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Abraham Uppal

Western Michigan University, abrahamuppal@outlook.com

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WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

PROTESTANTISM, LIBERALISM, AND RACIAL EQUALITY

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE HONORS COLLEGE

BY

ABRAHAM UPPAL

KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN

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PREFACE

In this paper, I will examine liberalism in Protestantism. Liberals who are Protestant, Mainline Protestants, are an interesting group who are different from the conservative, Evangelical Christian crowd. I will pay special attention to racial issues like affirmative action and racism. Liberalism in Protestantism is often called the social gospel, a theology in which Protestants believe Christian teachings mandate an active role in society in which values such as freedom, equality, and love are pursued. The social gospel contrasts with the theology called individual salvation, often identified with conservative or Evangelical Christianity, in which one's personal relationship with God is of paramount importance. I will examine the history of Protestantism, the definition of subfamilies, modern views on race, and the Gospels to develop my thesis. Liberalism in Protestantism has been a powerful force.

1. INTRODUCTION

General Introduction

The clash most relevant to this paper is between liberals and conservatives on issues of racial and economic equality.¹ The modern battleground in America on racial issues lies in the fight over affirmative action. Both moderate and extreme liberals argue that affirmative action is necessary to promote racial equality, though there is some dispute about the legitimacy of quotas. In another direction, both moderate and extreme conservatives argue that affirmative action to support racial equality is not legitimate. Moderate conservatives say that racial equality is a noble goal but one not best served by affirmative action. Some issues examined in this paper, such as conservative attitudes affirmative action, are considered by some to be openly racist or “modern racism.” On the lunatic fringe of the far right, some say racial equality is not legitimate. There are political extremists, such as the Nation of Islam and the Black Panthers, who say the black race is superior.

Racism can, in a broad sense, be defined as “hostile or negative feelings of one ethnic group or ‘people’ toward another and the actions resulting from such attitudes.” (Fredrickson 2002, p. 1) However, the purpose of this paper is not to discuss racism in terms of genocide or racial violence but in terms of economic equality. For example, attitudes toward affirmative action, which includes programs such as those designed to

¹ While sexual and gender equality issues are important, these issues will not be discussed in this paper because the project would then be too massive.

correct racial underrepresentation in the workplace, will be examined. Economic equality means equality of income or wealth as well as equal opportunity in areas such as employment and housing.

How Protestants view race and its relationship to religion will be examined. The two camps are the Mainline Protestants, who believe Christianity seeks to fulfill its purpose through social activism and the pursuit of racial equality, and the Evangelical Christians, who believe the pursuit of worldly goals such as racial equality is not important for the religion. The existence and foundations of these movements will be examined.

Two theologies have come about in Protestantism: the social gospel family, which emphasizes doing good deeds in order to be a good Christian, and the individual salvation family, which emphasizes developing an intimate relationship with God in order to become a good Christian. The social gospel family has in modern times been called Mainline Protestant, while the individual salvation family has been called Evangelical Christian. A political classification in which the social gospel family is deemed liberal and the individual salvation family conservative is also very interesting.

There is a perception that Christianity has changed drastically during the last two thousand years, and a debate rages on regarding whether the message of Christ was liberal or conservative. In the election of 2008, for example, religion played a vital role in the campaign, as both Obama and McCain had to answer to religious people. (Wright 2009, p. 198) Of the approximately seventy-five percent of adult Americans who consider themselves Christian, a substantial number of Protestants in America contend

that Christ taught a message of compassion best served by activist liberalism. (Wright 2009, p. 1)

The main split is going to come down to what is called the doctrine of the social gospel and what is called the doctrine of individual salvation. The split was described by Kenneth Wald, who, for example, explained in *Religion and Politics in the United States*, “At the beginning of the twentieth century, when the Social Gospel movement was particularly strong, it contributed to the split in American Christianity between the mainline denominations and their evangelical and fundamentalist adversaries. . . . Though the evangelicals were not indifferent to social problems, they emphasized the priority of spiritual communion between God and individuals.” (Wald 2003, p. 269) The social gospel and the tradition associated with this social gospel view religion as a source of inspiration to compassionate deeds done towards others in society. The social gospel argues that Jesus and other Christian thinkers taught a message of practical help for others, especially the poor.

The doctrine of individual salvation is often associated with conservative Protestantism or Evangelical Christianity. Such religious experiences stress one’s personal relationship with God and how God judges one as an individual. The social activist part of the social gospel is somewhat disregarded on the grounds that preparation for the next life is important, not success in this one.

Arguments in favor of both sides have looked to Christian thinkers from Jesus Christ to the founders of Protestant denominations like Martin Luther and John Calvin. Under different names, battles have been waged under traditions similar to the social

gospel and traditions similar to individual salvation. For example, Martin Luther's attack on the Roman Catholic Church can be considered a precursor to the social gospel before the movement had a name.

Outside of the debate between the social gospel and the doctrine of individual salvation, there are religious movements within Protestantism on the far right that are outright racist. One wonders if the charges that religion has gone hand-in-hand with racism are true. Furthermore, one wonders if the truth of the charges, if there are some, extend to outright racism, to ethnocentrism, or merely to conservatism on issues of racial equality. Data on the social gospel and on the doctrine of individual salvation will show that the amount of members of either camp who are racist is not significant.

Considering the great changes on race relations in America in the last forty years, racism has taken a downturn among whites in general. (Putnam & Campbell 2010, p. 311) On issues such as banning interracial marriage, favoring the legality of whites refusing to sell homes to blacks, and favoring an antidiscrimination law, progressive views toward racial equality among whites over the last four decades have increased substantially. Notions such as those that blacks have worse jobs, income, and housing than white people because their in-born ability to learn is less, that blacks should not push themselves where they are not wanted, and that blacks do not have the willpower to rise out of poverty have all become significantly less popular since the 1970's. (Putnam & Campbell 2010, p. 311) Barack Obama's election to the Presidency in 2008 also reflects more progressive views on racial equality.

The United States is very religious as Western nations go, and America is also very ethnically diverse. (Putnam & Campbell 2010) Such ethnicity, many believe, props up religion as ethnic groups seek their ethnicity's heritage and culture at church. In terms of race relations, evangelicals are caught between a message of equality taught by Jesus Christ and a history of racism. One may say that from the 1700's to the 1800's and 1900's, racism was a more important pillar with separate seating arrangements, separate congregations, and separate denominations being in effect. (Putnam & Campbell 2010, chapter 9)

Research Question

The purpose of this paper is to answer a question regarding Protestantism. Namely, one wonders what the relationship is between Protestantism and Liberalism. The question then arises of how many Protestants are liberal and what type of liberalism these liberal Protestants follow. Furthermore, questions arise as to whether one can authoritatively say that Protestantism is liberal. The question addressed is not only of what Jesus Christ thought and the relevancy of Jesus Christ but also as to how Protestantism and early Christianity has developed into the religion we see today.

I want to focus my thesis specifically on the issue of racial equality.² In addition to studying liberal Protestantism and its link with racial equality, I will compare and contrast

² While some other aspects of liberalism are covered, my basic problem is to determine the liberal Protestant relationship with racial equality.

major Protestant denominations in terms of their individual, unique relations with racial equality. Affirmative action will be covered. Ideas both from liberals and conservatives from mission statements, news, and other sources will be compared and contrasted. The debate is between those who consider major Protestant figures as liberal and those who contend these figures were conservative on racial and economic equality. I will address the problem by accessing sources related to the Protestant religion and racial equality.

The problem is an important one. Religious individuals, especially Christians, would be very interested in a verdict on the positions of people like Jesus Christ on political issues. The problem will also interest non-religious people because we live in a society where religion is very influential. Resolving the issue would enlighten us about our society as well as provide interesting information on Protestantism for discussions and otherwise.

Affirmative action may be defined as “a form of implementation, where the goal is to bring blacks on the average closer to whites in such spheres as education, occupation, and income.” (Schuman, Steeh, Bobo, & Krysan 1997, p. 170) Originally, affirmative action was a way of preventing discrimination against blacks in terms of employment or education. (Schuman, Steeh, Bobo, & Krysan 1997) When affirmative action policies began in the early 1960’s, the demand was for blacks to be included as candidates and given fair consideration. In other words, organizations such as businesses and universities would have to demonstrate that blacks were being treated fairly in being accepted in these organizations. Such organizations would have to contend with charges that blacks are greatly underrepresented in the organizations and,

since races are equal, such underrepresentation is necessarily evidence of racism. However, affirmative action now means giving preferential treatment to blacks in terms of admission to universities or employment; affirmative action is especially associated with organizations in which the candidates eventually selected greatly underrepresent blacks. (Schuman, Steeh, Bobo, & Krysan 1997) Such greater representation could reduce racial tensions that, in the 1960's for example, manifested themselves in riots.

Method

One asks how the answering of these questions is to be carried out. Firstly, one can examine the history of Protestantism, what and why important Protestant figures thought and did what they did. Secondly, investigations can be made into the beliefs advertised by different Protestant churches. Finally, an examination of what Jesus actually said in the Gospels might shed some light on the situation.

So, the roots of various Protestant subfamilies judged from historical data will be analyzed. Data from websites revealing the positions of various websites will be analyzed. Data I gathered firsthand from the Gospels from Jesus' own words will be analyzed. A note on this analysis of Jesus' own words is that I originally expected there to be a strong case for liberalism in Jesus' own words from the Gospels, but what I actually found was that Jesus had little or no wise sayings that could be interpreted in a modern context and that Jesus' rhetoric was rather conservative.

To define the contrast between liberalism and conservatism, we can examine different attitudes on politics in social matters, gender roles, foreign policy, economic matters, and race. We can determine that the differences between liberals and conservatives can help bring us a definition of the two terms through the concept of authority. By analyzing the positions on the issues of liberals and conservatives, we can observe that liberals will support political positions that take power away from groups traditionally in authority and support political positions that give power to those considered oppressed. Consider liberalism's opposition to elitism in police matters such as in the support of civil liberties to ensure police may not violate civil rights. Also note examples in the area of abortion rights and rights for homosexuals.

Similarly, modern conservatives take the opposite position of liberals. Whether it is support for whatever nation lived in in terms of foreign policy or support for religious elites such as in the issue of prayer in schools, conservatives stand by their traditional values, values seen as conserving social order and morality. Rebecca E. Klatch defines two types of conservatives, economic conservatives and social conservatives. (Klatch 1988, p. 31). According to Klatch, economic conservatives believe society benefits most when individuals are unhindered in their pursuit of self-interest while social conservatives want to bring the individual "under the moral authority of God, the church, and the family." (Klatch 1988, p.31)

Examining liberalism and conservatism as they relate to racial attitudes within Protestantism will be important in this paper. These attitudes will be examined both historically and in modern times. Issues covered will include affirmative action, racism, and statements from the Gospels related to the debate.

I study the history of Christianity in Part 1. I look first at denominations classified as Mainline Protestant. In Part 2, I will be able to find many statements on the issue of affirmative action from websites of these Mainline Protestant churches as well as back up my contention that these denominations are Mainline Protestant with data from the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life.

I look at denominations classified as Evangelical Christian. I will back up my contention that these denominations are Evangelical Christian ones with data from the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. I will also use other sources to describe the Evangelical Christian relationship with affirmative action. I discuss the Black Church in depth in this section. In Part 3, I will study the Gospels to build a case for liberal Protestantism from direct quotations from Jesus Christ.

One of my conclusions will be that, according to the statistics, views among both more religious and less religious Americans have become more tolerant in the same way in the last four decades. (Putnam & Campbell 2010, chapter 9) Religious Americans are not more likely to express racist views than less religious Americans. Some differences were seen in support of government policy to make better the effects of racial prejudice: white evangelicals were least likely to support such policy. Also, since the 1970's, "evangelicals have become more likely to say they would vote for a

law that ‘says a homeowner can decide for himself whom to sell his house to, even if he prefers not to sell to Blacks or African Americans’” than to vote for a law “that says that a homeowner cannot refuse to sell to someone because of their race or color.” (Putnam & Campbell, 2010, p. 314) Evangelical belief system may play in role in opposing government measures at racial equality even when there are no overtly racist attitudes. Those who like the social gospel disagree, arguing that people are part of the society lived in. Such society greatly causes how much success one has in life. For example, those who grow up in poor societies, the social gospel argues, need to be helped. The argument has gone hand-in-hand with arguing for affirmative action because blacks are viewed as being disenfranchised.

While modern racial attitudes have probably been shaped by the history of racism, as, for instance, racism in the former Confederacy is higher than racism other places, the conclusion as to the racism of Evangelical Christians is somewhat problematic. Statistics show that attitudes of religion and non-religious Americans have been comparable on issues of race since the 1970s. However, increased conservatism does remain among Evangelicals regarding measures to correct racial inequality such as affirmative action. To attempt to resolve the debate, we will look at the history of Christianity and official statements from churches.

PART 1. HISTORY OF PROTESTANTISM

Christianity was radically transformed in the sixteenth century by what is called the Protestant Reformation. Individuals such as King Henry VIII and Martin Luther brought revolutionary changes to Europe, breaking off from the Roman Catholic Church. The movement that became in modern times the social gospel was founded, as was the movement that became evangelicalism.

All Protestant denominations are descended from Luther, Calvin, or King Henry VIII. One example of corruption decried by Luther was the sale of indulgences in which the Catholic Church would forgive sins in exchange for money. (Melton 2007, chapter 3) Luther felt the need to claim authority on the Bible superior to that of the pope and Catholic Church. Luther promoted the notion of a priesthood of all believers and argued that salvation is only by the grace of God. Luther claimed that faith alone mattered. Luther's revolutionary ideas can best be seen as an attack on the Roman Catholic priesthood in favor of the common man and his faith. Luther wanted individuals to participate in a life of compassion and good deeds but not to earn the rewards of Heaven but as gratitude to Christ.

Luther's role brought him great condemnation by organizations such as the Roman Catholic Church and the Holy Roman Empire but Luther famously declared, "Here I stand, I can do no other." (Melton 2007, p. 220) Such struggle was similar to what happened to the practitioners of the social gospel, particularly in the civil rights

movement that included the changes of the 1960's, when liberal Protestants clashed with hitherto existing authority.

Meanwhile, in order to reform the Catholic Church John Calvin took another shot at establishing a Protestant denomination that would be considered truly to follow the works of Jesus in 1541. (Melton 2007, chapter 3) Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* would become central to what is called the Reformed church. Calvin had again attempted to establish a Protestant denomination, this time starting with more organization and political power. On matters relating to the way the Roman Catholic Church interpreted Christianity, Calvin was in a tradition of agreement with Martin Luther's attacks on organized religion.

Another opportunity to promote a non-Catholic Christian denomination with more political support arose in the rule of King Henry VIII of England. Henry VIII had initially defended the Catholic Church and attacked Luther but, because Henry VIII could not reconcile his decision to divorce the king's wife with the Catholic Church, eventually split with the Catholic Church and established the Church of England. (Melton 2007, chapter 3)

Perhaps one of the best ways to understand the individual salvation school of religious thought is to examine the Hebrew word "yasa" as it appears in the Old Testament. (Baker's Evangelical Dictionary 2013) One interpretation of "yasa" is that it means "set free." One interpretation of the individual salvation dimension may be that it is about freedom, whatever this word may mean. Freedom may mean freedom from

oppression, freedom from earthly delights, or freedom from a life of irreligious ignorance.

Although the concept of salvation in the Old Testament usually meant material salvation, salvation in the New Testament for the most part meant spiritual salvation. Some conclude that “Salvation is the overriding theme of the entire Bible.” (Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary 2013) A rather revealing quote from the Bible goes, “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” (Revelation 7:10)

In the Old Testament, individuals who are especially favored by God are granted privilege because of the goodness that will spread to others, such as when Moses uses his power to deliver the Jews from oppression in Egypt. This conception of salvation is more in accordance with the social gospel than with the philosophy of individual salvation.

However, salvation in the Old Testament is not for the sake of Israel but for the glory of God, “Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone.’” (Ezekiel 36:22) So, one may contest that the salvation of the Old Testament is not in the tradition of the social gospel as the purpose is to glorify God in society and not otherwise to help people in society.

In the New Testament, Jesus becomes an agent of salvation, “She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” (Matthew 1:21) Jesus opened up the possibility of eternal life and

forgiveness of sin by dying on the cross, and only by following Jesus may people obtain salvation. Jesus teaches that salvation involves believing in God above anyone else and in advancing God's kingdom. The spirit of the individual salvation theology may perhaps be best typified by the Biblical quote, "let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him, this man is standing before you well. This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among man by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:10-12)

The history of Protestantism produced these two families, with a strong case being made both that early Protestants resembled the social gospel movement and that early Protestants resembled individual salvation. Early Protestant figures included Martin Luther, John Calvin, and King Henry VIII. When Luther attacked the Roman Catholic Church, the Protestant movement resembled the social gospel movement with an attack on religious authority. However, Luther also resembled the individual salvation movement by moving the authority of religion from the Roman Catholic Church to the individual. Calvin also distanced himself from religious authority, though again the link between moving away from religious authority and supporting the social gospel is an interesting but problematic one. King Henry VIII also attacked the Roman Catholic Church, though the king established his own church. So, Martin Luther, John Calvin, and King Henry VIII did not only attack religious authority but also established it.

PART 2. ANALYSIS OF U.S. PROTESTANT SUBFAMILIES

There is use in organizing and understanding Protestantism by its subfamilies. Each subfamily brought with it a new theology. The theologies can point to tendencies within each denomination that side with either the Mainline Protestant theology or the Evangelical Christian theology.

In this part, I will describe many Protestant subfamilies in depth. In table 1, I overview which subfamily tends to follow which philosophy. In table 2, I overview which percent of each important American religion belongs to which tradition.

Table 1. Affiliation Tendency among Protestant Subfamilies

Protestant Subfamily	Classification
Lutheran	Mainline Protestant
Reformed	Balanced
Anglican	Mainline Protestant
Presbyterian	Mainline Protestant
Methodist	Mainline Protestant
United Church of Christ	Mainline Protestant
Baptist	Evangelical Christian
Pentecostal	Evangelical Christian
Anabaptist	Evangelical Christian

Table 2. Affiliation Percentage among Protestant Subfamilies

Religion	% of Americans	% Evangelical Christian	% Mainline Protestant	% Historically Black
Baptist	17.1	10.8	1.9	4.4
Methodist	6.3	0.3	5.4	0.6
Nondenominational	4.6	3.4	0.9	0.3
Luther	4.6	1.8	2.8	0.0
Presbyterian	2.7	0.8	1.9	0.0
Pentecostal	4.3	3.4	0.0	0.9
Anglican	1.7	0.3	1.4	0.0
Restorationist	2.1	1.7	0.4	0.0
Congregationalist	1.0	0.3	0.7	0.0
Holiness	1.3	1.0	0.0	0.3
Reformed	0.6	0.3	0.3	0.0
Anabaptist	0.6	0.3	0.3	0.0
Pietist	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.0
Fundamentalist	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.0
Protestant Nonspecific	4.9	1.9	2.5	0.5
Friends	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.0
None	16.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	33.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	26.3	18.1	6.9

2. Mainline Protestant Churches

Starting with a look at churches considered Mainline Protestant, we see modern Mainline Protestant churches take after a form of Protestantism that has been around since Martin Luther started his Protestant Reformation in 1517. This form of Christianity has a history of rebellion, especially against the priesthood. Such rebellion in itself can perhaps be considered liberalism.

Liberalism has also come to mean support for egalitarianism. “Modern liberals” support the welfare-state. (Conway 1995, p. 26) Modern liberals support equal opportunities, with many supporting affirmative action. A distinction may be made between modern liberals and classical liberals: classical liberals more often support equality in terms of equality before the law, meaning we all have an equal right to life, liberty, and property. Classical liberals are typified by Locke, the centuries-old but wise thinker who philosophized about the social contract. Locke’s ideas were highly influential in the founding of the U.S. government and in the thought of founding fathers such as Thomas Jefferson. Modern liberals look practically to groups that exist in society such as women, poor people, and non-whites and try to support politics that makes these people equal to the rest of society.

Liberalism has come to mean a political ideology that concerns itself with certain views on personal morality and life-style. (Conway 1995) Liberals have support for private authority in matters concerning morality; for example, liberals would support a

woman's right to decide whether or not to have an abortion or the right of a student not to be required to pray in schools.

One wonders if what those such as Martin Luther, John Calvin, and King Henry VIII, who founded denominations considered Mainline Protestant today, had in mind what contemporary political observers would call liberalism in the attack on the Catholic Church for not being true to the teachings of Jesus. In the classical liberalism sense, secularism can certainly be considered a liberal notion. When a movement pursues the separation of church and state or attacks religion for being authoritarian, even if such a movement is religious itself, such a movement can be considered a liberal one. While early Protestant thinkers founded a movement called today individual salvation, these thinkers also founded a movement that became what we today call the social gospel.

Turning now to modern Protestantism, we will look at statements, especially from websites of major Mainline Protestant churches, on issues regarding liberalism. Specifically, we will compare statements regarding issues of racial equality, economic equality, and other forms of equality.

Lutherans

16 percent of Mainline Protestants are Lutheran while 7 percent of Evangelicals are Lutheran. (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2012) 9.0 percent of American Protestants are Lutheran.

Luther claimed “Whatever is not against Scripture is for Scripture, and Scripture is for it.” (Mead, Hill, & Atwood 2005, p. 203) Luther thereby brought a liberalization of Biblical interpretation. Luther believed people were absolved of sinning only by turning directly to God and not by a church. Luther took the authority over one’s personal goodness away from the priests who preached individual salvation; rather, one was asked if one felt one was good with God. Luther redefined faith as placing one’s heart in Jesus Christ rather than as following the church and priesthood. Luther proclaimed, “The just shall live by faith.” (Mead, Hill, & Atwood 2005, pp. 203-204) Luther coined the term “evangelical” to describe his doctrine that the Bible is the perfect and inspired word of God.

Modern Lutheran churches feel inspired to follow Luther’s teachings through upholding affirmative action and the social gospel. For example, a 1964 convention of the American Lutheran Church affirmed liberal principles regarding race and economic equality. (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America 2012) The convention declared, “Christians, both personally and corporately, have the duty to press for and to support measures which insure that all persons, regardless of color, economic position, national origin, or ethnic grouping, have fair and equal access to education, housing, employment, voting, and public accommodations.” (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America 2012)

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America quotes Rom 3:23, “All of us sin and fall short of the glory of God.” (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America 2012) The church states, “Racism--a mixture of power, privilege, and prejudice – is sin, a violation

of God’s intention for humanity.” (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America 2012) The church advocates resolutions that will give all persons equally in the form of:

- Civil rights, including full protection of the law and redress under the law of discriminatory practices; and to all citizens, the right to vote;
- Access to quality education, health care, and nutrition;
- Opportunity for employment with fair compensation, and possibilities for job training and education, apprenticeship, promotion and union membership
- Opportunity for business ownership
- Access to legal, banking, and insurance services;
- The right to rent, buy, and occupy housing in any place; and
- Access to public transportation and accommodation

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2012

Reformed

1 percent of Mainline Protestants are Reformed while 1 percent of Evangelical Protestants are Reformed. (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2012) The Reformed Church of America says of affirmative action that it is “an imperfect attempt to recognize that some people suffer bias because of their gender, race, or disability when seeking employment or admission to a school.” (The Reformed Church of America 2012) However, the church continues, “It [affirmative action] has also been of great benefit in increasing access for women and/or racial/ethnic people.” (The Reformed Church of America 2012)

Anglicans

The Church of England is also known as the Anglican Church, and the Episcopal Church originates from the Anglican Church. (Mead, Hill, & Atwood 2005, p.102) 3.0 percent of U.S. Protestants consider themselves Anglican. (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2012) 8 percent of Mainline Protestants are Anglican, while less than 0.5 percent of Evangelical Protestants are Anglican.

Anglican theology was put forth by Richard Hooker, who lived from 1554 to 1600. (Mead, Hill, & Atwood 2005, p.102) Hooker argued belief is justified by the Bible, religious tradition, and reason. The Anglican Church is highly supportive of Aesthetics, whether they are through sight, taste, or hearing. The American Revolution came with a severe attack on the Church of England, which was associated with the British Monarchy in the minds of most people. Here one calls to mind the social gospel movement. Similar to the social gospel, revolutionaries during America's War for Independence got involved in politics and society with overtly violent action against the British. During the Revolutionary War, patriots sought to free the nation from the political practices of the Anglican Church, which was charged with demanding special rights and opposing those who went against the church. (Wright 2009, p.56) Revolutionary heroes like Thomas Jefferson and James Madison fought to establish a country based upon religious freedom.

The Episcopal or Anglican Church has built many schools, hospitals, and homes for the elderly. (Mead, Hill, & Atwood 2005, p. 102) The existence of hierarchy amongst

Episcopalians such as in the existence of bishops is one of the defining characteristics of the church, and many view the Anglicans as a midpoint in between Protestants and Roman Catholics. A statement on equal opportunities by the Bourne Abbey Church of England Primary Academy ran, “The staff of Bourne Abbey Church of England Primary Academy fully endorse Lincolnshire County Council’s Equal Opportunities Policy both in its commitment to preventing discrimination and to its active promotion of equal opportunities regardless of race, social class, gender, sexuality, religion, disability or age.” (Bourne Abbey Church of England Primary Academy 2012)

A Pastoral Letter from the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church reflecting on immigration reform declared, “Holy Scripture teaches us that all human beings are made in the image of God, and that Jesus Christ gave his life for all people.” (Episcopal Church 2012) The letter supported immigration reform and immigrants, “Ours is a migratory world in which many people move across borders to escape poverty, hunger, injustice, and violence. We categorically reject efforts to criminalize undocumented migrants and immigrants, and deplore the separation of families and the unnecessary incarceration of undocumented workers.” (Episcopal Church 2012). The Episcopal Church is an affirmative action employer. With support for immigration and affirmative action, the church attempts to pursue an agenda called the social gospel.

Presbyterians

British Presbyterians came to North America in 1658 after the rule of Puritans came to an end after the death of Oliver Cromwell. (Mead, Hill, & Atwood 2005, p. 129) Presbyterians also came to America from other countries, resulting in three to six thousand Scottish immigrants arriving per year from 1710 to 1750. The early Presbyterians made way for the modern social gospel movement. The early Presbyterians prohibited government control of the Presbyterian Church and the persecution of anyone because of his or her religion. By becoming active in government, the Presbyterians made way for an era in which religion made one active in the society one lives in; nowadays one may call this movement the social gospel. In the seventeen-hundreds, Presbyterian preachers became interested in a “new birth” movement that conflicted with the religious tradition of the time. Presbyterians were inspired to follow this movement to set religion on the right track, a view later upheld by many under the title social gospel. After the American Revolution, Presbyterian preachers worked with the common man, spreading a message of religious cooperation. The Presbyterians also worked with the Congregationalists. The Presbyterian work with the common man and the Congregationalists brings the social gospel to mind, in which Christians worked with the common man to spread religion.

10 percent of Mainline Protestants are Presbyterian, while only 3 percent of Evangelical Protestants are Presbyterian. (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2012) 5.2 percent of U.S. Protestants are Presbyterian. The Racial Ethnic and Women’s

Ministries/Presbyterian Women of the Presbyterian Mission Agency works for “racial justice,” builds Presbyterian religious communities that reflect a multicultural society, and builds leaders from across genders. (Presbyterian Mission Agency 2012) The Presbyterian Hunger Program or “Fair Trade” works to alleviate hunger and poverty by helping people “access needed resources,” “provide for their families,” “gain control over their lives,” “live with increased dignity,” and “tell their stories.” (Presbyterian Mission Agency 2012) Such deeds reflect the social gospel movement.

A General Assembly report of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, which “should not be construed as the official position of the OPC,” states that “God did not create different paths for different races, but created one pair, male and female, in His image.” (Orthodox Presbyterian Church 2012) On race relations, the church preaches “eagerness to share material possessions,” “mutual admonition,” and “total forgiveness.” (Orthodox Presbyterian Church 2012) This Presbyterian church has pursued the social gospel in race relations.

Methodists

Methodists are the most popular subfamily for Mainline Protestants. The Methodists, known as strong adherents to the social gospel, took after the philosophy of John Wesley, who felt he had established a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. (Melton 2007, chapter 3) Wesley made numerous religious societies to keep pace with the thinker’s continual development of new ideas. The societies asked members to

adopt a Christian lifestyle while often moving religious meetings away from churches and using un-ordained lay preachers. Such a Christian lifestyle brought religion in the direction of the social gospel rather than toward the doctrine of individual salvation. Another one of Wesley's ideas was to organize the members of the societies into small groups that met weekly for support and prayer. Such support brings to mind the social activism of the social gospel. The establishment of Methodism was another attempt to disentangle Christianity from organized religion in favor of religious freedom and personal revitalization through Christ.

The Methodist Church is represented in basically every county in America. (Mead, Hill, & Atwood 2005, p. 217) 12.1 percent of all Protestants in the U.S. consider themselves Methodist. (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2012) The denomination is on the liberal side, with 30 percent of Mainline Protestants being Methodist and only 1 percent of Evangelical Protestants being Methodist. Methodist hymns are popular in both Catholic and Protestant churches in English-speaking countries everywhere. (Mead, Hill, & Atwood 2005, p. 217) Methodists are well-known for their help with the disadvantaged. Indeed, often Methodists experience religion through compassionate deeds rather than adherence to religious authority. Such compassionate deeds are great examples of the social gospel movement.

In 2005, a book called *Workers for the Harvest* was published by the Committee for Racial Justice of the Methodist Church; the book seeks to inspire leaders who will then teach racial awareness at church (Christian Today 2012). Leaders are encouraged to follow the social gospel.

A statement by the River Falls United Methodist Church runs, “We believe all persons are of sacred worth and loved unconditionally by God. Therefore, we welcome all persons of any age, race, gender identity, ethnic origin, economic reality, family status, sexual orientation, diverse ability, faith history or social standing as full and equal participants in the life and work of this reconciling congregation.” (River Falls United Methodist Church 2012) Methodists stress the intent of those who founded Protestantism. (Mead, Hill, & Atwood 2005, p. 221)

The United Methodist Church supports affirmative action. The church says, “The implementation of ‘affirmative action’ reflects a shared understanding that diversity is a positive outcome of social inclusion that yields benefits for the entire community.” (The United Methodist Church 2012)

United Church of Christ

The United Church of Christ is rooted in New England Congregationalists, though the church was founded in 1957. (Mead, Hill, & Atwood 2005, p. 146) The church was founded by a union of Congregational churches, the Christian Church, the Evangelical Synod, and the United States’ Reformed Church. Representatives of some of these churches in 1959 made a testimony asserting belief in God, who “in Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our unified and risen Lord, ... has come to and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to himself.” (Mead, Hill, & Atwood 2005, pp. 125-126)

The United Church of Christ is a combination of Congregationalism and Presbyterianism. (Mead, Hill, & Atwood 2005, p. 147) The Christian Church has, since 1985, been active with the Consultation on Church Union and Global Ministries, spreading teaching and service by establishing new ministries. Social justice, like that of the philosophy of the social gospel, is a very important priority for the United Church of Christ.

Three percent of Mainline Protestants are United Church of Christ while no Evangelical Protestants are United Church of Christ. (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2012) 1.0 percent of American Protestants are United Church of Christ. The United Church of Christ supports affirmative action, stating “Structural racism is the cumulative effect of racial inequity in multiple institutions over time, and that is what Affirmative Action seeks to remedy.” (The United Church of Christ 2012)

American Baptist Churches USA

American Baptist Churches USA has sent representatives overseas to regimes like Haiti, Rwanda, South Africa, Mexico, and Zaire. (American Baptist Churches USA 2012) These representatives teach the compassionate Christianity of the social gospel. American Baptists are in favor of affirmative action. In an American Baptist resolution in support of affirmative action, the American Baptists said, “Affirmative action is designed to bring about justice and equal opportunity for people who have long been excluded from or underrepresented in certain fields of training or education, various types of jobs,

and in promotion to or selection for upper level decision-making positions. . . . It is important to the well-being of our society that persons of color and women be in positions where decisions are made.” (American Baptist Churches USA 2012) This support of affirmative action was made by the followers of the social gospel.

The great Protestant founders brought changes in the very customs of Christianity. The founders also brought great change in the philosophy behind the customs and the theology of Christianity. Some say the philosophy these founders created has led to a belief in equality echoed by the Mainline Protestant denominations who take after the founders by supporting affirmative action. Others, such as Evangelical Christians, interpret the founders of Protestantism differently.

3. Evangelical Christian Churches

Evangelical Christian churches, those based on the theology of individual salvation, do not have the same interpretation of Protestantism in which achieving social values such as equality is necessary for the faith. So, one should not expect Evangelical churches to pursue a social goal such as affirmative action with the same passion Modern Protestant churches do. The association of Evangelical Christians with the right-wing or conservative politics also implies a different view of social philosophy.

The websites of churches labeled Evangelical Christian did not have statements concerning affirmative action. Such silence may reflect the Evangelical Christian

tradition of individual salvation. While the Mainline Protestants pursue a “social gospel” tradition in which norms and values regarding social problems such as race are expected to be commented on by churches, Evangelical Christians do not necessarily believe it is the role of churches to comment on political positions such as affirmative action. Once again, much debate exists as to what the implications of conservative attitudes on race mean. Indeed, since both the Baptists and the Pentecostals gave support to the notion of racial equality, one would assume that these subfamilies at least do not label themselves racist. It is interesting how the Anabaptists’ website had no statements on race altogether.

One theory is that the equating of the Evangelical Christian churches with conservatism was held up by the lack of statements on the websites of these churches concerning affirmative action. One can also affirm the equating of Evangelical Christian churches with the individual salvation theology by this silence, as the goal of Evangelical Christian churches is not to correct social ills but to be better with God. I will examine the complex issue of race, including the affirmative action debate and black Protestants. I will also examine the Christian Identity movement and if the link between religion and racism.

Baptists

The Baptists are the most popular subfamily to American Protestants by a large margin. (Melton 2007, chapter 3) 33.5 percent of all American Protestants consider themselves Baptist. (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2012) The subfamily tends to be conservative, with 41 percent of all Evangelical Protestants being Baptist and only 10 percent of Mainline Protestants being Baptist. However, 64 percent of all Historically Black Protestants are also Baptist. The Southern Baptist Convention is extremely popular. (Melton 2007, chapter 3) The roots of the Baptists can be traced to the Anabaptists, but the Baptists also take much from the Puritans.

Baptists often meet together for education and missionary work. (Mead, Hill, & Atwood 2005) Baptists believe in doctrines such as the notion that the Bible is the supreme and only philosophy for life, acceptance of Christ as a guide, the freedom of individuals to undergo personal religion, and the separation of church and state. Such doctrines proclaim an emphasis on personal faith more in line with the doctrine of individual salvation than with the social gospel. Like other Protestants, Baptists believe that closeness to God and Jesus Christ goes hand-in-hand with religious freedom.

Baptists were highly successful in finding believers among black people before the end of slavery. (Mead, Hill, & Atwood 2005, p. 184) In these days, the social activist message of the social gospel may have been without hope for many slaves who would never be freed.

By 1793, one-fourth of Baptists were black. In the period of slavery, slaves would sit in church to identify with the masters' religious beliefs. (Mead, Hill, & Atwood 2005, p. 184) Many Christians back then, such as leader of a slave rebellion Nat Turner, believed the abolition of slavery was mandated by Christianity; many were appalled by Southern laws prohibiting blacks from reading. In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Act, which freed all slaves. (Wright 2009, p. 97) Lincoln commented that Americans had grown "too proud to pray to the God that made us," saying it was time for humility, confession, and pleas for forgiveness. (Wright 2009, p. 98) By 1880, nearly one million blacks were attending Baptist churches. (Mead, Hill, & Atwood 2005, p.184) Churches such as the Tremont Temple Baptist Church came into being with "a radical vision for racial and socio-economic equality." (Tremont Temple Baptist Church 2012)

Pentecostals

Pentecostalism is a distinctively American Christian subfamily and is now one of the fastest growing families in Latin America. (Mead, Hill, & Atwood 2005, p. 276) One of the leaders in the founding of Pentecostalism, Charles Fox Parham, believed the Holy Spirit still gave gifts in modern times. For example, Parham believed in speaking in tongues and the healing of illnesses. By emphasizing the miracles of Christ and God-favored Christians, the subfamily may be considered more of one in support of individual salvation than one following the socially active messages on race and gender

of the social gospel. The subfamily takes its name from the similarity to the first Pentecost when, soon after Christ's resurrection, the Spirit gave early Christians the ability to speak in languages these Christians did not know. Most Pentecostals are conservative and are considered evangelical. 13 percent of all Evangelical Protestants in the United States are Pentecostal, while no Mainline Protestants are Pentecostal. (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2012) 8.5 percent of all Protestants are Pentecostal. Finding the gift of tongues is considered holy and usually required for full discipleship. (Mead, Hill, & Atwood 2005, p.277)

In 2009, a former KKK imperial wizard, Johnny Lee Clary, became an ordained minister in a Black Pentecostal church. (CharismaMagazine 2012) The minister said he would stress racial reconciliation. Such an appointment would be unheard of by those supporting the social gospel. One of the main opponents of the social gospel's civil rights branch in the 1960's was the Ku Klux Klan. The United Progressive Pentecostal Church Fellowship can be quoted as saying that they welcome leaders "regardless of church size, denominational background or affiliation, race, ethnicity or sexual orientation." (United Progressive Pentecostal Church Fellowship 2012) In terms of economics, the Pentecostal Temple Church seeks to "promote Neighborhood Revitalization, Educational Enrichment and Economic and Social Empowerment" through direct programs. (Pentecostal Temple Church 2012) The church "calls to repentance any and all who have sinned against God by participating in racism through personal thought or action, through church and social structures, or through failure to address the evils of racism."

Anabaptists

In the sixteenth century, another subfamily, Anabaptism, emerged. (Melton 2007, chapter 3) The Anabaptists rejected both Luther and Calvin. (Mead, Hill, & Atwood 2005) Perhaps such a rejection made way for the emphasis on individual salvation by today's Anabaptists.

The subfamily began with the advent of rebaptism, which meant that baptism is for adults only. (Melton 2007, chapter 3) The Anabaptists also supported the separation of church and state. (Mead, Hill, & Atwood 2005, p.148) So, some of the ideas of Luther and Calvin were maintained. Other practices supported by the Anabaptists including baptizing those who profess faith only, the promise to follow the teachings of the New Testament with diligence, and opposition to secret societies. The Anabaptists here have mixed the traditions of those following the doctrine of individual salvation with pragmatic messages like those followed by the doctrine of the social gospel. The Anabaptists were initially persecuted by the authorities but spread the message across Austria and Germany while fleeing. (Melton 2007, chapter 3) So that the Anabaptists may defend themselves, some leaders gathered in 1527 at Schleitheim, publishing the document "Brotherly Union of a Number of Children of God concerning Seven Articles." (Melton 2007, chapter 3) The document called upon Anabaptists to adopt creeds such as baptism only for adults, rejection of members who go astray, limitation to partaking in the Lord's supper to members of the fellowship, separation from religious and political activities made "in unbelief," requiring pastors to have good reputations, advocating

pacifism via not taking up the sword or running for the office of magistrate if one is Christian, and telling Christians not to swear an oath. (Melton 2007, p. 223) By supporting pacifism, the Anabaptists imply support for the idea that God will judge everyone in the end, which is more important than the success of the subfamily in this world. Such an idea is in line with the doctrine of individual salvation, although such non-violence was popular with some, like Martin Luther King, during the civil rights movement which was greatly associated with those following the social gospel. The Anabaptists may be seen both as supporting privilege and being, at the time, anarchistic in, for example, its separation from the Catholic Church.

None the less, history records that early Anabaptists were associated with violence and apocalyptic spirituality and an attempt to form a commune in which bizarre ideas were applied at Munster in the 1530s. (Melton 2007, chapter 3) The commune was destroyed by a Catholic force, and both Catholics and Protestants pursued, often with arrests and torture, Anabaptist leaders. Threatened with the end of the faith, the Anabaptists began following a former Roman Catholic priest named Menno Simons. The leader argued for the Anabaptist cause with widespread acclaim, united the Anabaptist communities, and founded a haven for them. The Anabaptists took Menno's name and are still known today as Mennonites. The events were certainly not the last in the realm of religious violence.

Less than 0.5 percent of Mainline Protestants are Anabaptist while 1 percent of Evangelical Protestants are Anabaptist. (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2012) 0.4 percent of American Protestants are Anabaptist.

4. Data

Table 3 can map out the positions of different subfamilies on key issues related to race:

Table 3. Racial Views by Subfamily

Subfamily	Affirmative Action	Racism
Lutheran	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supports affirmative action. 2. Supports equality in matters of race and economics. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Considers racism a sin. 2. Supports civil rights. 3. Supports access to necessities across races. 4. Supports job opportunities across races. 5. Supports equal right to obtain services.
Reformed	<p>Calls affirmative action an imperfect attempt to recognize those who suffer because of gender, race, or disability.</p>	

Table 2—Continued.

Subfamily	Affirmative Action	Racism
Anglican	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supports equal opportunity regardless of race. 2. Is an affirmative action employer. 	Supports immigrants.
Presbyterian	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seeks a multi-cultural society. 2. On racial issues, seeks eagerness to share material possession and mutual admonition. 	Seeks “racial justice.”
Methodist	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strongly committed to the social gospel. 2. Supports affirmative action. 	Welcomes members regardless of race or ethnic identity.
United Church of Christ	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social justice is critical. 2. Supports affirmative action. 	

Table 2—Continued.

Subfamily	Affirmative Action	Racism
Baptist	American Baptists support affirmative action	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Were highly successful in finding believers among blacks before the end of slavery. 2. Many believed the end of slavery was mandated by Christianity.
Pentecostal	Seeks to promote economic success with direct programs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appointed former KKK imperial wizard to teach racial conciliation. 2. Welcomes leaders regardless of race or ethnicity. 3. Calls to repentance any who have been racists.

5. African-American Protestantism

Christianity in the United States has also been substantially influenced both by slavery and by segregation, and the legacy of these historical periods lives on in modern Protestantism. While one may not necessarily say that Evangelicals support slavery or segregation, Evangelicals stress personal salvation more than the social gospel embraced by Mainline Protestants. During the period of slavery, religion was often accused of being used to keep slaves in line with promises of an otherworldly future in heaven. Some, like Malcolm X, criticized Christianity harshly for inspiring “Uncle Toms” to keep slaves complacent. Malcolm X linked much of white culture to schemes by white supremacists to keep blacks complacent. While Malcolm X was not a Christian, Malcolm X pursued a mission to change society to correct racist wrongs. Many Mainline Protestants, though they do not agree with all of Malcolm X, are similar to him in becoming distant from the legacy of otherworldly hopes preached in the days of slavery and embrace the social gospel. Evangelical Christians do not consider the legacy of slavery as important.

Evangelical Christianity has a tradition going back centuries of strong emotional reactions combined with congregations including people across racial, economic, and geographic lines. (Heltzel 2009) One may say egalitarianism is very ingrained with Evangelical Christianity. However, whether such egalitarianism means support for equality amongst races and the sexes or whether such egalitarianism implies intolerance of those who are not like oneself is open to debate.

Martin Luther King, Jr. is probably the most favored religious leader of the twentieth century amongst Evangelical Christians, especially amongst young Evangelical Christians. (Heltzel 2009, p.45) None the less, many Evangelical Christians have trouble with King. King has been falsely charged with being a fundamentalist and being a communist. Some Evangelical Christians also disliked King's "doctrine of the atonement, his higher critical view of scripture, his message of direct-action civil disobedience, his socialist leanings, his appropriation of Gandhi's philosophy, his critique of the war in Vietnam, and his extramarital affairs." (Heltzel 2009, p. 45)

Values such as "freedom, individualism, independence, equality of opportunity, [and] privacy" in America derive greatly from the Evangelical tradition. (Emerson & Smith 2000, p.2) Nonetheless, often Evangelicals shy away from the success of these values in this world, arguing instead that one should strive for the kingdom of Heaven. For example, Billy Graham said "Only when Christ comes again will little white children of Alabama walk hand in hand with little black children." (Emerson & Smith 2000, p. 47) Some have opposed affirmative action. One person, a twenty-eight-year-old mother and Evangelical Christian named Mary, believes America has a race problem, "But it is frustrating when 'Oh, this is black heritage month, and this is Asian awareness and this is' Well when is there a basic white month? Well, if you have a chance to go to Boston where there is a big black population, why would you want to go to Vermont and be the only black student? But they were pushing affirmative action to increase the diversity. It's a frustration." (Emerson & Smith, 2000, p. 70) Some, like the Ku Klux Klan and the Skinheads, are more extreme, supporting segregation, slavery, and black church burnings. While race is important to some Evangelicals, issues such as the

decline of morality, family values, crime, and religious education for children are often more important.

An example of the pursuit of racial equality and the appreciation of different cultures is an ethnic-diversity embracement program pursued by the Evangelical Christian Emmanuel Bible College. Emmanuel Bible College has pursued a program that embraces many ethnicities. (Christerson, Edwards, & Emerson 2005) The college is considered to be individualistic and is an example in favor of those who argue that people become very much committed to racial justice and understanding when it is argued that the Bible speaks in favor of racial justice and understanding. The program includes “retreats, alternative chapels, clubs, and courses, to provide a forum in which to discuss and process racial issues that affect the campus and the wider society.” (Christerson, Edwards, & Emerson 2005, p. 144) Many students who were racial minorities said these programs were a great experience. The college argues that racial equality is best addressed through a color-blind philosophy that ignores differences in race and culture and stresses the common bond of being fellow Christians.

Regardless of whether a congregation is classified as interracial, homogenous, or no congregation, whites in the congregation give the same average response to the statement, “I support affirmative action policies.” (Emerson & Woo 2006, p. 128) The average response is between weak support and “neither agree nor disagree.” Non-whites show the same average support across congregations but are significantly more likely to support affirmative action. Historical scholars state that regardless of attitudes about race, whites are generally very resistant to government programs, such as affirmative action, that change the economy. Individuals such as Malcolm X charged

whites with refusing to support policies that give up power, such as affirmative action. Indeed, whites do not appear to change their positions on affirmative action when interracial contact is increased.

The Black Church is not unique in its merging of religion and ethnicity: the Korean American Christian community, Muslims from the Middle East and South Asia, and Sikhs from India have religious cultures similar to that of Black Protestants. (Putnam & Campbell 2010, chapter 9) Furthermore, churches such as the Mount Olivet Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, a “mega-church” with six thousand attending Sunday morning, merge religion and ethnicity. The Mount Olivet Lutheran Church is distinctively Swedish. Our Savior Lutheran in Houston is a very conservative church attended by many Germans.

The Black Church shares much with white evangelicals. (Putnam & Campbell 2010, chapter 9) The question can seriously be raised as to whether ethnicity trumps religion in this case. In measure after measure (attending church at least once a week, religion being important in daily life, religion being important for personal decisions, religion being an important part of one’s identity, reading the Bible, discussing religion, personal prayer), Black Protestants and evangelical Protestants show great similarities; there are some exceptions showing Black Protestants are more devout. Both groups are more devout than mainline Protestants. (Putnam & Campbell 2010)

Since around the mid-1980s, black college graduates have been attending church at increasing rates. (Putnam & Campbell 2010, chapter 9) The trend in which higher levels of education correlate with less orthodox beliefs is not present in Black

Protestants. The beliefs of Black Protestants (biblical literalism, the notion that the world will end soon, creationism) make them the most fundamentalist group in the United States.

The split between the Black Church and evangelicals was partly caused by common evangelical attitudes toward slavery. (Putnam & Campbell 2010, chapter 9) For example, many evangelicals who opposed slavery none the less supported racial segregation, and the Black Church was turned off by these policies. Once again Protestantism led to a great split and a rebellion against the religious orthodoxy of the time. The sentiments of the anti-slavery movement continue today, with Black Protestants combining their religion with politics more so than any other group, including evangelical Christians. While not all Black Protestants participated in the civil rights movement, black clergy customarily preached not acceptance of the next life but participation in this one. Black activism in the 1960's was indeed greatly supported by religion in the minds of many. Black churches would gather money, seek out volunteers, and plan political strategy. Many Black Protestants were inspired by tales of the escape by Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Black Protestants tend to support the Democratic Party, even more so than white evangelicals support the Republican Party.

Participation in church may actually enhance racial equality, as participants may find friends of a different race there. (Putnam & Campbell 2010, chapter 9) There is a strong linkage to having at least one friend from a different race if one attends a racially diverse congregation. Although, having a friend of another race may not necessarily change one's attitudes about race.

In the 1950s, prior to the civil rights movement, the content of churches with black congregations was centered on helping members prepare for the next life. (Billingsley 1999, p. 3) The theme was to survive the “evil” encounters and return home where one would be free from suffering. Such churches were the product of events occurring after the emancipation of slaves and in fact had much to do with slavery as well. During the period of slavery, black slaves would often meet in churches for singing, discussions, and prayer. Slaves would often be taught to hate their masters, and for this reason would often be severely punished. Many slaves were hunted down by militia forces and dealt with cruelty by the masters: floggings, beatings, and lacerations were common. Nonetheless, such cruelty more often galvanized the slaves into continuing their religion rather than abandoning it. One individual, Reverend Andrew Bryan, announced after a brutal beating, “If you would stop me from preaching, cut off my head! For I am willing not only to be whipped, but would freely suffer death for the cause of the Lord Jesus.” (Billingsley 1999, p. 16) Those who beat Bryan walked away after his statement.

Nowadays, many black churches contend that this era, in which personal salvation is stressed, is over: we must now look also towards social salvation. (Billingsley 1999, p. 87) Such churches echo the conflict between the social gospel of Mainline Protestants and the pursuit of personal salvation of Evangelical Christians with the former being favored. In the 1980s, many black churches began to try to repair the lives of members in terms of social, economic, and political factors. Thus began a new era in which problems within the black community would be addressed, as opposed to

the standard of the civil rights era in which problems which were addressed were external to the black community.

The Black Church is meant to include any black Christian. (Lincoln & Mamiya 1990, p. 1) The Black Church may said to have originated in the days of slavery, in which black people were close to the religions of the masters. While black Christians and white Christians both shared the same belief structure, different parts of the beliefs were emphasized. For example, the experience Jesus had with suffering and humiliation but eventually triumph is popular among black Christians who identify with oppression. Black Christians also stress greater importance on the equality implied by Biblical references to the children of God. References to freedom are also popular. Indeed, freedom has always been popular among black Christians since the days of slavery and remains popular today, although freedom after slavery usually means rights such as to employment or education. Nowadays, freedom means political, economic, or social justice. Such freedom demands that blacks not be made to make any compromise in their relationship with God. Black Christians stress that God demands freedom because all human beings were made in God's image. Many white priests and the like have argued against this conclusion.

The ideas of the Black Church in modern times are based largely on the ideas that came about during the 1950s and 1960s. (Cone 1984, p. 5) One may say that modern black theology is inseparable from the civil rights movement. Three key thinkers that have been associated with the religion among blacks during this period are Martin Luther King, Joseph Washington, and Malcolm X.

Unlike similar religious movements in Europe, black theology did not come from the educational establishment. (Cone 1984) Indeed, most early contributors to black theology did not hold advanced degrees in academia. Black theology came from the struggle for racial equality and justice, which started in black churches and became identified with civil rights organizations. This side of black theology is usually associated with Martin Luther King.

Joseph Washington contended that there was a unique black culture and black religion. (Cone 1984) Washington upset the standard views of this time because the general view was that the relationship of American blacks with African culture was destroyed by slavery so black culture would merely adopt the values of the West. Washington was displeased with the black religion of his time. Washington argued that since black churches have been excluded from white churches, black churches could never be genuine Christian churches. Washington said, "Negro congregations are not churches but religious societies." (Cone 1984, p. 9) Washington blamed white Christians exclusively for this situation. Washington was met with approval from whites but was strongly denounced by black churches. Much of black theology came about trying to refute Washington, specifically the claim that black churches could not be in touch with God was one very disturbing to black churches. The black churches contended, furthermore, that Washington was wrong in his belief that the Christian gospel was unrelated to a struggle for social justice. The black churches countered Washington by saying that in fact black churches and not white ones were truly in touch with God because black churches were in touch with the struggle for justice. Black

theologians said that white churches were hypocritical because they preached love but did nothing about it.

Another movement highly influential among black theology is the Black Power movement, often associated with Malcolm X. (Cone 1984) After the August 1963 March on Washington and riots in American ghettos, more and more blacks began to turn to black nationalism. Malcolm X presented a pessimistic view of America as a nightmare, and many blacks found this view compelling. After Malcolm X's assassination, civil rights activists replaced the term "integration" with "black power." The implication is that only with the pursuit of power could blacks obtain equality and justice. Stokely Carmichael cheered the slogan at the "march against fear" in Mississippi. Radical black activists like Carmichael broke with King, who was unconditionally committed to nonviolence. White Christians, especially priests, called upon blacks to denounce the Black Power movement as un-Christian. Nonetheless, many black leaders believed it was time to separate white religion from black religion, emphasizing in the latter a celebration of African cultural heritage and a struggle for justice.

Some ideas important to liberals include women's rights, income equality, and racial issues. (Putnam & Campbell 2010, chapter 9) Turning to racial issues within Protestantism, we may first consider Protestant institutions that have a strong ethnic basis such as those in the Black Church. We ought to keep in mind that America in recent decades has become more and more ethnically diverse. Indeed, U.S. Census Bureau projections anticipate that minorities will be a majority in terms of population by 2042. Furthermore, most people, according to the data from Putnam and Campbell's *American Grace*, who attend church do so in congregations which consist mainly of

people of the same ethnic group. (Putnam & Campbell 2010, chapter 9) One exception is the recent boom in Latino attendance at Catholic churches linked to increased immigration by Latinos.

One may charge religion with racism. (Putnam & Campbell 2010, chapter 9) Many assert that religion comes with a sabotage of intellectual integrity that leads to racist thought and behavior. Such people often point to warmongering attitudes throughout history against various ethnic groups as the fault of religion. Indeed, religion in general has often been associated with the political right. However, the data shows that in the last thirty years attitudes have changed both amongst religious and non-religious individuals when it comes to racial equality and gender equality.

The decisive split between liberalism and conservatism can, in the setting of the debate over Protestantism, be viewed in terms of a debate between those who stress the social gospel aspect of Protestantism and those who stress the individual salvation aspect of Protestantism. One can call the former Mainline Protestants and the latter Evangelical Christians. It seems a safe assumption to call the former liberal and the latter conservative, but there are many interesting arguments against this assumption.

It is interesting that the Black Church has much in common with Evangelical Christians; some say the Black Church is even more fundamentalist than Evangelical Christian churches. However, the Black Church identifies itself with liberalism and the Democratic Party and here does not follow the conservative Republican tilt of a great many Evangelical Christians. Nonetheless, there is a schism in the Black Church between the non-violent crowd of Martin Luther King and those in the black power

movement, who are often more aggressive about human rights violations and believe in fighting violence with violence.

So, that Jesus taught a message of compassion is not denied by the Evangelical Christian churches. However, we find evidence of attitudes which may be classified as in the conservative ideology common among Evangelicals. Evangelicals not only have a different worldview than Mainline Protestants regarding the situation of race today but also have a different priority for issues of race, putting the issue behind such other conservative ideas like family values.

6. White Supremacist Christian Movements

We may now take interest in the more extreme cultures in the race debate. Specifically, we will turn away from the social gospel Protestants and the Protestant fundamentalists to look at white supremacist movements. We hope to gather a better understanding of the situation by examining the Christian Identity movement in detail.

One example of a deviant Christian sect is the Christian Identity movement. (Barkun 1997) The sect can clearly be taken as a religious movement that is both racist and right-wing. Christian Identity organizations include Aryan Nations, the Order, and Posse Comitatus. Such movements take right-wing attitudes to the point of crime and have been associated with killing federal marshals and the Oklahoma City Bombing.

The Christian Identity movement originates with British-Israelism, though at a certain point Christian Identity split with British-Israelism. (Barkun 1997, p. 3) British-Israelism originated amongst Victorian Protestants in England and claimed British people were descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel. At first glance, there are two great differences between British-Israelism and the Christian Identity movement. For one, British-Israelism viewed Jews as brothers, as fellow Israelites. Christian Identity movements are highly anti-Semitic, usually attributing much of the evil of the world to a Jewish conspiracy. Secondly, British-Israelism was a strong supporter of government institutions. Christian Identity movements time and again have challenged the authority of the federal government.

Like individuals of other movements, Christian Identity followers vary in the intensity of religious conviction. (Barkun 1997) Most Christian Identity followers do not actively pursue their ideology to the extent of violent crime, as some have done who seek to bring about a violent revolution against the U.S. government or participate in paramilitary communes. Some actions pursued by Christian Identity members, such as engaging in political campaigns, are considered legal.

One of the goals of Christian Identity adherents is to make American law conform to the Bible. (Barkun 1997) Christian Identity has defined a view about the end of history, an apocalyptic view. This end of history is strongly linked to racism and anti-Semitism. Nonetheless, Christian Identity is not the same thing as the New Christian Right, exemplified by Jerry Falwell. Indeed, the two movements are at odds on many points. The New Christian Right, for example, disdains racism and anti-Semitism.

Christian Identity has brought together the neo-Nazis and the Klansmen, groups who were divided previously. (Burlein 2002) The movement began to bring attention to itself with the Oklahoma City Bombing. One famous Christian Identity member was Eric Rudolph, who bombed an abortion clinic and a gay bar.

Independent groups of people sponsor the Christian Identity movement through media such as newsletters, periodicals, computer bulletin boards, and radio broadcasts. (Burlein 2002, p. 34) These groups are quite often built around charismatic leaders who act as pastors and theologians as well as playing other roles.

The amount of Christian Identity believers in America is somewhere between 10,000 and 30,000. (Burlein 2002, p. 34) Members tend to be white, middle class, and college-educated. Members also tend to have moved to small towns. The notion that members join such extremist movements because of social isolation has proved to be a myth. According to James Aho, "My research indicates that the most important of those community ties is membership in independent fundamentalist, Baptist or Presbyterian congregations." (Burlein 2002, p.35) Aho also claims that most extremist members learned their political beliefs as children. (Burlein 2002, p.35) None the less, the Christian Identity movement and the Protestant fundamentalist movement are quite hostile to each other.

In an alternative perspective, Abby Ferber has concluded that, in terms of white supremacy, "It all comes down to sexuality." (Ferber 1998, p. 85) In other words, the white supremacist take on interracial sexuality is the dominant factor in white supremacist movements. According to *The Thunderbolt*, "A famous U.S. Senator once

stated that all our armies, cities and machines could be destroyed—and we could rebuild. But he went on to say that the White Christian Race could never be restored if it were destroyed through racial mongrelization.” (Ferber 1998, p. 85)

Furthermore, such sexual psychology can be traced to notions of gender. (Ferber 1998) White supremacists have again and again gone after feminists on the grounds that feminism questions gender stratification and wants to make men and women the same. White supremacists have charged feminism with being a tool of the system to divide the white race against itself.

In *The Turner Diaries*, a famous fictitious work with racist messages, feminism is described as leading to a state in which the Supreme Court rules that any law making rape a crime is unconstitutional because these laws imply a legal difference between men and women. (Ferber 1998, p. 93) In the book, the feminist movement backfires against feminists, and now gangs of Black criminals hang around school playgrounds where rape has now become a sport.

However, there is a rough ideology that Christian Identity members tend to follow. (Kaplan 1997) For example, Christian Identity ideologues use the book of Genesis to label the Jews “Satan’s Kids.” According to the interpretation of Christian Identity adherents, the serpent Satan in the book of Genesis seduced Eve. Eve thereby gave birth to two children. One, Abel, was a good Aryan whose father was Adam. Another, Cain, was the son of Satan. Cain is thought to be the ancestor to all Jews; therefore, the Jews are said to have since the time of Cain carried out a ceaseless conspiracy against those descended from Adam. This conspiracy is thought to have

now almost completely controlled the earth. For instance, the Zionist Occupation Government is thought to control all American politics. The Christian Identity believer thereby must live a life of struggle and oppression until the Day of Judgment when God will take vengeance on the Jews.

Often two key passages from the book of Revelations are cited to justify anti-Semitism. (Kaplan 1997, p. 2) One reads “I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich! I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.” (Revelations 2:9) The passage is linked with “I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars—I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you.” (Revelations 3:9)

Various subfamilies of Protestantism have tendencies to fall into the categories Mainline Protestant or Evangelical Christian. In turn, these categories have certain general ideas related to race. Mainline Protestant subfamilies generally specifically give support for affirmative action, while Evangelical Christian subfamilies generally remain silent on the issue. The issue of race is an intricate one, involving the legacy of slavery, the Black Church, and white supremacy within Christianity.

One should not make a study of Christianity while avoiding the Bible. We have previously turned to the history of Protestantism and data collected from contemporary churches in examining liberalism and the issue of race in Protestantism. We now will turn to the Gospels, where I will make my case regarding liberalism and conservatism in the life of Jesus Christ.

PART 3. IS JESUS A LIBERAL OR A CONSERVATIVE, BASED ON THE GOSPELS?

One undertaking the project of the influence of liberalism among Protestants should not forget to analyze the thought of Jesus Christ. We shall see if statements from the Gospels support a case for liberalism or conservatism.

Mainline Protestants teach of a Jesus who inspired the world with values such as freedom, love, and equality. Furthermore, mainline Protestants believe that these values, when interpreted in a modern setting, lead to support for liberal positions such as abortion rights, affirmative action, and support for labor unions. My research shows that wherever this conception of Jesus came from, it did not come from the Gospels. Jesus, in modern terms, would be considered more fundamentalist than most Evangelical Christians. Firstly, Jesus's legitimacy for most of the Gospels comes from the performance of miracles and not wise or inspirational sayings. When Jesus Christ speaks, it is often hard to place his saying in the context of modern political issues. While some statements, which show Jesus is consistent with Evangelical Christianity, are quite clear, such as socially conservative positions on sexuality, most statements are debatable in terms of modern meanings. None the less, the rhetoric used by Jesus is more recognizable in modern Evangelical churches than in Mainline Protestant ones. Indeed, the best case one could make for the Mainline Protestant school of thought is arguing that Jesus's attacks on the rich support liberal values of economic equality; however, this argument is quite problematic.

Time and again in the New Testament, Jesus advocates the philosophy that followers should not acquire or hold excessive luxuries. Christ illustrates this point in the following famous passage:

“Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments, ‘Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.’” And he said to Him, “Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up.” Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, “One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property. And Jesus, looking around, said to His disciples, “How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!” The disciples were amazed at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

Mark 10:18-25

Now, such a passage can be interpreted to support fiscal liberalism. Perhaps the passage supports the belief that all who need anything in order to live are entitled to those things, paid for by the state, although Christ was arguing for the young man to give his property away willingly and not for increased taxation to support the poor. However, it is not clear if Christ here is a liberal or a Christian Socialist. Economic

equality is a legitimate liberal political position but also one that has been associated with regimes on the far left such as Red China.

Christ also reveals himself later with an attack on making profits from loans:

If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is *that* to you? Even sinners lend to sinners in order to receive back the same *amount*. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil *men*.

Luke 6:34-35

If Christ is a socialist, then is it fair to place him more in one camp of the Mainline Protestant versus Evangelical Christian debate than in another? Since the Protestant fundamentalist movement starting in the 1970s and exemplified by Evangelical Christian hero Ronald Reagan, Christians have taken sides with economic inequality and certainly shy away from absolute economic equality. Ronald Reagan may be considered a competitor with Jesus in this regard. Evangelical Christians are greatly fond both of Jesus Christ and of Ronald Reagan. However, Jesus Christ argued for economic equality and Reagan for economic inequality. However, to call Jesus here a Mainline Protestant because they are as part of the mainstream left closer to socialism is also problematic.

There is one more issue on which debatably Christ may be put in the Mainline Protestant camp: the issue of non-violence. Christ is exemplified by his non-violent attitudes in the Biblical passages "But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but

whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.” (Matthew 5:39) The morality upheld by the doctrine of non-violence reflects a humility that may manifest itself in an ascetic care for the poor and the victims of racism. One may reiterate the points of the two camps relating to the issue of violence in obtaining racial equality: one camp believes that all violence is wrong, even if said violence is committed in the process of fighting illegitimate violence, while another camp believes violence in fighting oppression is justified, often drawing an analogy to how law is a legitimate method of combatting oppression. As you may recall from the discussion on the Black Church, many liberals, such as those who believe in Martin Luther King, believe non-violence is a liberal tenet. However, you may also recall that many dissented with this view. Black power supporters such as Malcolm X argued that such non-violent philosophy encourages oppression and upheld slavery by forbidding black slaves from doing violence to violent masters. Christ’s views on non-violence are relevant to the discussion of economic and racial equality because Christ is implying that advances in economic and racial equality, if desirable, should be made with non-violent means such as those employed by Martin Luther King. Christ upheld the non-violent philosophy in the Biblical passages saying:

Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you. “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”

Matthew 5:41-44

Evangelical teachings are consistent with the rhetoric and acts Christ used in the Gospels. Indeed, once again it may seem unfair to classify many Evangelical Christians as being as conservative as Christ is in the Gospels. Christ's rhetoric of humility towards God and Jesus and acts such as miracles would, in today's world, be considered more similar to the ceremonies at Evangelical churches. Christ contends that one must be a slave to God, "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth." (Matthew 6:24) Such rhetoric would be unfounded at most Mainline Protestant churches. Christ is saying that economic equality should be upheld by giving away one's possessions to the poor so as not to be a slave to wealth.

Christ requires that one put religion even above the family:

And a man's enemies will be the members of his household. "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

Matthew 10:36-38

In this case, Jesus is attacking the family but not to destroy the idea of "family values" upheld by many conservatives. Here the family is portrayed as an opponent of faith and not an upholder of faith. Once again intolerance for the ways of others may be seen as coinciding with positions against equal economic welfare. If someone violates one of Christ's strong commandments, he is put into a different class in which punishments such as Hell may be given. It is questionable whether Christ upholds

economic equality for those who separate from the teachings of Jesus in such a manner.

Humility before Jesus is also stressed by those whom Jesus performs miracles for: “And a leper came to Jesus, beseeching Him and falling on his knees before Him, and saying, ‘If You are willing, You can make me clean.’ Moved with compassion, Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, ‘I am willing; be cleansed.’” (Mark 1:40-41) The type of humility towards Jesus practiced by those seeking miracles is one that would irritate a great many secularists and atheists. The moral attitude reveals a position favoring economic equality as long as one is humble before Jesus. If one practices self-restraint through such moral behavior, then it is implied that economic resources will be distributed equally in the social realm by following this behavior to the logical conclusion.

Evangelical teachings are also consistent with Jesus’s commandments which uphold conservative values. Such conservative values imply a humility that would inspire one to donate to others to support economic equality. One commandment seems to dictate that one is not to care greatly for this life:

“Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap; for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth. But keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

Luke 21:34-36

Conservative Christian tradition is consistent with Jesus's statements regarding war. Christ upholds the idea of a just war: "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword." (Matthew 10:34) Christ again upholds the idea of tolerance for war on divine grounds in the passages, "When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be frightened; *those things* must take place; but *that is* not yet the end." (Mark 13:7)

Jesus espouses virtues such as humility or equality. For example, Christ contends, "Do not judge so that you will not be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you." (Matthew 7:1-2) One interpretation of Jesus's sayings here is that Jesus is supporting liberalism by supporting tolerance for all individuals. However, again there is the argument that tolerance for all would lead to authoritarianism, as Malcolm X made when he argued against slaves having tolerance for the masters and modern analogies to such. Jesus Christ says, "I am not judging anyone." (John 8:15) Another interpretation is that Jesus is advocating restraint and humility, manifesting in care for others in the form of economic and racial equality.

Jesus continues with a message of humility, "Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 6:1) On one hand, Jesus is preaching a liberal virtue of humbly not taking credit for one's good deeds. On the other hand, the virtue is something many Evangelical Christians could agree with also. Jesus also preaches equality, "In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 7:12) Here again one could say

Jesus is teaching liberalism via the virtue of equality such as in economic or racial matters. However, we again have the argument concerning cases of slaves having tolerance for the masters. If everyone is forgiven his or her sins, then one wonders where the room is for justice, a virtue espoused by many liberals. How can the modern legal system exist if we never judge anyone? Indeed, values such as equality and humility can often prove problematic and are not necessarily liberal values. We must realize that there are many different philosophies under the name liberalism. Some liberals, granted, will stick to the idea that equality and humility are liberal values here. However, some, such as those inspired by the Black Power movement, would disagree. These liberals would argue that equality can turn on liberalism; for example, if everyone is forgiven his sins, then criminals will go without earthly punishment – such policy would encourage violence and oppression, certainly something not appealing to genuine liberals.

Jesus discusses the law of the Old Testament and its edicts on behavior. If these ideas on Old Testament law are taken as indicative of a general legal philosophy, then Jesus argues that the law is a good thing but that fundamental legal principles such as justice and mercy are also important:

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.

Matthew 23:23

Jesus's philosophy is in the middle of two camps of legal thought. One camp argues that the law is important in and of itself, usually because it is important to establish order at all costs. Another, exemplified by civil disobedience practitioners such as Henry David Thoreau and Martin Luther King, argues that only just laws need to be obeyed. By so doing, Jesus puts forth a legal philosophy that many Mainline Protestants as well as many Evangelical Christians would agree with. Jesus continues:

Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of these commandments, and teaches others *to do* the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:17-19

Jesus argues here that the law must be unconditionally obeyed and those who break the law will be considered least "in relation to the kingdom of heavens." The argument is very conservative and could be used to condemn those who practiced civil disobedience, for instance during the civil rights movement, as well as many freedom fighters. So, Jesus is agreeing with the spirit of economic and racial equality argued by the practitioners of civil disobedience but also disagreeing with the means of achieving such equality, namely breaking the law, however unjust.

It is also noteworthy to mention Jesus's remarks on slavery. Race did not exist as a concept at the time of the Gospels. However, Jesus's attitudes toward slavery can be

seen as a parallel to racial issues and affirmative action. In a stunning quote, we find Jesus misses an opportunity to condemn slavery:

But the centurion said, "Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does *it*." Now when Jesus heard *this*, He marveled and said to those who were following, "Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel."

Matthew 8:8-10

In this quote, Jesus encounters a man who owns a slave. However, Jesus completely misses the opportunity to condemn the man and slavery by saying, for example, "This man is a sinner because he owns a slave." Not only does Christ miss the opportunity to condemn slavery, Christ indeed compliments the man as being the most faithful man in all Israel. Had Christ truly had strong views against slavery, it is doubtful there would not have been a condemnation. If Christ does not have strong views against slavery, it is hard to argue that Jesus would have supported affirmative action. Jesus also says, "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master." (Matthew 10:24) So, Jesus is going along with the idea that slaves cannot be superior to their masters. However, perhaps Jesus was saying that slaves and masters are equal, advocating equality.

One can hope that the analysis of the life and thoughts of Jesus Christ has shown light on the issue of liberalism versus conservatism in the Protestant tradition.

One may say that the life and thoughts of Jesus Christ are the ultimate authority in whether liberalism or conservatism in Protestantism is legitimate.

The case for Mainline Protestants was made by some interpretations of Christ's views on economics, especially his support of economic equality so that all luxury resources are instead given to those in need. Serious questions have arisen, however, as to whether Christ was abandoning capitalism. No absolutely definitive answer can be given as the sayings of Christ are hard to place in a modern context, but Christ seems to be supporting absolute economic equality, which may be a liberal political position but also is often associated with communists. The doctrine of non-violence, exemplified in the twentieth-century by Martin Luther King, is also an argument some argue is evidence that Jesus was liberal. However, individuals such as those in the Black Power movement disagree, arguing that non-violence leads to authoritarian oppression such as in teaching slaves to be non-violent towards the masters or in teaching victims to only engage in non-violent methods when attempting to achieve economic and racial equality. Finally, it is argued that Christ's praise of virtues such as equality and humility mean that Christ was a liberal. However, equality and humility are not necessarily liberal virtues.

The case for Evangelical Christians is made, for example, by the practices of Jesus such as his performance of miracles. The legitimacy of Jesus Christ also comes from his claim that he was one with God and that only through Jesus could one come bring oneself to God. Such rhetoric is more often found in the churches of Evangelical Christians such as the Pentecostals than in the churches of Mainline Protestants. Also, an ascetic life of humble self-sacrifice is praised that is more in line with the Evangelical

Christian side than with what one normally expects from Mainline Protestants. Indeed, such a life brings to mind the doctrine of individual salvation. Christ also espoused the cause of the just war, more often supported by conservatives than by liberals as seen in modern times in the debate over the war in Iraq.

Once again we must realize there are many philosophies under the name liberalism. Many would say that supporting a just war is a legitimate liberal argument. Many liberals supported the war in Iraq, for instance. None the less, in terms of pacifistic liberal philosophy, the idea of a just war is associated with conservatives.

The debate, my research shows, seems to point to Christ being more conservative than not. Statements reflecting conservative positions are clearer than those argued to be liberal. The research is enlightening in its take on one of history's most important social movements.

7. Conclusion

I undertook this project because I was intrigued by the notion of liberal Protestantism. The idea that religion is necessarily conservative and atheism liberal seemed to me to be one worthy of attack. I thereby came across the idea of investigating liberal Protestantism. The investigation of course raises the question of whether or not liberal Protestantism does exist. Perhaps those who equate Protestantism with conservatism are right. I became determined to investigate liberalism

in the time of the founding of various Protestant denominations. Since liberalism was not a concept for most of the periods covered, I looked for connections between early Protestant thought and liberal ideals such as equality and secularism.

I added to my analysis a summary of various agendas, organized by denomination. My primary task was to look at issues of racial equality, with other issues being in the background. My research, based on the webpages of various denominations, showed that churches with higher percentage of Mainline Protestants were quite likely to advertise support for affirmative action. Churches with a higher percentage of Evangelical Christians were more likely to remain silent on the issue of affirmative action. Interestingly, many churches, including the conservative Pentecostals, supported gay rights.

I finally sought to analyze the Gospels, the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. I was not impressed by those who claimed Jesus Christ would be a modern liberal. My thoughts, based on what I could gather about Christ's ideas on ideas such a war and family values, were that Christ belonged strongly in the conservative camp.

Protestantism has been one of the most influential social movements in human history. From the time of Martin Luther, Protestants attacked the priesthood and founded movements against war and for economic equality. These movements upheld the three pillars of liberalism: secularism, democracy, and economic equality. Over time, these movements influenced greatly the civil rights movement of the 1960's with the attempts to bring equality to the races and the sexes. Protestantism eventually split into

two camps: the social gospel or Mainline Protestant camp and the individual salvation or Evangelical Christian camp.

The social gospel philosophy of Protestantism argues that Jesus was a man of compassion who taught one to love one's neighbor and uphold values such as freedom and equality. Such values, applied today, argue for equality of the sexes and races and for economic equality. It was hard to find support for this philosophy in the Gospels, though the philosophy was probably around at the time of Martin Luther.

The Evangelical Christians argue for the doctrine of individual salvation. In other words, it is not important to be a good Christian to pursue help and justice for others in society. Rather, to be a good Christian it is important to personally follow the Bible and have a good personal relationship with God. Such individual salvation Christians were attacked as preachers of complacency amongst the slaves and for teaching complacency amongst the victims of racism during the civil rights era.

Neither the Mainline Protestants nor the Evangelical Christians could be considered racist as a whole. None the less, some Protestants such as the followers of Christian Identity are very racist.

The Black Church is an important movement within Protestantism that many members feel is important especially because of support for causes like civil rights. The Black Church is still influential in causes such as affirmative action today. The Black Church is sometimes called more fundamentalist than Evangelical Christians.

The study of Protestantism to settle the issue of liberalism versus conservatism in the Protestant movement is a large one. To attempt to resolve the issue is an ambitious goal. I hope here in my paper I have made a contribution to the debate.

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