THE FAITH OF THE FORCE:
THE STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS OF RELIGION IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

BY

FREDERICK A. COLEMAN III, MAJOR, USAF

A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF
THE SCHOOL OF ADVANCED AIR AND SPACE STUDIES
FOR COMPLETION OF GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

SCHOOL OF ADVANCED AIR AND SPACE STUDIES
AIR UNIVERSITY
MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA
JUNE 2012

APPROVAL

The undersigned certify that this thesis meets master's-level standards of research, argumentation, and expression.

_____

Lt Col MARK YEISLEY

_____

Dr. EVERETT C. DOLMAN

DISCLAIMER

The conclusions and opinions expressed in this document are those of the author. They do not reflect the official position of the US Government, Department of Defense, the United States Air Force, or Air University. In accordance with Air Force Instruction 51-303, it is not copyrighted, but is the property of the United States government.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Major Frederick A. Coleman received his commission through the Air Force Reserve officer Training Corps at the University of Saint Thomas in Saint Paul, Minnesota in May 1999. After attending undergraduate Air Battle Manager training in Panama City Florida, his first operational assignment was as an Air Weapons Officer in the 964th Air Command and Control Squadron at Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma. Major Coleman was just completing mission qualification training on September 11, 2001. Upon completion of training, he immediately deployed to the Middle East for the first of three deployments in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. Major Coleman ended up spending seven years at Tinker Air Force Base, during which time deployed around the world and held multiple positions within the squadron, including Flight Commander and Chief, Squadron Standardization and Evaluations. In June, 2007, Major Coleman was assigned to Elmendorf Air Force Base. While at Elmendorf, Major Coleman participated in operations and exercises around the world, and served as the Operations Group Chief of AWACS Mission Crew, the Chief of Wing Inspections, and the Wing Executive Officer. From Elmendorf, Major Coleman was selected to attend Air Command and Staff College, which he attended immediately prior to attending the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies.

Major Coleman has a bachelor's degree in both Biblical Studies and Psychology from Northwestern College in St. Paul, Minnesota. He also holds a master's degree in Psychology from Walden University and a Master's degree in Military Operational Art and Science from Air Command and Staff College. He is married to the love of his life and he and his wife are blessed with three children.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I recently hypothesized, over a glass of Glenlivet, about the possibility of human beings developing the capacity for telepathy through vibrations in molars. My wife told me it was the dumbest thing I'd ever said. While I am certain that I have indeed said much dumber things, I am eternally grateful for my wife's honest feedback. Her honesty, patience, and support through the entire SAASS school year, especially during the long hours of thesis writing, were beyond all expectations. She, and our children, have made me who I am today. So to my wife and our three amazing children, I say thank you, and I love you.

I would also like to thank Lt Col Mark Yeisley for his encouragement and direction. He shared my vision for this project when few others did, and gave me the opportunity to explore a contentious topic from an uncommon lens. He didn't always agree with my direction, and in fact, used the phrase, "you took a left turn at Albuquerque" on a number of occasions, but he kept me on track and did not let me get lost. I hope the reader will agree that I made it through Albuquerque.

Finally, Dr. Everett Dolman was also extremely helpful. In addition to reading and editing the manuscript along the way, he helped me ask the right questions. More than that, he also taught me how to make a logical argument, even if the topic is rather illogical, like the evolution of molar tooth vibrational telepathy.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the strategic implications of religion in the United States Air Force. While religion in the Air Force is often cast purely as a matter of personnel policy, this paper attempts to examine the implications of religion as they relate to strategy. The examination discusses the historical roots of religion in the United States and identifies current rates of religious affiliation in the nation as a whole, which are then compared to those within the military at large and within the Air Force specifically. With this historical and demographic foundation set, the author moves on to analyze the role of religion at the various levels of war: strategic, operational, and tactical. In the end, the author concludes that religious affiliations in the Air Force have very little strategic implications, but instead, lie mostly at the tactical level. The author concludes by making a number of observations and recommendations concerning the organizational and legal implications of religion at the tactical level.

CONTENTS

TABLES

Introduction

The Role of Religion in the Air Force

On September 1st, 2011, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General Norton A. Schwartz, released a memorandum to the entire service regarding religious neutrality. "Leaders at all levels," read the memo, "must balance Constitutional protections for an individual's free exercise of religion or other personal beliefs and its prohibition against governmental establishment of religion." Furthermore, leaders "must avoid the actual or apparent use of their position to promote their personal religious beliefs to their subordinates or to extend preferential treatment for any religion."[1]

Forty-four days later, General Schwartz released another memorandum for the service. This one was titled "A Declaration on Diversity." In this memorandum, General Schwartz beseeched Airmen across the ranks to embrace diversity, proclaiming that "diversity is a necessity," as it "aggregates our strengths, perspectives, and capabilities in a way that transcends individual contributions." "Therefore," concluded Schwartz, "consistent with our constitutional obligations, we will recruit, retain, and develop Airmen representative of the full spectrum of the American people whom we serve."[2]

The impetus placed on cultural awareness has been a resounding theme since 9/11, as evidenced by the promulgation of annual cultural training requirements and an uptick of culture and language courses in Professional Military Education across the force. Clearly there is great value in understanding the cultural idiosyncrasies of both our adversaries and our allies. And certainly religious beliefs have significant

---

[1] Gen Norton A. Schwartz, Chief of Staff, US Air Force, Memorandum for ALMAJCOM-FOA-DRU/CC, *Maintaining Government Neutrality Regarding Religion*, September 1, 2011.

[2] Gen Norton A. Schwartz, Chief of Staff, US Air Force, Memorandum for all Airmen, *Declaration on Diversity*, October 14, 2011.

effect on cultural idiosyncrasies. But are these messages just another beat on the culture drum, or are they something different?

This paper contends that General Schwartz, intentionally or not, is beckoning his Air Force to not only look outward, at the cultures of others, but also to look inward. Channeling the most ancient strategic theorist, Sun Tzu, General Schwartz seems to be saying, "know thyself."[3] The general's messages demand that Airmen take a long, hard look at their own religious beliefs in order to ask the question, "how does religion affect the United States Air Force?"

The Military Leadership Diversity Commission (MLDC), authorized by the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009, asked a similar question, albeit of the military writ large rather than just of the Air Force.[4] Among their discoveries, the commission found a significant discrepancy between religious beliefs of senior ranks in the Armed Services and those of the junior ranks. For example, 28 percent of servicemembers 18-30 selected "No Religious Preference" as their religious identification, compared to only 10 percent of those 51 and older.[5] While this discrepancy is consistent with a growing trend of religious disestablishment among youth in the United States, the MLDC warns that "Servicemembers in the senior ranks, many of whom are motivated by religious principles, should recognize that significant numbers of those they lead may possess no similar tenets and should ensure that the work environment accommodates those unlike themselves."[6] But how, and at what level does this affect the USAF? Or does it even matter? There must be more implications stemming from religious beliefs than just an age discrepancy.

---

[3] Sun Tzu. *The Illustrated Art of War: The Definitive English Translation* ed. and trans. Samuel B. Griffith. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005), 125.

[4] Military Leadership Diversity Commission, *From Representation to Inclusion: Diversity Leadership for the 21st Century Military (Executive Summary)*, (Arlington, VA: Department of Defense, March 15th 2011), 3.

[5] Military Leadership Diversity Commission, *Religious Diversity in the U.S. Military*, Issue Paper #22, v2, (Arlington, VA: Department of Defense, June 2010), 3.

[6] MLDC, *Religious Diversity*, 3.

In response to General Schwartz's memos on religion and diversity, and in the shadow of the Military Leadership Diversity Commission, this paper looks at religion in the Air Force to ask, "What are the strategic implications of religious belief in the United States Air Force?" This question is made up of a number of parts, each of which needs to be addressed individually. First, assuming that the military, as a cross-section of society, should be a close reflection of the general US population, does religious belief in the Air Force closely resemble that of the general population? Further, is religious belief in the Air Force consistent with that within the military overall? Second, how does religion generally relate to strategy? If religion can be tied to the strategic level of war, can it also be tied to other levels of war? Finally, how does the Air Force fit in? Does religion in the Air Force have strategic implications?

To answer these questions, I take the following approach: First, chapter one provides a brief literature review to help understand and explain the historical relationship between religion and government in the United States. Specifically, chapter one focuses on the establishment and free exercise clauses of the Constitution and examines religious belief in the United States in the context of a free market economy. After discussing the historical roots of religion in America, chapter two examines religious belief in contemporary society. This examination uses the two most credible and widely cited surveys ever conducted regarding religion, the American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS) and the Pew Forum's Religious Landscape Survey. Next, chapter three compares religious affiliation in the general US society to that within the Armed Services as a whole, then to that within the Air Force as a service, to determine if religious affiliation in the military and the Air Force is representative of that within the general population. Then, chapter four links the role of American religious belief to the levels of war: the strategic level, the operational level, and the tactical level. Finally, the

implications and conclusion section ties it all together by examining the implications of religious belief in the Air Force at the different levels of war.

Before continuing, it is necessary to clarify what is meant by the word *religion* in this paper. While this may seem like a menial task, it is not. In fact, a clear definition of religion is vital to any undertaking regarding the subject. This paper defines religion as a specific set of beliefs and/or practices concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe. Christianity is a religion, as is Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and many others. Of course, members of each of these religious camps may resent being lumped into an equivalent category of religion. For example, many Christians may claim that they don't have a religion, but instead have a personal relationship with Jesus. Likewise, where Christians have a personal relationship, Confucians have a divine ritual.[7] And this is the crux of the matter. "The world's religions disagree fundamentally on the most basic matters."[8] Military strategists must understand these differences. Strategists must analyze religion, including their own, objectively—not as a personal relationship or as right or wrong, but simply as contextual data. Strategists must ask themselves, "How do my adversaries', my allies', and my own religious beliefs affect military and political behavior?"

Just as American strategists cannot possibly hope to understand Muslim culture without understanding Islam, so too is it "impossible to understand American politics without knowing something about the Bible."[9] Therefore, this paper takes a step toward Sun Tzu's dictum, "know thyself." What is it that this country believes? What does the military believe? What do members of the United States Air Force

---

[7] Stephen Prothero, *God is not One: The Eight Rival Religions that Run the World and Why their Differences Matter* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2010), 69.
[8] Prothero, *God is Not One*, 177.
[9] Prothero, *God is Not One*, 11.

believe? Why do they believe it? And what are the strategic implications of this belief?

Chapter One

One Nation Under God

The United States of America is a predominantly Christian nation. Admittedly, other religions have significant presence in the US, and these other religions have freedoms and rights equal to those accorded to Christians.[1] The US government is constitutionally forbidden from supporting or giving preference to any single religion, including Christianity.[2] Yet, despite the secular intentions of its government, the United States is one of the most religious nations in the world. The citizens of the United States "report belief in God, church attendance, and frequent prayer at higher rates than many people in many other countries."[3] This dichotomy—government indifference coupled with a highly religious population—didn't happen by coincidence, it is written in law and enforced by a religious free market economy. The First Amendment of the Constitution mandates, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."[4] These clauses, known as the establishment and exercise clauses, fostered a free market economy for religion in the United States that has resulted in nearly continual positive growth in religious affiliation since the colonial era.

This chapter explores the religious roots of the United States by first examining the Constitutional provisions regarding religion, then by

---

[1] A religion is a belief system concerning the cause and purpose of the universe, often involving a moral code and one or more gods. See table 1.

[2] Christianity is currently the largest of the world's religions. Christianity includes three main branches: Eastern Orthodoxy, Protestantism, and Roman Catholicism. Of these branches, Protestantism is the most recent development, having split off in the sixteenth century. In general, most Christian denominations agree that sin is the core human problem, although they often disagree on how to achieve forgiveness from sin and thus salvation. See table 1.

[3] Winnifred F. Sullivan, 1182. "We Are All Religious Now. Again." *Social Research* 76, no. 4 (Winter 2009): 1181-1198.

[4] Our Documents Website, Transcript of "the Bill of Rights." http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=13&page=transcript (accessed 30 march, 2012).

discussing early religious demographics, and finally by assessing the subsequent religious development of the US population in the context of a free market economy.

Religion in the Founding Documents

The United States Constitution was adopted in 1787; the Bill of Rights in 1791. The Bill of Rights was a political promise made during the Constitution's ratifying conventions to encourage its ratification.[5] The liberties included in the Bill of Rights were intentionally left out of the Constitution to be later added as amendments because the authors of the Constitution—the Founding Fathers – wanted to ensure that the states had appropriate representation during the writing and ratification of the Bill of Rights.[6] The Constitution was written to simultaneously form and limit the powers of the federal government. The people's rights, articulated in the Bill of Rights, needed to come from the people, as represented in the Congress and Senate, which was to be established by the Constitution.

The First Congress made good on the promise and wrote the Bill of Rights in 1789, to be ratified in 1791. In many ways the Bill of Rights was written more to grant freedoms to the States (and thereby place limitations on the federal government) than it was to grant rights to the citizens of the United States. But these federal limitations provisioned in the Bill of Rights were not meant to be applied to the States; they were federal, not state, limitations. This holds particularly true for the First

[5] John H. McElroy, "Understanding the First Amendment's Religion Clauses." *The Intercollegiate Review*, Spring 2011, 36.

[6] The term "Founding Fathers" is usually used to describe the group of men who were fundamental to the establishment of the United States of America. To quantify this elite group, most historians limit selection to the 95 men that were signatories to either the United States Constitution (40 signatories) or to the Declaration of Independence (56 signatories; Benjamin Franklin was the only man to sign both). John S. Bowman, ed. *The Founding Fathers: The Men Behind the Nation*. (East Bridgewater, MA: World Publications Group, 2011), 6.

Amendment. The First Amendment accommodated the "states that had establishments of religion by stipulating that 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion,' which satisfied them that under no circumstances would the powers being granted the federal government include the authority to interfere with their religious establishments."[7]

Since its founding, the United States, and before it the original colonies, has been overwhelmingly Christian.[8] "Of the thirteen colonies, nine—almost 70 per cent—had established churches. Congregationalism (or the faith of the Puritans) was established in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. Anglicanism was established in the lower counties of New York, as well as in Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia."[9] This meant that in these states, the state government "legislated for the established church, supported it through taxation, and protected it against competition."[10] In addition, the states with established churches were "not terribly tolerant of the others. The Puritans of Massachusetts were not especially welcoming of the Quakers of Pennsylvania or the Catholics of Maryland."[11]

Not only did the states with established churches not like each other, but they also punished their own citizens who did not conform to the state religion. Take, for example, Maryland. Maryland was founded by a Roman Catholic (George Calvert) with a dual purpose.[12] First, it

---

[7] McElroy, "Understanding the First Amendment," 36.
[8] David L. Holms, *The Faiths of the Founding Fathers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 1.
[9] Holms, *Faiths,* 34.
[10] Holms, *Faiths,* 34.
[11] Ted G. Jelen and Clyde Wilcox, "Religion and Politics in an Open Market: Religious Mobilization in the United States." In *Religion and Politics in Comparative Perspective: The One, The Few, and The Many*, edited by Ted Gerard Jelen and Clyde Wilcox (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 290.
[12] The Catholic Church is the largest of Christianity's three main branches. The term Catholic means universal. Catholicism is distinguished from Protestantism by their belief in seven sacraments (baptism, confirmation, reconciliation, Holy Communion, marriage, ordination of priests, and anointing of the sick). Catholic belief is also distinguished by its veneration of the Virgin Mary and other saints, its insistence that the Bible be read in light of church traditions, and its insistence on celibate priests. The Catholic Bible has

was to be a place where Roman Catholics could live and worship freely. Second, it was founded as a place where the Calvert family could make money. Therefore, the state founders (the Calvert family) created religiously tolerant conditions that would encourage immigration. The greatest step towards this tolerance was the 1649 "Maryland Toleration Act," which decreed that the state would allow a diverse number of religious groups to exist and to worship, but retained the right to withdraw that permission at any time. The act was nullified in 1692 as the protestant Anglicans became the majority. In fact, by the late eighteenth century, Roman Catholics in Maryland were the minority. Protestants, mostly Anglicans, became the majority and the Church of England (Anglican) became the established church. Moreover, in the eighteenth century Maryland laws even became hostile to non-protestants.[13] Roman Catholics, despite being the majority land-holders, were denied the right to vote or to hold public office. Moreover, anyone who blasphemed or denied the doctrines of the Trinity or the divinity of Christ was subject to forfeiture of all lands or even execution.[14]

Not all of the states were as religiously strict as Maryland. For instance, the Church of England was the established church in Georgia, although by the mid-eighteenth century, "the Anglican establishment in Georgia existed largely on paper. By 1770 Presbyterians, Quakers, Lutherans, other religious groups, and the many irreligious substantially outnumbered Anglicans."[15] Moreover, some of the states had no

---

five additional books that are not found in the Protestant Bible: Tobias, Judith, the Wisdom of Solomon, Barch, and Maccabees. These books are often referred to, especially by Protestants, as the "Apocrypha," which is a Greek word that is usually interpreted as "hidden away" or "secret." Within these additional books is found the majority of support for Catholicism's sacraments. See table 1.

[13] Protestantism is and always has been the dominant form of Christianity in the United States. As the name implies, Protestantism began as a protest against the Catholic Church by the likes of Martin Luther and John Calvin in the sixteenth century. The fundamental difference between the two camps is the basis of salvation. Protestants broke away from Catholics because they believed that salvation came through faith alone whereas Catholicism required a combination of faith and works. As opposed to Catholicism, Protestantism only holds two sacraments: baptism and Holy Communion.

[14] Holms, *Faiths,* 21.

[15] Holms, *Faiths,* 25.

established church at all, although most still gave preference to one form or religion or another. For example, Rhode Island, founded in part by former Puritan leader Roger Williams, did not have an established church; it was founded to be a place of religious tolerance. It permitted a number of protestant religions including Baptists, Quakers, Anglicans, and Congregationalists. Notably, Rhode Island did not afford freedom of belief to atheists or Roman Catholics.[16]

Thus, the original colonies, and the subsequent United States, were constituted by predominantly Christian governance. While the First Amendment's anti-establishment clause prevented the federal government from establishing a national religion, it was also intended to protect the rights of the states to maintain their established religions, which most states did for many decades. In fact, it wasn't until 1833 that "the religious establishments in Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, and South Carolina were all abrogated by acts of state legislatures that revoked their establishment laws; no further establishment laws were ever enacted in the United States."[17]

The disestablishment of state religion in the first half of the nineteenth century had little to do with the First Amendment. Indeed, for the first 80 years of its existence, the First Amendment had no bearing on state-established religion. It wasn't until the 1868 ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment that the First Amendment began "to play a formal role in the defining of the accommodation of religion and politics … through the incorporation of the clauses into the Fourteenth Amendment."[18] Until 1868 the Bill of Rights applied only to the federal government; the states could still make laws that the constitution forbade. But the Fourteenth Amendment, written in the wake of the civil

[16] Holms, *Faiths,* 9.
[17] McElroy, "Understanding the First Amendment," 34.
[18] Sullivan, "We Are All Religious," 1184.

war, "changed the way the constitution operated" and extended federal law to state governments.[19] Until the Fourteenth Amendment was written and enforced, states were free to favor one church over the other or limit freedom of speech or press, but after the Fourteenth Amendment, the supreme court began to apply federal limitations to the state.[20]

The Fourteenth Amendment does not apply specifically to religion, but instead forbids state governments from making any law that would "abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States."[21] The application of the Fourteenth Amendment to state governance is an incredibly contentious issue. "The establishment clause clearly bans an official religion for the nation, but beyond this there is little agreement as to what it means."[22] Essentially, two camps have formed regarding the establishment clause: "some legal thinkers, often called 'accommodationists,' suggest that the establishment clause permits the government to establish policies that support all religion [sic], or perhaps Christianity in general."[23] In general, accommodationists believe that religion is a good thing and that "there is a consensus in the United States on moral and many religious issues, and that this then makes a generally neutral, yet supportive relationship between church and state desirable."[24] In contrast, Separationists "hold that the establishment clause forbids the government from upholding religion in general, and that the government must be neutral not only between religions, but also between religion and no religion."[25] Separationists "tend to view religion

[19] Ellen M. Kozak, *The Everything U.S. Constitution Book* (Avon, MA: Adams Media, 2011), 171.
[20] Kozak, *The Constitution Book*, 146.
[21] Our Documents website, "Transcript of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution." http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=43&page=transcript.
[22] Jelen and Wilcox, "Religion and Politics," 297.
[23] Jelen and Wilcox, "Religion and Politics," 297.
[24] Jelen and Wilcox, "Religion and Politics," 298.
[25] Jelen and Wilcox, "Religion and Politics," 298.

as a source of conflict and tension."[26] In general, the Supreme Court has taken a separationist position on the establishment clauses.

Despite the fact that since 1833 no state-established churches have existed anywhere in the United States, in the twentieth century, as a response to the Fourteenth Amendment, the Supreme Court began to expand its interpretation of the First Amendment. Some of the first cases regarding First Amendment establishment rights were Cantwell v. US in 1940 and Everson v. Board of Education in 1947.[27] With these cases the Supreme Court began regulating religion beyond the original intent of the First Amendment. Perhaps the most monumental Supreme Court action came when the court redefined the meaning of religious establishment by ruling "that a religious exercise in a public school [such as prayer] represents an establishment of religion."[28] Thus, 130 years after the last state church was disestablished, the application of the establishment clause of the First Amendment continues to be a contentious issue.[29]

Religion in the Founding People

While the United States is and always has been a predominantly Christian nation, the character of Christianity as well as the degree to which it is practiced has changed substantially since the Founding Fathers' time. The Evangelical Protestants that represent the most predominant form of Christianity today are "a different kind of Christian than the Congregationalists and Presbyterians and Quakers that settled the colonies and helped to form their politics."[30] In fact, Christianity has changed so much that many of the eighteenth century's Anglicans or

[26] Jelen and Wilcox, "Religion and Politics," 298.
[27] Sullivan, "We Are All Religious," 1184.
[28] McElroy, "Understanding the First Amendment," 33.
[29] McElroy, "Understanding the First Amendment," 34.
[30] Sullivan, "We Are All Religious," 1184.

Congregationalists would not even consider today's Evangelicals to be Christians at all, and vice versa.[31]

Not only has the nature of Christianity in America changed substantially over the past two centuries, but the level of religious activity has also changed substantially. Although history often portrays a high degree of religious establishment during the colonial time, individual attendance during these early times was very low. In fact, only 10-20 percent of the population actually belonged to a church in the Colonial period.[32] The extent of religious activity during this period is typically assumed to be much greater for a number of reasons. First, because most States at the time had established churches, the entire state population was often counted as a part of that denomination (these high numbers also aided church funding).[33] Second, most of the educated and thus literate citizens were part of the small religious minority who dominated public and political life.[34] Despite these misrepresentations, on the eve of the American Revolution, "only about 17 percent of Americans were churched."[35]

Most of the eighteenth century American Protestant religions were derivatives of English Puritanism, which itself was a derivative of European Calvinism. Congregationalism was the largest of the four American branches of Puritanism and emphasized intellect to a greater extent than any other protestant religion in the colonies. The other three branches of Puritanism in the colonies included the Presbyterians, the

---

[31] Evangelical is an adjective describing theological conservatism, including an emphasis on an experience of conversion (being born again), divine inspiration of the Bible (as opposed to infallibility), proselytization, and the atoning death of Jesus. Evangelicalism is not restricted to any denomination, and in recent times can even be found within the some Catholic churches. See table 1.

[32] Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America* (Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 27.

[33] A denomination is a subgroup within a religion. For example, Catholicism and Protestantism can be considered denominations within Christianity (although the Catholic Church often insists that it is the original Christian church and therefore not a denomination). As a further example, Baptist is a denomination of Protestantism. See table 1.

[34] Finke and Stark, *Churching,* 27-29.

[35] Finke and Stark, *Churching,* 22.

Baptists, and the Anglicans.[36] These four branches of Puritanism shared much common heritage but differed predominantly in matters of church governance and baptismal practice. All branches of Puritanism agreed that "all humans were sinners through Adam's and Eve's Original Sin in the Garden of Eden, which was then transmitted to their descendants."[37] Most importantly, all Puritans also believed in the concept of "double predestination: the belief that God fated every human being, before birth, to either heaven or hell,"[38] and that "humans could do nothing … to save themselves, but that God out of his mercy did save some humans (the 'elect') while damning others (the 'reprobate')."[39] Moreover, although Congregationalists believed that each congregation should run its own church affairs, all branches of Puritanism believed "in the union of church and state."[40]

Although the Puritan form of Calvinism "dominated American theology until the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries,"[41] in reality, "there never were all that many Puritans, even in New England."[42] Puritanism was the majority religion among the minority of those that adhered to a specific religious theology. However, other flavors of Christianity could be found throughout the colonies. In fact, the thirteen colonies of the eighteenth century and the subsequent United States became a "fermenting vat"[43] of Christian sects, to include Shakers, Quakers, Universalists, Episcopalians, Methodists, Lutherans, Arians, Amish, Mennonites, and Jews.[44]

---

[36] Holms, *Faiths,* 11.
[37] Holms, *Faiths,* 11.
[38] Stephen Prothero, *Religious Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know and Doesn't* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2008), 207.
[39] Holms, *Faiths,* 12.
[40] Holms, *Faiths,* 13.
[41] Prothero, *Religious Literacy*, 207.
[42] Finke and Stark, *Churching,* 25.
[43] Holms, *Faiths,* 4.
[44] Kevin Phillips, *American Theocracy: The Peril and Politics of Radical Religion, Oil, and Borrowed Money in the 21st Century* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 104.

Despite being the largest of Christianity's "three main branches, along with Eastern Orthodoxy and Protestantism," in the world at the time (and still today), Catholicism did not have a significant presence in the United States until the late nineteenth century. [45] Even then, a strong anti-Catholic sentiment remained in the US, evidenced by the fact that "the country did not have a Catholic president until John Kennedy in 1960."[46]

A final minority sect that was gaining notoriety in the colonial times was Deism. Deist theology held reason and human thought above all else, and was never codified in a formal doctrine. Deists typically described God as "a Watchmaker, who, after creating the world, sits back and observes history without intervening in it. They were critical of 'priestcraft' and institutional religion. They believed in one God and in afterlife rewards and punishments, and they saw morality as the essence of religion."[47] In general Deists believed in God, but typically deny the supernatural, such as miracles, prayer, and the resurrection of Christ. Thus the Jefferson Bible, in which Thomas Jefferson (one of the most famous Deists) used scissors and a razor blade to remove everything supernatural from the Bible so that he could practice his faith without being distracted by what he considered to be corruptions of the Bible. Because of their disbelief in the supernatural, theologically deists should not be counted as Christians, yet because deists believe in God, and often have tried to reconcile themselves with Christianity by going to church, praying, and respecting "the moral teachings of Jesus without believing in his divine status," neither can they be categorized as atheists.[48]

So while only a minority of people were religiously active in the eighteenth century, and of those that were religiously active most were of

[45] Prothero, *Religious Literacy*, 208.
[46] Prothero, *Religious Literacy*, 208.
[47] Prothero, *Religious Literacy*, 216.
[48] Holms, *Faiths,* 44.

a puritan brand, the colonial days nevertheless saw a high degree of religious diversity. According to the free market theory of religion in America, it is just this diversity that led to the promulgation of religious adherence in the United States.[49] Since this market opened up, it has yet to slow down, and the clear leader in growth has been the Evangelical Protestant denominations.

Evangelicals, who today represent "the dominant religious impulse in the United States," didn't come on the scene until the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.[50] Evangelicalism, formed in the Methodist movement, started with John and Charles Wesley and their protégé George Whitefield in the 1740s, although it took nearly a century to gain significant numbers. John Wesley "was the movement's principal organizer and preacher. Charles supported it by writing thousands of hymns. Whitefield, a protégé of the Wesleys at Oxford who had followed them to Georgia, became one of the most dramatic and effective evangelists in the history of Christianity."[51]

Separating from the Puritans, Evangelicalism preached a new doctrine of salvation that differed dramatically from accepted Puritanism. In stark contrast to the Puritan elect and probate system, Evangelicalism taught that anybody could be saved from damnation by being born again, which entailed becoming a new man or woman in Jesus Christ and living a reformed life.[52] Moreover, while the Puritans of the day believed the Bible to be the infallible word of God to be taken literally, the rising evangelicals insisted "merely that the Bible is divinely inspired." [53]

As the Evangelical faith grew and split into different denominations, many Evangelicals (namely, the Fundamentalist Evangelicals) have returned to the belief in the infallibility of the Bible.

---

[49] Barry Kosmin and Ariela Keysar. *Religion in a Free Market* (Ithaca, NY: Paramount Books, 2006), 2
[50] Prothero, *Religious Literacy*, 220.
[51] Holms, *Faiths,* 26.
[52] Holms, *Faiths,* 27.
[53] Prothero, *Religious Literacy*, 221.

However, Evangelicalism has often been quite ingenious in their interpretation of Biblical edicts to conform theology to social norms. For a more recent example of Evangelical modernism, consider the New Testament book of 1st Timothy, verses 9-14 (New Living Translation). In these verses the Apostle Paul, who wrote thirteen of the twenty-seven New Testament Books, clearly directs that women submit to men:

> "And I want women to be modest in their appearance. They should wear decent and appropriate clothing and not draw attention to themselves by the way they fix their hair or by wearing gold or pearls or expensive clothes. For women who claim to be devoted to God should make themselves attractive by the good things they do. Women should listen and learn quietly and submissively. I do not let women teach men or have authority over them. Let them listen quietly. For God made Adam first, and afterward he made Eve. And it was the woman, not Adam, who was deceived by Satan, and sin was the result."

While Puritan theology embraced this Biblical sexism (and still does to this day), liberal Evangelicals not only rejected it, but played a major role in establishing women's rights in the United States.[54] Thus, while early American Puritans and Evangelicals may have shared the same religious documents and figures, by offering universal salvation and embracing modernity Evangelical doctrine starkly contradicts Puritan theology.

The Evangelical movement during the colonial period became known as the Great Awakening. "The Great Awakening was … the single most transforming event in the religious history of colonial America. It

[54] Debate continues between the different Evangelical denominations concerning the amount of equality women should have with men. Prothero, *Religious Literacy,* 221.

left the legacy of Evangelical 'born-again' Christianity."[55] That said, Evangelicalism had little influence on the Founding Fathers or thus, on the writing of the Constitution or the Bill of Rights. "None of the founding fathers was an Evangelical," although most subscribed to a form of Protestantism. [56]

Religious Free Market Economy

In Book Five of Adam Smith's 1776 magnum opus, *The Wealth of Nations*, he suggested that America's religion was as subject to the free market as was its economy.[57] While Smith himself was most likely Deist or agnostic, he believed that religious plurality was important to the development of the United States: "Paradoxically a secular state needed a religious people because families and churches were the two main institutions that buttressed the intergenerational stability that a free society required."[58] Because of America's religious freedoms, its religious economy was "like commercial economies in that they consist of a market made up of a set of current and potential customers and a set of firms seeking to serve that market."[59] Thus, the success or failure of religions in America was dependent on (1) their organization (church polity and congregation), (2) their sales representatives (clergy), (3) their product (doctrine), and (4) their marketing (evangelism).[60]

Finke and Stark have attempted to better understand the specific conditions in which religions grow and/or fail to grow. They postulate that "religious organizations can thrive only to the extent that they have

[55] Holms, *Faiths,* 28.
[56] Holms, *Faiths,* 31.
[57] Barry Kosmin and Ariela Keysar. *Religion in a Free Market* (Ithaca, NY: Paramount Books, 2006), 2.
[58] Kosmin & Keysar, *Religion*, 3.
[59] Finke and Stark, *Churching,* 9.
[60] Finke and Stark, *Churching,* 9.

a theology that can comfort souls and motivate sacrifice."[61] The religious organizations that fail are the ones whose doctrines don't sufficiently motivate their constituents. The religious organizations that best comfort souls and motivate sacrifice are the ones that place high demands or costs on their members while maintaining distinctive boundaries from society. Finke and Stark explain: "At first glance it seems paradoxical that when the cost of membership increases the net gains of membership increase too. This is necessarily the case, however, when the commodity involved is collectively produced and when increased costs result in increased levels of participation in collective action, for this results in a greater supply of collective goods."[62]

Throughout American history, it is the new, small, religious sects that typically exact the highest costs and separate themselves the most from society. New sects begin because they want to be different. People join these new sects looking for great rewards, miracles, and answers to the human condition. As the sects exact high costs from their members and in turn reward them with meaning and purpose, the sects grow. But over time, these sects, which if they continue to grow eventually become denominations or religions in their own right, begin to reduce their costs.

As membership becomes more common, the group begins to bargain with its church for lower costs. But at some point, the religious body becomes too worldly and the rewards of membership become less valuable. This is the religious equivalent of the point of diminishing returns. Past this point people begin to break away to other sects or abandon religion altogether. Yet, holding true to a free market economy framework, the higher the level of religious competition in the marketplace, the higher the level of consumption.

For Kosmin and Keysar, the authors of the Pew Foundation's Religious Landscape Study, the economic relationship between

[61] Finke and Stark, *Churching,* 8.
[62] Finke and Stark, *Churching,* 250.

competition and consumption explains why "the contemporary religious situation in the United Sates counteracts secularization theory, the notion that the more developed a country in terms of education, occupation, science, and technology the more its people move away from religion. The easiest measure of this 'anomaly' in action is the national rate of church attendance, which today in the U.S. is 30 to 32 percent weekly, but in Western Europe only 5 to 15 percent."[63]

The free market economy theory of religion in America helps to explain the dramatic increase in religious affiliation in the United States from the eighteenth to the twenty-first century. "As the state and local regulation of American religion declined, a growing supply of energetic clergy actively marketed their faiths, new churches arose without resistance, and a rich variety of new religious options emerged."[64] From an adherence rate of 17 percent in 1776, the levels of American churching have grown progressively. By the start of the Civil War, 37 percent of Americans adhered to a specific religion. At the start of the twentieth century, this number grew to 50 percent. By 1980, it was at 62 percent. And Evangelicals have led the charge. The open market for religion in America, enabled by the First Amendment's establishment and exercise clauses, has made the intentionally secular United States one of the most religiously active countries in the world.[65]

Evangelicalism, with its focus on proselytization, modernity, and a personal relationship with Jesus is uniquely suited for a free market economy.[66] As such, religious denominations associated with evangelical theology were the first to thrive in the eighteenth century's newly established free market.[67] Offering a whole new brand of Christianity

---

[63] Kosmin & Keysar, *Religion*, 5.
[64] Finke and Stark, *Churching,* 3.
[65] Jelen and Wilcox, "Religion and Politics," 289.
[66] Kosmin & Keysar, *Religion*, 11.
[67] Phillips, *American Theocracy,* 109.

filled with emotion, hope, and belonging, Evangelicalism nearly wiped out Puritanism.

The two churches that most fully embraced Evangelicalism and thus were responsible for its spread were the Methodist Church and the Baptist Church. From 1776 to 1806 the American Methodist congregation grew by 2,500 percent, from 4,900 members to 130,000. Likewise, Baptist membership rose from 35,000 in 1784 to 173,000 in 1810.[68] By 1850 the Methodists had become the largest US denomination, with 2.7 million members, and the Baptists were the second largest denomination, with 1.6 million members.[69] By the end of the twentieth century, the Baptists had claimed numerical victory, boasting 40 million members in the Southern Baptist Convention alone, while the four previously largest mainline denominations, Methodist, Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Church of Christ Congregational, were left with only 15 million members combined.[70]

As has always been the case in the United States, the majority of religious practitioners in the United States claim some form of Protestant belief and since the nineteenth century, the Baptists and Methodists have claimed the largest number of followers.[71] Yet even in these belief systems, new, more conservative sects are continually breaking away to form their own brand. For example, the Southern Baptists broke away from the mainline Baptist church in 1845, and the American Baptists broke away in 1924.[72] These mutations provide strong support for the free market economy theory. As Finke and Stark put it, the primary

---

[68] Phillips, *American Theocracy,* 109.
[69] Phillips, *American Theocracy,* 109.
[70] Phillips, *American Theocracy, 107*.
[71] Pew, 16.
[72] Southern Baptist Convention Website: http://www.sbc.net/aboutus/default.asp and American Baptist Association Website: http://abaptist.org/abaha/ (accessed 13 May, 2012).

feature of religion in American religious history is that "the mainline bodies are always headed for the sideline."[73]

Summary

This chapter has demonstrated a number of points that are critical to understanding religion in America. To begin with, the First Amendment's establishment and exercise clauses were initially written and intended only to prevent the federal government from establishing a national religion (like the Church of England). The clauses were never meant to disestablish the already established state churches. In fact, the establishment clause was intended to protect the established churches in the states. Second, it was these same clauses that set the conditions for a religious free market economy in the United States. By ensuring that no single church could hold a monopoly on religion, the First Amendment paved the way for competition between religious organizations. Third, the original colonies and first states were not nearly as religiously adherent as is often depicted. Less than 20 percent of the population attended church. Fourth, of those that did attend church in the colonial days, most attended some form of Puritan church, probably because most of the established state churches were Puritan. Fifth, although Puritanism was the majority religious denomination, a number of other Christian denominations as well as other religions were present in the original colonies. Finally, today's most common form of Christianity, Evangelicalism, was not common in the eighteenth century. It wasn't until it was embraced by the Baptist and Methodist churches in the nineteenth century that Evangelicalism began to spread through the country, inspiring not only a dramatic increase in the Evangelical population, but because of the free market economy, Evangelicalism

[73] Finke and Stark, *Churching,* 283.

spurred on religious growth in every denomination and religion. Evangelicalism, it seems, is uniquely suited to a religious free market economy.

An important caveat should be noted regarded these findings. Measuring religious belief is hard. Church attendance and denominational affiliation are the primary means historians have to help understand religious belief in early America. However, church attendance and denominational affiliation do not necessarily equate to religious belief. Simply attending church does not mean that one believes in all of the tenets or canons of that church. Plenty of people attend church for the social or political benefits of being affiliated with a church and not for the theology. Likewise, not attending church does not mean that one does not believe in a specific interpretation of God. Often times, especially in the colonial days, transportation to and from a church, or the lack thereof, was simply prohibitive. Therefore, the statistics concerning low church attendance in the colonial days cannot be inferred to mean that people were not religious. Likewise, church attendance should not be inferred to mean religious belief. This same caveat holds true in measuring contemporary religious belief.

Table 1: Definitions

Defining the terms	
Catholic	The largest of Christianity's three main branches. The term Catholic means universal. Distinguished from Protestantism by their belief in seven sacraments (baptism, confirmation, reconciliation, Holy Communion, marriage, ordination of priests, and anointing of the sick). Catholic belief is also distinguished by its veneration of the Virgin Mary and other saints, its insistence that the Bible be read in light of church traditions, and its insistence on celibate priests. The Catholic Bible has five additional books that are not found in the Protestant Bible: Tobias, Judith, the Wisdom of Solomon, Barch, and Maccabees. These books are often referred to, especially by Protestants, as the "Apocrypha," which is a Greek word that is usually interpreted as "hidden away" or "secret." Within these additional books is found the majority of support for Catholicism's sacraments.
Christianity	Currently the largest of the world's religions. Includes three main branches: Eastern Orthodoxy, Protestantism, and Roman Catholicism. Of the branches, Protestantism is the most recent development, having split off in the sixteenth century. Most branches of Christianity agree that sin is the core human problem, although they often disagree on how to achieve forgiveness from sin and thus salvation. Moreover, most branches also believe in the Trinity--that is, the God of three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.[74]
Denomination	A subgroup within a religion. For example, Catholicism and Protestantism can be considered denominations within Christianity (although the Catholic church often insists that it is the original Christian church and therefore not a denomination). As a further example, Baptist is a denomination of Protestantism.

[74] Prothero, *Religious Literacy*, 209-210.

Evangelical	An adjective describing theological conservatism, including an emphasis on an experience of conversion (being born again), divine inspiration of the Bible (as opposed to infallibility), proselytization, and the atoning death of Jesus. Evangelicalism is not restricted to any denomination, and in recent times can even be found within the some Catholic churches.[75]
Evangelize	Evangelization is a specifically Christian form of proselytization. Thus, to evangelize means to attempt to convert a non-Christian to Christianity. Evangelization is a fundamental part of the Evangelical Christian denominations.
Proselytize	To proselytize means to attempt to influence or recruit others to join one's own group or sect. Can be associated with religion, but can also be used secularly.
Protestant	The dominant form of Christianity in the United States. As the name implies, Protestantism began as a protest against the Catholic church by the likes of Martin Luther and John Calvin in the sixteenth century. The fundamental difference between the two camps is the basis of salvation. Protestants broke away from Catholics because they believed that salvation came through faith alone where as Catholicism required a combination of faith and works. As opposed to Catholicism, Protestantism only holds two sacraments: baptism and Holy Communion.[76]
Religion	A specific set of beliefs and/or practices concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe, often involving a moral code and one or more gods.

Source: Author's original work. Many of the definitions have been adapted from Stephen Prothero, Religious Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know and Doesn't *(New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2008).*

[75] Prothero, *Religious Literacy*, 220-221.
[76] Prothero, *Religious Literacy*, 266-267.

Chapter 2

What America Believes

Since colonial days, religious affiliation in the United States has consistently trended upward. With ebbs and flows similar to those seen on Wall Street, the exclusively American religious free market economy has created a competitive marketplace for religion in which the newest, hottest brand sells the best, and sales are almost always increasing. To understand which religions or denominations hold what current market share, this chapter explores contemporary religious belief in the United States.

The most common way to report religious affiliation is through a survey method that asks participants to report their religion or religious denomination. This is a very neat and clean approach, and it is easily quantified, but asking people what denomination they belong to doesn't tell the whole story. Often times, survey participants will flippantly answer such questions by just reporting the religion or denomination of the church in which they grew up, or that of the church which they last visited. In fact, participants in religious surveys are often unable to spell or even properly pronounce the denomination to which they claim to be a member, much less are they able to articulate the major theological points of that religion.[1] Yet, to be quantified in a survey participants must be labeled somehow. Unfortunately then, although the denominational label often does not reflect actual religious belief, it is the mostly easily measured and thus widely used method for surveying religious belief.

Because it has been prevented by law from collecting data on religious belief since the 1950s, the US Census Bureau does not collect

[1] Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America* (Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 13.

or report the religious affiliation of US citizens.[2] Therefore, the best data available on contemporary religious belief comes from two separate independent sources: the American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS), conducted by Trinity College in Hartford Connecticut, and the Religious Landscape Survey, conducted by the Pew Forum in Washington DC. This paper includes a discussion of results from both of these studies individually, and then a synthesis that provides a more accurate snapshot of religion in contemporary America.

American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS)

Sponsored by the Institute for the Study of Secularism in Society and Culture at Trinity College, this survey has been conducted three times over a period of twenty years and provides a comparison of self-reported religious belief in the US from surveys taken in 1990, 2001, and 2008. Using random-digit dialing, survey administrators telephoned residential households and asked them, "What is your religion, if any?"[3] The questions were open-ended. Interviewers did not prompt participants for answers or offer a suggested list of potential answers. Collectively, ARIS data from surveys accomplished in 1990, 2001, and 2008 are based on the responses of nearly 220,000 participants. The US Census Bureau considers the ARIS data accurate enough that it has included its findings in the official publication of the Statistical Abstract of the United States since 2003.[4]

The data from ARIS suggest a current declining trend in American religious adherence, especially among Protestant denominations. In 1990, 86 percent of the US population self-reported as Christian. Of this

---

[2] Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, *U.S. Religious Landscape Survey* (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, 2008), 3.
[3] Barry A. Kosmin and Ariela Keysar, *American Religious Identification Survey: Summary Report* (Hartford, CT: Trinity College, March 2009), 2.
[4] Kosmin and Keysar, *American Religious Identification Survey*, 2.

number, 26.2 percent were Catholic. In 2008, only 76 percent of the population claimed Christianity, 25.1 percent of which were Catholic. While the Catholic population appears to have maintained stability during this time period, the Protestant population seems to have decreased by approximately nine percent. Minority US religions, to include Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism remained relatively stable, being claimed by only three to four percent of the population in 1990, 2001, and 2008 (see table 1).[5]

Table 2: Religious Self-Identification of the US Adult Population 1990, 2001, 2008

	1990		2001		2008	
	Estimated Number of People	%	Estimated Number of People	%	Estimated Number of People	%
Catholic	46,004,000	26.2	50,873,000	24.5	57,199,000	25.1
Other Christian	105,221,000	60.0	108,641,000	52.2	116,203,000	50.9
Total Christians	**151,225,000**	**86.2**	**159,514,000**	**76.7**	**173,402,000**	**76.0**
Other Religions	**5,853,000**	**3.3**	**7,740,000**	**3.7**	**8,796,000**	**3.9**
Nones	**14,331,000**	**8.2**	**29,481,000**	**14.1**	**34,169,000**	**15.0**
DK/Refused	**4,031,000**	**2.3**	**11,246,000**	**5.4**	**11,815,000**	**5.2**
Total	175,440,000	100.0	207,983,000	100.0	228,182,000	100.0

Source: Barry A. Kosmin and Ariela Keysar, American Religious Identification Survey: Summary Report *(Hartford, CT: Trinity College, March 2009), 3.*

The biggest gains over the twenty year period were seen by those who claimed no religion. This group is "an amalgamation of all the respondents who provided answers to our key question which identified them as having no religious identity or connection. The most common response was 'None' or 'No Religion.' This bloc can be described as the non-religious, irreligious and anti-religious bloc. It includes anti-clerical theists, but the majority are non-theists."[6] This group nearly doubled in

[5] Kosmin and Keysar, *American Religious Identification Survey*, 3.
[6] American Religious Identification Survey Website, "Methodology," http://commons.trincoll.edu/aris/about-aris/methodology/ (accessed 13 May, 2012).

size between 1990 and 2008, claiming only eight percent of the population in 1990, and 15 percent in 2008. Moreover, when questioned on their actual religious beliefs rather than just their denominational affiliation, Americans look even more separated from traditional religion. When questioned in this manner, "70% of Americans believe in a personal God, roughly 12% of Americans are atheist (no God) or agnostic (unknowable or unsure), and another 12% are deistic (a higher power but no personal God)."[7]

Table 3: Beliefs about God among US Adult Population 2008

Regarding the existence of God, do you think . . . ?

There is no such thing	2.3%
There is no way to know	4.3%
I'm not sure	5.7%
There is a higher power but no personal God	12.1%
There is definitely a personal God	69.5%
Refused	6.1%
n = 1,000	100%

Source: Barry A. Kosmin and Ariela Keysar American Religious Identification Survey: Summary Report *(Hartford, CT: Trinity College, March 2009), 8.*

By asking survey participants specifically about their belief in God instead of asking them about their religious affiliation, the American Religious Identification Survey highlights the degree to which measuring religious belief by denominational affiliation misrepresents actual belief. In the same survey with the same participants, 76 percent of respondents claimed to be Christian, but only 70 percent claimed to believe in a personal God, a belief that is arguably necessary to any definition of Christianity.[8]

[7] Kosmin and Keysar, *American Religious Identification Survey*, 2.
[8] Kosmin and Keysar, *American Religious Identification Survey*, 8.

Other notable data from ARIS includes correlations between religious belief and gender, age, ethnicity, and geography. Related to age and gender, male respondents ages 18-29 were more likely than any other demographic to claim no religion, while adults over 50, regardless of gender, were more likely to claim the Baptist denomination. Ethnically, black non-Hispanics were significantly more likely to be Baptist, while the majority of the Catholic denomination claimed Hispanic ethnicity, and Asians were the most likely to claim no religion. White non-Hispanics were most heavily represented in the mainline Christian denominations. Regarding education, members of the Jewish and Eastern Religions were significantly more educated than other religious groups, while the Baptist and Pentecostal/Charismatic groups reflected the lowest education levels. Geographically, while those claiming no religion increased in proportion in every state, they are most heavily concentrated in the Northeast, where they even became the majority group in Vermont. The Southern states are by far the most Christian, with 75 percent belonging to a Protestant denomination and only 10 percent claiming no religion.

The authors of the ARIS study identify their most interesting finding as the growing polarity in American religious belief between "the pious and non-religious portions of the national population, which are today roughly similar in size."[9] On one side, this polarity is represented by the already-discussed group of Americans who claim no religion. On the other side, the polarity is represented by the percentage of those who identify themselves as Christian that also claim to be "born again" or "evangelical."[10]

During the course of the survey, no definition was given for the terms "born again" or "evangelical," but they are typically associated with the most pious members of the Christian population who believe in a

[9] Kosmin and Keysar, *American Religious Identification Survey*, 9
[10] Kosmin and Keysar, *American Religious Identification Survey*, 9.

"personal relationship with Jesus" as well as more conservative views of salvation and scripture.[11] Those who identify with this group are represented in all brands of American Christianity, including mainline Protestant denominations as well as well as in the Catholic Church. In all, ARIS reports that 45 percent of Christian adults fall into this group of perceived piety, which accounts for 34 percent of the total adult population, making it one of the few growing trends in American religion. Thus, Americans seem to be moving in opposite directions regarding their religious beliefs. Most are either becoming more pious or more unreligious.

Pew Religious Landscape Study

Data from this study closely resembles that from ARIS, with some interesting deviations. The Pew study, accomplished in 2008, surveyed approximately 35,000 American adults. While this study was significantly smaller in scope than the ARIS study, it adds a very valuable dimension to the study of religion in America by asking not only more questions, but different questions. For example, while both the ARIS and Pew studies asked participants about their current religion, the Pew study also asked participants about their religious history: in what religion or denomination were they raised, had they changed religions or denominations, and why? Thus the Pew study in many ways complements the ARIS study and in other ways expands on it.

The Pew study found that 78.4 percent of Americans claim some form of Christianity as their religion (see Table 4). The majority of those who claim to be Christian align themselves with Protestantism; Protestants represent 51.3 percent of American adults. The next largest group is the Catholic population, which accounts for 23.9 percent of the

[11] Kosmin and Keysar, *American Religious Identification Survey*, 9.

population. Notably, the Pew study highlights the way in which the data on the Catholic population misrepresents the demographics of the Catholic Church. While it appears that the Catholic population has held steady in recent decades at about 25 percent of the population, approximately 22 percent of those born in the United States and raised in the Catholic faith have changed religions, mostly to Protestantism or to no religion at all. However, this exodus has been offset by the number of Catholic immigrants to the United States. Nearly half of all immigrants to the United States are Catholic.[12] Thus, the Catholic Church is experiencing a loss rate similar to that of the Protestant Church, but departing members of the Catholic Church are being replaced by immigrants to the US at a rate high enough to offset the losses, whereas the Protestant Church is not benefiting from an immigrant population.

[12] The high number of Latin American Immigrants to the United States along with the high rate of Catholicism among the Latin American population contributes significantly to the apparent stability of the Catholic population in the United States. Pew Forum, *Religious Landscape*, 36.

Table 4: Major Religious Traditions in the US

	PEW
Christian	78.4
Protestant	51.3
Catholic	23.9
Mormon	1.7
Jehovah's Witness	.7
Orthodox	.6
Other Christian	.3
Other Religion	4.7
Jewish	1.7
Buddhist	.7
Muslim	.6
Hindu	.4
Other World Religion	<.3
Other Faiths (Unitarian, New Age, etc)	1.2
Unaffiliated (Atheist, Agnostic, Nothing)	16.1
Don't Know / Refused / Data Error	.8

Source: Adapted from Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. U.S. Religious Landscape Survey *(Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, 2008), 10.*

The Pew study also found many significant demographic correlations regarding religion. Ethnically, 78 percent of the black population is Protestant, compared with 53 percent of the white population and only 27 percent of the Asian population. Moreover, 45 percent of the Catholic population is Hispanic and under the age of 30.[13] Regarding age, 62 percent of Americans 70 and older are Protestant, compared to only 43 percent of adults 18-29. This same 30 and under year group is more than three times as likely as those 70 and older to report no religion. Regarding gender, the Pew study found that men are

[13] Pew Forum, *Religious Landscape*, 36.

nearly 45 percent more likely than women to claim no religious affiliation (nearly 20 percent of men are unreligious and only 13 percent of women).[14]

Geographically the South, by far, had the greatest concentration of Evangelical Protestants, while the Northeast housed the most Catholics and the West had the largest proportion of unreligious people.[15] Economically, Protestants were more likely than any other group to make less than $30,000 a year (only 15 percent of Protestants made $100,000 a year or more), while those who claimed Judaism as their religion were more likely than any other group to make $100,000 a year or more (46 percent of Jewish survey participants were in this income category).

The most significant finding by the Pew Foundation in its Religious Landscape Study was the degree of religious mobility in the United States. The Pew study found that "more than one-quarter of American adults (28%) have left the faith in which they were raised in favor of another religion – or no religion at all. If change in affiliation from one type of Protestantism to another is included, roughly 44% of adults have either switched religious affiliation, moved from being unaffiliated with any religion to being affiliated with a particular faith, or dropped any connection to a religious tradition altogether."[16] This mobility has had a large impact on Protestantism. The Pew study reports that the Protestant population in the United States is declining markedly in recent decades and that the United States is becoming or has already become "a minority Protestant country."[17] The study describes Protestantism as "characterized by significant internal diversity and fragmentation, encompassing hundreds of different denominations loosely grouped around three fairly distinct religious traditions – evangelical Protestant churches (26.3% of the overall adult population),

[14] Pew Forum, *Religious Landscape*, 8.
[15] Pew Forum, *Religious Landscape*, 8.
[16] Pew Forum, *Religious Landscape*, 5.
[17] Pew Forum, *Religious Landscape*, 5

mainline Protestant churches (18.1%) and historically black Protestant churches (6.9%)."[18] The mainline Protestant churches seem to be seeing the greatest decline, as members of this group appear to be fleeing to either more conservative evangelical denominations or to no religion at all.[19]

Finally, while survey data from the Pew study shows that 16.1 percent of the American population is unaffiliated with any religion, further questioning suggests the actual number of unreligious people in the United States may be even higher. Of the 35,000 survey participants, 38 percent were not members of any church, although many still aligned themselves with a specific denomination.[20] Moreover, while 92 percent of Americans expressed some sort of belief in God, only 71 percent of those who confessed belief in God were "absolutely certain," 17 percent were fairly certain, and 5 percent were much less certain.[21] Most tellingly, only 60 percent of those who believed in God believed in a personal God, while the remainder believed in some sort of impersonal force or general deity.[22] If one accepts that belief in a personal God is a necessary condition to be labeled Christian, this statistic deviates sharply from the 78.4 percent of Americans who claim Christianity as their religion.

Synthesis

The ARIS and Pew studies report remarkably similar results, and combined provide a representative sample of nearly 250,000 American households. When averaged, the two surveys reveal that 77.2 percent of the US population claim some form of Christian religion. Of those,

---

[18] Pew Forum, *Religious Landscape*, 5.
[19] Pew Forum, *Religious Landscape*, 18.
[20] Pew Forum, *Religious Landscape*,162
[21] Pew Forum, *Religious Landscape*, 163
[22] Pew Forum, *Religious Landscape*, 164.

approximately 25 percent are Catholic and 50 percent are Protestant. A chart comparing and averaging the two studies is below; because the PEW and ARIS studies categorize differently, the categories in this chart have been edited to align as closely as possible with each other. For example, while the PEW study categorized Orthodox denominations separately from other Christian denominations, the ARIS study considered the Orthodox denomination a part of Mainline Protestantism. Therefore, for the sake of comparison, the Orthodox denomination has been grouped with the Protestant denomination in this chart.

Table 5: Synthesis of the ARIS and Pew Studies

	ARIS	Pew	Average
Christian	76	78.4	77.2
Protestant	48.3	52.2	50.25
Catholic	25.1	23.9	24.5
Mormon / Jehovah's Witness	2.6	2.4	2.5
Other Religion	3.9	4.7	4.3
No Religion	15	16.1	15.55
Don't Know / Refused / Data Error	5.2	.8	3

Source: Author's original work, data derived from the ARIS and Pew studies

The Pew and ARIS studies point to a number of conclusions regarding the religious beliefs and affiliations of the general US population. First, the United States today is less Christian than it was twenty years ago. Both the Protestant and Catholic religions have been losing numbers, although the percentage of Catholics in the United States has remained stable thanks to a large number of Catholic immigrants, while Protestantism has slipped nearly 10 percent in twenty years. Second, both studies agree that the number of people in the

United States who claim no religion has doubled over the past twenty years, and this group today represents approximately 15 percent of the overall population, although it is significantly more prevalent in younger adults. Third, religious affiliation is strongly correlated to demographics. Those who claim no religion are significantly more likely to be young, male, white or Asian, and from the north, while those who claim Protestantism are significantly more likely to be older, female, black, and from the South, and those who claim Catholicism are significantly more likely to be Latino.

While the United States remains a mostly Christian nation (in the sense that the majority of the population claims to adhere to some form of Christianity), its religious market is distinguished by significant mobility. This mobility is clearly demonstrated by the dwindling mainline Protestant population and the polarized growth of both the conservative Evangelical as well as the unreligious populations. Such mobility should be expected in a religious free market society, where energetic clergy can actively market their brands, create new churches without resistance, and grow to whatever degree for which they can foster support. American religious plurality has indeed led to a religious culture marked by intense market competition and high rates of consumption, as opposed to societies with putative monopoly faiths, which are marked by religious indifference.[23]

This chapter demonstrated the substantial growth in religious affiliation in the United States since its colonial period. Furthermore, it has identified general rates of religious affiliation among the current US population, and has correlated many types of religious affiliation according to demographic variables. The next chapter explores religious belief among a very specific demographic set: the United States military.

[23] Finke and Stark, *Churching,* 10.

Chapter 3

Religious Belief in the Military

The United States of America is best served by a military that is accurately representative of the population itself.[1] To that end, the military has in recent years labored tirelessly to create a force that is as diverse as the people it serves.[2] This chapter looks at religious belief within the military writ large, as well as within the Air Force specifically, to determine if religious beliefs in these organizations accurately reflect those of the American People.

Religious Affiliation in the Military

In the 2009 National Defense Authorization Act, Congress mandated the creation of the Military Leadership Diversity Commission (MLDC) to evaluate diversity in the Armed Forces. To assess religious diversity, the commission used data derived from their Religious Identification and Practices Survey (RIPS), which was voluntarily completed by 6,384 servicemembers. Of the thirty questions in the RIPS, two asked the respondent to self-identify his or her religious affiliation and the remainder addressed general attitude toward religion.[3] A table comparing the findings of the RIPS to those from the ARIS and Pew studies is below.

---

[1] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), 227, 286; See also Suzanne C. Nielsen and Don M. Snider, "Introduction," in *American Civil-Military Relations: The Soldier and the State in a New Era*, edited by Suzanne C. Nielsen and Don M. Snyder, 1-10, (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 5.

[2] Military Leadership and Diversity Commission. *From Representation to Inclusion: Diversity Leadership for the 21st Century Military (Final Report)* (Arlington, VA: Department of Defense, March 15th 2011), vii.

[3] Military Leadership Diversity Commission, *Religious Diversity in the Military,* Issue Paper 22, version 2 (Arlington, VA: Department of Defense, 2010), 1.

A few notes concerning the chart: first, the data for the ARIS and Pew studies comes from the categorization accomplished in Chapter 2, not from the categorization used by the MLDC report (which differs slightly). Second, because the three studies categorize differently, data from the RIPS study has been recategorized to align as closely as possible with that from Pew and ARIS. The first way this paper recategorizes the RIPS data is in the manner it categorizes the Orthodox denomination. While the PEW and RIPS studies categorized Orthodox denominations as separate from Protestant or Catholic denominations, the ARIS study considered the Orthodox denomination a part of mainline Protestantism. Therefore, for the sake of comparison, the chart below includes the Orthodox denominations a part of Protestantism in all studies. Second, the RIPS study considered humanism an independent religion, whereas ARIS and PEW categorized it as a part of the nonreligious category, therefore, this chart includes humanism as part of the nonreligious category instead of its own religion. Third, RIPS did not distinguish the Mormon or Jehovah's Witness denominations as their own denominations, but instead included them as part of "Other Christian". Therefore, this chart recategorized the ARIS and PEW data to include the Mormon and Jehovah's Witness denominations in the "Other Christian" category.

Table 6: Comparison of RIPS, ARIS, and Pew

	RIPS	ARIS	Pew
Christian	65.86	75.98	78.4
Protestant	42.07	48.3	52.2
Catholic	20.11	25.07	23.9
Other Christian	3.28	2.6	2.4
Other Religion	4.78	4.7	4.7
No Religion (includes humanist)	29.11	15	16.1
Don't Know / Refused / Data Error	.25	5.2	.8

Source: Author's original work; RIPS data derived from Military Leadership Diversity Commission, Religious Diversity in the Military, *Issue Paper 22, version 2 (Arlington, VA: Department of Defense, 2010), 2. ARIS data from Barry A. Kosmin and Ariela Keysar,* American Religious Identification Survey: Summary Report *(Hartford, CT: Trinity College, March 2009), 3. Pew data from Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life,* U.S. Religious Landscape Survey *(Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, 2008), 10.*

As demonstrated in the chart above, religious affiliation within the military differs markedly from that of the general population. Military members are ten percentage points less likely to report themselves as Christian and nearly twice as likely to claim no religious preference. However, these differences are likely more due to other demographic variables, most notably age and gender.

First, while the average rate of Christianity among the American population is 77.2 percent, there is a significant difference between older and younger adults as well as between males and females. Using the Pew Foundation's Religious Landscape Study, which provides more refined demographic details, it becomes clear that older adults are significantly more likely to claim Christianity than younger adults, and younger adults are significantly more likely to be unreligious. Specifically, 80 percent of US adults age 40-49 claim to be Christian,

compared to only 68 percent of those 18-29. In contrast, only 15 percent of those 40-49 are unreligious, compared to 25 percent of those 18-29.[4]

Second, males are eight percentage points less likely than females to be affiliated with Christianity and seven percentage points more likely to be unreligious (see table 2). The facts that 76 percent of active duty military personnel are under the age of 35 (compared to 47 percent of the general population) and that 84 percent of the military is male (compared to 50.8% of the general population) account for the discrepancies between religious affiliation in the military and that of the general population.[5] So in general, the military is less Christian and more unreligious than the general population, but this discrepancy is largely explained by the military's demographics (young and male).

Table 7: Percentage Religious Affiliation of US Citizens by age and gender

	Total Population	18-29	40-49	Male	Female
Christian	78	68	80	74	82
Protestant	51	43	52	48	53
Catholic	24	22	25	23	25
Unreligious	16	25	15	19	12

Source: Data Adapted from Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, U.S. Religious Landscape Survey *(Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, 2008), 37.*

[4] Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, *U.S. Religious Landscape Survey* (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, 2008), 37.

[5] The military data comes from Government Accountability Office, *Report to Congressional Requesters: Military Personnel, Reporting Additional Servicememeber Demographics Could Enhance Congressional Oversight,* GAO-05-952, (Washington, DC: September, 2005), 48. Data on the general population comes from US Census Bureau, "State & County Quickfacts," http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/00000.html (accessed 28 March, 2012).

Thus, "given its young demographic, the military appears to reflect the religious diversity of U.S. society closely."[6] The majority of military members, like the majority of Americans, claim to be affiliated with some sort of Christian belief system. Also similar to the general population of Americans, the number of military members who claim no religion seems to be growing, especially among the younger members. This age discrepancy may have significant implications for both policy and strategy. Because the military organization is by its very nature hierarchical, members in leadership positions are necessarily older; therefore "servicemembers in the senior ranks tend to be more religious."[7] Moreover, this discrepancy holds true in both the officer and enlisted ranks. Older officers are more likely than younger officers to be religious just as older enlisted members are more likely than younger enlisted members to be religious. Most notably, younger military officers (40 and under) are more likely to be religious than enlisted military members in the same age category (see table 3). The higher degree of Christianity among officers is most accentuated by, and perhaps statistically skewed by the rate of Christianity in the Air Force.

Table 8: Comparison of No Religious Preference between Officer and Enlisted

	Religious Preference (%)	
	40 and Under	Over 40
No Religious Preference		
Officer/Warrant	15.65	9.68
Enlisted	27.63	17.27

Source: Data Adapted from Military Leadership Diversity Commission, Religious Diversity in the Military*, Issue Paper 22, version 2 (Arlington, VA: Department of Defense, 2010), 3.*

[6] MLDC, *Religious Diversity*, 6.
[7] MLDC, *Religious Diversity*, 3.

Religion in the Air Force

No significant survey or research has been conducted on religious belief in the Air Force. Therefore, the data used to determine religious affiliation in the Air Force was provided by the Air Force Personnel Center's (AFPC) Retrieval Application Web (RAW). Information was collected from annually updated personnel records. As such, it is practically 100% representative, but is not nearly as accurate as open-ended survey data, as the personnel records only ask the member what his or her religious affiliation is, rather than what he or she believes. Moreover, because religious preference is a part of military member's personnel records, and is this official record, responses are much more subject to preference falsification. That said, when the MLDC compared the RIPS data collected on the general military to the personnel records at the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC), it found only minor differences. Personnel data, for the most part, supports survey data and vice versa.

AFPC data reflects a significantly higher rate of religious affiliation in the Air Force than in the military writ large, however, the rate of religious affiliation in the Air Force is largely consistent with that of the general public. Nearly 78 percent of Air Force members are affiliated with Christianity, as are roughly 77 percent of the general public, but only 66 percent of the military as a whole. Most interestingly, the officer Corps within the Air Force reflects a slightly higher rate of Christianity than the enlisted force, the military as a whole, or the US general population (see table 4).

Table 8: Comparison of religious beliefs in the Air Force to those in the military and the general population

	RIPS	ARIS	PEW	AF	AF Enlisted	AF Officer
Christian	65.86	75.98	78.4	77.6	75.1	80
Protestant	42.07	48.3	52.2	55.6	55.5	51.1
Catholic	20.11	25.07	23.9	19.5	18.1	25.4
Other Christian	3.28	2.6	2.4	1.8	1.5	3.5
Other Religion	4.78	4.7	4.7	1.7	1.6	1.8
No Religion (includes humanist)	29.11	15	16.1	21.4	22.4	17
Don't Know / Refused / Data Error	.25	5.2	.8	.7	.9	1.2

Source: Author's original work; RIPS data derived from Military Leadership Diversity Commission, Religious Diversity in the Military, *Issue Paper 22, version 2 (Arlington, VA: Department of Defense, 2010), 2. ARIS data from Barry A. Kosmin and Ariela Keysar,* American Religious Identification Survey: Summary Report *(Hartford, CT: Trinity College, March 2009), 3. Pew data from Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life,* U.S. Religious Landscape Survey *(Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, 2008), 10. Air Force data from Air Force Personnel Center, "Retrieval Applications Web," https://gum-crm.csd.disa.mil/app/answers/detail/a_id/13048/kw/RAW/r_id/100169, retrieved 28 March, 2012.*

AFPC reports that other demographics within the Air Force are consistent with the military overall, although it has slightly more women and slightly fewer racial minorities. The average age of the Air Force member is 28 (same as the regular force), 19 percent of Air Force

members are women (16 percent of the general force), and 74 percent are white (67 percent of the general force).[8]

While the rates of religious affiliation in the Air Force appear to closely mirror those of the general population, the differences in religious affiliation between the Air Force and the military in general are somewhat disquieting. The military in general has a rate of religious affiliation about 10 percentage points lower than the general public, mostly because of age. The average age of the military member is 28 years old, compared to 37 years of age for the average American adult.[9] Therefore, although rates of religious affiliation in the military appear less than those in the general public, they are still consistent with the general public because the average age of the military member is 10 years younger than that of the average American adult, and younger Americans are less religiously affiliated.

If the average age of the Air Force member is the same as that of the average age of the military member, and if younger American adults have a lower rate of religious affiliation than older American adults, then the rate of religious affiliation in the Air Force is not consistent with that of the general public. Using the data provided by AFPC, rates of religious affiliation in the Air Force are at least 10 percentage points higher than that in the general public. Put another way, the Air Force appears to be significantly more Christian than the rest of the military and the rest of the country.

An important caveat to this observation must be made. As previously mentioned, this observation is made by comparing personnel

---

[8] AF data from Air Force Personnel Center, "Air Force Demographics," http://www.afpc.af.mil/library/airforcepersonneldemographics.asp, accessed 28 March, 2012. Military data from Government Accountability Office, *Report to Congressional Requesters: Military Personnel, Reporting Additional Servicememeber Demographics Could Enhance Congressional Oversight*, GAO-05-952, (Washington, DC, September, 2005), 48.

[9] CIA *World Factbook, The United States*, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/us.html (accessed 13 May, 2012).

records to survey data. The two data sources are not alike, thus a difference of 10 percentage points may be an acceptable margin of error. But the finding, coupled with recent media attention regarding alleged religious impropriety and proselytization in the Air Force, especially at the Air Force Academy, warrants further study.[10] Future research should first of all seek to confirm or deny the apparent discrepancy. If confirmed, future research should ask why this discrepancy exists. An initial hypothesis may offer a correlate related to the alleged proselytization at the Air Force Academy (to be discussed more in the next chapter). However, since only 22 percent of the officer corps attended the Academy, this correlation may not fully explain the discrepancy.[11]

Summary

The demographic data presented in this chapter and the one previous to it lead to a number of conclusions. Demographically, most of the United States (about 77 percent) is Christian, but Christianity is more prominent among older members of society, while younger members have slightly lower rates of religious affiliation overall. Consequently, the military as a whole, which is composed of a younger cross-section of society, has lower rates of Christianity than the population in general. However, the Air Force appears to have higher rates of Christian affiliation than the rest of the military by over 10 percentage points. Moreover, the Air Force officer corps has a nearly 15 percentage point higher rate of Christian affiliation than the rest of the

[10] For a good overview of religious controversy in the Air Force, specifically at the US Air Force Academy, see Anne Loveland, "Evangelical Proselytizing at the U.S. Air Force Academy: The Civilian-Military Controversy, 2004-2006," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 44, no. 1 (Winter 2009), 11-25.

[11] Air Force Personnel Center, Air Force Demographics, http://www.afpc.af.mil/library/airforcepersonneldemographics.asp (accessed 13 May, 2012).

military, and an approximately three percentage point higher rate of Christianity than the population as a whole.[12]

The next chapter will ask, "so what?" What do contemporary demographics regarding the religious beliefs of the nation, the military, and the Air Force have to do with strategy? To answer that question, the next chapter will first endeavor to briefly define strategy and to differentiate the strategic level of war from the other levels of war. Then, the above demographic data, specifically the disparity between the religious beliefs of Air Force officers and that of the rest of the military, will be analyzed for any potential strategic implications.

[12] This data comes from Table 8 on page 45.

Chapter 4

Christianity in the Levels of War

Religion is everywhere. "Every dominant state, and particularly an empire, promotes a religion or ideology that justifies its domination over other states in the system."[1] Religion is a powerful driving force both individually and collectively, and as such, it has been the seed for some of the world's most influential actors and events. Religion shaped the actions of both Mother Theresa and Adolf Hitler; it has been the ideological justification for countless blood baths as well as innumerous acts of charity. Religion has destroyed and built nations; killed and protected the weak; eroded and strengthened organizations. Religion is quite possibly the most powerful ideology ever known. After considering the rates high of religiosity in the United States (demonstrated in the previous chapters), it is clear that religion continues to play a large part in American society.

This paper is about the strategic implications of religion in the United States Air Force. To understand these implications, one must first understand the history of religion as a whole in the country, as well as historical and contemporary religious belief in the US population, the military, and the Air Force. The first three chapters of this paper provided this foundation. This chapter asks the logical question, "so what?" What are the strategic implications of these religious affiliations? Is religion related to strategy, and if so, how? How does the USAF fit into this relationship? Do the religious beliefs of members of the United States Air Force have strategic implications, or do the implications of religious belief in the Air Force lie at a different level? To answer these

[1] Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 30.

questions, the implications of religious belief must be analyzed at all levels of war.

The Department of Defense's Joint Publication (JP) 3-0 describes the three levels of war as the strategic, the operational, and the tactical.[2] These three levels of analysis are not exclusive; in reality the same factors may have effects at multiple levels, and some levels may bleed over into others; however, each level is theoretically distinct and each fulfills a specific purpose.

Religion at the Strategic Level

The strategic level is the highest level of war. JP 3-0 defines the strategic level of war as that at which all the instruments of national power (diplomatic, information, military, economic) are used to achieve national objectives.[3] Dolman defines strategy as "a plan for continuing advantage."[4] To Dolman, whose definition of strategy is informed by the famous strategic theorist Carl Von Clausewitz, strategy is an infinitely long-term thing, "for the goal of strategy is not to culminate events, to establish finality in the discourse between states, but to influence states' discourse in such a way that it will go forward on favorable terms. For continue it will."[5] Strategy then is the continuous pursuit of advantage. Strategy is not how you play the game, but why you play the game: "strategy is always *about* the game or competition … The conclusion of the game is immaterial."[6] By this definition, strategy has no point of culmination; its only end can be described as the continuation or betterment of the state, and the state "is understood not as a simple descriptive of its existing characteristics (size, population, resources,

[2] Joint Publication 3-0, *Joint Operations*, 11 August 2011, I-13.
[3] JP 3-0, *Joint Operations*, xi.
[4] Everett Carl Dolman, *Pure Strategy* (New York, NY: Frank Cass, 2005), 6.
[5] Dolman, *Pure Strategy*, 6.
[6] Dolman, Pure Strategy, 129.

etc.), but as a culmination of these and its culture, ideology, mythology, and more."[7] Thus the implications of religious belief at the strategic level of war can best be understood in terms of how religion defines the state.

As demonstrated in chapters one and two, the US is and always has been a predominantly Christian, specifically Protestant, nation. Today approximately 77 percent of the country claims to be Christian, and about half of the country is Protestant.[8] Although the government was constructed to be secular, as articulated in the First Amendment and further enforced in the Fourteenth Amendment, Christianity has influenced the US government, even if only in an unofficial capacity.

It is widely accepted that religious belief shapes a person's values and cognition, specifically his or her aspirations, assumptions of causation, and goals.[9] Thus, even without governmental endorsement, the premises and values of Christianity continue "to be endorsed by societal structures and laws … because the majority of the population" adheres to Christianity.[10] Not only does a largely shared religious base inform national values, but such a base even strengthens a sense of national identity: "there is considerable evidence that religiousness is positively related to a strong national identity in European countries … and the United States."[11] Therefore, despite the secular intentions of those who designed the US government structure, the fact that the majority of the Americans believe in some form of Christianity has undoubtedly influenced the strategic level of war by shaping American ideology.

---

[7] Dolman, Pure Strategy, 129.

[8] Barry A. Kosmin and Ariela Keysar, *American Religious Identification Survey: Summary Report* (Hartford, CT: Trinity College, March 2009), 3.

[9] Skip Worden, "Religion in Strategic Leadership: A Positivistic, Normative/Theological, and Strategic Analysis," *Journal of Business Ethics* 57 (2005): 221-239, 222.

[10] Heather Widdows, "Religion as a moral source: can religion function as a shared source of moral authority and values in a liberal democracy?" *Heythrop Journal* 45, no. 2 (April 2004): 197-208, 206.

[11] Vassilis Saroglou and Benoît Hanique, "Jewish Identity, Values, and Religion in a Globalized World: A Study of Late Adolescents," *Identity* 6, no. 3 (July 2006): 231-249, 234.

Ideology is generally accepted to mean "a system of beliefs shared by members of a social, political, or religious group that develops and reproduces through discourse and serves as a basis for opinions, decisions, and actions."[12] Ideology is what a group of people think their world should look like. Ideologies can be grand or minor, macro or micro. In fact, groups can even have multiple ideologies concerning multiple issues, and subgroups within groups can have sub-ideologies to go along with the larger group's ideology. Thus, generalizing American ideology is no easy task, but is necessary to understanding the strategic level of war, for a nation's ideology should guide its strategy, and in fact, the ideological end state should be synonymous with the national strategic end state.

American ideology began with religion:

> "The Lord will be our God, and delight to dwell among us, as His own people, and will command a blessing upon us in all our ways, so that we shall see much more of His wisdom, power, goodness and truth, than formerly we have been acquainted with. We shall find that the God of Israel is among us, when ten of us shall be able to resist a thousand of our enemies; when He shall make us a praise and glory that men shall say of succeeding plantations, 'may the Lord make it like that of New England.' For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill."[13]

These words, spoken by Governor John Winthrop in 1630 to colonists of the future Massachusetts Bay aboard the ship *Arbella*, are still used to express American ideology today. The analogy of

---

[12]Annette D. Beresford, "Homeland Security as an American Ideology: Implications for U.S. Policy and Action," *Journal of Homeland Security & Emergency Management* 1, no. 3 (2004): 1-22, 6.

[13] Governor John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity," (1630), The University of Virginia Religious Freedom webpage, http://religiousfreedom.lib.virginia.edu/sacred/charity.html (accessed 11 May).

the city on a hill refers to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, recounted in Matthew 5:14. By using this analogy, Winthrop was positing that "America had a unique role in God's providence," and that by becoming members of this great society, American immigrants were now part of God's chosen people, with a special responsibility.[14]

To Winthrop, and to many that have followed Winthrop, God chose America, with its ideals of liberty, equality, freedom, and democracy, to be an example unto the world—to be the ultimate society for mankind. This idea was in line with the common Protestant belief that "humankind has been placed upon this earth to labor and make it plentiful to the greater glory of God and that the United States has taken on this covenant with greater success and with more consistency than any other nation."[15] In its original meaning then, the city on the hill was purely a religious concept: God chose the US as "a redeemer nation … called to transform the earth in its own image."[16]

This idea that the US was a divinely predestined city on a hill was the beginning of American ideology, and traces of this ideology are still seen today. It has been used by some of the most prominent political leaders of the past century, to include Woodrow Wilson, Ronald Reagan, and George W. Bush, all of whom used it with its original religious connotations.[17] However, idea of divine predestination was only the roots of American ideology. American

---

[14] Lewis, "American Exceptionalism," 20.
[15] Lyons, "City on a Hill," 120
[16] Lyons, "City on a Hill," 120
[17] Woodrow Wilson, "Address at Gettysburg," (July 4, 1913), University of Virginia's Miller Center website, http://millercenter.org/president/speeches/detail/3787 (accessed 28 April, 2012); Ronald Reagan, "We will be a City Upon a Hill," (25 January, 1974), Reagan 2020 website, http://reagan2020.us/speeches/City_Upon_A_Hill.asp (accessed 28 April, 2012); Lyons, "City on a Hill," 119.

ideology eventually grew into the broader concept of American exceptionalism.[18]

American exceptionalism is perhaps the best way to express contemporary American ideology. American exceptionalism, grounded in the idea of the city on a hill, is the theory that "America's values, political system, and history" make the US "both destined and entitled to play a distinct and positive role on the world stage."[19] Put otherwise, "American exceptionalism is the idea that the liberal-democratic values of the United States give it a mandate to lead the vanguard of history."[20] The important distinction between ideology of American exceptionalism and the ideology stemming from the city on a hill analogy lies in the impetus of the ideology. American exceptionalism is founded on American values and its form of government—a more secular foundation—whereas the city on a hill ideology is grounded in divine predestination.

Ironically, Joseph Stalin was the first to use the precise term, "American exceptionalism," although, when Stalin used this term, he was speaking derogatively about American communists who thought themselves the exception to Marxism.[21] However, the idea of American exceptionalism sprouted well before Stalin's time. The European social scientist Alexis de Tocqueville is typically credited as the first to record the notion of American Exceptionalism. While visiting the US in the early nineteenth century to research his book, *Democracy in America*, Tocqueville was impressed by what he thought was a more free and humane society than that of Europe. Tocqueville argued that America was exceptional because it did not rely on the traditions of inherited status and hierarchy; Americans had "extraordinary social mobility,

---

[18] Paul Lyons, "George W. Bush's City on a Hill," *Journal of the Historical Society* 6, no. 1 (Mar 2006): 119–131, 119.
[19] Stephen M. Walt, "The Myth of American Exceptionalism," *Foreign Policy* 189 (Nov 2011): 72-75, 72.
[20] Andrew Fiala, "The Crusade for Freedom: A Just War Critique of the Bush Doctrine," *Political Theology* 9, no 1 (2008): 47-60, 48.
[21] Brian D. McLaren, "America the Exceptional," Sojourners Magazine 41, no. 1: 16-19. Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost (accessed May 11, 2012).

which served as a potent source of energy in American life."[22] In essence, it was America's sense of equality and individualism, emplaced by its democratic form of government, which set the US apart as an exceptional nation.

For Tocqueville though, America's equality, individualism, and democracy did not sprout by themselves; instead, America's exceptionalism was born from its religion. Tocqueville recognized that even at its very young age, there was no country in the world in which Christianity exerted a more powerful influence over the population than in the US.[23] Although he acknowledged that many Americans earnestly believed in the dogma of their religion and others adhered to it purely out of habit or social considerations, he found that dichotomy inconsequential: "I do not know whether all Americans put faith in their religion, for who can read into men's hearts? But I am sure that they believe it necessary for the maintenance of republican institutions."[24] Therefore, argued Tocqueville, "Religion, which never interferes directly in the government of Americans, should … be regarded as the first of their political institutions, for, if it does not give them the taste for liberty, it enables them to take unusual advantage of it."[25]

Furthermore, Tocqueville warned that American government should never be separated from its religion: "It is religion which has given birth to Anglo-American societies: one must never lose sight of that; in the United States, religion is thus intimately linked to all national habits and all the emotions which one's native country arouses; that gives it a particular strength."[26] For Tocqueville then, America's religion—Christianity—gave birth to its form of government—democracy—and it is American government that truly makes it exceptional.

---

[22] V. Bradley Lewis, "American Exceptionalism," *America* 205, no. 9 (3 Oct 2011), 19-22, 19.
[23] Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2003), 340.
[24] Tocqueville, *Democracy*, 342.
[25] Tocqueville, *Democracy*, 342.
[26] Tocqueville, *Democracy*, 496.

Although it may be "impossible to draw a straight line historically from Christianity to democracy," contemporary democracy has very strong ties to Christianity, specifically to Protestantism.[27] Today 79 of the 88 free democracies world-wide are predominantly Christian countries.[28] In fact, the very "idea of a federal constitution and a separation of priest and king did indeed originate from the Old Testament."[29] Many ideas that are considered fundamental to democratic government are Biblical concepts. Consider, for example, Jesus' admonition recorded in Matthew 22:21 (*New Living Version*) to "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's," or the apostle Paul's counsel in Romans 13:1 (*New Living Version*) to "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities."

Perhaps most importantly, certain democratic ideals, "such as that of human dignity … are actually predicated on Christianity and Biblical religion."[30] As an example, consider perhaps the most famous of all Bible verses, John 3:16 (*New Living Version*): "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life." This famous dictation of universal grace is a foundation of Protestantism: all are equally valuable and all can be saved. This belief in equality and universal grace is what stood the eighteenth and nineteenth century Evangelicals out from their Calvinist and Puritan predecessors, who did not accept universal grace, but instead believed in divine predestination. That the Evangelical ideal of universal grace developed in parallel with the American democratic ideal of equality is no coincidence, as the values of the Americans that built this democracy were heavily influenced by their Christian beliefs:

---

[27] Steve Bruce, "Did Protestantism Create Democracy," *Democratization* 11, no. 4 (August 2004): 3-20, 6.
[28] Thomas Schirrmacher, "Christianity and Democracy," *Journal of Theology*, 35, no. 1 (2011): 51-60, 54.
[29] Schirrmacher, "Christianity and Democracy," 51-60, 53.
[30] Joseph Bottum, "American Exceptionalism and American Religion," *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion & Public Life* 199 (January 2010): 53-67, 66.

> "The religion of the West gave the West a belief in a God who is distinct from and above any human, or social structure, or nation. It gave us an understanding of obligations to that God which are also distinct from and above the obligations to society and state. It established both the idea of a strong cultural place for preachers to name those obligations for all, and the idea of an inner conscience that is utterly individual. Most of all, biblical religion gave us an understanding of the world in which each of us—by ourselves, without the support of our nations or our families—will be judged for our thoughts and words, for what we have done and what we have failed to do. Together, these are the beliefs that created, and grounded, the concepts at the core of the American democratic experience."[31]

Founded by settlers who believed they were God's chosen people, and that the US would be a new Israel, early Americans built a form of government that aligned uniquely with their protestant beliefs. [32] They built a secular government founded on Christian values—a democracy—that made the United States of America absolutely exceptional. Once instilled, the idea of American exceptionalism became in the broadest sense the core of American ideology. In fact, President Obama, who has referenced American exceptionalism more than any other President in history, recently proclaimed, "My entire career has been a testimony to American exceptionalism."[33] The continuation of this ideology—this way

---

[31] Bottum, "American Exceptionalism," 66.
[32] Bruce, "Protestantism," 4.
[33] The statistic regarding presidential use of the phrase "American exceptionalism" comes from Robert Schlesinger, "Obama has Mentioned 'American Exceptionalism' more than Bush," *US News and World Report Website*, http://www.usnews.com/opinion/blogs/robert-schlesinger/2011/01/31/obama-has-mentioned-american-exceptionalism-more-than-bush. (accessed 13 May, 2012).

of life—is the US strategic end state. American strategy seeks the continuation of American exceptionalism, which has been largely shaped by, and continues to be heavily influenced by, Christianity.

Yet today, political leaders often try to avoid the religious underpinnings of American exceptionalism. Instead, they focus on the secular values of equality and democracy as the impetus for American exceptionalism. For example, when President Obama explains the reasons for American exceptionalism, he does not include any reference to God or religion: "The United States remains the largest economy in the world. We have unmatched military capability. And I think that we have a core set of values that are enshrined in our Constitution, in our body of law, in our democratic practices, in our belief in free speech and equality that, though imperfect, are exceptional."[34]

In fact, even the city on a hill analogy is often secularized. For example, President Kennedy in 1961 used the city on a hill analogy in a secular sense: "Today the eyes of all people are truly upon us—and our governments, in every branch, at every level, national, state, and local, must be as a city upon a hill—constructed and inhabited by men aware of their great trust and their great responsibilities … For of those to whom much is given, much is required."[35] In this way, Kennedy was saying that America is a city on a hill, but not because of divine predestination, but because of its values and form of government. President Obama has also invoked this secular version of the city on the hill analogy: "As the earliest settlers arrived on the shores of Boston and Salem and Plymouth, they dreamed of building a City upon a Hill. And

---

The quote from President Obama comes from Devin Dwyer, "Obama Rebuffs Romney on 'American Exceptionalism,'" *ABC News Website*, http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/politics/2012/04/obama-rebuffs-romney-on-american-exceptionalism/ (accessed 13 May, 2012).

[34] President Barrack Obama, as quoted in Robert Schlesinger, "Obama has Mentioned 'American Exceptionalism' more than Bush," *US News and World Report Website*, http://www.usnews.com/opinion/blogs/robert-schlesinger/2011/01/31/obama-has-mentioned-american-exceptionalism-more-than-bush. (accessed 13 May, 2012).

[35] John F. Kennedy, "City Upon a Hill Speech," (9 January, 1961), University of Virginia's Miller Center website, http://millercenter.org/president/speeches/detail/3364 (accessed 28 April, 2012).

the world watched, waiting to see if this improbable idea called America would succeed. For over two hundred years, it has."[36]

The secularization of American ideology is not a new phenomenon. In fact, it is constitutionally mandated by the First Amendment. Moreover, this secularization is often not well received by America's highly religious population. In fact, in the twentieth century a secularization theory even emerged to help explain how and why America was being secularized, and to warn of the ramifications of secularization.[37] Ironically though, secularization never really happened. In fact, as American government secularized more, the American people became more religious.[38] The effects of secularization in America were the exact opposite of those predicted by secularization theory. The most likely reason for this inverse relationship: the religious free market economy theory. The more religiously neutral the government, and the less it restricted the religious activity of its population, the more religiously active the population became.[39] In turn, the religious affiliations and religious beliefs of the population indirectly but very meaningfully influenced government policies and behavior.

Is there more to American strategy than just Christianity? Certainly. Christianity is not a monolithic influence in American ideology or government, but neither is it inconsequential. In many ways, understanding Christianity in America helps the strategist understand *why* America fights, but understanding Christianity can also help the

---

[36] Barrack Obama, University of Massachusetts at Boston Commencement Address, *Obamaspeeches* website, http://obamaspeeches.com/074-University-of-Massachusetts-at-Boston-Commencement-Address-Obama-Speech.htm (accessed 28 April, 2012); Lyons, "City on a Hill," 119.

[37] Mark O. Yeisley, "The End of Civilizations: The Role of Religion in the Evolution of Subnational Conflict, 1946-2007" (doctoral dissertation, Department of Political Science, Duke University, 2010), 7.

[38] Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 96.

[39] Ted G. Jelen and Clyde Wilcox, "Religion and Politics in an Open Market: Religious Mobilization in the United States," in *Religion and Politics in Comparative Perspective: The One, The Few, and The Many*, edited by Ted Gerard Jelen and Clyde Wilcox (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 289.

strategist understand *how* America fights, which is the subject of the following section.

Religion at the Operational Level

If the strategic level of war describes *why* America fights, then the operational level of war describes *how* America fights. At this level, existing research has demonstrated at least two main implications of religious belief. The first implication can be seen in the use of religion as a mobilizing ideology on the road to war. The second implication can be seen in the rules that govern American warfare, known as Just War Theory.

The first way Christianity in America influences how America fights is by acting as a mobilizing ideology. Going to war is rarely a unilateral decision. This is especially true in a democracy. The road to war is a political process, during which government leaders must convince others within the government as well as those within the voting population of the necessity for war. To convince such a disparate group of the necessity for war, leaders often turn to a common moral basis or group identity. This common ground is often found in religious or ethnic commonality.[40] "Religion, as both an individual and institutional resource, is thus a powerful tool in the process of political mobilization for conflict."[41]

Examples of attempts at religious mobilization can be easily found within US political rhetoric. Consider President George W. Bush's 2002 State of the Union Address, in which he famously described the countries of Iran, Iraq, and North Korea as the "axis of evil," going on to proclaim that "evil is real, and it must be opposed … many have discovered again

[40] Michael Basedau, Georg Strüver, Johannes Vüllers, and Tim Wegenast, "Do Religious Factors Impact Armed Conflict? Empirical Evidence From Sub-Saharan Africa," *Terrorism & Political Violence* 23, no. 5 (2011): 752-779, 754.
[41] Yeisley, "The End of Civilizations," 51.

that even in tragedy—specially in tragedy—God is near."[42] Religious references are made in American politics as a tool for mobilization on an almost daily basis. Moreover, the intentional use of such speech is no secret. David Price, who has been serving in Congress on behalf of the state of North Carolina since 1987, put it aptly, "my experience demonstrates how speaking in the religious idiom connects with many audiences, relating contemporary reality to truths and stories that are part to their personal history. Such references should be accessible and inclusive."[43]

Use of the religious idiom for the purposes of mobilization is surely not unique to the US. Surprisingly, the religious political rhetoric that comes from the democratic United States of America often sounds much like the religious rhetoric that comes from its rival theocratic countries. Consider as an example the 1980's Iran-Iraq War, in which the Iranian Imam Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini proclaimed that the attacks coming from Iraq were "an assault on Islam and the Prophet's legacy by profane forces of disbelief." The Iranian theocrats insisted, "Iran had not been attacked because of its provocations or lingering territorial disputes, but rather because it embodied Islam and sought to achieve the Prophet's injunctions." Thus, "Armed with faith, the cause of Iran was bound to prevail, as God would not allow the forces of righteousness to be defeated."[44] These claims sound eerily like those made by President George W. Bush, who declared "God is not on the side of any nation, yet we know He is on the side of justice."[45]

There is an important differentiation that needs to be made. Religious differences between nations have not consistently proven to

---

[42] George W. Bush, "President George W. Bush's State of the Union Address, 2002 (29 January 2002), http://www.johnstonsarchive.net/policy/bushstun2002.html (accessed 13 May, 2012).
[43] David E. Price, "Faith & Politics," *Blueprint* 2005, no. 1: 18-21, 19.
[44] Ray Takeyh, "The Iran-Iraq War: A Reassessment," *Middle East Journal* 64, no. 3 (Summer 2010): 365-383, 366.
[45] Joe Klein, "The Perils of a Righteous President," interview with George W. Bush, *Time*, 9 May 2004, http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,634641,00.html [accessed?]

drive nations to war in modern times. “Although the salience of religion seems to be on the increase, given ongoing efforts by fundamentalist groups such as al Qaeda, it is realist rather than religious issues that appear to continue to drive groups to conflict in the new millennium.”[46] Often what matters more than religion in the onset of war “is wealth, population, experience and equity.”[47] Contemporary evidence only demonstrates the utility of religion in mobilizing a state’s populous along a path to war that has already been chosen. “As religion in classic modernity belongs to the private sphere, it lost its importance as a reason for war. The state’s interest dictates and legitimizes warfare. Religion only serves, besides nationalism, as an additional means to ensure the loyalty of troops and populations.”[48]

Once the path to war has been chosen and the nation mobilized, religion continues to affect how a nation fights by shaping its rules of engagement, which in the US are based on the Christian-rooted Just War Theory. Michael Walzer is widely renowned as the contemporary oracle of Just War Theory. In his magnum opus, *Just and Unjust Wars*, he differentiates between the justness of going to war, called *jus ad bellum*, and the justness of action in war, called *jus in bello*:

> “War is always judged twice, first with reference to the reasons states have for fighting, secondly with reference to the means they adopt. The first kind of judgment is adjectival in character: we say that a particular war is just or unjust. The second is adverbial: we say that the war is being fought justly or unjustly. Medieval writers made the

[46] Yeisley, “The End of Civilizations,” 228.
[47] Yeisley, “The End of Civilizations,” 227.
[48] Heinrich Schäfer, "The Janus Face of Religion: On the Religious Factor in New Wars," *International Review For The History Of Religions* 51, no. 4 (November 2004): 407-431, 410.

difference a matter of prepositions, distinguishing *jus ad bellum*, the justice of war, from *jus in bello*, justice in war."[49]

After distinguishing between the justice of war and justice in war, Walzer goes on to intricately discuss all matters of morality in war, to include noncombatant immunity and military necessity, sieges and blockades, guerilla war, terrorism, and nuclear war. Walzer's work is perhaps the most rigorous and thorough ever presented on the topic, but strangely enough, the word "Christian" or "Christianity" appears nowhere in the text. For Walzer, justice of war and justice in war are founded purely in natural law: "the truth is that one of the things most of us want, even in war, is to act or to seem to act morally. And we want that, most simply, because we know what morality means (at least, we know what it is generally though to mean)."[50] Walzer's entire work is prefaced by the assumption that *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* are natural, universal values.

Although Walzer may be the contemporary expert on Just War Theory, he is not its originator. As with most international law, the roots of Just War Theory come from "the Christian Roman Empire that took shape after the conversion to Christianity of the Emperor Constantine in the year 312 AD."[51] The Catholic theologian Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430) is typically credited as the originator of Just War Theory.[52] For Augustine, just war was purely a Christian concept, although surely he would have preferred that the entire world adopt his religion and thus

---

[49] Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), 21..

[50] Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, 20.

[51] Martin L. Cook, "Ethical Issues in War: An Overview," in *U.S. Army War College Guide to Strategy*, edited by Joseph R. Cerami and James F. Holcomb, Jr. (February, 2001): 19-30, 20. http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/ssi/00354.pdf (accessed 13 May, 2012).

[52] Daryl Charles and Timothy J. Demy, *War, Peace, and Christianity: Questions and Answers from a Just-War Perspective* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2010), 113.

his morals. From the fourth century on, countless philosophers and theologians have wrestled with Just War Theory.

Nearly a thousand years later, the Spanish Catholic philosopher and theologian, Francisco de Vitoria (1480-1546), the Spanish Jesuit priest, philosopher, and theologian Francisco Suarez (1548-1617), and the Dutch philosopher, theologian, and Christian apologist, Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) made leaps and bounds in the development of Just War Theory during the Renaissance Period.[53] One of the chief accomplishments of this trio of theologians and philosophers was their attempt to ground Just War Theory "not in Christian theology per se, but in moral obligation that is known through natural-law reasoning."[54] These renaissance men took the first steps toward claiming just war as a universal value based on natural law, instead of a solely Christian concept. Walzer's magnum opus seems to be the culmination of that journey.

There are many advantages for Christian philosophers, politicians, or nations to ground Just War Theory in natural law instead of religious faith, but "an unrestrained readiness to sever just war from its religious moorings is not without certain problems."[55] The chief problem with assuming that Just War Theory is based on natural law is the idea of natural law itself. Does such a thing exist? If so, where does it come from? For many Christians, natural law comes from God himself. In Romans 2: 14-15 (New Living Translation), the apostle Paul clearly spells this out: "Even when Gentiles, who do not have God's written law, instinctively follow what the law says, the show that in their hearts they know right from wrong. They demonstrate that God's law is written within them, for their own consciences either accuse them or tell them they are doing what is right." This logic, that Just War Theory is

[53] Charles and Demy, *War, Peace, and Christianity*, 32.
[54] Charles and Demy, *War, Peace, and Christianity*, 33.
[55] John D Carlson, "Winning Souls and Minds: The Military's Religion Problem and the Global War on Terror," *Journal of Military Ethics* 7, no 2 (2008): 85-101, 95.

universal because it is not based on religious preference but instead on natural law which was written on the hearts of all men by God, fails to convince even the amateur skeptic of the secular nature of just war.

To the non-Christian nation, "Christian just war tradition is generated as an apologetic by Christian theological leaders to justify the state, particularly its power in terms of waging war and making a war moral."[56] In fact, other cultures, with other religious beliefs, have their own ideas about just war that do not always coincide with Christian Just War Theory. For example, "for Islam, the concepts of war, battle and conduct of war, among other things, are not some accretion that has to be theologically justified after well over 300 years of life of the faith, but rather they are central to the formation of Islamic theology, jurisprudence, and ethics."[57]

Thus, Just War Theory must always be considered in light of its historical Christian roots. While some of its concepts may seem universal and may be found in the traditions of other cultures, it is fairly clear that "just-war moral reasoning has been nurtured and refined in the soil of the Western cultural tradition, of which the broader Christian tradition constitutes an important part."[58] However, Christian roots don't necessarily make for a good or bad tree. Although Just War Theory has been widely accepted throughout the world (most fully by other Christian, western societies), its ultimate source of credibility comes from international institutions such as the United Nations (UN) and the North Atlantic Trade Organization (NATO). Both the UN and NATO have adopted charters and policies that largely coincide with just war criteria for intervention.

The mere fact that both the UN and NATO accept large parts of Just War Theory lends it credibility as a universal value instead of just a

---

[56] Charles W. Amjad-Ali, "Jihad and Just War Theory: Dissonance and Truth," *Dialog* 48, no. 3, (Fall 2009): 239-247, 239.
[57] Amjad-Ali, *Jihad and Just War*, 240.
[58] Charles and Demy, *War, Peace, and Christianity*, 97.

Christian heritage. However, it can never be a purely secular concept, as Walzer attempts to make it. Just War Theory began as a Christian concept and is still firmly rooted in Christianity today. In fact, of the top 50 returns on an EBSCOHOST search of "Just War Theory," more articles appeared in religious journals such as *The Journal of Religious Ethics* or *A Journal of Theology*, then appeared in the secular government journals such as *The Journal of Military Ethics*.[59]

Despite its Christian heritage, or perhaps because of it, "the idea of just war is one to which the well-led and disciplined military forces of the world remain committed," but this does not mean that Just War principles are always followed. In fact, on the same page on which the *The US Army War College Guide to Strategy* champions US respect for Just War Theory, it confesses, "The fact that the constraints of just war are routinely overridden is no more a proof of their falsity and irrelevance than are similar points about morality: we know the standard, and we also know human beings fall short of that standard with depressing regularity."[60]

Poignantly, what came to be known as the "Bush Doctrine" in the first decade of the twenty-first century was considered by many as a blatant violation of the principles of both *jus ad bellum* or *jus in bello*. *Jus ad bellum*, the justness of going to war, typically revolves around six key issues: just cause, competent authority, right intention, last resort, proportionality, and reasonable hope for success.[61] Prior to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, President Bush and the US intelligence community

---

[59] EBSCOHOST search, "Just War Theory," http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/results?sid=6d719a29-abcc-4b1c-8e3a-ccb0430c52a8%40sessionmgr113&vid=11&hid=122&bquery=Just+War+Theory&bdata=JmRiPWFwaCZkYj1tdGgmZGI9dHNoJmRiPWJ0aCZjbGkwPUZUJmNsdjA9WSZ0eXBlPTAmc2l0ZT1laG9zdC1saXZlJnNjb3BlPXNpdGU%3d#37 (accessed 13 May, 2012).

[60] Martin L. Cook, "Ethical Issues in War: An Overview," in *U.S. Army War College Guide to Strategy*, edited by Joseph R. Cerami and James F. Holcomb, Jr. (February, 2001): 19-30, 19. http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/ssi/00354.pdf [accessed?]

[61] Stephen Strehle, "Saddam Hussein, Islam, and Just War Theory: The Case for a Pre-Emptive Strike," *Political Theology*, 5, no. 1 (January 2004): 76-99, 82-83.

attempted to invoke the just cause right of going to war by painting Saddam Hussein as an imminent threat to national security. However, the idea of preventative war, even in the name of just cause, is a gray area in Just War Theory; only in extreme cases is preventative war considered just. After the invasion, when it became clear that Saddam Hussein and Iraq were not imminent threats to US national security, most of the world came to the conclusion that the US preventative war against Iraq was not within the bounds of Just War Theory:

> "The just war tradition maintains (among other things) that war can only be used as a proportional last resort in defense of a just cause; and it requires that war be restrained according to principles that include discrimination and adherence to the developed ideas of what Walzer calls 'the war convention.' While there are debates among just war theorists about the extent to which the just war ideal allows for humanitarian intervention, it is clear that the just war ideal does not permit wars aimed at radical historical transformation."[62]

In retrospect, the Bush Doctrine appears to be a crusade for democracy that laid well outside of the bounds of what would be considered just in Just War Theory.

Many pundits have also claimed that the Bush Doctrine exceeded the bounds of *jus in bello*. The two criteria of *jus in bello* are generally accepted to be discrimination or noncombatant immunity and proportionality.[63] While US precision weapons aided immensely in minimizing collateral damage and protecting civilians, the bounds of *jus in bello* were exceeded on a number of different occasions. First, instances of torture, justified by declaring "the Taliban and Al Qaeda

---

[62] Andrew Fiala, "The Crusade for Freedom: A Just War Critique of the Bush Doctrine," *Political Theology* 9, no 1 (2008): 47-60, 51.

[63] Strehle, "Saddam Hussein, Islam, and Just War Theory," 83.

outside the coverage of the Geneva Conventions," lay outside the generally accepted bounds of *jus in bello*.[64] Moreover, in the ensuing counterinsurgency operations after the initial invasion, excessive force was often claimed to have been used, and civilians and prisoners alike were often mistreated, most notoriously at Abu Gharib.[65]

War is messy, and no war has ever been fought completely within the bounds of the idealistic Just War Theory. The *Army War College Guide to Strategy* observes, "The moral tradition of just war, and its partial embodiment in the laws of war at any moment is part of on-going evaluation. They represent a drive to make practical restrains on war that honor the moral claim of individuals not to be unjustly attacked while at the same time recognizing that use of military force in defense of individuals and values is sometimes a necessity."[66] Just War Theory is an ideal, but it is an ideal that the United States of America has signed up for. Furthermore, it is an idea firmly entrenched in Christianity: "Just war tradition is more than a checklist of criteria. It is a way of living justly."[67] Just war tradition "is sustained by the virtues inculcated through the preaching and teaching and practices of discipleship that characterize the life of the Christian community."[68]

Christian theologians founded Just War Theory, and members of the Christian faith still feel responsible for its upkeep. With this Christian influence, Just War Theory informs American military and political decisions concerning whether or not to use force to achieve desired ends. Once committed to the use of force, Just War Theory informs military rules of engagement, to include concepts such as

---

[64] *The New York Times*, "A Guide to the Memos on Torture." http://www.nytimes.com/ref/international/24MEMO-GUIDE.html (accessed 13 May, 2012).
[65] David Fisher and Nigel Biggar, "Was Iraq an unjust war? A debate on the Iraq war and reflections on Libya," *International Affairs*, 87, no. 3 (May 2011): 687-707, 692.
[66] Cook, "Ethical Issues in War," 29.
[67] Daniel Bell, "In War and Peace," *Christian Century* 122, no. 18 (Sept 6, 2005): 26-33, 26.
[68] Bell, "In War and Peace," 26.

military proportionality, limitations of collateral damage, and laws of armed conflict.

Thus, through its utility as a mobilizing ideology, and through the application of Just War Theory, Christianity has a heavy influence in *how* America fights. Furthermore, before America even gets to the fight, Christianity has a heavy influence on *why* America fights. If the strategic level of war is why the game is played, and the operational level of war is how the game is played, then what occurs within the game properly describes the tactical level of war.[69]

Religion at the Tactical Level

The tactical level of war is the level at which military organizations plan and execute battles and engagements to achieve military objectives.[70] Where strategy is concerned with aggregate interactions and conditions, tactics "is concerned with individual actions and decisions."[71] While victory is a concept that has no meaning to the strategist, to the tactician victory is everything. Tactics are short term, highly dependent on the actions of individual players, and very reactive to the environment, but they only matter in the aggregate to strategy. A single victory or loss may mean nothing to the strategist, but the culmination of years of victories, or worse, years of defeats, likely carries strategic implications.

If the tactical level of war is about the individual battles and engagements, then the implications of religion at the tactical level concern the individual issues that arise in the military related to religion. Just as individual battles or engagements may have little or no bearing at the operational or strategic level, individual religion-related events may

[69] The game analogy comes from Dolman, *Pure Strategy*, 129.
[70] Joint Publication 3-0, *Joint Operations*, xii.
[71] Dolman, *Pure Strategy*, 5.

have little or no bearing at the operational or strategic level. It is only the *aggregate* of tactical-level events that matter. Thus, to understand the implications of religion at the tactical level, this discussion will begin by briefly overviewing some of the most salient religion-related events that have recently occurred in the military.

In 2005, *Harper's* Magazine ran an article entitled, "Jesus Killed Mohammed." It tells the story of an Army Special Forces unit that called themselves "the Faith Element."[72] Based just outside the Iraqi town of Samarra, they drove a Bradley fighting vehicle with the words, "Jesus Killed Mohammed" spray painted in Arabic on their vehicle through the streets, while blasting the same words, spoken in Arabic, through a bullhorn.[73] The article goes on to tell of other, similar, tactical-level events, such as an Army commander who had proselytized to Afghan warlords during his tour in Afghanistan, as well as multiple chaplains and commanders who had portrayed to their soldiers the conflict in the Middle East as a conflict between good (Christians) and evil (Muslims).

However, the Army isn't the only service with religion problems, especially considering the mountain of religious discrimination claims at the Air Force Academy over the past decade. In 2003-2005, issues such as a "Team Jesus" banner in the football locker room; a Commander who instructed his cadets to "share the gospel" with non-evangelical cadets; frequent reports of anti-Semitic remarks; and organized prayer at mandatory meetings, meals, and ceremonies gave the impression of flagrant religious discrimination at the Air Force Academy.[74] Complaints led to a 2005 investigation which concluded that the entire Academy organization had "religion problems."[75] Since that time, the Academy

---

[72] Jeff Sharlet, "Jesus killed Mohammed: The Crusade for a Christian Military," *Harper's* Magazine, May 2009, http://harpers.org/archive/2009/05/0082488 (accessed 28 April, 2012).
[73] Sharlet, "Jesus killed Mohammed".
[74] Anne Loveland, "Evangelical Proselytizing at the U.S. Air Force Academy: The Civilian-Military Controversy 2004-2006," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 44, no. 1 (winter 2009): 11-25, 11-12.
[75] Sharlet, "Jesus Killed Mohammed."

has continued to make news with claims of religious disparity, although a 2010 Air Force Climate Survey conducted at the Academy reported decreasing rates of religious intolerance. Notably, while the report showed a decreasing trend among religious minority cadets feeling ridiculed, shunned, or pressured because of their religion or lack thereof, the report also found that "more Christians feel a lack of religious freedom with continued emphasis of legal restrictions on unwanted proselytizing."[76]

Beyond the Air Force Academy, the Air Force has faced other religion-related problems. For example, just months ago, in February 2012, three-star General Ronnie Hawkins made the national news after members of his organization complained about a presentation he gave at a Commander's Call briefing. In the presentation, General Hawkins briefed his priorities to his organization, "the first and last of which are, 'always put God first, and stay within His will' and 'Always remember God is good—all the time!'"[77] In another recent example, Airmen complained about the Christian themes of a nuclear ethics course. The Air Force subsequently removed the course from the curriculum.[78] Both of these instances, and many others, have made the national news.

Individually, events like those described above are purely tactical events. Collectively however, they begin to have operational or even strategic implications. Consider the perception of these events from the perspective of an adversary, or even an ally: US military institutions, such as the Air Force Academy, make the news for a string of religion-related events related to proselytization of future officers. Once

---

[76] Lt Gen Mike Gould, US Air Force Academy Commandant, 2009/2010 Cadet & Perm Party Climate Assessment Survey: Media Brief, 29 Oct 2010

[77] Markeshia Ricks, "3-Star Ripped for Presentation Referencing God," http://www.airforcetimes.com/news/2012/02/military-3-star-presentation-reference-god-021712/ *Air Force Times*, 17 Feb, 2012 (accessed 28 April, 2012).

[78] Markeshia Ricks, "Air Force yanks nuclear ethics course," *Air Force times*, 4 Aug, 2011, http://www.airforcetimes.com/news/2011/08/air-force-nuclear-ethics-course-yanked-080411/ (accessed 17 May, 2012)

commissioned, military officers then make the news for giving preferential treatment to other Christians, or for embedding Christian themes in military training. When sent to combat, military officers proselytize the enemy or speak and act disparagingly about other faiths. Operationally, the aggregate of these events give the US military the look and feel of Christian crusaders, whose cause is clearly outside the realm of Just War Theory. Strategically, the aggregate of these events cast doubt upon America's democracy and the constitution upon which it is founded; outsiders may ask, does the US really have freedom of religion?

Thus, the implications of religious belief at the tactical level largely involve the way military members and their organizations balance the free exercise of religion with the prohibition against religious establishment. This balance is more delicate for military members than it is for average citizens, because military members represent the US government. Moreover, military members are subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice, which is a set of laws that go beyond the normal civilian's constitutional rights. Consequently, military members, especially in uniform, occasionally give up some of their constitutional rights.

This precedent has been set and reinforced multiple times in US courts. For example, in the 1974 *Parker v Levy* Case, the Supreme Court decreed the infringement of First Amendment values permissible in certain applications: "while military personnel are not excluded from First Amendment protection, the fundamental necessity for obedience, and the consequent necessity for discipline, may render permissible within the military that which would be constitutionally impermissible outside it."[79] This finding has been reiterated a number of times, including, more recently, in the 2003 case of the *United States v O'Connor*, during which the United States Court of Appeals for the Armed

[79] *Parker v Levy*, Supreme Court of the United States, from Boston College Website, http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/cas/comm/free_speech/parker.html (accessed 28 April 2012).

Forces stated, "We have long recognized that the First Amendment rights of civilians and members of the armed forces are not necessarily coextensive."[80] Again, this finding was specifically reinforced in the 2008 case of *United States v Wilcox*, in which the court determined that "deference must be given to military authorities' determination that military needs justify particular restrictions on the First Amendment, and that military commanders may enact regulations and take administrative actions that place burdens on, or exact administrative consequences for, speech, expression, and the exercise of religion that would not pass constitutional muster in the civilian context."[81]

While findings such as these don't eliminate the military member's right to the free exercise of religion, there are times when this right is more limited than it is for civilians. This limitation is necessary because when military members wear the uniform, everything they do can be perceived as government establishment. This condition is unique to military members and necessarily limits free exercise. Civilians, when they exercise their religion freely, do not represent their government. Military members do.

Summary

US doctrine describes warfare at three levels: the strategic, the operational, and the tactical. The strategic level of war describes why America fights. At the strategic level, the desired end state of American strategy is the continuation or betterment of the American way of life, which is founded upon the ideology of American exceptionalism. The ideology of American exceptionalism is based on "a core set of values that

[80] *United States v O'Conner*, from United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces website, http://www.armfor.uscourts.gov/newcaaf/opinions/2003Term/01-0403.htm (accessed 28 April 2012).
[81] *United States v Wilcox*, from United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces website, http://www.armfor.uscourts.gov/newcaaf/opinions/2008Term/05-0159.pdf (accessed 28 April 2012).

are enshrined in our Constitution, in our body of law, in our democratic practices, in our belief in free speech and equality that, though imperfect, are exceptional."[82] These values are largely shaped by Christianity. Beginning with the first settlers, Americans analogized themselves after the Biblical city on a hill, predestined by God. Even the American form of government, intentionally structured to be religiously neutral, has been shaped by Biblical principles.[83] Since the founding of the country, the American government has struggled to maintain its constitutionally mandated religious neutrality; a necessary struggle, as it is this very neutrality that enables religious freedom in the US. Without government neutrality, the religious American free market economy could not continue, and the Christian values that shaped and continue to indirectly influence the secular government could wither and die.[84]

The operational level of war describes how America fights. At this level the US, like every other nation, state, or empire before it, uses religion as an ideology around which to mobilize. American political leaders throughout history have successfully used Christianity and/or Christian values as a tool to mobilize both the government and the population.[85] Moreover, Americans subscribe to, even champion, Just War Theory as a moral guide in both going to war and in fighting a war. Just War Theory, despite ongoing attempts at secularization, is firmly founded in Christian values and ethics. Furthermore, despite western attempts at the secularization of Just War Theory, many adversaries continue to see it as "an apologetic by Christian theological leaders to

---

[82] Schlesinger, "Obama has Mentioned 'American Exceptionalism' more than Bush".
[83] Bottum, "American Exceptionalism," 66.
[84] Ted G. Jelen and Clyde Wilcox, "Religion and Politics in an Open Market: Religious Mobilization in the United States," in *Religion and Politics in Comparative Perspective: The One, The Few, and The Many*, edited by Ted Gerard Jelen and Clyde Wilcox (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 289.
[85] Price, "Faith & Politics,", 19.

justify the state, particularly its power in terms of waging war and making a war moral."[86]

Finally, religion at the tactical level of war revolves around the individual religion-related events that occur in the military. Recent religion-related events include proselytization of cadets at the Air Force Academy, preferential treatment of Christianity in the general force, and attempted proselytization of the adversary and the disparaging use of religion to incite violence in combat. Individually events such as these have little bearing on the operational or strategic levels, but collectively these events have both operational and strategic implications. In the worst case, by creating the perception of religious government establishment, the aggregate of these tactical events threatens the government religious neutrality that is fundamental to the American way of life.

[86] Charles W. Amjad-Ali, "Jihad and Just War Theory: Dissonance and Truth," *Dialog* 48, no. 3, (Fall 2009): 239-247, 239.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

To suggest that religious belief in the Air Force has direct strategic implications is a bit grandiose. Religious belief in the US does have strategic implications, but these implications are a reflection of the values and beliefs of the country as a whole, taken over the entire lifespan of the nation. What the military does today or tomorrow, or what the members of the force believe today or tomorrow, have little direct influence on the strategic implications of religion. Even at the operational level, where America's religious beliefs have informed its ways of fighting, the individual beliefs of the warfighters and the individual religion-related events matter little. For the most part, the implications of religious belief in the Air Force, or in any service for that matter, lie mostly at the tactical level, where individual events occur. That said, as with any other tactical activity, the aggregate of tactical events can have operational or even strategic implications.

Coupled with the first section of this paper, which dealt with the demographics of religious affiliation in the population as a whole, the military as a whole, and the Air Force as an independent service, an understanding of the implications of religion at the different levels of war leads to the conclusion that the primary implication for the Air Force relates to its demography. Demographically, most of the US (about 77 percent) is Christian, but Christianity is more prominent among older members of society, while younger members have slightly lower rates of religious affiliation overall. Consequently, the military as a whole, which is composed of a younger cross-section of society, has lower rates of Christianity than the population in general. However, the Air Force appears to have higher rates of Christian affiliation than the rest of the military by over 10 percentage points. Moreover, the Air Force officer corps has a nearly 15 percentage point higher rate of Christian affiliation

than the rest of the military, and an approximately 3 percentage point higher rate of Christianity than the population as a whole.[1]

Along with the litany of religion-related events that have occurred in the Air Force over the past decade, the nearly 15 percentage point differential in religious belief between Air Force officers and the rest of the military highlights an important disparity. An Air Force Officer corps that is continuously more religious than the enlisted corps it leads, and is also more religious than the rest of the military as well as the rest of the nation as a whole could (and perhaps already has) lead to an uptick in religion-related events at the tactical level. Individually, these events are nothing more than a nuisance, but over the very long term, could have operational and strategic consequence.

Thus, the Air Force should take steps to measure and understand the rates of religious affiliation of its members. If indeed this demographic disparity exists, the Air Force must ask itself why, and must be cognizant of the potential tactical implications, as it is the aggregate of tactical implications that can have strategic consequence.

The fact that the Air Force and the Department of Defense as a whole seem unaware of this demographic discrepancy points to a second implication: that of self-awareness. In a quick search through the five most current issues of the National Defense University's Joint Forces Quarterly journal, the word Islam, or a derivative thereof appears 83 times. Conversely, the word Christian appears ten times.[2] This simple statistical measurement says nothing about causation, but is used to make the point that the Department of Defense talks about the implications of its adversary's religion significantly more than it talks about the implications of its own religion.

---

[1] This data comes from Table 8 on page 45.

[2] This analysis was conducted using Issues 60-65 of *Joint Force Quarterly*, located at http://www.ndu.edu/press/jointForceQuarterly.html (accessed 13 May, 2012).

A great deal of effort has been exerted over the past decade to better understand Islam. But do members of the US military understand Christianity to the same extent? Religious competency is critical to understanding an adversary, but is also critical in understanding oneself. As Sun-Tzu opined: "Know the enemy and know yourself."[3] This holds especially true in today's small war environment. In fact, "in winning hearts and minds, the military may need to become more attuned to the religious lives and spiritual dimensions of human beings – to the soul."[4] Currently, the only significant religious training the active duty force undergoes is religious sensitivity training and cultural awareness education, but these programs "do not explain why religion is of any inherent importance or why it is worthy of respect or special consideration."[5] Instead, these programs focus more on legal requirements. Rather than, or perhaps in addition to, religious sensitivity and cultural awareness programs, Air Force leaders, including all officers and non-commissioned officers, should be exposed during PME to religious education as an important component of military operations.

These two implications seem strangely at odds: first, to be aware of the potential over-representation of Christian affiliation in the force, which could be perceived as government establishment, and could over the long term have strategic implications; second, to teach more about Christianity and religion as an ideology, so that Airmen are more aware of their own biases, as well as those of others. But this difficult dichotomy is exactly what the founding fathers prescribed when they

[3] Sun Tzu, *The Illustrated Art of War: The Definitive English Translation,* ed. and trans. Samuel B. Griffith (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 125

[4] John D Carlson, "Winning Souls and Minds: The Military's Religion Problem and the Global War on Terror," *Journal of Military Ethics*, Vol 7, No 2, 85-101, 2008, 87.

[5] Carlson, "Winning Souls and Minds," 91.

wrote the first amendment. "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."[6]

[6] Our Documents Website, Transcript of "the Bill of Rights." http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=13&page=transcript (accessed 13 May, 2012).

Conclusion

The meaning of the First Amendment has changed since it was originally penned, especially since being coupled with the Fourteenth Amendment. Today, the words "Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of a religion" mean something different than they did in the eighteenth century. [7] This phrase originally meant that the federal government would not be permitted to establish a national religion that would impinge upon the different States' religious establishments. Since the Fourteenth Amendment, the First Amendment has been reinterpreted by the Supreme Court to mean that neither the Federal nor the State governments can take actions that could be perceived as giving preference to any single religion.[8]

But this reinterpretation of the original intent of the First Amendment does not negate the military member's legal requirement to adhere to it. Nor should this reinterpretation be construed as a secularizing of the nation. In fact, religious affiliation in the US has continually swelled since the forming of the nation, while at the same time, the government, in order to remain religiously neutral, has continually kept religion at arm's length. Government religious neutrality is a necessary component in maintaining the religious free market economy in the US.

The apparent dip in religious affiliation over the past two decades should not be considered evidence of a nation undergoing secularization, but should instead be considered a natural part of the ebb and flow of a religious free market economy. The US is one of the most religiously active nations in the world specifically because the government continues to refuse any appearance of religious preference or establishment,

---

[7] Our Documents Website, Transcript of "the Bill of Rights." http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=13&page=transcript (accessed 13 May, 2012).

[8] Winnifred F. Sullivan, "We Are All Religious Now. Again," *Social Research* 76, no. 4 (Winter 2009): 1182.

resulting in a high demand and high supply of independent religious establishments. Despite government neutrality, America's religious fervor is a fundamental part of what makes it so exceptional.

Herein lie the strategic implications for Airmen. Airmen, as uniformed representatives of the same secular government that enables the religious free market economy, must be aware of their own religious biases, and must also be aware of the constitutional mandate to balance their freedom of religion expression with the prohibition of government establishment. This balance is central to the strategic imperative of continued American Exceptionalism. For under the free market economy model, the best way to secularize the nation is not to make the government more secular, but to make the government more religious.[9]

[9] Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America* (Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 3.

Bibliography

Air Force Policy Directive 36-70. *Diversity*, 13 October 2010.

Air Force Personnel Center. "Air Force Demographics." http://www.afpc.af.mil/library/airforcepersonneldemographics.asp. (accessed 28 March, 2012).

Air Force Personnel Center. "Retrieval Applications Web." https://gum-crm.csd.disa.mil/app/answers/detail/a_id/13048/kw/RAW/r_id/100169 (retrieved 28 March, 2012).

Allison, Graham, and Philip Zelikow. *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis.* New York, NY: Longman, 1999.

American Baptist Association Website, "History and Archives," http://abaptist.org/abaha/ (accessed 28 March, 2012).

American Religious Identification Survey Website, "Methodology," http://commons.trincoll.edu/aris/about-aris/methodology/ (accessed 28 March, 2012).

Amjad-Ali, Charles W. "Jihad and Just War Theory: Dissonance and Truth," *Dialog* 48, no. 3, (Fall 2009): 239-247.

Bar, Shmuel. "God, Nations, and Deterrence: The Impact of Religion on Deterrence." *Comparative Strategy* 30, no. 5 (November 2011): 428-452.

Basedau, Michael, Georg Strüver, Johannes Vüllers, and Tim Wegenast. "Do Religious Factors Impact Armed Conflict? Empirical Evidence From Sub-Saharan Africa." *Terrorism & Political Violence* 23, no. 5 (2011): 752-779, 754.

Bell, Daniel. "In War and Peace." *Christian Century* 122, no. 18 (Sept 6, 2005): 26-33.

Beresford, Annette D. "Homeland Security as an American Ideology: Implications for U.S. Policy and Action." *Journal Of Homeland Security & Emergency Management* 1, no. 3 (2004): 1-22.

Bowman, John, S., ed. *The Founding Fathers: The Men Behind the Nation.* East Bridgewater, MA: World Publications Group, 2011.

Bottum, Joseph. "American Exceptionalism and American Religion." *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion & Public Life* 199 (January 2010): 53-67, 66.

Brooks, David. "The Larger Struggle." *The New York Times.* June 14,2010.

Bruce, Steve. "Did Protestantism Create Democracy?" *Democratization.* 11, no. 4 (August 2004): 3-20.

Carlson, John D. "Winning Souls and Minds: The Military's Religion Problem and the Global War on Terror," *Journal of Military Ethics* 7, no 2 (2008): 85-101.

Charles, Daryl J., and Timothy J. Demy. *War, Peace, and Christianity: Questions and Answers from a Just-War Perspective.* Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2010.

CIA World Factbook, The United States, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/us.html

Connolly, William E. "Capitalism, Christianity, America: Rethinking The Issues." *Political Theology* 12, no. 2 (2011): 226-236.

Cook, Martin L. "Ethical Issues in War: An Overview," in *U.S. Army War College Guide to Strategy*, edited by Joseph R. Cerami and James F. Holcomb, Jr. (February, 2001): 19-30, 20.

Cooperman, Alan. "Inquiry Sought Over Evangelical Video," The Washington Post, 11 December, 2006. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/12/10/AR2006121000883.html (accessed 28 April 2012)

Dolman, Everett Carl. *Pure Strategy*. New York, NY: Frank Cass, 2005.

Dwyer, Devin. "Obama Rebuffs Romney on 'American Exceptionalism,'" ABC News Website, http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/politics/2012/04/obama-rebuffs-romney-on-american-exceptionalism/ (accessed 15 May, 2012).

Fiala, Andrew. "The Crusade for Freedom: A Just War Critique of the Bush Doctrine." *Political Theology* 9, no 1 (2008): 47-60, 58.

Fox, Jonathan. "Religious Discrimination: A World Survey," *Journal Of International Affairs* 61, no. 1: 47-67.

Finke, Roger, and Rodney Stark. *The Churching of America*. Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005.

Fisher, David and Nigel Biggar, "Was Iraq an unjust war? A debate on the Iraq war and reflections on Libya," *International Affairs*, 87, no. 3 (May 2011): 687-707.

Gilpin, Robert. War and Change in World Politics. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

Gould, Lieutenant General Mike, Commandant US Air Force Academy. 2009/2010 Cadet & Perm Party Climate Assessment Survey: Media Brief, 29 Oct 2010.

Government Accountability Office. *Report to Congressional Requesters: Military Personnel, Reporting Additional Servicemember Demographics*

Could Enhance Congressional Oversight. GAO-05-952. Washington, DC, September, 2005.

Holmes, David, L. *The Faiths of the Founding Fathers.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Huntington, Samuel P. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order.* New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1996.

Huntington, Samuel P. *The Soldier and the State.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957.

Janis, Irving. *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascoes.* Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1982.

Jelen, Ted G., and Clyde Wilcox. "Religion and Politics in an Open Market: Religious Mobilization in the United States." In *Religion and Politics in Comparative Perspective: The One, The Few, and The Many*, edited by Ted Gerard Jelen and Clyde Wilcox. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Jervis, Robert. *Perception and Misperception in International Politics.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976.

Johnson, Richard. "Gods and Monsters: Religion as a Survival Strategy." *Heythrop Journal* 50, no. 5 (September 2009): 864-876.

Joint Publication 3-0, *Joint Operations*, 11 August 2011.

Kennedy, John F. "City Upon a Hill Speech," (9 January, 1961). University of Virginia's Miller Center. http://millercenter.org/president/speeches/detail/3364 (accessed 28 April, 2012).

Klein, Joe. "The Perils of a Righteous President." Interview with George W. Bush. *Time*, 9 May 2004.

http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,634641,00.html (accessed 13 May, 2012).

Kosmin, Barry, A. and Ariela Keysar, *American Religious Identification Survey: Summary Report*. Hartford, CT: Trinity College, March 2009.

Kosmin, Barry, A. and Ariela Keysar. *Religion in a Free Market*. Ithaca, NY: Paramount Books, 2006.

Kozak, Ellen, M. *The Everything U.S. Constitution Book*. Avon, MA: Adams Media, 2011.

Lewis, Bradley V. "American Exceptionalism." *America* 205, no. 9 (3 Oct 2011), 19-22.

Loveland, Anne C. "Evangelical Proselytizing at the U.S. Air Force Academy: The Civilian-Military Controversy, 2004-2006." *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Winter 2009, Vol 44, 1, 11-25.

Lyons, Paul. "George W. Bush's City on a Hill." *Journal of the Historical Society* 6, no. 1 (Mar 2006), 119 – 131.

McLaren, Brian D. "America the Exceptional." *Sojourners Magazine* 41, no. 1 (Jan 2012), 16-19. Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost (accessed May 11, 2012).

Military Leadership and Diversity Commission. *Business-Case Arguments for Diversity and Diversity Programs and Their Impact in the Workplace.* Issue Paper 14. Arlington, VA: Department of Defense, February, 2010.

Military Leadership and Diversity Commission. *From Representation to Inclusion: Diversity Leadership for the 21st Century Military (Final Report).* Arlington, VA: Department of Defense, March 15th 2011.

Military Leadership and Diversity Commission. *From Representation to Inclusion: Diversity Leadership for the 21st Century Military (Executive Summary).* Arlington, VA: Department of Defense, March 15th 2011.

Military Leadership and Diversity Commission. *Religious Diversity in the Military*. Issue Paper 22, version 2. Arlington, VA: Department of Defense, 2010.

McElroy, John, H. "Understanding the First Amendment's Religion Clauses." *The Intercollegiate Review*, (Spring 2011): 33-40.

New York Times, "A Guide to the Memos on Torture." http://www.nytimes.com/ref/international/24MEMO-GUIDE.html (accessed 13 May 2012).

Nielsen, Suzanne C. and Don M. Snider. "Introduction." In *American Civil-Military Relations: The Soldier and the State in a New Era*, edited by Suzanne C. Nielsen and Don M. Snyder. 1-10. Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009.

Obama, Barrack. "University of Massachusetts at Boston Commencement Address." Obamaspeeches website. http://obamaspeeches.com/074-University-of-Massachusetts-at-Boston-Commencement-Address-Obama-Speech.htm (accessed 28 April, 2012).

Our Documents Website. "Bill of Rights." http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=13&page=transcript (accessed 28 April, 2012).

Our Documents Website. "Transcript of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution." http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=43&page=transcript (accessed 28 April, 2012).

Parker v Levy. Supreme Court of the United States. Boston College Website. http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/cas/comm/free_speech/parker.html (accessed 28 April 2012).

Peterson, Gregory, R. "Are Evolutionary/Cognitive Theories of Religion Relevant for Philosophy of Religion?" *Zygon* 45, no. 3 (September 2010): 545-557.

Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, "New Poll: Per Forum on Religion and Public Life Surveys Mormons in America," Pew Forum website, http://www.pewforum.org/Press-Room/Press-Releases/New-Poll--Pew-Forum-on-Religion---Public-Life-Surveys-Mormons-in-America.aspx (accessed 30 April, 2012).

Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, "Reconciling Obligations: Accommodating Religious Practice on the Job," Pew Forum website, http://www.pewforum.org/Church-State-Law/Reconciling--Obligations-Accommodating-Religious-Practice-on-the-Job.aspx (accessed 30 April, 2012).

Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. *U.S. Religious Landscape Survey.* Pew Research Center. Washington, DC, 2008.

Phillips, Kevin. *American Theocracy: The Peril and Politics of Radical Religion, Oil, and Borrowed Money in the 21st Century.* New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2006.

Prothero, Stephen. *God is not One: The Eight Rival Religions that Run the World and Why their Differences Matter.* New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2010.

Prothero, Stephen. *Religious Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know and Doesn't.* New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2008.

Reagan, Ronald. "We will be a City Upon a Hill," (25 January, 1974). Reagan 2020 website, http://reagan2020.us/speeches/City_Upon_A_Hill.asp (accessed 28 April, 2012).

Ricks, Markeshia. "3-Star Ripped for Presentation Referencing God." *Air Force Times*, 17 Feb 2012. http://www.airforcetimes.com/news/2012/02/military-3-star-presentation-reference-god-021712/ (accessed 28 April, 2012)

Ricks, Markeshia. "Air Force yanks nuclear ethics course," *Air Force Times*, 4 Aug, 2011, http://www.airforcetimes.com/news/2011/08/air-force-nuclear-ethics-course-yanked-080411/ (accessed 17 May, 2012)

Rodda, Chris. "Against All Enemies, Foreign and Domestic." In *Attitudes Aren't Free: Thinking Deeply about Diversity in the US Armed Forces*, edited by James E. Parco and David A. Levy, 69-98, Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, February, 2010.

Saroglou, Vassilis and Benoît Hanique. "Jewish Identity, Values, and Religion in a Globalized World: A Study of Late Adolescents." *Identity* 6, no. 3 (July 2006): 231-249.

Schäfer, Heinrich. "The Janus Face of Religion: On the Religious Factor in New Wars." *International Review for the History of Religions* 51, no. 4 (November 2004): 407-431.

Schirrmacher, Thomas. "Christianity and Democracy." *Journal of Theology* 35, no. 1 (2011): 51-60.

Schlesinger, Robert. "Obama has Mentioned 'American Exceptionalism' more than Bush," US News and World Report Website, http://www.usnews.com/opinion/blogs/robert-

schlesinger/2011/01/31/obama-has-mentioned-american-exceptionalism-more-than-bush (accessed 15 May, 2012).

Sharlet, Jeff. "Jesus killed Mohammed: The crusade for a Christian Military." *Harper's Magazine*, May 2009. http://harpers.org/archive/2009/05/0082488 (accessed 28 April, 2012).

Southern Baptist Convention Website. "About Us," http://www.sbc.net/aboutus/default.asp (accessed 28 March, 2012).

Schwartz, Norton, A., Chief of Staff, US Air Force. Memorandum for all Airmen, *Declaration on Diversity*. 14 October, 2011.

Schwartz, Norton, A., Chief of Staff, US Air Force. Memorandum for ALMAJCOM-FOA-DRU/CC, *Maintaining Government Neutrality Regarding Religion*. 1 September, 2011.

Shavit, Uriya, and Frederic Wiesenbach. "Muslim Strategies to Convert Western Christians." *Middle East Quarterly* 16, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 3-14.

Strehle, Stephen. "Saddam Hussein, Islam, and Just War Theory: The Case for a Pre-Emptive Strike." *Political Theology*, 5, no. 1 (January 2004): 76-99.

Sullivan, Winnifred F. "We Are All Religious Now. Again." *Social Research* 76, no. 4 (Winter 2009): 1181-1198.

Sun Tzu. *The Illustrated Art of War: The Definitive English Translation.* Edited and translated by Samuel B. Griffith. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Takeyh, Ray. "The Iran-Iraq War: A Reassessment." *Middle East Journal* 64, no. 3 (Summer 2010): 365-383.

Tocqueville, Alexis. *Democracy in America.* New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2003

United States v O'Conner. United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces website. http://www.armfor.uscourts.gov/newcaaf/opinions/2003Term/01-0403.htm (accessed 28 April 2012).

United States v Wilcox. United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces website. http://www.armfor.uscourts.gov/newcaaf/opinions/2008Term/05-0159.pdf (accessed 28 April 2012).

US Census Bureau. "State & County Quickfacts." http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/00000.html (accessed 28 March, 2012).

Walt, Stephen M. "The Myth of American Exceptionalism." *Foreign Policy* 189 (Nov 2011): 72-75.

Walzer, Michael. *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 1977.

Weinstein, Mikey. "Hasan and the Proselytization Factor." *The Washington Post*, 10 Nov, 2009. http://onfaith.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/guestvoices/2009/11/hasan_and_the_proselytization_factor.html (accessed 28 April, 2012).

Weinstein, Mikey. *"Protecting the Civil Rights of American Muslims." Hearings before the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Human Rights.* Submitted 28 March 2011. http://militaryreligiousfreedom.org/docs/senate_testimony.pdf (accessed 30 April, 2012).

Widdows, Heather. "Religion as a moral source: can religion function as a shared source of moral authority and values in a liberal democracy?" *Heythrop Journal* 45, no. 2 (April 2004): 197-208.

Wilson, Woodrow. "Address at Gettysburg," (July 4, 1913). University of Virginia's Miller Center. http://millercenter.org/president/speeches/detail/3787 (accessed 28 April, 2012).

Winthrop, John. "A Model of Christian Charity." (1630), The University of Virginia Religious Freedom webpage, http://religiousfreedom.lib.virginia.edu/sacred/charity.html (accessed 11 May).

Worden, Skip. "Religion in Strategic Leadership: A Positivistic, Normative/Theological, and Strategic Analysis." *Journal of Business Ethics* 57, (2005): 221-239.

Yeisley, Mark O. "*The End of Civilizations: The Role of Religion in the Evolution of Subnational Conflict, 1946-2007.*" PhD dissertation, Department of Political Science, Duke University, 2010