a fruitful journey through the psyche of a Christian politician, while debating their faith versus political theory. The divide between the two political/religious clusters was shown to be clear and substantial, where the Republican Christians in almost all certainty and predictability align with the Institutional Christianity cluster. This cluster was categorized by ten meaning units all that contributed to the characterization of politicians who emulate Institutional Christianity. These traits were seen, as overwhelmingly reported by the Republican participants as: being Christ-like and abiding by the rule of law as essential Christian characteristics; holding a literal interpretation of Christian scripture; a view of God as one of having individual freedom and fearing God's judgment; maintaining a libertarian philosophy of government and a punishment-oriented system of justice; following the United States constitution is of most importance in their role as a politician; individualism is the core function of a Christian politician; anti-immigration policy tied to following the letter of man's law; having personal responsibility when it comes to health care; support of free-market capitalism and economic individualism; and finally, a commitment to private material ownership of property. These meaning units epitomize the Institutional Christianity theory and help to better understand the meaning behind this group's behavior. We also found that when asked about potential conflict between their view and what scripture says, justification and perceived congruence dominated; but we also saw some admission to the conflict and that their views were dissonant with what scripture says.

Conversely, the Democratic Christian respondents had a cohesively alignment with the Natural Christianity cluster. This cluster is also categorized by ten meaning units

all that added to the depiction of a politician who encompasses the theory of Natural Christianity. These traits were seen through this research and in complete unity reported by the Democratic subjects as: Christian characteristics are Christ-like and selfless, emulating the beatitudes; uses a hermeneutical interpretation of Christian scripture; a view of God that is very loving and personally involved in everyone’s lives; an egalitarian and communitarian theory of government and justice; following the Christian faith is the most important role as a politician; collectivism is the core function of a Christian politician; pro-immigration policy and following the spirit of God’s law; maintaining an effective government assistance of health care for all; belief in highly regulated markets to prevent from greed; and lastly, a commitment to shared collective ownership of public property for the benefit of all. The meaning units discovered in this research all exemplify the traits of Natural Christianity and are useful in predicting the behavior of someone who is categorized by Natural Christianity. The Democratic Christian politician respondents reported that they all found high levels of congruence between their political behavior and what Christian scripture had to say on the matter.

Table 11 Ten Meaning Units of this Phenomenon

Themes	Republican Participants	Democratic Participants
Christian Characteristics	Rule of Law	Beatitudes / Selflessness
Scriptural Interpretation	Literal	Hermeneutical
View of God	Freedom and Judgment	Personal and Loving
Theory of Government and Justice	Libertarian and Punishment	Egalitarian / Communitarian

Primary Identity in Politics	Constitution over Faith	Faith over Ideology
Function of a Christian Politician	Individualism	Collectivism
Immigration	Pro-Immigration/Spirit of God's Law	Anti-Immigration/Letter of Man's Law
Health Care	Personal Responsibility	Government Assistance for All
Capitalism	Free Markets / Individualism	Regulated Markets / Anti- Greed
Private Property	Private Material Ownership	Shared Collective Ownership

This research highlights that a Republican Christian uses their political theory and philosophy first when behaving as a politician and then adjusts to fit Christian scripture into their worldview. While the Democratic Christian uses their Christian faith first and primarily when behaving as a politician and promoting their worldview. We also found that we could predict how one would interpret scripture based on their political party, where the Republicans took the word-for-word literal translation, while the Democrats looked at scripture in the context of the culture, history and related Biblical books, chapters and verses. Moreover, this research showed the predictability in voting habits and policy advocacy based on the Christian politician's political party, we found that a Democratic Christian politician will advocate and vote for pro-immigration policies, universal health care, government regulated industry and community property and wealth; while the Republican Christian politician will advocate and vote for anti-

immigration policies, privatized health care, free-markets with no regulations, and strict private property rights.

CHAPTER 9

A DISCUSSION OF WHAT THIS ALL MEANS

Introduction

I started this project deeply puzzled about how contemporary Arizona Christian politicians were able to arrive at completely different conclusions regarding public policy, all the while claiming a Christian identity. I was confused on why members of the Arizona legislature with high salient Christian identities couldn't put aside their party difference and connect with their common identity of Christianity. I wanted to know how and why politicians made their policy decisions and in what ways they defended these decisions using their Christian faith. Furthermore, did these politicians, after justifying their policy positions with their faith, recognize that their faith and political behavior are congruent, or dissonant, or perhaps they were ambivalent to this notion? If the politician experienced dissonance, were they aware of it and how did they cope and adjust? I sought out the source of one's decision-making, examining whether it was ideological or theological. Did these subjects consider their faith when making a policy decision, and if they did, in what ways have they interpreted their faith to arrive at that conclusion? These questions were the driving force behind the desire to engage in this research.

Two major political/religious clusters - Institutional Christianity and Natural Christianity - dominate the halls of government in Arizona and possibly, throughout the United States. As Leathers (1984), describes that these two clusters are as polar opposite as they get on the ideological spectrum, but yet both clusters claim an identity of Christianity. Where Natural Christianity expresses its faith in the love, selflessness,

action, and a commitment of service to all; a faith that is centered on the praxis of one's actions in all aspect of their life mirroring God's love to all. While Institutional Christianity finds its faith rooted in the orthodoxy of law and individualism a faith in oneself to become self-made, saved, and reap the material bounty of God's blessing because of one's righteousness. As witnessed in the study, these two clusters are not only different, they are at odds with one another, both sides challenging the other's inherent theology about who God is and how we should behave as Christians.

What I Learned

This project is nine years in the making, essentially beginning when I was first appointed to state government as a State Senator in 2005. When I began this project I couldn't understand why there was so much angst and acrimony within politics and especially between political figures. I learned a couple of life lessons about the political experience, but it left me with a bewildered position of why the Christian, supposedly like-minded, politicians where so far apart on issues. It was this quandary that led to this study. By constructing a qualitative phenomenological research study based on rich, detailed elite-interviews, I gained further understanding about this problem of how politicians adjust, defend, justify, and enact their worldview as Christian faith.

I came into this study asking in what ways are the Christian politicians congruent or dissonant with their faith and political behavior? How does a Christian politician cope and adjust to dissonance? In what ways do Christian politicians exhibit praxis or orthodoxy throughout their political behavior? What new information can be found? How can the average layperson understand this dynamic and integrate it into their political

behavior of voting and activism? But the primary driving question is how does one gain understanding, create meaning in the process of defending, enacting, and justifying their religious and political worldviews as ideology? This research explores other questions about this binary. Which theories of Justice align with which cluster? How important is one's political party in predicting their cluster? When making political decisions, what is more important to the politician, the Bible or United States Constitution? What is each cluster's view of God? What is their interpretation theory? As well as, what are the policy positions and behaviors that characterize each cluster?

This research connects the counter-hegemony traits of Natural Christianity with the liberating history and power of the prophets, apostles, and Jesus Christ. More importantly, it connects the notion of love in action, praxis for all politicians to emulate; the belief that love, God's love, is the essential action that challenges the hegemonic attributes of selfishness, individualism, competition, and accumulation. Also, this research identifies that Institutional Christianity, as a hegemonic project, exists amongst a majority of politicians and promotes an orthodoxy reflected in one's internal commitment to be responsible for the self. It is a perspective that each person has the freedom to succeed or fail and it is up to each person, individually, to reap the benefits or deal with the consequences.

During this research opportunity, one of the most important lessons I learned is that each subject loves God very much and has an internal desire and longing to do what they think is right. I learned how easy it is to sit and talk for an hour and connect with both opposing and like-minded politicians versus the fighting that occurs between politicians in the public eye. I learned about just how distrusting members of the

opposing party truly are of someone not aligned with them, and how important the confidentiality factor was to conducting this study. I learned about my own fears and the insecurity I experience not knowing how this study will be taken or applied.

What I Found

A thorough review of Christian foundations, contextualized in a variety of historical, theological, and political literatures, utilizing scriptural anecdotes from the Old and New Testaments, as well as extra-Biblical scriptures⁸⁴ such as the Apocryphal and Book of Mormon, all within the pre-Modern time frame, establishes the fundamental principles of both the Natural Christianity cluster and the Institutional Christianity cluster based within their interpretive schemas. Then, the literature explored the Modern and Enlightenment era, where changes in governance, society, and theology saw cultural shifts to notions of private property and capitalism, particularly with the rise of the Gospel of Wealth and the decline of Calvinism. During this time, Institutional Christianity saw its rise to dominance. The final era that this study looked at is the postmodern/contemporary era in which the debate over Church and State became a constant struggle. During this period, science best explains the rational behavior of a politician seeking re-election and maintaining power as strategic political action. Moreover, an examination of contemporary issues reveals that they are often employed as political capital, rather than social/economic ills that politicians intend to eradicate or solve.

⁸⁴ Extra-Biblical Christian scriptures were used along with the Bible because of the composition of the subjects of this study. Many Mormon subjects referenced the Book of Mormon and many Catholic subjects reference the Apocryphal in the Catholic Public Domain Version.

Furthermore, this research explored the theoretical construction of the religious/political clusters. Institutional Christianity presents as the foundation of hegemony within the political arena, while Natural Christianity, as counter-hegemony, adds a love-based display of faith. Psychological theories of cognitive dissonance and integrated congruence help to describe the politician's positionality on faith; where dissonance is perpetuated by the coping mechanisms of self-deception, rational ignorance, and confirmation bias. The theoretical makeup of each political/religious cluster reflects a binary divide, whether it is praxis versus orthodoxy, literal versus hermeneutic interpretations, or a human nature rooted in good or evil. Furthermore, each cluster is supported by a variety of justice theories, where Institutional Christianity is categorized by libertarianism, utilitarianism, individualism, and capitalism. While the cluster of Natural Christianity is reflected in justice theories such as: communitarianism, egalitarianism, collectivism, and socialism.

This study is grounded in hour-long detailed interviews with sixteen state-level politicians, each asked thirteen questions from the Interview Instrument (see Appendix A) about their Christian faith and their political action. It was from this set of questions that ten themes emerged from the interviews with the politicians. These themes helped to highlight the essence of this phenomenon and contextualize and categorize the attributes of Christian politicians emulating each political/religious cluster. The themes that emerged from the interviews are: Christian characteristics, scriptural interpretation, view of God, theory of government and justice, primary identity in politics, function of a Christian politician, immigration policy, health care policy, capitalism, and private property.

After weeding and mining through the vast amounts of data I collected from these interviews, using the significant statements from each interviewee, meaning units emerged that revealed a binary relationship within each theme. When I applied horizontalization to the data, the first result that I found was that within each theme, there were two opposing meaning units. The next result I found was that the common denominator within each grouping of meaning units was that they were divided based upon the subject's political party. Next, after reviewing the meaning units from all ten themes and grouping those together, it became quite clear that the subject's political party was a predictor of which political/religious theoretical cluster they identified as. More specifically, this study solidified the idea that more times than not, a Christian Republican politician operates under and is informed by the political/religious cluster of Institutional Christianity. Meanwhile, a Christian Democrat, in the same way, acts in a way and is influenced by the political/religious cluster of Natural Christianity.

Christian Characteristics.

This first theme is a pivotal theme in establishing this research, whereas it sets the tone from each cluster as to how they perceive and interpret Christianity for themselves. This was the only theme where both clusters identified one common meaning unit, that is that a core Christian characteristic is being *Christ-like*. Not as significant as one would think, this response was too ambiguous and unclear. However, when analyzing the opposing meaning units that emerged, it becomes quite obvious that these clusters, more specifically, Christian Democrats and Christian Republicans, understand Christ-like

attributes in very different ways. The Christian Democrat uniformly promoted a meaning unit that Christian characteristics are being *selfless* and having the *Beatitudes* of humility, forgiveness, kindness, peaceful, and fight for justice. Christian Democrats believe that you consider the plight of the oppressed and downtrodden first and serve them in a way that promotes social change to create equality for all. On the other hand, Christian Republicans argued that true Christian characteristics reflect a person's adherence to the *Rule of Law*. They posited that being a Christian meant following the commandments, being obedient to God, having self-restraint, and observing the principles of God. Christian Republicans believe that we must be responsible for our own selves, that as an individual, we work out our own faith. These opposing perspectives illuminate a divide⁸⁵ that occurred in the time of Christ. We see this play out in today's political climate where the Christian Republicans maintain the selective commitment to the law, while in contrast we see the Christian Democrats who selectively seek after mercy and service to others.

Scriptural Interpretation.

The second theme that emerged was the notion that there were two distinctly different ways to interpret Christian scripture, the meaning units of *literal interpretation* and *hermeneutical interpretation*. All of the Christian Democratic respondents identified that they interpret scripture in a hermeneutical way. Where they take the cultural and historical context in which it was written, taking into account the language and translation

⁸⁵ This divide is best illustrated in Matthew 12: 1-14, when the Pharisees pointed out that Jesus and his disciples broke the law and ministered on the Sabbath. To which Jesus responds in verse 7 "If you had known what these words mean, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice' you would not have condemned the innocent." Jesus continues throughout the rest of that exchange with the Pharisees, who were plotting to kill him that fulfilling the law is about one's fruit, it is about one's doing good and seeking justice, not about following the letter of the law.

from the original to their modern language, as well as that each word, verse, chapter is situated as part of a broader narrative. A Christian Democrat believes that all of these elements must be considered when reading, understanding, and applying Christian scripture to our own contemporary culture. Conversely, a large majority of the Christian Republican respondents stated that they interpret scripture in a literal way. This is the approach that believes that each word, verse, and chapter is the literal word of God and must be taken word-for-word as truth; that scripture is God's word verbatim, placed onto paper. That every translation from the original is God-inspired and is absolute truth that must be assigned to today's culture as well. A Christian Republican believes that Christian scripture must be taken literally and applied literally to our own contemporary culture. This theme is imperative when understanding how each of the two clusters came to different conclusions regarding scripture. This research has illustrated this using the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30). When taken literally, the Christian Republican finds it's justification of private property, usury, capitalism, competition and accumulation of wealth. However, when taken hermeneutically, the Christian Democrat finds that the parable speaks to the social ills of the oppressive land owner, a society where the rich get richer and poor get poorer and finds a champion for social justice in the third servant. This is one of many examples that highlight the significance of scriptural interpretation and why the clusters are so divided.

View of God.

The third theme to come out of the interviews is the participant's view of God and embedded in this theme are two dissimilar meaning units, a view of God that is based in

Freedom and Judgment and a view that God is *Personal and Loving*. This theological divide positions Christian Democrats in a meaning unit that sees God as personal and loving. They see a God that is concerned about each and every individual and works and speaks into everyone's life. God is the perfection of love, care, forgiveness and is non-judgmental. On the theologically opposite side, Christian Republicans see a God based in freedom and judgment. This view of God is one of a parent/Father, one that holds us accountable for our decisions, but allows us to make our own choices. This laissez-fair notion of God, espouses the belief that all humans have the right and freedom to make their own decisions, and God will hold them accountable. Most of the Republican respondents focused on the freedom "to make bad decisions" and that God, in his vengeance, casts judgment on those who make bad decisions. This is the cultural debate between the God of the Old Testament⁸⁶, and the God of the New Testament⁸⁷. This view of God has been studied from a variety of perspectives, of the most interesting is a 2010 (Silton, Flannelly, Galek, & Ellison) study that found that people with a punitive view of God tended to be positively associated with the psychiatric symptoms of: anxiety, paranoia, obsessions, and compulsions; while those who had a belief in a benevolent God were negatively associated with these symptoms. These data explicates a notion that one who understands God as judgmental and castigatory, assumes that position on others; while the person who understands God to be benevolent and loving projects those characteristics on the world.

⁸⁶ A God that destroyed the whole earth because of its corruptness (Genesis 6), a God that ordered the killing all the men, and the capture of all the women and children of Midian because of idolatry (Numbers 31).

⁸⁷ A God that asserts one must "love their neighbor as themselves" (Mark 12), a God that instructs us to "turn the other cheek" when someone harms us (Matthew 5).

Theory of Government and Justice.

The fourth theme from the interviews is the participant's theory of government and justice, with the meaning units of *Libertarian and Punishment* and *Egalitarian/Communitarian*. This study found that Christian Democrats had an egalitarian and communitarian theory of government and justice, with a focus on the restorative nature of social justice. Meanwhile the Christian Republican had a libertarian and utilitarian theory of government and justice with an emphasis on the retributive nature of punishment. Christian Democrats identified in their significant statements notions of equality of opportunity and resources for all, to consider the least in society and aid them as best as they can, as well as placing the needs of the community over the needs of the individual. Meanwhile, the Christian Republican, in complete conflict with the Christian Democrat, identified in their significant statements perspectives of reduced government with one purpose, which is to protect an individual's right to life, liberty and property and to punish anyone who infringes on these inherent God-given rights. While the Christian Democrat sees justice as a fight to help the oppressed and poor, the Christian Republicans see justice as the preservation of individual freedoms and individual responsibility.

Primary Identity in Politics.

The fifth theme to be identified from the interviews is the notion that the participants differed on what their primary identity in politics was, which resulted in the meaning units of either a commitment to the *Constitution over Faith*, or a rigidity to one's *Faith over Ideology*. This theme gets to the heart of the subjects' identity, perhaps

answering just how salient their Christian identity truly is when serving as a politician. This research yielded a consistency amongst all these themes, but most telling is this idea of how does a politician think, what is their identity when making a public policy decision. The data showed that all of the Christian Democrats stated that their faith is of primary important and that it is the standard by which they make all their judgments. On the other hand, all the Christian Republicans stated that their faith is only an individual value, and though it may inform them, it certainly doesn't dictate their action. Instead, Christian Republicans value the United States Constitution above all else when making political decisions. Many Christian Republicans provided solipsistic answers for placing the Constitution above all else in politics, which is the idea that all laws and government leaders are God-inspired and therefore are righteous. These meaning units shed some light as to why Christian Republicans and Christian Democrats don't see eye-to-eye. There is a vastly different view initially about approaching politics, where Democrats incorporate praxis about their Christian faith into all of their political decisions, while Republicans hold to orthodoxy about their religious affiliation and solely see their faith as an individualistic expression, but one that is muted once their politician identity emerges. Christendom has had this divide since inception, where some draw from Jesus' parables⁸⁸ as a calling to all who are placed in power or authority, that to those who have been entrusted with much power to rule, much is required that they rule rightly, while others see this as an individual expression, not one that must be forced upon society.

⁸⁸ Gospel of Luke 12: 35-48, in which Jesus is telling a parable to always be ready for Jesus' return. The apostle Peter questions Jesus asking is he telling this parable to just them or for everyone. To this, Jesus gave another parable about a slave watching over his master's house. Jesus states that those who while waiting for the master's return, beats and oppresses the workers, indulges in food and drink, will have a harsher punishment upon them. Then in answering Peter's question, Jesus states, "From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded." (Luke 12:48)

Function of a Christian Politician.

The sixth theme to come out of these interviews is the question of what is the function of a Christian serving as a politician. Two disparate meaning units were identified as best describing the binary of this theme, they are *Individualism* and *Collectivism*. The Christian Democratic respondents all spoke about roles and functions that encompass the identity of collectivism. They spoke about the core value of loving and caring for everyone in society, to serve the needy and liberate the oppressed. Their responses also emphasized the interdependence of each person in society that God expects us to put the other person first, the community first, which is seen by how we take care of the poor, needy, less fortunate and vulnerable in our society. Moreover, many of the Democratic subjects not only spoke in favor of a collectivist role, but condemn and cautioned against adopting an individualistic role. In complete contrast, the Christian Republican interlocutors all highlighted their role and function from a position of individualism. Their responses focused on the individual, that as politicians we must maintain freedoms for all individuals, the freedom to make our own decisions and be held responsible for those decisions, and the freedom from any coercion. This view places a priority in the individuals' goals, serving themselves first and expecting everyone to be responsible for their own selves. The Republican subjects illuminated a function of political behavior that supports meritocracy, exceptionalism, and bootstraps mentality. Christian Democrats assert that Jesus instructs⁸⁹ everyone to care and assist the

⁸⁹ In Matthew 25 when Jesus separates the sheep from the goats, his words strike straight to the heart of this binary. Jesus parable of whom will receive the blessing of eternal life is narrowed down to how one treats the other. He states in verse 35-36 “for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.” Then the righteous asked God, when did

community they live in, to help all. While Christian Republicans posit that Christ's words were aimed at us individually and therefore we are expected to behave and act individually with love, not collectively.

Immigration.

The seventh theme that came out of the interview questions and the first of the four public policy issues, is this debate over immigration, or as Camara (1971) calls it, "Abrahamic minorities" (p. 74). The meaning units that surfaced from this theme are: *Pro-Immigration/Spirit of God's Law* and *Anti-Immigration/Letter of Man's Law*. The Christian Democrats provided answers that exemplified the meaning unit of being Pro-Immigration and following the spirit of God's law. Their responses talked about believing in God's law, a law that is based in the spirit of love, acceptance, and forgiveness. They explicitly mentioned that Jesus would treat immigrants regardless of legality, with love, openness, welcoming, and concern for their well-being and that each of us must do the same. The Democratic respondents highlight that when a country rejects someone simply because of citizenship documents, they are in essence rejecting God. Moreover, Christian Democrats see this issue as more than just advocacy; it is an issue that protectionist policies oppress so many families and must be corrected. Adversely, Christian Republicans all had responses that fit the Anti-Immigration meaning unit with a common factor upholding to the letter of man's law and following through with consequence for breaking the law. This meaning unit is closely aligned with being

we do this to you? Jesus responds to them in verse 40, "just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." Then Jesus turns to those who did not do these things and condemned them to eternal punishment.

personally responsible for one's actions and that immigration should not negatively affect the citizens of the United States. Many Republican respondents commented that immigration is not a religious or Biblical issue, that it simply is a governance problem. Some Christian Republican subjects use the solipsism of Romans 13:1 "everyone is subject to governing authorities" as reasoning for this Anti-Immigration position. While other Christian Republicans do recognize that their political ideology is in conflict with their faith. Christian Democrats draw on a litany of scriptural passages⁹⁰ and verses to justify their view that God calls on them to welcome the stranger, foreigner, and sojourner to their land with love.

Health Care.

The eighth of the ten themes and second public policy issue is the debate around health care, which yielded two meaning units that divide the clusters, *Personal Responsibility* and *Government Assistance for All*. The Christian Republican respondents all provided answers and significant statements that highlighted their meaning unit of maintaining personal responsibility in health care. They all asserted that health care is the individual's choice not the government's responsibility. This belief is rooted in the idea, as the subjects stated, that God expects all people to be responsible for their own selves, and to not expect others to take care of you, especially the government. Dissimilar to this, the Christian Democratic subjects all gave answers that promoted a meaning unit of government assistance for all. They maintained that everyone is God's children and everyone should have the opportunity to live free of pain and suffering. In responding to

⁹⁰ Leviticus 19:33-34 & 25:35, Matthew 25:35, Exodus 22:21-23, Malachi 3:5, Hebrews 13:2, Jeremiah 7:5-7, and Ezekiel 47:22 as well as Alma 27 and 3 Nephi 24:5 from the Book of Mormon

this policy questions, they retorted back that their job is to do what Jesus would/did do. Obeying Christ's teachings means that one heals the sick and cares for the lame, and as a politician, they have a unique opportunity to provide these blessings to others, just as Jesus did during his ministry on earth. Both clusters used Biblical reference to highlight their beliefs. The Christian Republican subjects in this study used the literal reading of Galatians 6:5 and apply it to health care as an explanation that each person should carry their own burden, as God's urging for individual responsibility and zero government intervention. Meanwhile the Christian Democratic respondents all used the life and works of Jesus and the apostles⁹¹ to highlight how we are to take care of, heal, aid, and love those who are sick, injured, lame, or have any other infirmity or sickness.

Capitalism.

Capitalism was the ninth theme and third of the public policy questions to produce very meaningful statements that create a divide amongst the two clusters. This theme produced two meaning units, *Regulated Markets/Anti-Greed* and *Free Markets/Individualism*. The Christian Democrats typify the meaning unit of a highly regulated marketplace and fighting against the sin of greed. The Christian Republicans personify a free, unfettered marketplace, one that is based in individualism and personal responsibility. The Christian Democrats all identified capitalism as corrupt and full of greed, which is hurtful to so many people, thus the need for heavy regulation. They spoke about the individualistic pursuits running wild and harming others, in which people become slaves to money. That capitalism, if left to its own devices, is truly a sin unto

⁹¹ Matthew 4:23, Mark 6:56, Luke 9:11, Act 10:38, Acts 19:11-12, Matthew 25:31-46, Matthew 25:31-46, Mark 16:17-18, 1 Thessalonians 5:14, and 1 John 3:16-19

God and God's children. The Christian Republican subjects promoted capitalism and assert that it must be left alone and that individuals must also be left alone to make whatever decisions they see fit with their own money. They asserted that capitalism is virtue given by God and is part of the individual working out their own salvation. Almost all of the Republican respondents stated that capitalism is God-inspired and it reflects a core principle of scripture, individualism. To highlight this divide between the clusters, Jesus' parable in Matthew 25 about the Three Servants or the Parable of the Talents, is a perfect example about how the differing interpretation theories yield vastly different results. When read literally, as the Republican subjects did and many in the Institutional Christianity community do, this parable is capitalistic. You get the money that is given to you, invest it and make more of it. If you protect that money and don't make more, you are condemned as lazy and sentenced to damnation. However, if this parable is read hermeneutically, it yields a very radical and subversive action that condemns the oppression which was occurring in Rome during the time of Christ. As mentioned in length in Chapter 8 of this study, a contextual look at this parable assumed by the Democratic respondents and promoted by the Natural Christianity community, offers a view that Jesus was highlighting the unjust and unfair practices of an economic system that gives more to the wealthy, while the poor continue to be harmed. Where a literal reading sees the master as God, who judges the lazy and industrious; a contextual reading sees the master as the oppressor and the third servant as the hero, whose resistance protected many of the vulnerable in his community. Though this is just one example, it perpetuates this dynamic between the Republican and Democratic politicians with regards to why they are not connecting on a religious plane.

Private Property.

The last theme and policy question that emerged in this study is the notion and policy of private property. Within this theme, two distinct meaning units surfaced; first, the idea that property is a *Shared Collective Ownership* and second the belief in *Private Material Ownership*. All of the Christian Democrat responses identify the meaning unit of shared collective ownership, and in the same way, almost all of the Christian Republican responses exemplified the meaning unit of private material ownership. The narrative that the Christian Democrats promoted, highlighting the concept of Natural Christianity, is that all property is God's and is intended to benefit all and assist all in the community. They also discussed how within scripture it is the wealthy man, the rich, and greedy person who hoards their wealth and property who is condemned to hell, while the one who uses property to aid the needy is praised. This meaning unit is embedded in the principle of shared wealth/commonwealth in society along with the theory of collectivism. The Democrats responded with the eternal hope of creating a balance here on earth so that all may be fulfilled and loved. They discussed that the sin of private property is gluttony and greed for those with ambition to accumulate excess, and that society has a responsibility to protect not only the vulnerable from exploitation, but the wealthy from dehumanization. Many of the Democratic subjects identified that by taxing the rich in order to help the poor, part of this mission can be accomplished. Meanwhile, the Christian Republicans also paint a narrative, in conjunction with their political/religious theory of Institutional Christianity, which believes that private property is an inherent right from God. They promote a responsibility that Jesus gave them to be good stewards over what is materially given to them and it is good to gain more, which is

simply a sign that God is blessing you more. This meaning unit's core theory comes back to a common belief that we have seen in this research among Republicans, which is libertarianism and individualism. This belief is illustrated throughout all of the Republican's significant statements, where they talk about one's private property as essential to their life, and no one has a right to take that away from them. They see private property as a material sign of righteousness and blessings by God, for being industrious, good stewards, and hard workers reaping the rewards from God. This study went into much depth in chapter 3 and 8 when discussing the notion of property in Christian scripture. Whether it was from the Old Testament with the Law of Jubilee and Moses' Covenant with the Land⁹², the Book of Mormon's principles of the Law of Consecration and United Order⁹³, the many prophets⁹⁴ who condemned self-interest and the hoarding of land to the detriment of the poor and needy, to the ministry and parables of Jesus⁹⁵ preaching to overcome worldly and selfish desires and instead give to the poor and needy. It is the interpretation of these verses that divides the clusters and yields different policy positions.

Republican as Exemplar of Institutional Christianity

This research reveals, specifically about the Institutional Christianity political/religious cluster and with it, its champion the Christian Republican politicians,

⁹² Leviticus 25:2-7; Exodus 23:11; Leviticus 19:9-10; Leviticus 23:22; Leviticus 25:10-11; Leviticus 25:23

⁹³ Doctrine and Covenants 42:30-31, Doctrine and Covenants 51:3, Doctrine and Covenants 104:16 & 18, Doctrine and Covenants 52:40

⁹⁴ 1 Kings 21; Amos 2:6-7; Amos 8:4; Hosea 4:1-2; Hosea 12:8; Hosea 13:16; Isaiah 3:14-15; Isaiah 58:7; Micah 2:2; Micah 6:12; Habakkuk 2:5; Jeremiah 5:28-29; Jeremiah 22:13 & 17; Ezekiel 22:29

⁹⁵ Rich Young Ruler (Matthew 19:16-22; Mark 10:17-27; Luke 18:21-25); the beggar Lazarus (Luke 16:19-23); Tearing down barns (Luke 12:16-21; Matthew 6:19-21); Money-changers (John 2:13-16); Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37); Sheep and Goats (Matthew 25:31-46); Sermons on the Beatitudes (Luke 6:20-26; Matthew 5:1-12)

many signifying factors that stand out to differentiate each from the opposing cluster. For example, Republicans who have the identity of Christianity as their faith, in overwhelmingly majority, have very specific characteristics. They believe the core characteristic of Christianity is following the rule of law, both in society and with regards to Biblical mandates. However, when pressed on which identity is more salient, they place society's contract of the Constitution as primary importance with their identity of a politician. Republican politicians take a literal interpretation of Christian scriptures which is reading and understanding it word-for-word. They view God as a judging God who gives humankind the agency and freedom to make their own decisions and deal with the consequences. All of this maintains their theory of justice and governance from a libertarian perspective with an emphasis on punishment. It is from their libertarian philosophy that they see their function of a politician as a champion of individualism, fighting for life, liberty, and property. From this individualistic perspective, the Republicans shape their opinions on a variety of important policies. They see the policy debate around immigration as being protectionist promoting anti-immigration policy and asserting that people must be held responsible for their actions and obey the letter of the State's law. They see public policy on health care as promoting an individual's personal responsibility and choice to take care of their own selves, that government should not be in the business of taking care of everyone. They are loyalist to the capitalistic free and unfettered market, asserting that each person has the right to make their own decisions of what to do with their own money. Finally, they maintain a commitment to private property as an inherent right from God, and that one's private material wealth is a signifier of God's blessings and rewards upon them.

Democrat as the Prototype of Natural Christianity

Christian Democrats are the standard bearers for Natural Christianity in this society and present an alternative to the philosophy of Institutional Christianity and worldly pursuits. In total uniformity, as revealed in this research, a Democrat generally has high salience with their Christian identity and offers uniquely different practices of faith than their opponents. Christian Democrats identify the core characteristics of Christianity as selflessness and love-based, which is identified within Jesus' sermon on the Beatitudes. With this in mind, Democrats adjust by placing a greater importance on their faith and the Christian scriptures than any other laws or contracts. Moreover, they approach the Bible and extra-Biblical scriptures with a hermeneutical interpretation, one that analyzes the history, culture, and the context of the scripture located within the large Biblical narrative. These Christian Democrats view God as a loving and caring God who has a personal relationship with each of his children, a relationship that is centered on what God is all about, love. These views of God and Christendom all inform their theory of justice and governance, the theories of egalitarianism and communitarianism, which intersect with their theology and philosophy. From these theories and from their commitment to their faith, these Christian Democrats see their function as a political actor that promotes collectivism, that the needs of the community supersede the needs of the individual. It is from the precepts of their Christian faith embedded in a collectivist perspective that the Democrats form a position on various public policy issues. The Democrats see immigration indubitably as a Biblical mandate to be supportive of the stranger, foreigner, sojourner, immigrant to the land, regardless of status; they believe in following the spirit of God's law, which is a higher law to live by. They see health care,

as they profess Jesus would and did see it, which is to do everything in your power to heal and aid those who are infirmed and in pain through government intervention, providing assistance for all. They reserve damning and harsh judgment for the selfishness and greed instilled in this culture due to capitalism, and instead promotes a heavily regulated marketplace that can protect the vulnerable and liberate the oppressors. Finally, all the Democrats saw the concept of property as God's and must be used for the collective benefit of all. They rebuke the idea of accumulation of wealth and assert that society must be ordered to share in its surplus, so that none may suffer. Moreover, these Democrats adjust in their worldviews to incorporate their understanding of scripture and remain relevant to modern culture.

This research has exposed that the divide between the two clusters is vast and deep. Perhaps, this difference should be assumed. Both clusters believe that they have the correct application of Christian faith and they see the other side as erred. Because of how different each cluster truly is when it comes to incorporating their faith they rarely connect in the political arena. An example of this basic separation is highlighted by doing a quick word search within the complete transcribed interviews of the subjects, revealing a completely different vernacular, vocabulary, and symbolism. When all nine Republican transcribed interviews were placed in one document and all seven Democratic interviews in a separate document and searched for meaningful words within each, I found some very striking and important results. For example, a search for how many times the word "Love" was used, Democrats said it 49 times, while Republicans said it 17. Also, a search for the word "Poor", Democrats used it 16 times, while the Republicans said the word once. In the same vein, a search for a combination of the Beatitude words, "Compassion",

“Caring”, and “Forgiveness”, Democrats said these words 34 times, while Republicans said them only 8 times. Next, a search for the words “Individual Responsibility”, Republicans used that phrase 73 times, while the Democrats never used that phrase, not once. Also, a search for the word “Freedom” and found that Republicans used that word 48 times, while the Democrats only used it twice. Finally, a search for the word “Law”, Republicans used it an astoundingly 128 times, and the Democrats used it 45 times. This simple analysis tells us that the political parties are very different in their Christian faith. This analysis yielded that in seven interviews and over 7 hours of interviewing time, the Democrats were the only party to focus on the concepts of love, compassion, care, forgiveness, and the poor. While, with over nine interviews and over 9 hours of interview time, the Republicans were the only party to focus on the concepts of Law, freedom, and personal responsibility.

Dissonance

A pivotal piece of this research is the psychological experience of dissonance. One of the questions asked to each of the participants on public policy is if and how they might experience dissonance between their philosophical view and their faith. The results received were telling. This research found subjects whose responses indicated that they believed their worldviews were congruent. Also, these data showed a significant amount of recognized dissonance from the interviewees. That is not to say there still is dissonance from the subjects who did not recognize it. There are quite a few explanations for the source these results. Perhaps the subjects truly had high salience with their faith and were able to congruently integrate it into their political behavior. Perhaps they

actually had low salience of their Christian identity and were simply ambivalent to this paradox. Perhaps they didn't know the answer, that they are not theologians and simply did not know what scripture said about an issue. Finally, there is a possibility that the dissonance is a mental disorder or psychological coping mechanism that separates multiple identities and adjusts, jumping in and out of them as fitting for one's needs.

When I asked the question of "how does their view reconcile with their Christian faith and how do they cope with dissonance if any", the majority of respondents denied any dissonance and asserted that their faith and political behavior are congruent. More specifically, regarding the Democrats, six of the seven responded that their views on immigration, health care, capitalism, and private property mirror what Christian scripture says. They exhibited high salience of their Christian identity throughout the whole interview and expressed a well-rounded knowledge of scripture to speak intelligently to these issues. The one outlier, Sissy, responded to each question that she simply did not know, that she had a good idea, but ultimately was not well-versed enough to state with conviction that her views aligned with scripture. As for the Republican responses, which were much more mixed, a good portion of the Republicans asserted that their political view is in congruence with their faith. Of those Republicans that stated their political action and faith are congruent a large portion qualified their answers to the interviewer. Meanwhile, for every public policy question, around 2 - 4 Republicans identified dissonance between their political view and what the Christian scriptures say on the issue. This is highly important, because these Republicans had the same perspective and opinions on immigration, health care, capitalism, and private property as the rest of the

Republican subjects, yet they identified that their view is not consistent with scripture and that dissonance exists.

This issue of dissonance is of utmost importance to this research. Scholars and theologians may have speculated and guessed that the results would reflect Democrats fitting into the Natural Christianity cluster and Republicans fitting into Institutional Christianity cluster, but the notion of recognized dissonance and what that says regarding the efficacy of a specific cluster is significant. Excluding the one Democrat and one Republican who simply identified that they did not know the background of their thought, in that they were limited in understanding scriptural references due to lack of knowledge. This also might be the case for some who did not recognize a dissonance. There is the potential that these subjects who do not recognize dissonance generally don't understand the theory or theological and philosophical references of their thought. However, in taking these subjects at their word, and assuming they might be in a more informed position than most, we find three possible outcomes. The politician knows what they are talking about and identifies that their faith and political action are congruent or are dissonant, but they are knowledgeable enough to recognize this distinction. The politician doesn't know that their faith and political action are incongruent, or does know but chooses not to state it, and are simply ambivalent to the conflict and instead uses it strategically to deceive. Finally, the politician could be a true believer and does not know that dissonance exists due to a mental disorder and well employed coping mechanisms.

First off, the intentional compartmentalization of one's faith and political action as attributed to one's ambivalence to the notion of dissonance reveals a low salience in one's Christian identity. This is a purposeful action of not publically recognizing one's

dissonance because of strategy. This notion of ambivalence, as Merton and Barber (1976) identify, helps to explain the participants whose responses don't seem to fit anywhere in scripture, but yet they attempt to qualify that they do. These incongruent responses could be reflected within both of the cluster's responses depending on interpretation. Embedded in these responses is the sense that they are callused to the conviction of scripture and are simply using Religion as a political tool to get re-elected or adjust to some other political outcome. Many of their responses may seem like far-fetched justifications⁹⁶. To these subjects, dissonance is negotiated⁹⁷. It is how they thread the needle and complete a circle without bursting the frail bubble they are blowing for themselves.

Now with many of these respondents affirming that their faith is congruent with their political opinions, there is the potential that many of these subjects are true believers, and are simply unknowingly employing strategic coping mechanism to deal with the dissonance or mental disorder. This is the unintentional compartmentalization of one's faith and political action in order to cope with dissonance. To these subjects, they respond with conviction and in their heart believe that God is inspiring them to act in a certain way, yet those actions may not be reflected in Christian scripture. The 2010 study by Siltan, Flannelly, Galek, & Ellison exposes part of the mental struggle that some of these respondents experience, that perhaps their anxiety, paranoia, compulsions, and

⁹⁶ Examples of this justification are with immigration they stated that they are being "*humane*" and "*Godly*" by "*protecting this nation and constitution*" and "*punishing those who break the law*". Regarding health care, they justified their congruence by stating that "*the Bible is about individual responsibility*" and "*no where in the Bible does it say that the Government should help the poor*". For capitalism, they simply stated that "*Capitalism is supported by the Bible*", with a couple of respondents using the parable of the Talents to support this position. Lastly, with the topic of private property, the qualification was that "*God wants us to be blessed with property*", sort of the eudemonistic perspective.

⁹⁷ Jesus uses the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Matthew 18:23-35) as an example of a powerful bureaucrat/politician who is cunning, shrewd, merciless and makes political calculations that aid him, even when tremendous grace had been afford unto him.

obsessions are so grand that it produces a schizophrenic dynamic allowing one's mind to compartmentalize two incongruent "truths" and manifest them into one. Psychologists identify specific coping mechanisms that the brain uses to deal with this cognitive dissonance such as self-deception (Cowan, 2005), which is a purposeful delusion the brain creates attempting to reconcile two opposing identities. There is also rational ignorance (Downs, 1957; Salkovskis, 1996), which is the ability of the brain to ignore or purge any conflicting foreign thought. Finally, psychologists see confirmation bias (Nickerson, 1998; Wason, 1960; Hall, 1983) as the other tool the brain uses to reconcile the dissonance, by selectively interpreting new or alternate information to fit one's own worldview. This is not strategic, but rather, subconsciously administered by those who unknowingly compartmentalize incongruent thoughts.

Finally, the most pivotal portion of this research regarding dissonance is from those who identify that their political behavior and ideology does not reconcile or is not congruent with their Christian faith. This study was able to provide data that identified the dissonance that is realized by some of the subjects. Regarding the issue of immigration and possible dissonance, Republican subject #3, Teddy Niles stated, *"There's always a potential for compromise and sometimes you have to compromise on public policy issues"*. He states how he is able to cope with the dissonance, *"You should never compromise on fundamental moral issues, but very few things we do in the legislature are fundamental moral issues."* He recognized that his view on immigration was a "compromise", but justified it stating, that immigration is not a fundamental moral issue". The only other subject to identify dissonance was Republican respondent #11, Jose Hector stating, *"I see a difference, not necessarily in how I feel, but I see a*

difference” when asked about his view on immigration and what Christian scripture has to say. He identified in his answer that he copes with the dissonance, because it isn’t “how I feel”, yet he still saw a difference between his view on immigration and what Christian scriptures say on it.

Next, regarding the issue of health care, Republican subject #3, Teddy Niles had this to say regarding dissonance, *“I think there is a conflict in determining where does your Christian faith bring you on that”*. He did not state how he copes with this dissonance, but he recognized he experiences dissonance. Also, Republican subject #16, Trisha, identified her dissonance responding, *“Probably there’s a limitation... I have to say there’s a bit of a difference.”* Trisha responded to the question of how she “copes” with the dissonance, she stated, *“I am so not saying the Democrats are less religious or Christian, I know better. In a way you’re more Christian.”* She was able to recognize that there is a difference between her view on healthcare and what scripture has to say. She even identified that the Democrats probably have more of a Christian perspective on healthcare. Furthermore, Republican subject #2, Bernie, responded to his dissonance, using ignorance, he states, *“I don’t think there’s anything in the constitution that mandates that you get free healthcare from the government. I don’t think I can tell you what, or point to the scriptures as far as healthcare.”* This use of admission by subtraction also reveals his primary identity when decision-making, using the Constitution first and ignoring what Christian scripture would say. Also, Republican respondent #4, Greg, identified dissonance in a roundabout way. He stated, *“You know I drive a Lexus, should I be driving a Ford and giving more money to the poor? Maybe. But, there’s a certain amount of ego and pride that enter into a lot of decisions.”* When

asked how he copes with this dissonance, he responded, *“scriptures... put on us a duty to act, but they don’t compel, it means we should act voluntarily not be compelled to act.”*

This negotiation is between identifying dissonance and justifying it by not using government intervention because the duty to act is an individual request, not something that government must compel society to do.

The economic system of capitalism is the third public policy issue that this research studied. There were four Republican respondents that acknowledged that dissonance exists between their view and what the Christian scriptures state regarding capitalism. Republican respondent #2, Bernie, used an ignorance defense when asked about dissonance, he stated, *“I don’t think the scriptures themselves say anything on (capitalism)... I’m not a historian to pinpoint scriptures.”* Republican respondent #3, Teddy Niles, was not as ambiguous, but still used the ignorance defense stating, *“I don’t know what the scriptures says; I don’t know it says a lot about business one way or another. I don’t know of anywhere where, other than the moneychangers in church, but I think that was a different issue.”* When I asked if he experiences dissonance, he responded, *“I don’t think there’s a conflict. I mean, there could be. The greedy capitalist has no consideration for the rules and only consideration for themselves and what’s good for their bottom line, it’s not a very Christian attitude.”* These two subjects alluded to the dissonance that they see regarding capitalism as incongruent with Christian scriptures. Republican respondent #11, Jose Hector, was more blatant when asked about his potential dissonance, he stated, *“I feel like I’m being greedy a lot with my time and other resources.”* Though this self admission of dissonance, he also justified capitalism using Jesus’ parable of the Talents. Lastly, Republican respondent #16, Trisha, was matter of

fact when responding. She stated, “*Yeah definitely there’s a difference*”. When I asked how she copes with the dissonance, she states that, “*We can’t do Christian on the nation, because they are not, unfortunately, not really a Christian nation anymore.*” Her blunt response to the dissonance is revealing, as well as her justification for why she supports capitalism, in that this nation is no longer a Christian nation. This dissonance on capitalism was best explained by Peck (1967) and the creative shift by St. Jerome from *agape* (the original Greek word) to *caritas* (Latin word), which put an emphasis on individual alms-giving of charity versus the original intent of communal responsibility to show God’s love.

The final public policy issue and display of dissonance in this study is on the topic of private property. This question is inherently tied to a libertarian philosophy, of life, liberty and property. Only two respondents identified dissonance with their political perspectives and actions. First was Republican respondent #3, Teddy Niles, who responded when asked about if he experiences dissonance, stating, “*I think there’s a potential for conflict. I don’t think there is anything wrong with having a nice car, having a boat, having a nice home, I think that’s all fine.*” However, he later states that, “*In the Bible, don’t hoard up treasures on earth, amassing all the private property and wealth that you can, I think that conflicts with Christian principles.*” This subject identifies the dissonance, but justifies his own private property and wealth accumulation. The other Republican respondent #16, Trisha, also identified a dissonance between her support for private property and what Christian scripture says regarding private property. She states, “*Is there any private property in the scriptures? I don’t know. I don’t think so, they were all communal. You farmed and it was a communal thing, there wasn’t any private*

property. I think that's something we invented... Everything we have is given to us by God." When I asked how she copes with the dissonance, she stated, *"I think we have to have stewardship over what we're given... we just need to be responsible."* This display highlights the dissonance that is seen between a justification for private property and what Christian scriptures say about private property.

The respondents highlighted notions of congruence and dissonance within each of their responses. Where the totality of Democratic respondents stated that they experience congruence, with one saying ultimately she wasn't well-versed enough to support that claim. The Republican respondents had a different mixture, anywhere from two to four respondents for each topic clearly identified dissonance between their political perspective and actions and with their faith. While the rest of the respondents stated that their political action and perspective is congruent with their faith, except for the respondent who stated that they weren't sure. This admission of dissonance is highly significant to the overall analysis of Institutional versus Natural Christianity. For members of a specific group to expose any incongruence, this may jeopardize the foundation of one's political/religious theoretical cluster. Particularly, with the Republican respondents, this revelation opens up the questions for the rest of the subjects who purported similar perspectives but did not claim any dissonance, was their simply a discursive exercise in spectacle?

Expressions of Justice Theory

This research has examined two theoretical clusters that were informed by differing theories of justice. Leathers (1984) highlights the stark contrast between these

clusters where, “their interpretations of the Christian faith as a political and social ideology and policies are polar opposites on the ideological spectrum” (p. 1160). Natural Christianity has its foundation in the political and justice theories of egalitarianism and communitarianism. Natural Christianity supports the goal of creating equity for all, ensuring that each person has an equal opportunity and equal resources at succeeding, and placing the goals of the community ahead of any individualistic or selfish motive. Institutional Christianity is embedded in the political and justice theories of libertarianism and utilitarianism. Institutional Christianity promotes the notion of individualism, where one’s liberty, life, and property are placed as the primary God-given right to all, and any infringement upon these results in an appropriate punishment. Where Institutional Christianity presents as hegemony in contemporary American culture, with the ubiquitous value in capitalism and individualism, Natural Christianity as counter-hegemony, presents with the values of community, selflessness, and equality.

The Democratic respondents typified the Natural Christianity cluster within their statements. The Democratic significant statements paralleled the foundational justice theories of Natural Christianity. These statements reflected a Hobbesian (1651/1982) notion of human nature that is inherently evil and self-oriented and needs regulation to order society. This ordering is performed through a social contract, as Kant (1785/2012) identifies, which is forced upon society from the intent of what is Right, and not as a means for individual benefit. The Hobbesian and Kantian conditioning of society is fundamental to the Democratic subjects responses reflected within Western philosophies of social contract justice. Rawlsian (2001) thought adds to this social contract a principle that exemplifies the Democratic subjects’ answers, the idea that when ordering a society,

construct the conditions to provided the “greatest benefit to the least-advantaged members of society” (p. 43). The contemporary philosophies reflected in Natural Christianity and the Democratic responses are communitarianism and egalitarianism. Many of the responses from the Democrats talked about the communitarian idea of a “common good”⁹⁸ (MacIntyre, 1999), and the egalitarian (Neilson, 1986; Nell & O’Neill, 1972) notion of equality of basic conditions and life prospects for everyone in society. Their responses also identified critiques and beliefs on economic systems. Much of what Natural Christianity is, and what the Democratic subjects stated, reflects the critique of free-market Capitalism as simply evil and selfish (Weakland, 1980). The respondents instead promoted a system of economic welfare (Benhabib, 1994) and low-risk Capitalism (Keynes, 1936; Nielson, 1986) that can best achieve the goals of Jesus’ teachings and move society closer to harmony.

The Republican respondent’s significant statements exemplified the Institutional Christianity cluster and the fundamental theories of justice that support it. Their statements echo the Lockean (1690/2004) and Smithian (1759/2007) notion of human nature that of inherently goodness, or at least that human nature is a blank slate, from which to act. This individual liberty and freedom to act on one’s own accord is a trajectory of libertarian Western philosophy of justice. Also embedded in the Republican responses is a utilitarian principle of consequences from the actions one generates that produce a pleasure or utility. This utilitarianism philosophy of Jeremy Bentham (1789) along with John Stuart Mill (1871), has an etiology in Hobbesian thought, however, it is applied within the constructs of Institutional Christianity that maintains the idea of

⁹⁸ The idea of the “common good” is that we all have a shared responsibility in society, where everyone is affected by each other’s actions, and we must establish a value in the basic equality of all in a community.

punishment and consequences for one's actions. Furthermore, this philosophy is supported by a core libertarian (Bastiat, 1850/1998; Hospers, 1974; Nozick, 1974; Machan, 1989) belief that the *Greatest-Happiness Principle* (Mill, 1871, p. 92) is reflected in the commitment to preserving one's life, liberty, and property. This libertarian theory of justice is also closely connected with laissez-faire free market capitalism (Friedman, 1987; Hudson, 2010), and is reflected throughout all of the Republican respondent's answers. Ultimately, the Institutional Christianity cluster, as promoted by the Republican subjects of this study, as Max Weber (1904/1958) described, base their Christian defense of individualism and liberty from a theory of utilitarianism, libertarianism, and an economic system of capitalism.

What it Means

This study was able to put together a more realistic perspective of contemporary Christian Arizona politicians by connecting their worldviews to theory and understanding in what ways dissonance may be experienced. From the Natural Christianity cluster, which is reflected in the Democratic subjects' responses, to the Institutional Christianity cluster and their proponents, the Republicans respondents; this research has solidified the research question that these political parties are reflected within their corresponding clusters. One of the more revealing results that came out of this research is the notion of dissonance, and how the Democratic subjects reported zero dissonance, but the Republican subjects identified dissonance in their worldviews. Perhaps the Democratic subjects explained their adjustments as necessary to engage in contemporary culture and society. Anywhere from two to four Republican subjects reported that they identify

dissonance between their political perspectives and their Christian faith. It is highly significant if just one politician, non-the-less four, would admit to a notion of dissonance within their political behavior and faith. Herein lays the crux of this research and what it means to other Republican respondents who share the same political perspective. What it means to Democratic respondents who have the opposite worldview and what does this tell us about the Christian faith community whom are generally responsible in teaching its members what scripture says about this world.

The results from this study carry significant meaning to the fields of politics and Religion. While many politicians, including those mentioned here, could simply be perpetuating a political strategy that is reflected through their ambivalence, others could be true believers and are psychologically invested in being a follower of Christ. Either way one's Christianity is constantly on display, intentionally to serve a purpose or unintentionally in one's service to others. The conclusions from this research may have profound effects upon a democracy, where its citizenry will have more information about what their politicians think. The results from this study regarding the dissonance that is expressed by some Republican subjects yield an analysis that asks: are these expressions of dissonance wrong or do the other Republicans colleagues who don't recognize it engage in coping mechanism?

Many of these politicians are simply rationalizing their contradictions and strategically coding their worldview into their Christian faith. As Stoler (1997) when writing about political behavior, that these political games are nothing more than a "psychological and cognitive assessment of human behavior... as analytic strategies that deftly circumvent questions of power" (p. 101). In other words, there is a reason why

politicians use the Christian faith in a strategic way. As Rodriguez and Weingast (2003) posit, they are generally “maximizing their own interests” (p. 1431), and perhaps do so in a way where they pay “no price for grand standing or mischaracterization” (p. 1539). This type of behavior is re-election seeking and political positioning with the hopes of moving up in the political world of power (i.e. leadership positions, higher office, appointed bureaucrat, etc.).

The effectiveness of this type of positionality is tantamount to none. Institutional Christianity, as hegemony, presents as an elaborate script that is well rationalized and appearing void of dissonance. As mentioned in Chapter 4 of this study, the strategic positioning of this cluster capitalizes on the internal desires and wants of a public not too keen on perpetual selflessness. As seen in this study, Institutional Christianity utilizes a myriad of techniques to deal with dissonance and rationalizes incongruent worldviews. As subject #1, Thomas Job identifies, one side tends to focus on fear. “*Fear is one of the most powerful tools, not as effective as love, but a whole lot easier.*” Also, a tool that is evident in many of the Republican responses is the use of propagandistic slogans, where nobody is represented and the humanity is removed from it, and in turn it becomes a violent attack. A perfect example of this is with subject #6, Gary Harris, who stated, “*I think people should receive a hand up not a hand out*” and “*You want a helping hand, look at the end of your own arm.*” These slogans were used when asked about how Gary Harris sees being a Christian and a Republican.

Only subjective inference can be obtained by the subjects who cited no dissonance. While leaving questions regarding their congruence of worldview and faith, these true believers showed there is just as much conviction and commitment on both

sides of the theological divide. Their words, taken at face value, produce two very different types of Christian expression. This narrative is long-running and deeply historical, from mammonistic virtues clashing with the God of the desert, to eudemonistic beliefs fought by the prophets of the Old Testament, and the apex of this clash between the Pharisees and Jesus; this divide is embedded in the apostle Paul's encouragement to Christians living in Rome to not be conform to the world, but be changed by renewing one's mind to Christ (Romans 12:2). Institutional Christianity and Natural Christianity will always be at odds, wherein, they promote such distinct and mutually-exclusive thoughts, that one is closer to God's heart and one is closer to a false-teaching.

Concluding Thoughts

As one who operates in multiple circles, I am regrettably aware that this study may be used as a sword rather than a plowshare. That perhaps, I, the researcher, will have to respond to folks who do not agree and may be upset for my observations and data reporting. My hope and challenge to those with such ill-intent is to request a civil dialogue, a discourse ethic, a discussion that mirrors the past, such as the writings between C.S. Lewis and George Bernard Shaw debating atheism and Christianity. For Institutional Christianity apologists, I would challenge them to posit constructive criticisms of my work and encourage a debate based in love and sincerity, so that both sides may reach consensus and love.

When evaluating the nature of this study, I am encouraged that it yielded results. I was initially suspicious that the subjects would be stand-offish and not want to speak freely. Perhaps the politicians were more eager to share because of the confidentiality I

assured them. This anonymity gave them the freedom to speak from their heart and not have to filter everything for political expediency. On the other hand, the politician subjects may have been very trusting of me, since I had developed a prior relationship with many of them and they felt comfortable to speak freely with me. This confidentiality allows this research to be explicated upon the general Christian politician and applied.

In concluding this study, I offer these constructive remarks of what can be done next. As much as this study could have gone in so many tangential directions, the identification of dissonance between political perspectives and Christian faith is a useful contribution to the scholarship of Religion and politics. That said I have many suggestions for future research that this study simply could not address. I think a research study that would examine the historical nature of past American politicians and their potential dissonance between what they did politically and their Christian faith is extremely interesting. For example, how might President Andrew Jackson reconcile the dissonance of his actions towards the Native American peoples and his Christendom? Also, I believe a similar study like the one I performed, aimed at clerical leaders within various Christian sects. Since I couldn't use intersectionality due to the confidential nature of this study, one might be able to interview Christian leaders within their various denominations and see how race, sex, and social class affect their results between Institutional and Natural Christianity. Furthermore, one could identify which segment of Christianity is more likely to identify as Institutional or Natural Christianity. Moreover, the result of this research has the potential to be used to present a guide in unifying Christian politicians into a collaboration of doing God's work. Lastly, these results could

be used as a manuscript to instruct Christian members of the public of what to expect from a Christian politician.

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APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT

Questions:

1. “What does being a Christian mean to you?”
2. “What does being a (Republican/Democrat) mean to you?”
3. “How do you think being a Christian and a (Republican/Democrat) influences your decisions on public policy?”
4. “Tell me about your view of Christian scriptures (i.e. Bible, Book of Mormon, Apocryphal, others)? How do you interpret their meaning?”
5. “What is your image/view of God?”
6. “What is the role of a Christian serving in government?”
7. “How do you interpret and understand justice?”
8. “What is your view on (x)? How does that view correlate with what you interpret the Christian scriptures say on (x)? How do you reconcile the differences (if any):
 1. Immigration and Illegal Immigration?
 2. Health Care? Emergency Care?
 3. Capitalism?
 4. Private Property?
 5. Any other issue that you would like to tell me about?”
9. “Is there any other information that you would like to tell me that you feel is important?”

APPENDIX B
CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONSENT STATEMENT

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

CONSENT FORM

“At the Intersection of Religion and Politics: How politicians reconcile dissonance or experience congruence between their faith and political action”

INTRODUCTION

The purposes of this form are to provide you (as a prospective research study participant) information that may affect your decision as to whether or not to participate in this research and to record the consent of those who agree to be involved in the study.

RESEARCHERS

Dr. Alan Gomez, Assistant Professor in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, along with co-investigator Edward Ableser, graduate student in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences has invited your participation in a research study.

STUDY PURPOSE

The purpose of the research is to gain a detailed understanding of how the contemporary Arizonan Christian state-level politician, knowingly or unknowingly, defends, enacts, and justifies their worldview of their Christian faith and political behavior.

DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH STUDY

If you decide to participate, then you will join a study involving research of contemporary Arizonan Christian state-level politicians. You will take part in an audio recorded interview, in which you will be asked general questions about your Christian faith and your political action. You will be allowed to use any materials (such as the Bible, Book of Mormon, or any other Christian reference) that might assist you in your responses. You will be allowed to skip any question you wish. You may take a break at any time for any length that you wish. You will be allowed to review your responses and make any changes to your interview after it is transcribed. If you feel you need more time, you may schedule a follow up interview to complete your responses.

If you say YES, then your participation will last for 1 to 1.5 hours at a location that is comfortable to you such as your legislative office, home or community center. You will be asked to reflect upon your Christian faith and political behavior over the time you have been elected. Approximately 16 of subjects will be participating in this study from Arizona’s legislature and state-wide elected officials.

RISKS

There are no known risks from taking part in this study, but in any research, there is some possibility that you may be subject to risks that have not yet been identified.

BENEFITS

Although there may be no direct benefits to you, the possible benefits of your participation in the research are the possible congruencies that may be identified in contemporary American politics and Christianity.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential. The results of this research study may be used in reports, presentations, and publications, but the researchers will not identify you. In order to maintain confidentiality of your records, Dr. Alan Gomez and

Edward Ableser will destroy all audio recordings after the completion of the study, along with any other identifying data. Electronic data will be erased and deleted and all hard data will be shredded and discarded. All electronic data will be stored on a password secured computer and all hard data will be locked in a file cabinet. Furthermore, you will be given a pseudonym, which will assist in maintaining confidentiality.

WITHDRAWAL PRIVILEGE

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. It is ok for you to say no. Even if you say yes now, you are free to say no later, and withdraw from the study at any time.

Your decision will not affect your relationship with the investigator or cause a loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled. All data will be destroyed after the completion of the study for those participants who withdraw.

COSTS AND PAYMENTS

There is no payment for your participation in the study.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT

Any questions you have concerning the research study or your participation in the study, before or after your consent, will be answered by Dr. Alan Gomez, P.O. BOX 874902 Tempe, AZ 85287, Mail Code: 4902 Phone Number: (480) 727-8270 and Edward Ableser P.O. BOX 874902 Tempe, AZ 85287, Mail Code: 4902 Phone Number: 480-343-1602.

If you have questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk; you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at 480-965 6788.

This form explains the nature, demands, benefits and any risk of the project. By signing this form you agree knowingly to assume any risks involved. Remember, your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefit. In signing

this consent form, you are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies. A copy of this consent form will be given (offered) to you.

Your signature below indicates that you consent to participate in the above study.

Subject's Signature

Printed Name

Date

INVESTIGATOR'S STATEMENT

"I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, the potential benefits and possible risks associated with participation in this research study, have answered any questions that have been raised, and have witnessed the above signature. These elements of Informed Consent conform to the Assurance given by Arizona State University to the Office for Human Research Protections to protect the rights of human subjects. I have provided (offered) the subject/participant a copy of this signed consent document."

Signature of Investigator_____ Date_____

APPENDIX C
DEMOGRAPHICS SHEET

Internal Code: _____

- 1) Age: _____ 2) Marital Status: _____
- 3) Highest Level of Education completed: _____
- 4) Gender: Male Female
- 5) What Political Party do you identify with?
 Republican Democratic
- 6) What is your racial identity: White, Black, Hispanic, Native American,
 Asian Pacific Islander, Bi/Multi – Racial _____
- 7) What is your socio – economic status: _____
- 8) Family’s Religious identity: _____
- 9) Christian denomination affiliation: _____
- 10) Frequency of: Church attendance _____, Scripture Study _____,
Individual/Family Prayer _____, Tithing _____.
- 11) Social and Political Issues which are most important to you:
- a) _____ b) _____
- c) _____ d) _____
- e) _____ f) _____

APPENDIX D
INFORMATION LETTER-INTERVIEWS

“At the Intersection of Religion and Politics:
How politicians reconcile dissonance or experience
congruence between their faith and political action”

Dear:

I am a graduate student under the direction of Professor Alan Gomez in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to gain a detailed understanding of how the contemporary Arizonan Christian state-level politician, knowingly or unknowingly, defends, enacts, and justifies their worldview of their Christian faith and political behavior.

I am inviting your participation, which will involve research of contemporary Arizonan Christian state-level politicians. You will take part in an audio recorded interview, in which you will be asked general questions about your Christian faith and your political action. You will be allowed to use any materials (such as the Bible, Book of Mormon, or any other Christian reference) that might assist you in your responses. You will be allowed to skip any question you wish. You may take a break at any time for any length that you wish. You will be allowed to review your responses and make any changes to your interview after it is transcribed. If you feel you need more time, you may schedule a follow up interview to complete your responses.

If you say YES, then your participation will last for 1 to 1.5 hours at a location that is comfortable to you such as your legislative office, home or community center. You will be asked to reflect upon your Christian faith and political behavior over the time you have been elected. No more than 16 of subjects will be participating in this study from Arizona’s legislature and state-wide elected officials. You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop the interview at any time.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty, your decision will not affect your relationship with the investigator or cause a loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled. All data will be destroyed after the completion of the study for those participants who withdraw. You must be 18 or older to participate in the study.

Although there may be no direct benefits to you, the possible benefits of your participation in the research are the possible congruencies that may be identified in contemporary American politics and Christianity. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential. The results and responses of this research study may be used in reports, presentations, and publications, but the researchers will not identify you and your name will not be known. In order to maintain confidentiality of your records, Dr. Alan Gomez and Edward Ableser will destroy all

audio recordings after the completion of the study, along with any other identifying data. Electronic data will be erased and deleted and all hard data will be shredded and discarded. All electronic data will be stored on a password secured computer and all hard data will be locked in a file cabinet. Furthermore, you will be given a pseudonym, which will assist in maintaining confidentiality.

I would like to audiotape this interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be taped; you also can change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know. The tapes will be destroyed once they are transcribed and saved in electronic format. All tapes will be locked in a file cabinet until they are destroyed. Once the data is saved on a computer, that file will be password protected on a secured hard drive until the completion of the study and then it will be destroyed.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team at: Dr. Alan Gomez, P.O. BOX 874902 Tempe, AZ 85287, Mail Code: 4902 Phone Number: (480) 727-8270 and Edward Ableser P.O. BOX 874902 Tempe, AZ 85287, Mail Code: 4902 Phone Number: 480-343-1602. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788. Please let me know if you wish to be part of the study.

APPENDIX E
RESEARCHER'S RESPONSES

Question #1 is: “What does being a Christian mean to you?” My response is:

I dedicate my life to sacrificing myself and my selfish ambition for my family, neighbor, and all of society as Christ has exhibited to me. It means that I serve others and treat others as I would have them treat me and not taking any account of injury or wrong but instead exhibiting God's love through my behavior, words, and deeds.

Question #2 is: “What does being a Democrat mean to you?” My response is:

That I recognize injustice and systematic oppression and work to correct all injustices and work to change systems of oppression to something which better reflects the concepts of love and Christian ideals which I believe in.

Question #3 is: “How do you think being a Christian and a Democrat influences your decisions on public policy?” My response is:

Being a Christian and Democrats highly influences every decision I make as an elected official. More importantly my Christian faith is tantamount to any other ideological or political theory that might persuade my decision-making. The ideals of my Christian faith, which is loving all of humanity, serving and being a servant unto the least in society is the direction in which I take each and every political decision. My Christian identity is always present when making a decision on public policy; I always consider what Jesus would want me to do when voting on a bill and how it affects the poor, the widowed, the orphan, the sick, the prisoner, and the foreigner to our land.

Question #4 is: “Tell me about your view of Christian scriptures (i.e. Bible, Book of Mormon, Apocryphal, other)? How do you interpret their meaning?” My response is:

I view scripture as the divinely inspired word of God which is intended to provide examples, instructions, and motivation of how we as followers of Christ should behave, think, and love each other. I interpret all scripture through the historical contextual lens in which it is written, weeding through the narrative in which it is written in order to get to the intent and meaning of what the Jesus Christ, prophets, ancient writers, and the apostles of Christ were trying to say.

Question #5 is: "What is your image/view of God?" My response is:

I view God as our heavenly father who desires to have an intimate and personal relationship with each and every one of us. I view God as a loving and forgiving and the embodiment of what love is. I dispel the notion that God is a vengeful, fearful, punishing God. As the Psalms say God knows each and every hair and fabric of our being, if that is true, any assault or act of pain on another human is an active pain and assaults on God.

Question #6 is: "What is the role of a Christian serving in government?" My response is:

I believe the role of a Christian serving in government is cling to the precepts and creed of our Christian faith regardless of differing denomination. A Christian public servant is to be held to the highest standard of model of Christian behavior and love. I believe we as Christians in government will be judged with a stricter measuring stick because of our ability to help and love more people or hurt and harm more people. I believe our role as a legislator is to mirror what Christ did while on earth which is to stand up for the sick and hurting, the poor and downtrodden, the widow and orphan, and the oppressed; and by fighting for justice through legislative action and community advocacy, we are

fighting for justice for all people.

Question #7 is: “How do you interpret and understand justice?” My response is:

To me justice is when both the oppressed and oppressor are liberated from the shackles of behavior, thoughts, and material manipulation which entraps us into harming others or being harmed ourselves. Justice is when both parties are emancipated from these selfish and individualistic paradigms which restrict each one of us from truly loving each other.

Question #8a is: “What is your view on Immigration and Illegal Immigration? How does that view correlate with what you interpret the Christian scriptures say on Immigration and Illegal Immigration? How do you reconcile the difference (if any)?” My response is:

It is evil to dehumanize brothers and sisters in God's kingdom based on their place of birth, in doing this we dehumanize our heavenly father and make a mockery of the Gospel. I believe in our state and our country immigration policies are driven by racial divides that are rooted in bias and prejudice. If we truly wanted to follow the precepts and commission of what Christ intended us to do we accept all individuals who wanted to better our society and work in unison for the betterment of all. I believe my view is absolutely consistent with what scripture says on immigration. We know that the prophets in the Old Testament ranging from Abraham and Moses up to Ezekiel and Jeremiah all commented on accepting the foreigner to the land. Moreover we have illustrations in the Old Testament where God sent down fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah for the sole purpose of their treatment on the foreigner to the land. I believe that my view reflects what scripture says, which is to love each person and

bring them into your society.

Question #8b is: “What is your view on Health Care and Emergency Care? How does that view correlate with what you interpret the Christian scriptures say on Health Care and Emergency Care? How do you reconcile the difference (if any)?” My response is:

Jesus Christ called upon all of us to heal the sick, to make the blind to see, and the lame walk. I do believe that much of what Christ did was miraculous through divine healing but I also believe that Christ gave each and every one of us science and innovation as a tool to do that simple calling which we're all supposed to heal the sick. Christ would have us provide preventative, interventions and remediation health care in the most complete and holistic way possible. I believe that this view is consistent with scripture and has substantial evidence throughout all Scripture. I believe as a policymaker I'm held to higher standard in which heavenly father asked of me to do whatever it takes to heal the sick. I am cognizant of the fact that political opponents of my view would argue that Scripture simply states it's an individual's responsibility to help the sick however as individuals we are part of a collective in government and we make choices individually to remediate the collective struggle or social-ill. Therefore taking into account Christ's admonishments of healing the sick we must act as individual political actors to use the resources society deems available to heal the sick, otherwise we are simply a Levite passing the beaten man on the side of the road.

Question #8c is: “What is your view on Capitalism? How does that view correlate with what you interpret the Christian scriptures say on Capitalism? How do you reconcile the difference (if any)?” My response is:

I view capitalism as a selfish and self serving economic system that appeals to mankind's animalistic instinct of self survival and individualism. I don't believe that there is anything godly or spiritual about the economic market of capitalism.

I believe that capitalism is a tool used by the adversary (Satan) to separate the rich and poor, the people with a lot and the people without any, a system that dehumanizes many in society.

I believe that my position on capitalism is congruent with scripture, moreover based upon the prophets of the Old Testament and their condemnation upon capitalist merchants throughout Assyria and Babylon as well as Jesus and the apostles and their critique and criticism of wealthy and capitalistic individuals, I believe that our economic market of capitalism is a social ill and flies directly in the face of Christ's Gospel message.

Question #8d is: "What is your view on Private Property? How does that view correlate with what you interpret the Christian scriptures say on Private Property? How do you reconcile the difference (if any)?" My response is:

The scripture clearly lays out a specific purpose for personal property in which human beings can have ownership to sustain their family. However, scripture also lays out a clear and unambiguous view that property in terms of resources must be communal and used for the betterment of the commonwealth. Throughout all Scripture, going back to the prophets and the time of Christ, scripture clearly identifies the use of communal property as a way to benefit all in society. With the Law of Jubilee and the Mormon law of Consecration, there is no denying the fact that private property for personal gain is discouraged and viewed as a sin;

whereas communal property for the benefit of all is the ideal which Christ asked of us. I believe that this view is in complete congruence with scripture.

Question #8e is: “What is your view on any other issues that you would like to tell me about?” My response is:

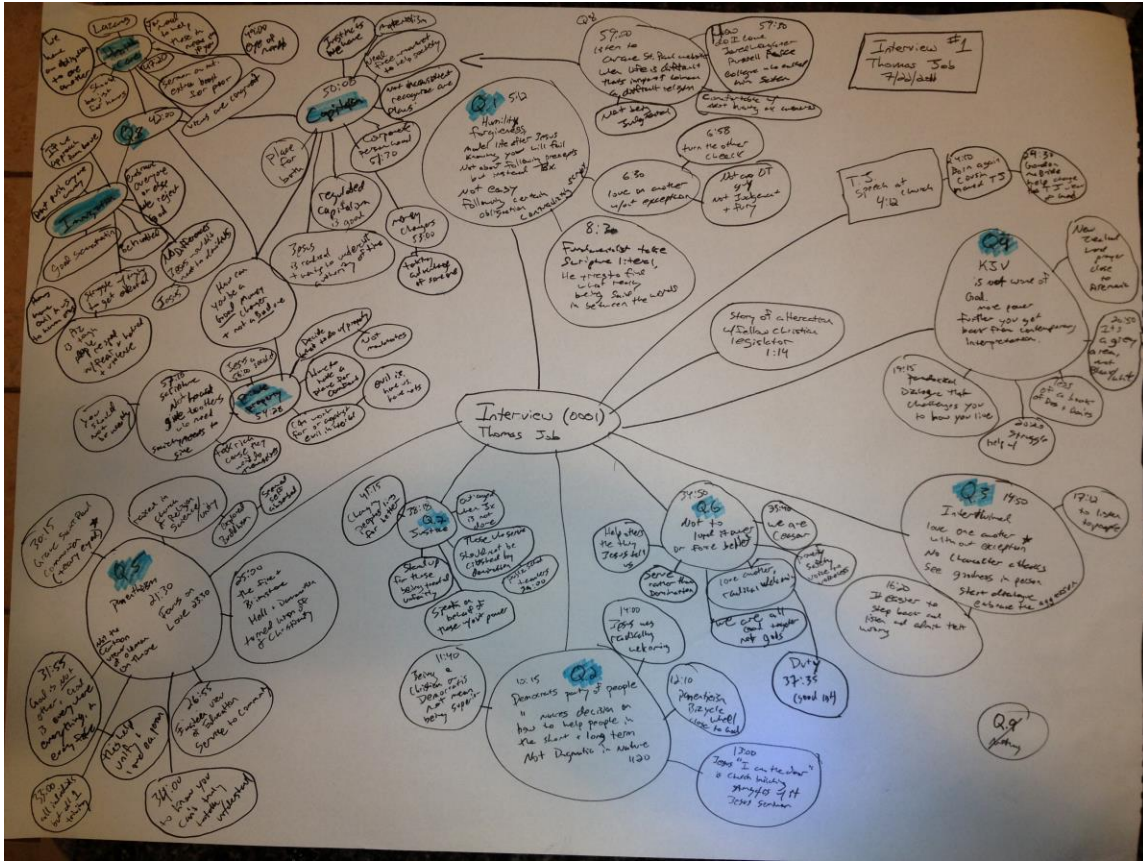
I am firmly opposed to capital punishment as a mechanism in which society punishes individuals who hurt others or break the law. Nothing in Scripture identifies this as a mechanism for crime prevention or punishment, moreover the standard and consistency in which it is carried out is so hypocritical that many innocent and lesser crimes are being killed by the state where worse crimes are getting off with lesser sentences. I believe that my view and scripture are completely in congruent.

Questions #9 is: “Is there any other information that you would like to tell me that you feel is important?” My response is:

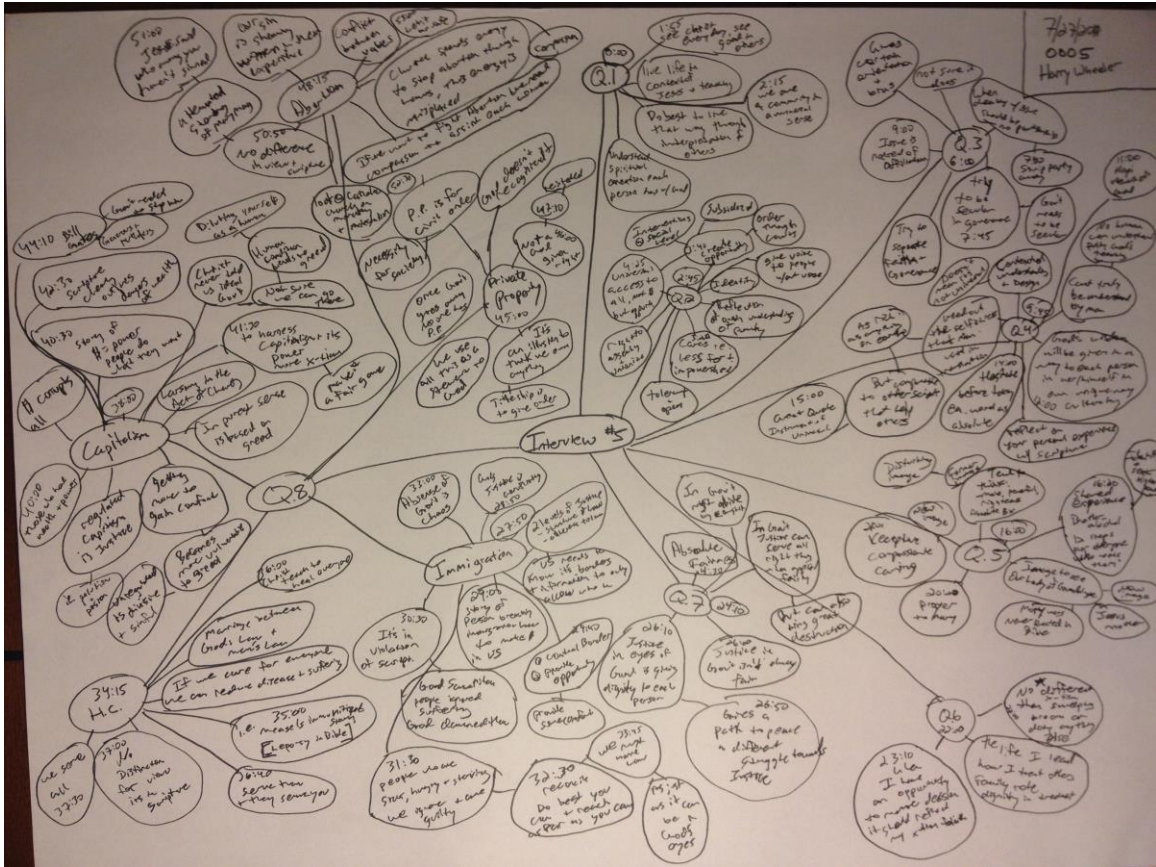
No response.

APPENDIX F
SPIDERGRAMS

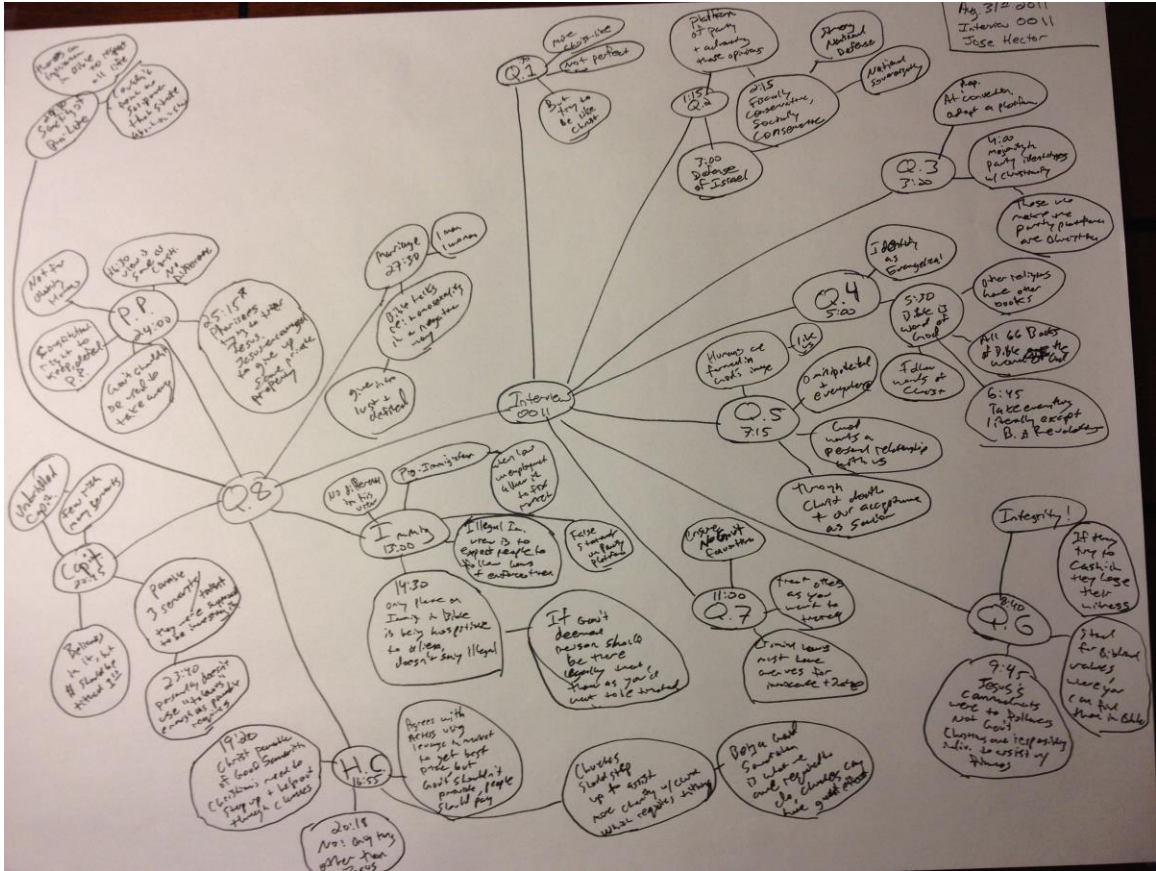
Thomas Job

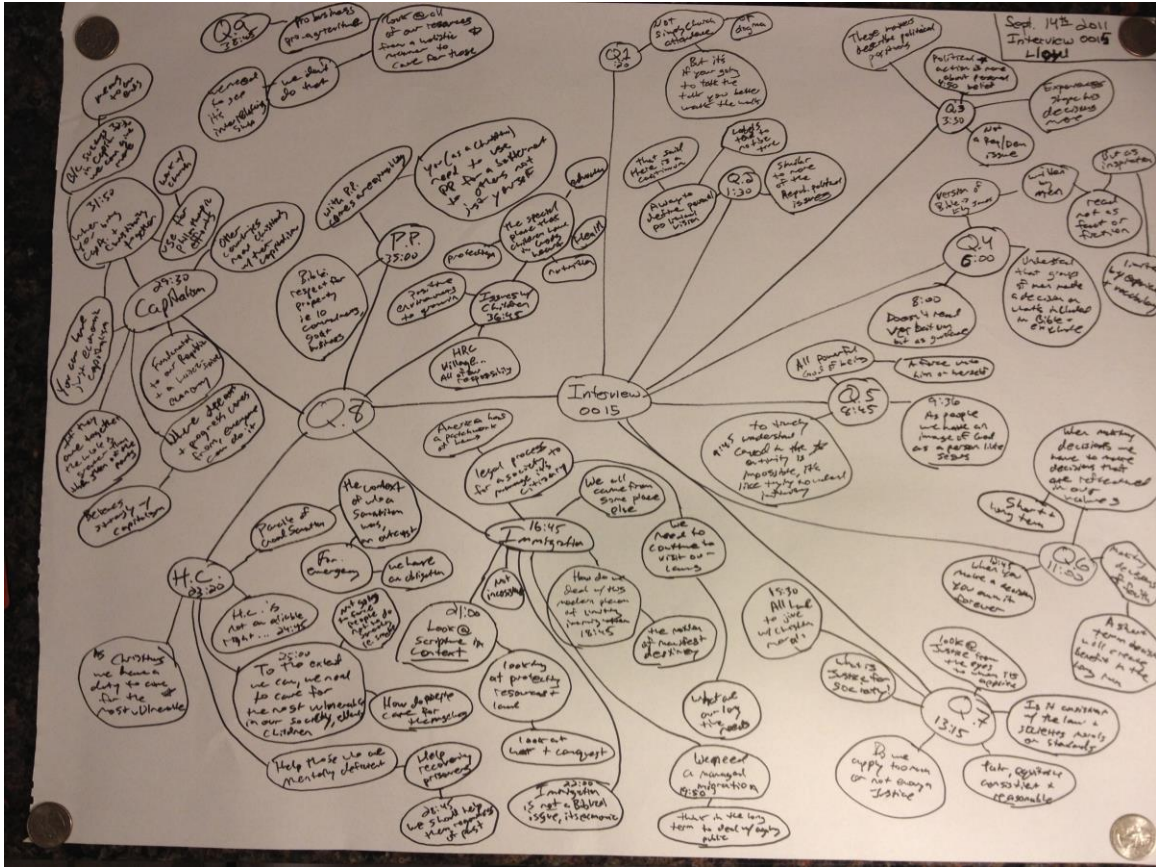


Harry Wheeler



Jose Hector





APPENDIX G
CODING SCHEME

Christian Characteristics

Beatitudes

SOCIAL JUSTICE
POOR
PERSECUTED
WALK THE TALK
MEEKNESS
KINDNESS
LOVE

Selflessness

HUMILITY
FORGIVING
SERVING
GOLDEN RULE
ACCEPTING

Christ-like

FOLLOW JESUS
BE LIKE CHRIST
BELIEVE IN BIBLE

Rule of Law

KEEP GOD'S COMMANDMENTS
SELF-RESTRAINT
FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES
OBEDIENCE
GOD'S AUTHORITY AND POWER

Scriptural Interpretation

Hermeneutical Interpretation

CONTEXT
NOT A DEAD DOCUMENT
GRAY AREAS
DEALING WITH CONTRADICTIONS
READING BETWEEN THE WORDS
NOT ABSOLUTE
INSTRUMENT FOR UNDERSTANDING
HISTORICAL MEANING
NOT LITERAL
SYMBOLISM

Literal Interpretation

OBEDIENCE TO LAWS OF NATION
DIRECTION
WE ARE SUBJECT TO KINGS AND RULERS
INDIVIDUAL
TRANSLATED AND INTERPRETED CORRECTLY
LITERAL
WORD OF GOD
WORD FOR WORD
ABSOLUTE TRUTH

View of God

Personal

EVERYWHERE AND EVERYTHING
SACRIFICES FOR ALL
IN EVERYONE

Loving

LOVE
ACCEPTING
COMPASSIONATE
UNDERSTANDING
CARING
FORGIVING
PEACEFUL
NONJUDGMENTAL
KIND

Freedom

ALLOWS US FREEDOM TO MAKE DECISIONS
ALLOWS US TO MAKE MISTAKES
OBEDIENCE LEADS TO BEING LIKE HIM
GIVE US AGENCY

Judgment

SANCTIONS
PUNISHMENT OF HELL
HOLDS US ACCOUNTABLE
DEAL WITH CONSEQUENCES

Theory of Government and Justice

Egalitarian

HELP CREATE EQUALITY FOR THOSE IN NEED

EVERYONE HAS AN EQUAL CHANCE
STRIVE FOR EQUALITY
USE EDUCATION TO COMBAT POVERTY
GOLDEN RULE
TREAT ALL FAIRLY

Communitarian

SERVE COMMUNITY
SPEAK AS ONE
GOVERNMENT IS NEEDED TO HELP
FIGHTING FOR THE OPPRESSED
GOVERNMENT PROVIDES RESOURCES EQUITABLY

Libertarian

GOVERNMENT IS THE PROBLEM
INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM
FREE MARKETS
PROTECT LIBERTIES
PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY
CONTROL OWN PROPERTY
LIFE, LIBERTY, PROPERTY

Punishment

PUNISH THOSE WHO DESERVE IT
ULTIMATE SANCTION IS HELL
GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IS TO PUNISH
HOLD PEOPLE ACCOUNTABLE
PENALTIES FOR VIOLATING LAWS
HARD WORK PAYS OFF

Primary Identity in Politics

Faith over Ideology

BEING A CHRISTIAN INFLUENCES ME FIRST
REFER TO FAITH WHEN MAKING POLITICAL DECISIONS
MY FAITH IS WHY I AM A POLITICIAN
DON'T WANT TO BE A HYPOCRITE
CHRISTIANITY IS BIGGER THAN IDEOLOGY
FAITH GUIDES ME IN EVERYTHING

Constitution over Faith

STRONG CONSTITUTION
FAITH INFORMS, NOT DICTATES
SCRIPTURE IS INDIVIDUAL
DEFEND LIBERTY AND FREEDOM

REPRESENT CONSTITUENCY
CHRISTIANITY DOES NOT DEFINE MY POLITICS

Function of a Christian Politician

Collectivism

GOLDEN RULE
EMBRACE ALL PEOPLE
SERVE COMMUNITY
VOICE FOR THE VOICELESS
HELP THOSE WHO SUFFER
CARE FOR THE POOR AND NEEDY
CREATE AN EVEN PLAYING FIELD
FOLLOW CHRISTIAN VALUES OF LOVE

Individualism

MAKE PEOPLE MORE FREE
FREEDOM TO MAKE OWN DECISIONS
FAITH INFORMS, NOT DICTATES
FREE AGENCY
WORK TO GET WHAT YOU NEED
INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY
JESUS WAS TALKING TO INDIVIDUALS, NOT
GOVERNMENT
SUFFER CONSEQUENCES FOR POOR CHOICES

Immigration

Pro-Immigration

SEA OF PEOPLE WHO ARE SUFFERING, CAN'T IGNORE
GOOD SAMARITAN
CREATE HUMANE LAWS
HELP ALL ACHIEVE AMERICAN DREAM
OUR LAWS HARM THE INNOCENT

Spirit of God's Law

RADICALLY WELCOMING
EMBRACE EVERYONE
LOVE
BREAK DOWN BARRIERS THAT DIVIDE
NOT JUDGING OTHERS
EVERYONE IS EQUAL
TAKE IN THE FOREIGNER/STRANGER/SOJOURNER

Anti-Immigration

SUPPORT STRICT LAWS PREVENTING ILLEGAL
IMMIGRATION
RIGHT TO PROTECT OUR BORDERS
NATION MUST PROTECT STANDARD OF LIVING
REWARDING PEOPLE FOR BAD BEHAVIOR

Letter of Man's Law

IT IS ILLEGAL, IT IS A CRIME
GOD DOESN'T WANT US TO VIOLATE THE LAW
NOT A RELIGIOUS QUESTION, A PRACTICAL ONE
WE HAVE TO OBEY THE LAWS

Congruence

MAN'S LAWS VIOLATE SCRIPTURE
WE NEED RECONCILIATION
CONSISTENT
NO CONTRADICTION
BY PUNISHING ILLEGAL ACTIONS, YOU ARE BEING
HUMANE
BIBLE SAYS TO PROTECT ONE'S LAND

Dissonance

DON'T KNOW, NOT A SCHOLAR
YOU HAVE TO COMPROMISE
THERE IS A DIFFERENCE
NOT SURE WHAT SCRIPTURE SAYS

Health Care

Government Assistance for All

WE ARE OBLIGATED TO CARE FOR EACH OTHER
A HEALTHY POPULATION HELPS US ALL
PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR THE POOR
CHRIST TEACHES US TO HEAL EVERYONE
HEALTH CARE IS A RIGHT
GOOD SAMARITAN
GOLDEN RULE
A NECESSITY, NOT A LUXURY

Personal Responsibility

CHRISTIAN DUTY TO BE PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE
NOT GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY
BE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR FAMILY
INDIVIDUAL ADMONITIONS

CHARITY
SOMEONE WILL ALWAYS BE IN NEED
NOT OBLIGATED TO HELP

Congruence

DENYING HEALTHCARE IS NOT CHRISTIAN
IT IS CONSISTENT
TOO MANY HYPOCRITES
SCRIPTURE SAYS TO PROVIDE FOR YOURSELF
SCRIPTURE DOESN'T SAY GOVERNMENT SHOULD HELP
POOR

Dissonance

I DON'T KNOW
THERE IS A CONFLICT
SCRIPTURE DOESN'T SAY MUCH
THERE IS A DIFFERENCE

Capitalism

Regulated Markets

NEED REGULATION
FREE MARKETS TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE POOR
WORK TO HELP COMMUNITY, NOT GET RICH
TAKE CARE OF EACH OTHER, BALANCE OUR
RESOURCES
CONSIDER THOSE HARMED BY CAPITALISM

Anti-Greed

MONEY CORRUPTS
BASED IN GREED
SINFUL
EXCESS IS SINFUL
PEOPLE ARE SLAVES TO MONEY

Free Markets

HAVE SELF INITIATIVE
CAPITALISM IS BEST SYSTEM
PARABLE OF THE TALENTS
CAPITALISM IS BASED IN SCRIPTURE
IS FUNDAMENTAL TO LIFE
HOARDING WEALTH IS A GOOD THING

Individualism

BE RESPONSIBLE FOR SELF

WORK OUT OUR SALVATION INDIVIDUALLY
RICH MAN IN SCRIPTURE IS INDUSTRIOUS AND
PRODUCTIVE
GOD GAVE US ABILITY TO MAKE GOOD DECISIONS
IF PEOPLE WANT TO EAT, THEY HAVE TO WORK

Congruence

JESUS WAS A SOCIALIST/COMMUNIST
WEALTH IS DANGEROUS
CONSISTENT
NO DIFFERENCE

Dissonance

THERE ARE NO SCRIPTURES ON CAPITALISM
I DON'T KNOW
I FEEL LIKE I AM GREEDY
THERE IS DEFINITELY A DIFFERENCE

Private Property

Shared Collective Ownership

HOARDING IS NOT GOOD
TAX THE RICH
CHRIST WANTED US TO GIVE EVERYTHING AWAY
HELP THE POOR
GOD OWNS EVERYTHING
PRIVATE PROPERTY IS NOT A GOD-GIVEN RIGHT
SHARED PROPERTY IS CHRISTIAN
COMMUNITY NEEDS MOST IMPORTANT
GREED IS SINFUL
CAMEL THROUGH THE EYE OF THE NEEDLE

Private Material Ownership

SANCTITY OF PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS
FUNDAMENTAL TO OUR SOCIETY
FREEDOM TO HAVE FREE ENTERPRISE
PARABLE OF THE TALENTS
RIGHTFUL ACCUMULATION OF PROPERTY
RESPONSIBILITY TO BE A GOOD STEWARD
GOVERNMENT HAS NO RIGHT TO TAKE IT
DEFEND AT ALL COSTS

Congruence

GIVE AWAY OUR EXCESS
JESUS WAS A COMMUNIST

CORRELATION

IN LINE WITH SCRIPTURE
NOTHING THAT SAYS NOT TO
NOTHING WRONG WITH LUXURY
GOD BELIEVES WE SHOULD HAVE PRIVATE PROPERTY

Dissonance

THERE IS CONFLICT, DON'T HOARD TREASURES ON EARTH
PRIVATE PROPERTY IS NOT IN SCRIPTURE
EVERYONE WAS COMMUNAL