Religious Belief, Salience, and Social Action: Are They Related?

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RELIGIOUS BELIEF, SALIENCE, AND SOCIAL ACTION: ARE THEY RELATED?

by

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RELIGIOUS BELIEF, SALIENCE, AND SOCIAL ACTION: ARE THEY RELATED?

Timothy R. Tuinstra, M.A.
Western Michigan University, 1989

With the increasing size and social/political activity of theologically orthodox religious groups within the United States, research dealing with the relationship between orthodoxy and social action is necessary in better understanding the phenomena. Past research has been inadequate in that it has largely focused either on the clergy or, when using the laity, has only measured attitudes toward social action rather than participation in social action. This study measured social action participation among lay members drawn from three Grand Rapids area United Methodist Churches. A third variable, salience of religious belief, was also examined, which past research indicated could be a possibly important interviewing variable between orthodoxy and social action. No direct relationship was found between orthodoxy and social action. When controlling for salience, however, an inverse orthodoxy social action relationship was found among those in the high salience group only.
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Timothy R. Tuinstra
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CHAPTER I

PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE

Although always an influential segment of the American population, evangelical Christianity in recent decades has both grown in members and expanded its role in social action in recent decades. Particularly since the 1970s, often to the surprise of many social researchers and governmental leaders, and more liberal Protestants, there has been a rapid increase in social action among theologically conservative religious groups and individuals (Quebedeaux, 1978). One result of this new social action emphasis has been the rise of such organizations as Moral Majority (founded in 1979), Evangelicals for Social Action (founded in 1973), and Right to Life (founded soon after the 1973 Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion). Nonevangelical, typically more liberal Protestant groups who were already significantly involved in social action have now been joined, or, perhaps more accurately "rejoined" by these new organizations (Linder, 1975). Due to frequently differing beliefs, attitudes, and goals, the new relationship between these liberal and conservative groups has often been uneasy.
This rise in social action concern among evangelicals was expected, given their past reluctance to become socially active. However, many evangelicals have rejected the traditional "pie-in-the sky by-and-by theological stance" (Hunter, 1983; Linder, 1975; Quebedeaux, 1978). Thus, the increase in social action provides a fertile field for current social research.

A number of major questions can and should be addressed. These questions include: (1) Are the social goals of evangelicals different from the more liberal groups? (2) How might the organizational structures differ between evangelicals and nonevangelicals? (3) What are the methods generally used by evangelicals to effect change, if indeed there are general methods? Probably one of the most important questions, though, concerns the relationship between religious belief and social action. Simply put, how conducive to social action is the generally conservative theology of evangelicals? With this question in mind, we could also look at several related "sub-questions" concerning the degree to which the salience and orientation of one's beliefs affect involvement in social action, and the effect these beliefs have, not only on social action, but on attitudes toward social action and on the main purpose of the social action in which they are involved.
Glock and Stark (1965) constructed a very influential set of dimensions of religiosity: the experiential, ideological, ritualistic, intellectual, and consequential. Two of these—the ideological and consequential dimensions—encompass religious belief and social action respectively. The present study examines the effect that the ideological dimension (religious belief) has on the consequential dimension (a major component being that of social action).

More specifically, the study focuses on several aspects of both religious belief and social action. The primary aspect of religious belief examined is that of religious orthodoxy based on traditional Judaeo-Christian beliefs. However, attention is also given to the importance individuals ascribe to their beliefs (the salience of their belief) and to their consideration of their beliefs as more inner-directed (more pietistic, one may say) or other-directed (as portrayed in the parable of the Good Samaritan).

Inclusion of the orthodoxy variable is an attempt to answer the main question of this study; that is, whether conservative religious beliefs are more or less conducive to social action. The salience of belief variable will be used to better understand how the importance of one's belief affects one's involvement in social action. Two individuals may, for example, hold identical beliefs
concerning the Bible, salvation, and the Trinity, but the importance of these beliefs may differ widely, which in turn may influence their behavior, including social action. The distinction between inner and other-directed beliefs may inform us when individuals with similar beliefs may be differentially involved in social action. Due to the lack or inconclusiveness of the literature, the nature of this research is necessarily exploratory; consequently, no hypotheses are offered.

Three different aspects of social action are examined. The main focus is that of actual social action behavior—social action in which the individual is directly involved. This focus, it is hoped, will shed light on the effect religious belief, particularly orthodoxy, has on actual social action behavior. We are then able to focus on any differences in religious belief between those individuals who are quite involved in social action as opposed to those with little or no involvement. This area, as it pertains to lay people, has been virtually ignored.

Another aspect of social action is that dealing with attitudes about social action (rather than actual behavior). The inclusion of this variable is to answer the question of whether individuals who are more orthodox may hold different attitudes concerning social action than those who are less orthodox, and if this difference
then carries over into actual social action behavior. A more orthodox individual may, for example, have some sort of aversion to social action and therefore not see social action as very important. On the other hand, we may find that both the orthodox and nonorthodox groups may have similar attitudes concerning the importance of social action but may exhibit different levels of social action behavior. This study then would be an important stepping stone toward further research concerning why that situation would occur.

Finally, the third aspect of social action concerns the main purpose of the social action in which the individual is involved. For example, is a particular social action organization in which a person participates geared toward political goals? Or is its main function more immediate, such as the direct alleviation of poverty? Or is it concerned with such global issues as world peace? Such questions would fall into the variable of the main purpose of the organization in which an individual is involved.

Inclusion of this variable would allow one to find further areas of difference in the area of social action between two groups which may be different in religious belief but the same in actual level of social action behavior. For example, it may be that either the more or less orthodox individuals may be more involved in
addressing what they see as a political problem while the other may work toward alleviating poverty. Exploration in this area would help in forming hypotheses for future research.

Significance of the Research

The significance of the study of religious belief and social action embodied in this paper may be seen in three important areas. First, the resurgence in the last decade or two of a social action emphasis among churches and religious organizations, especially theologically conservative, evangelical churches, has been both dramatic and controversial. Political and social action organizations such as the Moral Majority and Right to Life, as well as many other political and social action organizations large and small, are now receiving much attention both within and outside religious circles. Their impact in both the political and social spheres is increasing, as can be seen in the current struggle over the issue of abortion.

While the impact of these groups has increased, so has the controversy surrounding both their goals and, possibly more, the methods they use to reach those goals. For example, the goal of the Moral Majority seems to be to bring what they feel to be biblical principles back into both government and society. This in itself can be
controversial considering a large segment of the American population do not share this goal, and those concerned with the separation of church and state are often critical of the methods used to reach this goal. Consequently, any research dealing with the relationship between religious belief and social action would be very relevant in understanding current political and social trends, and would be useful to both policy makers at various levels, and, in all fairness, to those who are agitating for changes in policy.

Support for the significance of this study comes from a second area: the work is a logical extension of the literature up to the present time. Glock and Stark (1965) developed the most widely known set of dimensions of religiosity, consisting of the experiential, ideological, ritualistic, intellectual, and consequential dimensions. Faulkner and DeJong (1966) in turn, operationalized these five dimensions. Since then their operationalization has found use and support in many different studies comparing a wide range of variables with religiosity, studies which consistently showed the ideological (or religious belief) dimension to be the dimension with the highest relationship to general religiosity, while the consequential dimension (of which social action is a large part) was often found to be the least related. Some researchers (DeJong, Faulkner &
Warland, 1976, for example) have suggested that the consequential dimension should be considered a dependent variable. This study, building on well-established conceptual and operational definitions, will focus specifically on the ideological dimension and its effect on the social action aspect of the consequential.

The third support for the significance of this study is found in the literature dealing with religiosity and social action. There have been many studies dealing with the relationship between these two variables. It must be pointed out, however, that most of these studies were completed before the recent resurgence of social action among evangelicals. Certain evangelicals' ideas and attitudes toward social action have changed in the last ten to fifteen years (Hunter, 1983; Linder, 1975; Quebedeaux, 1978). In addition, not all of the studies deal specifically with one dimension of religiosity as this study does, but instead focus on religiosity as a general concept.

Finally, and maybe most importantly, those studies in the last twenty years which at least in part deal with the relationship between religious belief and social action by and large do not actually examine social action behavior among lay individuals. Instead, they either use the clergy as their sample (Koller & Retzer, 1983, for example), or when they do use the laity as their sample,
they examine attitudes toward social action and not actual social action behavior (for example, Faulkner & DeJong, 1967). This present study, by including lay social action, is an attempt to redress this problem.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Multidimensional Religiosity

Attempts to answer the question of what constitutes religiosity have been numerous in the study of religion. Generally it has been seen as religiousness, or the degree to which religion affects one's life. Traditionally it has been believed to be unidimensional. However, in recent years, there have been an increasing number of authors who take a multidimensional approach. Such an approach, they feel, offers a much more complete understanding of religiosity than the rather simple unidimensional approaches. It also provides for the possibility of individuals being religious in some areas and not in others. Lenski (1961) developed a four dimensional system consisting of traditional orthodoxy, devotionalism, communal and associational involvement. King and Hunt (1972) were inspired by Glock and Stark's (1965) work and arrived at ten dimensions of religiosity which resemble Glock and Stark's. King and Hunt's dimensions were: (a) creedal assent; (b) devotionalism; (c) congregational involvement (consisting of church attendance, organizational activity and financial

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support, religious knowledge, orientation to religion (consisting of the dimensions of growth and striving and the extrinsic) and (d) salience (consisting of their dimensions of behavior and cognition).

The multidimensional approach which has had the largest influence in the study of religiosity has been that of Charles Glock and Rodney Stark (1965). The major strength of their approach has probably been that of a limited number of broad yet individually distinct dimensions which many—including myself—have found to be both useful and easy to use in better understanding religiosity. In their 1965 work, Religion and Society in Tension, they outlined what they believed to be the core dimensions of religiosity. These are universal dimensions, being applicable across the wide range of world religions. The dimensions are as follows:

First is the Experiential Dimension, which would include that which is termed "religious experience." As Glock and Stark (1965) state: "the religious person will at one time or another achieve direct knowledge of ultimate reality or will experience religious emotion" (p. 20). The authors felt there were four possible ways religious emotions can be express: (a) through concern, a wish to believe, a seeking after purpose in life, a sense of dissatisfaction with the world as it is; (b) through cognition, an awareness of things divine;
(c) through trust or faith, a sense of being in the hands of a divine power in which trust can be placed; and (d) through fear (an area in which a study would have to be indirect, such as examining the individual's ideas concerning the nature of God).

The second of Glock and Stark's (1965) dimensions is the Ideological Dimension. This dimension is based on "expectations that the religious person will hold to certain beliefs" (p. 20). In examining the ideological dimension, one can choose among three different aspects on which to focus: (1) the belief structures themselves, which include warranting beliefs--those which warrant the existence of the divine and define its meaning--purposive beliefs--those which explain divine purpose and define man's role in relation to it, and implementing beliefs--those which define the proper conduct of man in relation to God and in relation to one's fellow man, (2) the salience, or importance, of one's beliefs, and (3) the function of one's beliefs, or as Glock and Stark define it, "the role of religion in their psychological and social adjustment" (p. 20).

The third dimension is the Ritualistic Dimension. This dimension "encompasses the specifically religious practices expected of religious adherents." Examples of such practices are worship, prayer, sacraments, and fasting. The authors feel these practices could be
examined in terms of their frequency and inter-relatedness, the variations within particular practices, and the meanings of particular religious acts.

Separate from but related to the ideological dimension is the fourth dimension, the Intellectual Dimension, the concept of which surrounds the "expectation that the religious person will be informed and knowledgeable about the basic tenets of his faith and its sacred scriptures" (p. 20). In examining this dimension Glock and Stark (1965) suggest: (a) learning how much the religious person knows about his/her religion, (b) learning the attitudes the individual holds toward religious knowledge (such as open versus closedmindedness), and (c) how much intellectual sophistication is brought to one's reading of scripture.

Finally, the fifth dimension is the Consequential Dimension. This dimension "encompasses the secular effects of religious belief, practice, experience and knowledge on the individual" (p. 21). Consequences include what a person does in order to receive a reward, and what one does or does not do as a consequence of being religious.

Glock and Stark (1965) emphasized that a person may be religious in one dimension and not another—hence, the separate dimensions. They also emphasized, however, that in order to understand religion as a whole, one must understand its component parts.
Much of the impact of Glock and Stark's (1965) multidimensional approach came through the work of Joseph Faulkner and Gordon DeJong (1966) which operationalized Glock and Stark's five dimensions. The purpose of their operationalization was "to develop measures to religiosity for each of the five dimensions using the Guttman scale technique" (p. 247).

Using a sample of introductory sociology students, they found each scale representing the five dimensions to yield a coefficient of reproducibility of at least .90. Each scale was based on four or five items reflecting universal traditional Judaeo-Christian beliefs. These beliefs represented what they considered the "discernable commonality among Catholic, Jewish, and major Protestant bodies on the more universalistic religious issues" (p. 247).

Faulkner and DeJong (1966) found that among the students they sampled the ideological dimension was the dimension with the largest number of individuals falling in the categories of higher religiosity. They believed this to indicate that college students do not depart markedly from traditional beliefs. The same was also true, generally, for the experiential dimension, suggesting the continuing role of religion among college students to answer questions of emotional security such as death and purpose in life. The intellectual and
consequential dimensions, on the other hand, showed a skew toward the lower levels of religiosity. For the consequential dimension this illustrates a lack of differentiation among college students concerning this dimension quite possibly reflecting "the presence of a strong humanistic element among college students" (p. 250). The ritualistic dimension scale scores followed a normal distribution.

Faulkner and DeJong (1966) indicated that the most important question their study attempts to answer is the interrelationship between the five dimensions. The correlation coefficients between the dimensions ranged from a low of .36 to a high of .58, all showing the hypothesized positive relationship, and all being statistically significant. The ideological dimension had the highest correlations with the other dimensions, adding some substantiation to past studies which had relied heavily on that dimension, while the consequential dimension had the lowest correlations. Among the other three dimensions, they found the intellectual dimension as a slightly above average indicator of general religiosity (on all five dimensions), the ritualistic dimension near average, and the experiential dimension slightly below average.
Criticism of the Glock/Stark—
Faulkner/DeJong Approach

The work of Faulkner and DeJong (1966) has not been without its critics. An early criticism came from Gibbs and Crader (1970). They argued that two of Faulkner and DeJong's (1966) scales—the experiential and consequential—do not adequately measure the dimensions as Glock and Stark (1965) defined them.

The consequential scale, they argued, is contaminated because the consequences measured by their items are framed in a religious context; the example they give concerns the item dealing with premarital sexual activity which asks if people who support the church through attendance should behave in such a manner (stress mine).

The experiential scale, they further argued, is represented by only one item which adequately reflects Glock and Stark's (1965) conceptualization of religious experience as involving some sort of communication with a divine essence, as one's "degree of 'intimacy' in the perceived contact with a supernatural agency" (p. 109). The other items "pertain to such things as religion and purpose in life and the essentialness of faith in religious life, but make no reference to contact with a supernatural" (p. 109).

A more serious criticism of Faulkner and DeJong (1966) came from Clayton (1971). Studying students at a
college in Florida, he used Faulkner and DeJong's scales to test the interdependence of the dimensions measured by the scales. He found a strong correlation among the ritual, experiential, intellectual, and ideological dimension, with the ideological dimension as the predominant factor. He believes their findings cast doubt on the whole concept of the multidimensionality of religiosity. (Clayton does admit that the relative homogeneity of the sample—students from a southern, church-related school—may show much more undimensionality than actually occurs in the general population). He argued, based on his findings, for two basic conceptual reconsiderations:

1. That there may be an overemphasis on multidimensionality in the study of religiosity when there is evidence that several of the dimensions may be combined into a composite index of religiosity.

2. That a question arises as to the existence of any independence between the ideological and the intellectual-commitment to an ideology based on creedal tenets, he believes, may be impossible without the knowledge dimension.

Clayton expanded his criticism in a later article coauthored by James W. Gladden (Clayton & Gladden, 1973). Using much of the same data as Clayton's earlier study, they found in both first and second order factor analysis
what they considered to be strong evidence for the undimensionality of religiosity. They considered the ideological dimension to be the dominant dimension while the other dimensions, with the exception of the consequential were considered to be different aspects of the ideological dimension. As opposed to examining separate dimensions of religiosity, they argued:

That the crucial task in the study of religiosity is first, to pinpoint the belief system (Ideology) with which a subject identifies or toward which reacts. His or her religiosity (Ideological commitment) is determined by the degree of acceptance or nonacceptance of the traditional--and/or nontraditional--beliefs indigenous to the ideology and the salience of those beliefs to his or her world view. The strength of the respondent's religiosity (Ideological commitment) is or can be expressed in one or more of the directions in which commitment strength flows.

Thus, a demonstration of commitment strength might be observed in such phenomena as the expression of a belief, the regularity of ritual participation, the erudition of religious knowledge, the attribution of a 'religious' label to an effective experience, and involvement in social action. (p. 142)

Support for the Glock/Stark--Faulkner/DeJong Approach

Support for the work of Faulkner and DeJong (1966) can be found in two separate areas. First, several studies subsequent to Faulkner and DeJong's 1966 study give direct empirical support to their multidimensional approach. Largely in response to the criticism of
Clayton and Gladden (1973), DeJong et al. (1976) conducted a cross-cultural study with two basic questions in mind: (1) Is there continuing evidence for the multidimensionality of religiosity as opposed to a more general underlying dimension? and (2) Are there dimensions which describe more than one cultural group and if so, how do the patterns of intercorrelations compare across groups?

The authors began by administering a questionnaire to German and American college students. From the items within this questionnaire, the authors factored out six dimensions closely resembling the five dimensions they had earlier (1966) operationalized, and giving credence to the contention of Glock and Stark (1965) that their dimensions could be applied to a much broader range of cultures than just American society. The six dimensions were: (1) belief, (2) knowledge, (3) social consequences, (4) individual moral consequences, (5) religious practices, and (6) religious experience. These six dimensions differed from the previously operationalized five dimensions only in the splitting of the consequential dimension into two separate dimensions—individual moral consequences and social consequences.

Additional specific support for the multidimensionality of religiosity comes from comparing the American and German students. The authors found that although the
two groups differed in the degree of religiosity in each dimension, they were found to be "strikingly similar in the structure of religiosity" (p. 879).

Even broader support for the multidimensional approach is found in a study conducted by Weigert and Thomas (1979). They examined the effect of organization, industrialization, and the cultural importance attached to religion on degree of religiosity. Their sample was a cross-cultural sample consisting of Catholic high school students in Bonn, New York, St. Paul, San Juan, Merida, and Seville. Using Glock and Stark's (1965) five dimensions to measure religiosity, they found the dimensions to be relatively independent.

A second area of support for the work of Faulkner and DeJong is found in the wide acceptance and utility of their operationalization in the scientific study of religion. It has often been used to measure religiosity in order to compare it to other variables. Finner (1970), for example, used a scale based on Faulkner and DeJong's five dimensional scale to compare religiosity, a combination of religious preference and church membership, religious self identification, and attitudes toward war. His main purpose in doing this was to demonstrate that there is a difference between church membership and religious preference. He was able to conclude that: (a) church membership and religious preference are not
interchangeable, (b) religious preference is more strongly related to religiosity than church preference, and (c) using church membership as the sole indicator of religiosity creates groups with as much difference within the group as between groups.

Others have used Faulkner and DeJong's (1966) scales to compare religiosity with nonreligious variables. Macdonell and Campbell (1971), for example, used Faulkner and DeJong's scales to examine the religiosity of the intellectual elite in order to "determine the effect their intellectual commitment had on their religious orientations" (p. 609), and found that the religiosity of this group was relatively low and that there is a considerable amount of adjustment among intellectuals between the intellectual and religious aspects of their lives. Also, similar to Faulkner and DeJong's (1966) findings, the ideological dimensions was found to be dimensions exhibiting the highest religiosity scores.

Finney and Lee (1977) used the scales to examine the effect of age on the five dimensions of religiosity, and found age to be positively correlated with all five dimensions. Hornick (1978) developed a scale based on Faulkner and DeJong's (1966) scales to compare religiosity with attitudes toward certain aspects of sexuality. In one study Hornick (1978), compared religiosity as well as the traditionality of one's
religious membership, with the intimacy of sexual behavior and sexual permissiveness, and found a negative association between each of the religious variables and each of the sexual attitude variables. In a later article, Hornick, Doran, and Susal (1978) used the same scale to measure religiosity as an independent variable, and searched for any relationship with the dependent variable of contraceptive use. They found, however, that religiosity was not a very good predictor of contraceptive use. Crawford and Crawford (1978) also used the Faulkner and DeJong scales to correlate religiosity with attitudes toward public exposure to sexual stimuli. They found a negative correlation between the two.

Many others, while not directly using the scales or using a segment of them, have still been influenced by the concepts behind Faulkner and DeJong's (1966) scales. Wimberley, Clelland, Hood, and Lipsey (1976), for example, used some of Faulkner and DeJong's (1966) items as well as others, to examine the presence of civil religion in America. They found strong evidence that such a situation does occur, somewhat separate from the other three dimensions they investigated—beliefs, experience, and behavior.

Payne (1976) measured religion and religiosity as one of several demographic variables influencing the
relationship among nurses between knowledge, attitude, and behavior regarding sexuality. She found that religion—Catholic versus Protestant—is not as an important issue as many have thought. As for religiosity, however, she found that more religious nurses to be less comfortable when confronted with sexual issues.

Johnson (1977) investigated the relationship between two dimensions of religiosity—church involvement and orthodoxy—and racial prejudice and social distance toward minority groups. He also examined the relationship between importance of religion (or salience) and racial prejudice and social distance. Authoritarianism was controlled as a possible underlying personality factor. He found both degree of church involvement and orthodoxy to be inversely related with degree of racial prejudice and social distance. He also found the importance of religion to be inversely related with prejudice and social distance.

Key Dimension Number One: Religious Belief

As outlined in Chapter I, the relationship between religious belief (the ideological dimension) and social action (a major part of the consequential dimension) is the main focus of this paper. Religious belief will be treated as the independent variable and social action the
dependent variable. Three different aspects of religious belief will be examined: (1) level of orthodoxy concerning traditional basic Christian doctrine, (2) individual consideration of belief as more inner-directed (its main emphasis being the salvation and spiritual growth of the individual) or other-directed (its main emphasis being the individual's responsibility to aid those in need), and (3) the salience of one's religious belief.

Orthodoxy

Orthodoxy has been one of the most widely examined aspects of belief. This may be at least due to the wide variation in degree of orthodoxy found within American Protestantism. Whatever the reason, it is important to realize that within their multidimensional approach, Faulkner and DeJong (1966) measure religiosity in the ideological according to adherence or non-adherence to traditional basic Christian beliefs. The more one holds to these beliefs, the more religious one is considered to be. It should be pointed out, however, that one may be orthodox in belief but not in practice, or vice versa.

Yinger (1970), for example, points out the importance of both belief and practice dealing with religiosity and he believes aspects of each found in all five dimensions of religiosity. Consequently, both belief and
practice could be measured along the orthodoxy scale.

Filsinger, Faulkner, and Warland (1979) developed a taxonomy of religious individuals with "The Orthodox" type as one of seven different types. However, they view individuals within this type as "orthodox in their belief, experience, knowledge, ritualistic behavior, and attitudes" (p. 142). In this paper, orthodoxy will deal specifically with orthodoxy in belief.

**Inner-Directed Versus Other-Directed**

An aspect of belief which is very rare in the literature dealing with religiosity concerns the concept of belief as generally inner-directed or other-directed. The question may arise whether this too closely resembles one's attitude toward social action, another variable to be analyzed. Although they do overlap, one's belief orientation regarding the main object of one's belief is not identical with one's attitude toward social action.

An other-directed orientation may be present with neutral or even negative attitudes toward social action, and may then lead to other-directed behavior not connected with social action such as sharing one's time with lonely friends or sharing one's faith with others.

**Salience**

The third aspect to be examined will be the salience
of religious belief. Many researchers have indicated the need for such an analysis. For example, an early critic of Faulkner and DeJong's (1966) multidimensional approach was Clayton (1971), who criticized the lack of any focus on the salience of belief as an integral part of religiosity. While he believed religiosity was not multidimensional but rather unidimensional with ideological as the dominant aspect, he stated:

Another criticism of the 5-D scales is that they do not allow the researcher to measure the salience or centrality of importance of each dimension relative to every other. This salience measure is important because it would allow the researcher to posit differential relationships between separate dimensions and some dependent variables. (p. 40)

And then in a later article with Gladden (1973), he stated:

In effect we would argue that the crucial task in the study of religiosity is first, to pinpoint the belief system (Ideology) with which a subject identifies or toward which he reacts. His or her religiosity (Ideological Commitment) is or can be expressed in one or more of the directions in which commitment strength flows. (p. 142)

One of the purposes of Johnson's article "Religious Commitment, Social Distance, and Authoritarianism" (1977) was to investigate the relationship between the importance of religion (or salience) and social distance and the importance of religion and racial prejudice. Realizing that among fundamentalists some church members seemed to be very prejudiced while others were not, he
wanted to investigate the reason why this occurs. Since the religious beliefs were similar he felt another variable—salience—would explain such diversity. His hypothesis, which his study supported, was that religious importance and social distance, as well as religious importance and racial prejudice would be inversely related. Introducing the concept of salience, then, aided in explaining variation between religious belief and other variables.

DeJong et al. (1976) saw the necessity of future researchers to include the salience variable in examining the seeming non-relationship between religious belief and social consequences (see note 5, p. 884).

In a later study by Filsinger et al. (1979) they found the concept of salience useful in outlining the characteristics of the seven different religious types within their taxonomy. An interesting finding was the difference between "The Conservative" and "The Orthodox" groups who, while somewhat similar on many attitudes and beliefs, displayed a marked difference on salience scores as well as attitudes toward "ameliorative social programs such as housing for the poor and eradication of poverty." (p. 142)

Several researchers have specifically focused on the relationship among orthodoxy, salience, and social action. Gibbs, Mueller, and Wood (1973) researched the
relationship among orthodoxy, salience, and the more
general consequential dimension, the dimension which
includes social action. In measuring the impact was
significant and positive for the high salience group
(versus the low and medium groups), especially on the
church-related consequences. There was no significant
difference between the low and medium salience groups,
but the high salience group, showing a positive effect,
differed significantly from the low and medium groups,
which they believed indicated a high salience threshold
which must be crossed before its impact would be felt.

In criticizing Gibbs et al. (1973), Roof and Perkins
(1975) presented some important considerations. They
stressed that:

Unfortunately, in much research on religious
beliefs there is a tendency to assume
implicitly that creedal assent also implies
emotional salience without trying to sort out
these two differing aspects of a belief system.

Given our measure of doctrinal orthodoxy,
it would appear that fundamentalist beliefs--
which may be neither very urgent to the
believer nor very frequently invoked--are
nevertheless principally responsible for
whatever influence belief systems have upon the
consequential dimension. (p. 124)

They go on to explain that religious beliefs may be held
by some as an instrumental means of legitimating their
world view. The concept of salience, which they believe
is intrinsic religious commitment as opposed to extrinsic
or instrumental commitment, would lessen such world
views.
Roof and Perkins (1975) then investigated the relationship among orthodoxy, salience, and attitudes toward social activism. Their findings supported the idea that orthodoxy and salience have opposite effects on social activism and that measuring both of these variables increases the predictability of social activism.

One of the most important studies which has focused on the relationship among orthodoxy, salience, and social activism is that of Bahr, Bartel, and Chadwick (1971). In reviewing the previous literature, they found the mixed results of past researchers, and concluded that:

Doctrinal orthodoxy has been shown, in some studies, to be related to unfavorable attitudes toward social activism by churches. But other studies have failed to show this relationship. This paper suggests that the relationship depends on a critical intervening variable, salience, or perceived importance of religion. (p. 69)

They also found that among students and laymen there had usually been found no significant relationship between orthodoxy and attitudes toward social action while such a relationship was found for clergymen among who religious belief is much more salient.

Using university students as their sample, Bahr et al. (1971) measured orthodoxy (using four items from Faulkner & DeJong (1966), activism (responses to six statements regarding the church's role in social action), and salience (both answering how important religion is to them and estimating how many hours per
month they are involved in church activities). They found no significant relationship between orthodoxy and social action for the sample as a whole, but in the high salience group an inverse relationship was found. Their findings led them to conclude that:

The findings, even though with a limited sample and gross measures, underscore the importance of incorporating measures of importance of religion in studies of the relationship between religiosity and other factors. Much of the inconsistency in previous research findings may be attributed to the lack of systematic control of this variable. (p. 74)

Past research, then, indicates that inclusion of the salience variable holds much promise for a better understanding of the relationship between religious belief and social action. Salience may, in fact, be a crucial intervening variable between the variables of orthodoxy and actual social action.

Key Dimension Number Two: Social Action

Interest in social action among social researchers has led to a large volume of research concerned with that variable. Focusing only on research dealing with the relationship between religiosity and social action, the field narrows considerably, allowing a brief survey of the material relevant to the current study. This section, then, will discuss: (a) later developments of the consequential dimension (the dimension in which social action falls) within the multidimensional
approach, (b) the literature dealing with the history of the relationship between religion and social action, (c) recent major works examining that relationship, and (d) the specific aspects of social action this paper addresses.

In most studies examining the relationship between the five dimensions of religiosity, the consequential dimension has consistently been the least related to the other dimensions. Of the ten correlations between the five dimensions in their original study, Faulkner and DeJong (1966) found the correlations between the consequential and the other four dimensions to be the four lowest correlations. This led the two authors to conclude that the consequential dimension "may reflect a qualitatively different measure of religious involvement" (p. 250).

Clayton and Gladden (1973), while criticizing the multidimensional approach of Faulkner and DeJong (1966) and emphasizing the predominance of the ideological dimension, found substantial correlations among all the dimensions but the consequential. In their study offering further support for the multidimensionality of religiosity, DeJong et al. (1976) found again that the consequential dimension was a separate, unrelated dimension. They also summarized the various multidimensional approaches, and concluded that in most cases
the consequential dimension is used as a "dependent variable rather than as an integral component of religiosity" (p. 867). In this paper, as well, the consequential dimension will be treated as a dependent variable.

As mentioned earlier, after factor analyzing the data in their cross-cultural study Faulkner and DeJong (1966) split the consequential dimension into the two dimensions of social consequences and individual moral consequences. This is significant in that it gives support for examining social action as one aspect of the consequential dimension.

By the late 1970s, the consequential dimension had largely been set aside from being strictly "religious" dimension. As Finney (1978) writes:

An early dimension, the consequential, has more to do with religious effects than anything inherently religious. The logical problems resulting from the inclusion of a dependent variable in scheme of religious commitment are. We suggest treating religious consequences as secular, nonreligious dependent variables. (p. 20)

As mentioned in Chapter I, there has been a growing social awareness and emphasis on social action among religious conservatives during the last ten or twenty years. This social awareness and action is not new. However, it is new only in relation to the lack of such concern in the period ending in the 1970s.
Wells and Woodbridge (1975) put this growing social awareness into a historical perspective. They wrote that the past almost universal indifference to social issues among evangelicals is actually the exception and not the rule when considering the history of the evangelical movement. For most of its history, they felt, the movement has fostered an emphasis on social reform. In fact, they write that:

The social gospel actually was born out of theological considerations as evangelical Christians struggled to meet the needs of industrial society and as they worked out the logic of their evangelical quest for 'a Christian America.' At first they took the lead in social ministry, especially in the nineteenth century. (p. 197-198)

They go on to write, however, that:

In the twentieth century, the social gospel was detached from its evangelical roots by theological liberal looking for a raison d'être as they watched their young men leave the ministry and their constituency drift away because of the theological sterility of their position. (p. 198)

The twenties, according to Wells and Woodbridge (1975) was the time in which evangelicals reacted against social concern and involvement. They stated:

This was due to the increasing identification of the social gospel with theological liberalism, growing disillusionment with legislative initiative, an expanding alliance with bit business and the status quo, and mounting disgust with a hostile press which seemed to ally itself with secularism and the religious left. (p. 200)
By 1960, however, signs of a resurgence of a social emphasis were beginning to be seen, a resurgence which grew and which carried over into the 1970s (the time of their writing). It was not something new, but actually a return to a previous social concern.

Quebedeaux (1978) also argues that evangelicals, which constitute a large percentage of traditional Protestantism, have been getting more involved in social action. He argues organizations such as the ESA—Evangelicals for Social Action and such periodicals as Sojourner\(^1\) and The Other Side\(^2\) are testimonies to the increased social action—especially liberal social action—emphasis among evangelicals. The recent rise in social action by many religious conservatives is not confined to liberal political or social causes. However, much emphasis is also being placed on social action meant to protect or recover what they feel to be traditional values or laws. As Hadden and Long (1983) write:

Just as the spread of new religions highlighted the 1970s, the new political activism of conservative Protestants bids to dominate religious headlines in the 1980s. That development is no less surprising than the cult explosion, and at least as controversial. It was barely a decade ago that this wing of Protestantism was denouncing anti-war clerics and earlier civil rights demonstrators, for abandoning the church's mission of saving souls for social

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\(^1\)Sojourner. (1976–present). Published by People's Christian Coalition. Washington, D.C.

\(^2\)The Other Side. A bi-monthly magazine, published six times a year by Fred A. Alexander. Savannah, OH.
action. Conservative Christians remain strongly opposed to established 'liberal' culture, but now they are doing something about it. And since evangelicals have entered the political wars in earnest, liberals have sounded the alarm about free speech and the separation of church and state. (p. 87)

Many studies have been conducted examining the relationship between religious belief and social action from both of those holding to a multidimensional conception of religiosity and those not holding to such a conception.

Although occurring before most of the resurgence of social action among religious conservatives, Quinley's (1974) study of California clergy is one of the most extensive examinations of the relationship between orthodoxy and social action (the same data may also be seen in Stark, Foster, Glock, and Quinley's (1970) Sounds of Silence). He compared two groups of ministers: the traditionalists, those who held to most or all major traditional Protestant beliefs; and modernists, those who rejected most or all such beliefs. The modernists, he found, were more receptive to the use of the church's institutional power to effect social and political reforms, and they were also more willing to give sermons touching on political subjects. On the other hand, traditionalists were much stronger in their support of strong laws in the area of public morality, and their sermons tended to touch on these areas as opposed to political subjects.
Both criticism and support for the findings in *Sounds of Silence* (which, not unexpectedly, led to the same conclusions as Quinley's) are voiced in Koller and Retzer (1983). Using a sample of North Carolina ministers, they found in contrast to Stark et al. (1970) that the more orthodox ministers were very outspoken on social issues. However, when they analyzed the content of their sermons, they found that the more orthodox ministers tended to speak out against threats to individual spirituality, such as liquor, pornography, sex and violence on television, protection of school religious education, and abortion. The authors argued that among orthodox ministers "there appears to be an emphasis on nurturing the spiritual side of life by maintaining or creating a social order which enhances individual opportunity to lead a 'spiritually upright' and 'morally correct' existence" (p. 96). The less orthodox ministers, on the other hand, concentrated on "issues involving physical life conditions of various segments of the community" (p. 96), and so addressed such things as poverty, the energy crisis, and racial problems.

The relationship between orthodoxy and social action has also been examined by researchers using the scales developed by, or similar to those developed by Faulkner and DeJong (1966). Faulkner and DeJong (1967) themselves
were probably the first to do so. Investigating the relationship between the institutional church, individual religiosity (a major dimension of which they had found in their 1966 study to be the ideological dimension), and attitudes concerning social justice. More specifically, they examined attitudes toward the role of religion and the church in social justice. They asked their sample of college students whether they wanted a fully integrated society (85 percent did), whether they believed ordained ministers should be involved in this (58 percent did), and whether they believed the church should support civil disobedience in an effort to obtain such integration (18 percent did). Examining these attitudes in relation to one's church affiliation, they found that more members than nonmembers wanted an integrated society but more support for direct action came from nonmembers. When examining the high versus low religious, they discovered that a higher proportion of the high religious favored an integrated society, but this difference was much more pronounced for Catholics than Protestants. The low religious, however, supported a socially active clergy more often. There was little difference between the low and high religious groups in attitudes concerning the church's role in social action.

Faulkner and DeJong (1967) believe their findings show that while the church may believe in a just society,
it does not see itself as the main instrument toward that goal. They also seem to imply that many conservative elements who are highly religious stand in the way of churches becoming socially involved.

Roof (1972) finds somewhat similar results when he examined "localism-cosmopolitanism as an orientational correlate of traditional religiosity" (p. 1). He found strong positive relationships between localism and orthodoxy, and localism and religious group communalism, and weaker relationships between localism and devotion-alism and localism and ritual involvement. More important for our study, he found social activism to be inversely related with localism. These findings led him to conclude that "this pattern leads one to suspect a basic cognitive set which includes within a single constellation, proclivities toward local values, fundamentalist beliefs, and anti-involvement in social issues" (Roof, p. 9).

Filsinger et al. (1979) also separated their subjects into groups based on their "cognitive sets." However, the characteristics of what they labeled the orthodox type differed from the findings of Roof (1972). The members of this group, while holding to traditional beliefs as well as traditional ideas concerning morality, supported such social programs as housing for the poor and the eradication of poverty. These values were in
direct contrast with the values supported by the respondents in Roof's study.

It can be seen that the evidence is far from conclusive concerning the relationship between orthodoxy and social action. While many studies indicate a negative relationship between orthodoxy and social action, others seem to contradict those findings. More research in this area is needed and this paper will attempt to help meet this need.

Three aspects of social action will be examined: social action behavior, attitudes concerning social action, and the main purpose of the social action organization the individual participates in.

Social action behavior is rarely, if ever, dealt with in the literature. Attitudes concerning social action are usually the way in which researchers gauge social action. Stark et al. (1970), Faulkner and DeJong (1976), and Roof (1972) are examples of researchers who use attitudes to gauge social action.

The problem with using this as the sole criterion of social action is that attitudes concerning social action may reflect actual social action and that other variables may affect social action besides attitudes along (such as religiosity variables). This paper, then, will investigate any similarities or differences between attitudes toward social action and social actions behavior.
Finally, the type of social action organization one participates in will be examined. Classifications used will reflect the main purpose of the social actions organization. A broad classification system has been constructed by Berry (1977) in *Lobbying for the People*, who breaks down what he calls public interest groups into seven categories. Knoke and Wood (1981) constructed a similar classification system. Both systems are combined in constructing the classification system used in the present study.

In summary, the two key dimensions examined in this study are religious belief (specific aspects being orthodoxy, orientation of belief, and salience) and social action (specific aspects being social action behavior, attitudes, and purpose).
CHAPTER III

METHODS

The following summary of the methods used in this study will examine four major areas of concern: (1) the selection of the sample, (2) the methods of data collection, (3) the operationalization of the variables, and (4) the statistical procedures used in the analysis of the data.

The Sample

The sample used in the study was drawn from United Methodist Church members in the Grand Rapids, Michigan area. There were at least two major reasons for sampling from this one religious denomination. First, differences between respondents as a result of differing denominational traditions and concerns regarding social action were excluded. Second, the United Methodist Church, not being a confessional church, exhibits a wider variation in belief among its membership than many other denominations. Gibbs and Crader (1970) noted this variation as well when they found the Methodists to be very near the middle between orthodoxy and nonorthodoxy when six different denominations were compared. This variation in belief results in greater belief among the
respondents of this study, a condition which enhances the chances of fruitful comparisons being made.

The specific sample was drawn from three United Methodist churches in or near Grand Rapids. One church was located in each of the following: central city neighborhood, suburb, and rural/small town. A list of the members in each congregation was obtained, and 60 members—30 men and 30 women—were randomly selected from the rural and suburban congregations, while due to a large number of nonactive members and constraints of time, 50 were selected from the neighborhood church, 25 men and 25 women. Two of the lists of selected members—from the neighborhood and suburban churches—were then checked by the respective minister who deleted any names of members who no longer attended the church. Substitutes for each of those deleted were then randomly chosen—and checked by the minister—until each congregation was represented by 50 or 60 members, who to the best of their minister's knowledge were currently attending the church. The secretary of the third church—the rural—on her own initiative deleted nonattenders from the church member list before the sample was drawn. The total of 170 was considered large enough to obtain the 100 or more responses which the researcher felt would be necessary to provide an adequate amount of flexibility in categorization and analysis.
Data Collection

A mailed survey was the method by which the data were collected. Each of the 170 members selected from the four churches was sent the questionnaire as well as a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study and the confidentiality of the data. A number on each questionnaire was used to separate respondents from non-respondents. After a period of seven to fourteen days, nonrespondents were sent a follow-up letter and another copy of the questionnaire. The data were collected in September and October, 1985.

The number of responses totalled 104 for a response rate of 61.2%. Of these, 99 were considered usable for the study. The usable response rate for each individual church was 68.3% for the rural church, 66.7% for the suburban church, and 34% for the neighborhood church. There was no clear explanation for the large difference, although the demographic factors of the significant number of Hispanic members (who may be less likely to respond to an English language questionnaire) and the less education typical of inner city residents may account for much of the difference.

More women than men answered the questionnaire: 61% of the respondents were female. The respondents also tended to be 30 or over (92%). The lower representation of the two youngest age groups (under 20, and 20-29) was
probably due to the fact that only church members were sampled thereby already ruling out many in those two youngest categories; this parallels Finney and Lee (1977) who found older individuals to be church members. The large number of respondents in the 60 and over category may also be the result of more time to answer the questionnaire as well as the broader age range within the category.

Finally, the largest category in education completed was that of high school graduates (40%), although more than half (53%) received some post-high school education, 13% going as far as graduate school. Interestingly, 7% of the respondents had received only an eight grade education.

Operationalization of Variables

The six central variables in the study were operationalized as follows: Orthodoxy was measured by the responses to a set of eight items constructed by DeJong et al. (1976). These close-ended items ask respondents their beliefs concerning the traditional Christian teachings of immortality (two items), God, Jesus, God in history, prayer, sin, and the Bible (see Appendix). For the items with more than five possible categories, the categories with no or few responses were collapsed in order to attain an equal number of categories, which in
turn allowed the addition of the orthodoxy items into a composite scale. For each respondent the responses on the orthodoxy items were added to form one orthodoxy scale with a possible range of 8 through 40, low through high orthodoxy respectively.

The inner versus other-directedness of each respondent's belief was measured by the following items:

Rank the following statements beginning with what you believe to be the more important teachings of Christianity (beginning with number 1) to the less important (ending with number 6).

___ Living a morally good life.
___ Becoming more loving toward others.
___ Growth in one's spiritual life.
___ Aiding others in need.
___ The salvation of one's soul.
___ Living one's life for the service of others.

The first, third, and fifth statements were indicators of an inner-directed orientation while the second, fourth, and sixth statements were indicators of an other-directed orientation. For each respondent, the scores for the inner and other-directed statements were summed, resulting in a total inner and other-directed score. These total scores were then compared for each respondent. Those scoring more than three points more on the total inner-directed score when compared to the total other-
directed score were considered having an inner-directed orientation. Respondents scoring more than three points higher on the total other-directed score when compared to the inner-directed score were considered having an other-directed orientation. If the total scores were within three points of each other, however, the respondents were considered falling within the balanced orientation group.

The salience of one's religious belief was measured by the following two items (taken from Bahr et. al., 1971), one attitudinal and one behavioral, as well as a second behavioral item:

How important is religion to you?
1. Fairly unimportant
2. Not too important
3. Fairly important
4. Quite important
5. Extremely important

This item was used to measure salience on an attitudinal scale. Its possible range of scores was one through five. The following two items were used to measure salience on a behavioral scale.

About how many hours per month do you spend in church or church-related activities?
1. 0 - 2 hours
2. 3 - 5 hours
3. 6 - 8 hours
4. 9 - 11 hours  
5. 12 - 14 hours  
6. 15 or more hours  
What percentage of your yearly income would you estimate you contribute to your church?  
1. 0 - 2 percent  
2. 3 - 5 percent  
3. 6 - 8 percent  
4. 9 - 11 percent  
5. 12 - 14 percent  
6. 15 or more percent  
The two items were summed, yielding a possible range of scores between 2 and 10. Finally, a total salience scale constructed by collapsing the behavioral salience into 5 categories and then summing it with the attitudinal salience scale, yielding a possible range of 2 through 10.  
The respondents' attitudes toward social action were assessed by his or her response to this item:  
How important do you feel it is for individuals to be involved in efforts to change society either through direct participation or through financial support of organizations involved in such action?  
1. Fairly unimportant  
2. Not too important  
3. Fairly important
4. Quite important
5. Extremely important

Possible scores ranged from one through five.

Social action was measured by an item asking whether the individual was currently participating in any organization, church-related or not church-related, which is concerned with changing American society, the possible responses being either a yes or a no. For those answering "yes", they were asked to fill out a table in which they were to describe the organization in which they participated, the name of the organization, average time spent and estimated yearly contributions to the organization, and whether or not they had been an officer in the organization (see Appendix 1). However, the surprisingly low number of respondents participating in social action disallowed any significant comparisons using the table's responses.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between religious belief and social action. Three measures of belief—orthodoxy, direction, and salience were treated as the independent variables and their relationship with two measures of the dependent variable of social action—attitudes toward social action and social action participation—were examined. Several demographic variables were also analyzed in terms of their relationship with social action, and will be presented first in order to discuss any factors affecting social action not included in the main focus of the study.

Demographic Variables

When comparing the four demographic variables of church, age, sex, and education with social action, only one significant (p. < .05) relationship was found: a significantly higher percentage of females (29.6%) were involved in social action than males (7.9%).
Orthodoxy

Actual scores on the orthodoxy scale ranged from 22 to 40, with a very large majority falling between 35 and 40, indicating a large degree of orthodoxy among the respondents in this study (see Table 1).

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
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<td>33</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-29</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To allow comparisons between orthodoxy and social action, and between orthodoxy and attitudes toward social action, orthodoxy was trichotomized into low (scores of 22-34), medium (scores of 35-39), and high orthodoxy (scores of 40).
When comparing orthodoxy and attitudes toward social action, the latter also had to be trichotomized into low (scores of 1 and 2), medium (scores of 3), and high (scores of 4 and 5).

No significant relationship was found between orthodoxy and social action, confirming other theorists' (Bahr, Bartel, Franz, & Chadwick 1971,) projections from measuring only attitudes concerning social action, that orthodoxy has little effect on social action participation (see Table 2).

Table 2
Comparison of Orthodoxy and Social Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orthodoxy</th>
<th>Social Action</th>
<th>No Involvement</th>
<th>Involvement</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
<td>78.57</td>
<td>21.43</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(22)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td></td>
<td>86.21</td>
<td>13.79</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(25)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
<td>77.78</td>
<td>22.22</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(14)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>81.33</td>
<td>18.67</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(61)</td>
<td>(14)</td>
<td>(75)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N indicated by parentheses
Chi square = .744, n.s. at .05
The grand total (75) is the number of respondents responding to both the orthodoxy and social action items in a usable manner.
Examining Table 2, one notices the very large majority (at least three quarters) of the respondents within each orthodoxy category who do not participate in social action. There is some evidence of a curvilinear relationship, however, with the medium orthodoxy group exhibiting a somewhat lower level of social action participation, although the differences are not statistically significant. More research, with a larger sample and a larger number of categories for both the orthodoxy and social action variables, would be necessary in measuring and validating such a relationship.

Orthodoxy was also found not to be significantly related with attitudes concerning social action (see Table 3).

Table 3
Comparison of Orthodoxy and Attitudes Concerning Social Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orthodoxy</th>
<th>Attitudes Concerning Social Action</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>28.57 (8)</td>
<td>42.86 (12)</td>
<td>28.57 (8)</td>
<td>100.00 (28)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>22.58 (7)</td>
<td>35.48 (11)</td>
<td>41.94 (13)</td>
<td>100.00 (31)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>22.22 (4)</td>
<td>38.89 (7)</td>
<td>38.89 (7)</td>
<td>100.00 (18)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>24.68 (19)</td>
<td>38.96 (30)</td>
<td>36.36 (28)</td>
<td>100.00 (77)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N indicated by parentheses
Chi square = 1.240, n.s. at .05
Very little change occurs in relation to attitudes concerning social action as level of orthodoxy changes. Also, since no relationship was found between attitudes concerning social action and social action, there was no need to examine the orthodoxy-social action relationship while controlling for attitudes concerning social action.

In order to allow adequate cell values in comparing orthodoxy and social action while controlling for salience, the variable of orthodoxy and the three separate measures of salience (attitudinal, behavioral, and total salience) were each collapsed into two categories. Respondents in the low attitudinal orthodoxy group scored between 22 and 37, and respondents in the high orthodoxy group scored between 38 and 40 on the orthodoxy scale. Respondents in the low attitudinal salience group scored between 1 and 4 on the attitudinal salience scale, while those scoring a 5 were placed in the high group. On the behavioral salience scale, those scoring 2 through 5 were placed in the low group and those scoring 6 through 11 were placed in the high group. Finally, the total salience, respondents scoring between 2 and 6 were placed in the low group and those scoring between 7 and 10 were placed in the high group.

While first controlling for attitudinal salience and then for behavioral salience, no significant relationships were found between orthodoxy and social
action, although strong nonsignificant Chi square values were found in both high salience groups (2.946 and 3.105 respectively, both sig. at .10).

When controlling for total salience, however, a significant relationship was found between orthodoxy and social action (see Table 4). Although the low salience group exhibited no significant effect on the orthodoxy-social action relationship, within the high salience group the highly orthodox were less likely to be involved in social action. This can be contrasted with the low salience group in that although it was not significant, the relationship went in the other direction.

Following the lead of Gibbs et al. (1973) who found a relationship between orthodoxy and social action when controlling for salience only when they used a very high threshold to delineate the high salience group, both behavioral and total salience was redichotomized with higher salience; attitudinal salience could not be redichotomized because it was already at the highest threshold possible. In contrast with Gibbs et al. no significant relationships between orthodoxy and social action were found in either the low or high salience groups for either behavioral or total salience.
Table 4
Comparison of Orthodoxy and Social Action
While Controlling for Salience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low Salience Group</th>
<th></th>
<th>High Salience Group</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Action</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>87.50 (14)</td>
<td>12.50 (2)</td>
<td>100.00 (16)</td>
<td>54.55 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>75.00 (9)</td>
<td>25.00 (3)</td>
<td>100.00 (12)</td>
<td>86.21 (25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>82.14 (23)</td>
<td>17.86 (5)</td>
<td>100.00 (28)</td>
<td>77.50 (31)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N indicated by parentheses
Chi square = .730, n.s. at .05

Chi square = 4.585, sig. at .05
Salience

Besides controlling for salience in examining the orthodoxy-social action relationship, all three measures of salience (behavioral, attitudinal, and a combined total salience) were compared with social action. The Chi square values for the three salience-social action comparisons are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5

Chi Square Values for the Comparisons Between the Three Measures of Salience and Social Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures of Salience</th>
<th>Chi Square Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral</td>
<td>.867 (df=2), n.s. at .05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudinal</td>
<td>.930 (df=2), n.s. at .05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.065 (df=2), n.s. at .05*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant, however, at .20, the high salience group exhibiting more social action participation than either the low or medium salience groups

Although none of the Chi square values were significant (p. <.05), the Chi square value for the total salience-social action relationship was substantially larger than for either the behavioral or attitudinal salience measures alone, reinforcing the method of combining the attitudinal and behavioral measures of salience into a more potent measure of salience.
Direction of Belief

No significant relationship was found either between direction of belief and social action (see Table 6), or direction of belief and attitudes concerning social action.

Table 6
Comparison of Direction of Belief and Social Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Action</th>
<th>No Involvement</th>
<th>Involvement</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outer</td>
<td>58.33</td>
<td>41.67</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(7)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direction of Belief</td>
<td>Balanced</td>
<td>79.41</td>
<td>20.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(27)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
<td>(34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inner</td>
<td>85.29</td>
<td>14.71</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(29)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>78.75</td>
<td>21.25</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(63)</td>
<td>(17)</td>
<td>(80)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N indicated by parentheses

Chi square = 3.868, n.s. at .05

Although not significant at the level set for this study, the Chi square value was strong (significant at .20). A roughly linear relationship occurs. Examining Table 6 we find the outer-directed respondents were at
least twice as likely to be involved in social action as the balanced respondents, and nearly three times as likely as the inner-directed respondents. Although not surprising, more research is necessary to find whether this actually does occur or whether it was only the result of sample bias.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to discover and discuss any relationship between religious belief and social action. Religious belief was measured primarily in terms of orthodoxy, but also in terms of salience and direction (inner versus other-directed). Social action measured primarily in terms of actual social action, as well as attitudes toward social action. Six main findings from the study are summarized below.

First, a very low proportion (less than one in five) of the respondents included in this study were actually involved in social action. Since this study examines lay social action participation as opposed to either attitudes concerning social action or clergy social action, the results are quite exploratory and comparisons with other studies are difficult. Comparisons with social action in the general population, however, are possible. A 1983 Gallup survey (Gallup, 1984) found that 55% of all adults were involved in volunteering which they defined as "working in some way to help others for no monetary pay," (p. 20) a concept closely paralleling the concept of social action used in this study.
At first glance the church members seem to be substantially less involved than the general population. However, on closer inspection of the national survey's results, we find that when respondents were asked to indicate the particular activities in which they volunteered, the two top categories, working alone informally and religious voluntary work (which 44% and 37% of the respondents indicated, respectively) were not, by definition, included as social action in the present study. Instead, respondents were asked to indicate participation in non-church related social action organizations. Ruling those two out for the national sample would greatly reduce the difference in social action rates between it and the church member sample used here.

One possible explanation for low rates of outside the church social action among church members may be the simplest. A person who is an active member has less time for activity outside the church. This may partly explain why women, who are less likely to be in careers than men and so may have more time, are more likely to be involved in social action. The Gallup survey's results also support this explanation. In the 1981 version of their study of volunteering (reported in Gallup, 1984), respondents were asked why they stopped volunteering. The most frequent (33%) reason given was that they were too busy to continue. Also, in response to an item asking why
they did volunteer, the second most frequent response (35%) was because they had an interest in activity or work, indicating time available to "fill up" with activity. Indeed, the most frequently given response was wanting to be useful, help others, or do good deeds, indicated by 45% of the respondents. Being active church members, the respondents in the present study already are filling at least part of their time with volunteered activity.

Second, the respondents in this study fell largely at the high to very high end of the orthodoxy continuum which may make this study's findings different from those of a study using a more sensitive measure of orthodoxy or drawing a sample from another section of the country or another denomination. Grand Rapids is often considered a religiously conservative section of the country, so regional differences may be present. Also, by using only active members, an inadvertent selection of the more orthodox may have occurred than if nonactive members would have been included. Again, further research should use a variety of populations from various geographic areas and should include nonactive as well as active members.

Third, of the demographic variables, only sex was found to be significantly related with social action. Since few, if any, other studies actually measure lay
social action (as opposed to clergy social action or attitudes concerning social action), future research should try to explore the causes of that relationship more fully. One possible direction for the new research, although easily overlooked, could be simply the amount of time available for women to be involved in social action. Although the gap has narrowed considerably, a higher percentage of men are employed than women. It could also be argued that women may be more relationship-oriented than men, which in turn leads to higher community social awareness. Either explanation may account for the differences found in this study.

Fourth, orthodoxy alone was not significantly related to social action; it was only significantly related when the salience of religion was high. It may be that the repressive effects of orthodoxy on social action are only powerful enough to be significant in those individuals to whom religion (and religious belief) is an important part of their lives.

Two important considerations must be taken into account, however. First, for those whose religious beliefs are both highly orthodox and highly salient, social action may more frequently take a form not measured by the instrument used in this study. Such a person may be more likely to participate through his or her church as opposed to social action organizations, or
may be concerned with the sharing of his or her religious faith which, according to the definition used in this survey, could be considered a form of social action. Second, and much simpler, it could well be that those whose beliefs are high orthodox and highly salient may spend a larger proportion of their time, energy, and resources involved in and concerned with their church, simply not allowing as much participation in other social action organizations. Future research could examine both of these areas in order to better understand the relationship between orthodoxy, salience, and social action.

It seems clear, however, that when considering the absence of a relationship between orthodoxy and social action until salience is controlled, future research including the variable of orthodoxy as an independent variable should also include the salience of religious belief. Doing so would probably greatly increase our understanding of religious belief as an independent variable.

Fifth, although an important factor in the orthodoxy-social action relationship, salience alone was not found to be related to social action. This reinforces the suggestion of including both salience and orthodoxy together in any future research. By themselves they will probably not be adequate predictors of social action.
Sixth, surprisingly, both the direction of belief and attitudes concerning social action were not related to social action participation. Apparently, such internal states or inclinations toward social action were mitigated by stronger variables, notably orthodoxy and salience. More research with larger samples and more detailed analysis may find a relationship between direction of belief and social action participation, or attitudes concerning social action and social action participation.

The orthodoxy-social action relationship is a complex one, one which is often thought to be a simple positive or negative relationship. However, as this study illustrates, there are other very important intervening variables, an important one being that of salience. To broaden our understanding of these variables and their effects on the orthodoxy-social action relationship much more research is needed. This study has been one step in that direction.
Appendix

A Survey Concerning Religion and Social Action
A SURVEY CONCERNING RELIGION AND SOCIAL ACTION

FOR QUESTIONS 1 THROUGH 3 PLEASE CIRCLE THE ANSWER WHICH APPLIES TO YOU.

1. What is your sex?
   1. Male
   2. Female

2. What age category would you fall in?
   1. Under 20
   2. 20-29
   3. 30-39
   4. 40-49
   5. 50-59
   6. 60 or older

3. How much education have you completed?
   1. Eighth grade
   2. High school graduate
   3. 1-2 years of college
   4. 3-4 years of college
   5. 5 or more years of college

FOR QUESTIONS 4 AND 5 PLEASE CIRCLE THE ANSWER WHICH BEST ESTIMATES THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN YOUR LIFE.

4. About how many hours per month do you spend in church or church-related activities?
   1. 0-2 hours
   2. 3-5 hours
   3. 6-8 hours
   4. 9-11 hours
   5. 12-14 hours
   6. 15 or more hours

5. How important is religion to you?
   1. Fairly unimportant
   2. Not too important
   3. Fairly important
   4. Quite important
   5. Extremely important

6. Are you currently participating in any organization which is concerned with changing American society?
   ____ YES      ____ NO
If YES, in Column 1 please check the description which best describes the organization(s) in which you participate.

In Column 2, for each description you have checked, please give the name of the organization(s) in which you participate.

In Column 3, please check the blank which best estimates the number of hours you spend in a typical month in each organization you have listed.

In Column 4, please check whether you have been either an officer or a member of the Board of Directors in any of the organizations you have listed.

In Column 5, please check the blank which best estimates the percentage of your yearly income which you contribute to each organization you have listed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column 1</th>
<th>Column 2</th>
<th>Column 3</th>
<th>Column 4</th>
<th>Column 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JUDICIAL OR NATIONAL POLITICAL</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENVIRONMENTAL</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>CONSUMER RIGHTS</td>
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<tr>
<td>HEALTH OR MENTAL HEALTH</td>
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<td>NEIGHBORHOOD OR COMMUNITY</td>
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<td>CIVIL RIGHTS</td>
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<tr>
<td>PEACE OR ARMS LIMITATION</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. How important do you feel it is for individuals to be involved in the types of organizations discussed on the preceding page?
   1. Fairly unimportant
   2. Not too important
   3. Fairly important
   4. Quite important
   5. Extremely important

FOR QUESTIONS 8 THROUGH 15 PLEASE CIRCLE THE ANSWER WHICH IS CLOSEST TO YOUR BELIEF.

8. What do you believe about immortality?
   1. I do not believe in immortality in any sense.
   2. I believe in reincarnation.
   3. I believe immortality is the continued influence of a person's life on family or society.
   4. While its meaning is somewhat imprecise, I believe in the continued existence of the personality as part of a universal spiritual principle.
   5. I believe in the resurrection of one's being and life after death.

9. What do you feel will probably happen to you after death?
   1. Simply stop existing.
   2. Reincarnation.
   3. I have no idea.
   4. Uncertain.
   5. My "spirit" will have some continuation in the universe.
   6. Depending on the will of God, I will go to heaven or hell.

10. What do you believe about God?
    1. I don't believe in God.
    2. I don't know whether there is a God and there probably is not a way to find out.
    3. God is a "spirit" within us.
    4. I don't believe in a personal God, but I do believe in a higher power of some kind.
    5. I feel that I do believe in God even though I am not able to explain fully who or what God is.
    6. I know God really exists and I have no doubts about it.
11. What do you believe about Jesus?

1. Frankly, I am no sure the historical Jesus existed.
2. I think Jesus was only a man.
3. I think Jesus was only a man, although an extraordinary one.
4. I feel that Jesus was a great religious prophet, but I don't feel He was the Son of God any more than all of us are the children of God.
5. Jesus is best understood as symbol of goodness, whether he existed or not is unimportant.
6. I feel basically that Jesus is Divine, but I have some problem understanding his Divinity.
7. Jesus is the Divine Son of God and I have no doubts about it.

12. What do you believe about the idea that God has and continues to act in the history of man?

1. There is no evidence of any intervention of "God" in human history.
2. People who have believed in God have influenced history.
3. I believe the unfolding history of man has been within a natural order established by a higher power.
4. While I am unable to explain fully who or what God is, I believe He has an influence in the history of man.
5. I believe God has and continues to intervene directly and indirectly in the history of man.

13. Which of the following comes closest to expressing your conception of prayer?

1. "Prayer" is not a meaningful term to me.
2. Prayer is self-evaluation and working out one's problems.
3. Prayer is meditation in which thought is directed toward beauty, goodness, comfort, etc.
4. Prayer is directing one's thoughts toward a higher power.
5. Prayer is speaking to God.
14. Which of the following statements comes closest to expressing your conception of sin?
   1. I do not believe in "sin".
   2. I believe people err but do not "sin".
   3. Sin is behavior which goes against my own personal principles.
   4. Sin is behavior which harms others.
   5. Sin is behavior which goes against accepted social and ethical principles.
   6. Sin is failure to live up to the highest spiritual ideals I know.
   7. Sin is the individual's rejection of God's will for his life.

15. What is your view of the Bible?
   1. The Bible is a collection of myths and fantasies.
   2. The Bible is a collection of literary and historical writings.
   3. The Bible contains some of man's significant moral and ethical thinking.
   4. The Bible was written by inspired men and contains valuable spiritual teachings.
   5. The Bible is God's Word.

16. When making important decisions, how often does religion influence the choices you make?
   1. Almost never
   2. Not to often
   3. Fairly often
   4. Quite often
   5. Almost always

PLEASE READ THE INSTRUCTIONS FOR QUESTION 17 CAREFULLY.

17. Rank the following statements beginning with what you believe to be the most important teachings of Christianity (beginning with number 1) to the least important (ending with number 6).
   __ Living a morally good life.
   __ Becoming more loving toward others.
   __ Growth in one's spiritual life.
   __ Aiding others in need.
   __ The salvation of one's soul.
   __ Living one's life for the service of others.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR COOPERATION IN COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. PLEASE RETURN IT IN THE ENCLOSED SELF-ADDRESSED, STAMPED ENVELOPE.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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