

Bridging Religion and Politics: The Impact of Providential Religious Beliefs on Political Activity

Rebecca A. Glazier

University of Arkansas at Little Rock

Abstract: Past research shows that religious beliefs can shape political activity. Yet current literature leaves open many questions about the mechanisms at work. I point to the key role of a particular religious belief found across denominations: providentiality, or the belief that God has a plan that humans can further. When these beliefs are connected to politics, providential believers are likely to be active and dedicated participators. I test this notion using survey data collected during the 2012 election campaign from congregants in Little Rock, Arkansas. In general, providential believers are less likely than their non-providential counterparts to participate in politics. However, when providential believers report hearing political sermons from their clergy, they are significantly more likely to participate. These findings illustrate one pathway by which religious beliefs can influence politics: through a cue that links providentiality and politics.

INTRODUCTION

Religion influences political activity in a variety of ways — from the impact of religious tradition on vote choice (Layman 2001; Guth et al. 2006) to the correlation between church attendance and civic skills (Verba and Nie 1972; Jones-Correa and Leal 2001; Lasswell 1936, Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Additionally, recent scholarship demonstrates that individual’s religious beliefs can influence their political behavior: from foreign policy attitudes (Djupe and Calfano 2013; Glazier 2013) to charitable giving (Lunn, Klay, and Douglass 2001) to opinions on the role of government (Baylor 2011).

Address correspondence and reprint requests to: Rebecca A. Glazier, Department of Political Science, Stabler Hall 603, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, 2801 South University Avenue, Little Rock, AR 72204-1099. E-mail: raglazier@ualr.edu

Yet, scholars do not have a clear idea of the mechanisms by which religious belief influences political behavior. Understanding the link between the two is challenging for many reasons, but key among these is the difficulty of constructing and deploying useful survey measures. Most religious belief measures are either too complex or too specific to regularly include in surveys (e.g., Barker, Hurwitz, and Nelson 2008; Driskell, Embry, and Lyon 2008), or there is not a clear causal mechanism driving their inclusion (Wielhouwer 2009), or both. As a result, we lack a solid understanding of the specific lines of influence that might lead religious beliefs to influence political behavior. This problem is a serious one, not only for political scientists interested in religion but, indeed, for political scientists who want to know more about the factors that drive political behavior more broadly.

Toward the aim of addressing this problem, I examine the path by which a specific type of religious beliefs — providentiality — shape political behavior. Providential believers are those who believe, first, that God has a plan and, second, that they can help to bring it about. Both components are essential to understanding how providential beliefs might matter for politics and are described in more detail below. Religious believers from many backgrounds and traditions are providential, but they may not always see their providential beliefs as relevant for politics. That is, individuals may believe that God has a plan that they can know and facilitate, but they may not see politics as part of that plan. A religiously-framed political cue can potentially change that — providing the link that can lead to a shift in political behavior. Here, I examine the providential religious beliefs and political activities of congregants in Little Rock, Arkansas during the 2012 presidential election campaign. I hypothesize that the effect of providential religious beliefs on political activity will be felt most strongly when clergy cues establish a bridge to connect religion and politics.

RELIGION AND POLITICAL ACTIVITY

The research on political activity is guided by the seminal work of Verba, Scholzman, and Brady (1995), who emphasize resources, recruitment, and motivation as key contributors to political activity. They and others (e.g., Peterson 1992) argue that the primary impact of religion is indirect and felt through church attendance — church attenders learn civic skills by leading meetings, organizing events, recruiting volunteers, and so on (Verba and

Nie 1972; Jones-Correa and Leal 2001) and those skills then “spill over” into politics (Peterson 1990).¹ Additionally, those who attend church regularly are more likely to be targets of mobilization efforts (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993, 166-167; Guth et al. 2002) and are politically socialized at church (e.g., Wald, Owen, and Hill 1988; 1990; Huckfeldt, Plutzer, and Sprague 1993; Harris 1994), providing opportunities for religion to contribute to recruitment and thereby boost political activity. Thus, it comes as no surprise that attending church is positively correlated with political activity; simply put, church life equips people for political engagement (Smidt 1999; 2003b; Lasswell 1936).

Although there is a strong research tradition in this field, the story of religion’s influence on political activity remains incomplete. For instance, Djupe and Grant (2001) find that, although church attenders do develop civic skills, there is no natural spill over to political activity; instead, “some cognitive or social process must occur before members apply church-gained skills to political endeavors” (Djupe and Gilbert 2009, 179). Similarly, Schwadel (2005) find that simply attending church “does not seem to supply the knowledge or skills that translate into secular organizational activity” (Schwadel, 2005, 167). The gap in the story of religion’s influence on political activity can potentially be filled by an improved understanding of the role of religious beliefs.

Religion matters for politics in part because it provides believers with a worldview, which in turn helps them make sense of political events, messages, and actions (Wielhouwer 2009, 402). Thus, religion can mobilize — or demobilize — believers for political activity. For instance, Quinley (1974) finds that religious believers with an “otherworldly” orientation — meaning they are more concerned with spiritual salvation than temporal matters — are less likely to be politically active. The “liberation theology” more common in Black churches (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990; Sernett 1991), on the other hand, may affect the political activity of congregations in both amount and kind (Harris 1994; McDaniel 2004), including increasing political efficacy (Calhoun-Brown 1996). Other research on religious belief (e.g., Schwadel 2005; Djupe and Neiheisel 2012) has focused on the relatively narrow issue of Biblical literalism, which is negatively associated with political activity.

Recent research by Driskell and colleagues draws on data from the Baylor Religion Study to further demonstrate the importance of religious beliefs when it comes to understanding political activity (Driskell, Embry, and Lyon 2008; Driskell and Lyon 2011; Driskell, Lyon, and Embry 2008). Operationalizing religious beliefs in part by asking respondents

about prayer topics, Driskell and colleagues find that beliefs have a greater impact on political activity than church attendance (Driskell, Lyon, and Embry 2008), that people who pray about general world concerns are more likely to be politically active, and that people who believe that “God is directly involved in world affairs” are less likely to be politically active (Driskell, Embry, and Lyon 2008).

In a subfield that has plenty of data but fewer causal explanations, beliefs form a critical link between the religious realm and the political, with effects that are more direct and immediate (Wald and Smidt 1993, 32) compared to other religious measures (Page and Bouton 2006). Better understanding the relationship between religious beliefs and political activity is thus an essential next step for the literature. I propose that examining providential religious beliefs is one way to move this research agenda forward.

Providential Religious Beliefs

Providential believers share two key characteristics: they believe God has a plan and they believe they can contribute to bringing that plan about. Both components are necessary for understanding the beliefs measured here. People who believe that God has a plan, but that the plan is unknowable, or people who believe that God has a plan and carries it out without cognizant human help, would not be considered providential believers. The belief in a divinely-authored plan is politically important because it means there is some future end state that is — to the believer — inevitable. Thus, research on the political implications of relative socio-tropic time horizons, foremost the nearness of Biblically-foretold “end times,” indicates that those who hold such beliefs behave differently than those who don’t (Barker and Bearce 2013). But, importantly, the belief that God has a plan by itself is not sufficient to generate political activity. Believing God has a plan without believing people can contribute to bringing it about may lead, as in Barker and Bearce’s (2013) research, to believers’ not prioritizing carbon emission reduction or environmental protection — that is, to believers not engaging in politics to further God’s plan. Instead, God’s plan will come about whether or not they engage.

Thus, the belief that one can contribute to carrying out God’s plan is important because it indicates a potential willingness to engage in political activity. Theoretically speaking, providential believers may be more likely

than non-providential believers or non-believers generally to see a divine purpose in voting for a particular candidate, participating in a political action, or pursuing a specific policy (e.g., fighting terrorism, preserving the lives of unborn children, or promoting democracy). Both components — belief in God’s plan and belief that people can help bring it about — are included in the concept of providential beliefs discussed here.

Providentiality is thus measured here and elsewhere (Glazier 2013; 2014) through two survey questions: a five-point Likert agreement scale in response to the statement “God has a plan and I have a part to play in it,” and the question “Would you say your religion provides some guidance in your day-to-day life, quite a bit of guidance, or a great deal of guidance in your day-to-day life” (“religion really isn’t important to me” is also available as a response option).² In the data presented below, the Cronbach’s alpha of these two questions is 0.83. The two questions get at the two elements of providentiality that work together: the notion that there is a divine plan in place and turning to religion for guidance regarding what to do to facilitate that plan. Other surveys that have utilized these questions show similar alpha scores, ranging from 0.73 in a national survey conducted in 2012 to 0.81 in a national survey conducted in 2008 (Glazier 2013).³ Using the “God’s plan” and “religious guidance” questions together to measure providential beliefs is both theoretically and statistically justified and is the approach taken here.

This two-question battery is useful because it taps into a common religious belief — providentiality — that is broadly relevant and fairly simple to measure. Although the reviewed literature has found that religious belief measures have great explanatory power (e.g., Guth 2009; Guth et al. 2006; Bader and Froese 2005; Finke and Adamczyk 2008; Jelen 1994), most religious belief batteries are either too narrowly focused on denomination to make them broadly applicable and/or too lengthy for regular inclusion in surveys. For instance, the Baylor data utilized by Driskell and colleagues (Driskell, Embry, and Lyon 2008; Driskell, Lyon, and Embry 2008; Driskell and Lyon 2011) provides an incredible depth of survey research on religion from a representative national sample. However, the number and detail of the questions the survey asks about religion in general and religious belief in particular are rarely available to most survey researchers.

Although, theoretically, providential believers might be more likely to participate in politics, this is not necessarily the case in practice. In fact, Driskell, Embry, and Lyon (2008) find that agreement with a statement about God’s active role in world affairs is *negatively* associated with political participation. Just as national surveys demonstrate that many

Americans claim religion is very important to them but that they don't see the relevance of religion for politics (Ben-Nun Bloom and Arikan 2013), in a similar way, providential believers don't inherently link politics to their religious beliefs.

Building Bridges between Religion and Politics

In order for providential believers to see politics in a religious light, a bridge between the two must be built. We can think of this process in the classic political communication terms of “who says what to whom” (Lasswell 1936; Iyengar and Valentino 2000; Hovland, Janis, and Kelley 1953). A message (the “what”) is delivered to bridge religion and politics, but whether that bridge leads to real change depends on the credibility of the source (the “who”) and the characteristics of the receiver (the “whom”). Because religious teachings are internalized and interpreted differently by different congregants, even within the same congregation (Broughton 1978) the nature of the receiver's beliefs matters. Theoretically, if a providential and a non-providential believer receive the same bridging message from the same credible source, the providential believer will be more likely to act. Although, this bridging process is not a given. For instance, Ellis and Stimson (2012) find that a substantial minority of people are religiously and socially conservative, but do not connect those personal choices to their political choices and “end up taking moderate or left-of-center positions on a wide range of issues” (Ellis and Stimson 2012, 133).

A bridge between religion and politics can thus potentially impact political attitudes and behaviors, but who can construct such a bridge? Bridge-builders can range from oneself to the divine, but congregation leaders are uniquely equipped to build bridges. Clergy members tend to have more coherent worldviews (Crawford and Olson 2001; Guth et al. 1997; Beatty and Walter 1989), making them “particularly effective opinion leaders...[who can] frame grievances in a way that makes them politically relevant to parishioners” (Wald and Calhoun-Brown 2010, 115). For instance, when a congregation leader talks about a traditionally political topic during a Sunday sermon, he or she provides congregants with a religious lens through which to see the issue (Smidt 2003a; 2004; Schwadel 2005; Djupe and Gilbert 2003). Similarly, when a political leader uses religious language — particularly “coded” language targeted to a specific religious audience (Calfano and Djupe 2009;

Albertson 2014) the political is linked to the religious. Credibility matters (Lupia and McCubbins 1998) and, generally speaking, clergy have less credibility when they communicate political rather than religious messages (Djupe and Calfano 2009; Kohut et al. 2000), but, as “professional arbiters of values and absolute truths” (Olson 2009, 375), clergy pronouncements do carry a lot of weight, particularly among the faithful, for whom God — speaking through religious leaders — has the ultimate source credibility (Druckman 2001; Iyengar and Valentino 2000; Jelen 1994).

However, the influence of clergy messaging is limited by a number of factors based in receiver characteristics (Leege 1985; Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995; Djupe and Gilbert 2009), including members projecting their own views on to clergy (Krosnick 1989; Krosnick et al. 1993), defensive motivations in information processing (Chaiken, Giner-Sorolla, and Chen 1996), and confirmation bias (e.g., Munro et al. 2002). That being said, the research here is primarily concerned with the conditions under which providential believers engage in political activity, not the conditions under which clergy messages motivate political activity. Religious experience is often deeply personal (e.g., James 1985). Thus, what matters is not so much the *objective* content delivered by the congregation leader, but the *subjective* content received by the congregant. As Djupe and Gilbert (2009) argue, “People attending church bring with them their own predispositions and external life experiences, which can expand or attenuate the church’s ability to influence their opinions and behaviors” (Djupe and Gilbert 2009, 9). Holding providential beliefs changes the characteristics of the receiver — potentially making her more likely to hear and respond to a call to political action framed in terms of God’s will and delivered by someone she views as God’s servant.

Thus, the message that bridges providential religious beliefs and politics forms the critical causal link that leads the receiver to take providential considerations into account when making decisions in the political realm.⁴ In the research here, an individual providential believer’s perception of a political cue from a congregation leader provides the link. Without this link, believers don’t know what God’s will is on a particular political issue or whether it is even an issue of religious relevance. But once the connection is made, the political contributions of providential believers have the potential to be significant. Research indicates that tight-knit religious communities with strong commitments to their faith represent networks that can facilitate rapid, episodic mobilization, even if political activity among the membership is rare (Campbell 2004). One way to think of these believers is as “dry kindling” waiting to be mobilized

(Campbell and Monson 2007). It is the bridge between religion and politics that makes such mobilization possible.

When it comes to the potential influence of religion on political activity, we know that attending church provides the civic skills, socialization, and recruitment opportunities that can boost political activity. However, it is likely that only a portion of the story of religion's influence on political activity is told in the chapter on attendance. Research on religious beliefs has a lot of potential, but we don't yet know *how* religious beliefs lead to political activity. Some mechanisms are being explored through experimental research (e.g., Djupe and Calfano 2009; Djupe and Gwiasda 2010), but to fully answer the question, we need to know more about what the relationships between religious beliefs and political activity look like in practice and in context. It is possible that congregation leaders can play a role in the process of connecting powerful religious beliefs — here, specifically, providential religious beliefs — to politics. Sunday sermons are one opportunity for bridge construction. When these sermons encourage political involvement, providential believers who hear and remember them will respond with greater political activity. Thus, I hypothesize that the effect of providentiality on political activity will be greater in the presence of a perceived political cue from a congregation leader.

DATA AND METHODS

The Little Rock Congregation Study was conducted from May 1 through November 11, 2012, with the aim of collecting data from both congregation leaders and congregants. The study proceeded in three stages. First, a survey of congregation leaders was distributed via mail to a total viable sample of 409 churches within the city limits of Little Rock. A total of 66 surveys were returned completed, for a return rate of 16.14%. Second, from these 66, a representative sample of 15 religious organizations was selected for congregation leader interviews. A major goal of these interviews was to establish relationships with the congregation leaders that would facilitate data collection from congregants in the third stage, where five congregations were selected for participation in the congregation portion of the study. The five congregations selected included one from each of the following religious bodies: Mainline Protestant, Evangelical Protestant, Catholic, Black Protestant, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The first four religious bodies were chosen as they are the largest in Little Rock and the fifth was chosen

due to the prominence of candidate Mitt Romney's Mormon faith in the 2012 campaign.

Although these congregations represent the major religious traditions in Little Rock, they are by no means representative. Among other data limitations, the Black Protestant and Evangelical congregations surveyed were smaller than the Mainline Protestant, Catholic, and Mormon congregations,⁵ possibly obscuring religious tradition-specific relationships that may have been apparent in a larger sample. In addition to these five religious organizations, surveys were also distributed to a group of agnostics and atheists who meet each Sunday at the local library in Little Rock. Members of this congregation of sorts emphasize reason over faith and are unlikely to hold providential religious beliefs. This organization was chosen as an actively non-religious comparison group that retains some of the social and potentially political benefits common to congregations. For congruence, this organization is referred to as a congregation and designated as Atheists.

Surveys were distributed by hand in each congregation on the Sunday before the 2012 Presidential Election. The return envelopes for the surveys were prepaid with postage back to the PI's university address and respondents had the choice to mail them back or drop them in secure boxes on the way out of their church. There were a total of 968 surveys distributed and 374 returned, for a response rate of 38.63%.⁶ As a sample of convenience, data were only collected from those who attended church the Sunday the surveys were distributed.

Variables

Summaries and descriptions of the dependent and independent variables used in the analysis are presented in [Table 1](#) and the full question wording is provided in the Appendix.

The dependent variable in the models that follow is *Political Activity*, as measured by the sum of the same six political items used in the American National Election Study: donating to a political campaign, volunteering for a political campaign, displaying a campaign bumper sticker, persuading someone to vote, attending a political rally, and signing a petition, undertaken in the previous 12 months. I hypothesize that the effect of providentiality on *Political Activity* will increase when the respondent reports receiving a strong political activity cue.

Table 1. Variable names, question wording, and descriptive statistics

Variable Name	Question Wording	Descriptive Statistics
Political Activity	<p>In the past 12 months, have you:</p> <p>a) Tried to persuade someone to vote</p> <p>b) Donated money to a political candidate or campaign</p> <p>c) Worked as a volunteer for a political candidate or campaign</p> <p>d) Attended a political rally</p> <p>e) Stuck a campaign bumper sticker on your car or window</p> <p>f) Signed a petition</p> <p>No (1), Yes, once or twice (2), Yes, a few times (3) or Yes, many times (4) for each</p>	<p>Range: 6 to 24.</p> <p>Cronbach's alpha: 0.81</p> <p>Mean: 9.44, SD: 3.65</p>
High Activity Cue	<p>In the past year, how often have you heard sermons or homilies by the pastor/priest here that:</p> <p>a) Encouraged you to get involved in a <i>local</i> political cause or issue</p> <p>b) Encouraged you to get involved in a <i>national</i> political cause or issue</p> <p>c) Encouraged members to serve or volunteer in the community</p> <p>d) Urged you to register to vote?</p> <p>Never (1), Sometimes (2), Often (3)</p> <p>Total score coded (1) if in top 35% (9 or higher) and (0) otherwise.</p>	<p>Range: 0 to 1</p> <p>Mean: 0.36, SD: 0.48</p>
Providential	<p>Agreement with the statement God has a plan and I have a part to play in it, plus religious guidance question.</p>	<p>Range: 2 to 9</p> <p>Cronbach's alpha: 0.83</p> <p>Mean: 7.69; SD: 1.99</p>
Attendance	<p>How often do you attend religious services? Range from Never (1) to Multiple Times a Week (6)</p>	<p>Range: 1 to 6</p> <p>Mean: 4.95, SD: 0.92</p>
Religiosity	<p>How often do you read Holy Scripture? Range from Never (1) to Several Times a Day (6), plus</p> <p>How often do you pray? Range from Never (1) to Several Times a Day (6)</p>	<p>Range: 2 to 12</p> <p>Cronbach's alpha: 0.79</p> <p>Mean: 8.49, SD: 3.33</p>

Election Interest	How much do you care who wins the 2012 presidential election?	Range: 0 to 4 Mean: 3.67; SD: 0.62
Non-white	What is your race/ethnicity? White (0) Other (1)	Range: 0 to 1 Mean: 0.109; SD: 0.31
Age	In what year were you born? Age calculated by subtracting from 2012. Range from (1) Don't Care to (5) A Great Deal	Range: 18 to 88 Mean: 53.42; SD: 15.93
Education	What is the highest year in school/degree you have achieved? Range from less than high school (1) to post-graduate (5)	Range: 1 to 5 Mean: 2.93; SD: 0.94
Male	What is your gender? Male (1) Female (0)	Range: 0 to 1 Mean: 0.44, SD: 0.49
Income	By your best estimate, what was your total household income last year, before taxes? Range from \$10,000 or less (1) to \$150,000 or more (7)	Range: 1 to 7 Mean: 5.12, SD: 1.60
Ideology	Many people use the terms liberal, moderate, and conservative to recognize different political opinions. On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is the most liberal position and 5 the most conservative, where would you rank yourself when you think of your general political views?	Range: 1 to 5 Mean: 3.53, SD: 1.19
Mainline Protestant	Completed a survey distributed at the Mainline Protestant congregation. Yes (1) or No (0)	Range: 0 to 1 Mean: 0.17, SD: 0.38
Black Protestant	Completed a survey distributed at the Black Protestant congregation. Yes (1) or No (0)	Range: 0 to 1 Mean: 0.05, SD: 0.22
Religiosity × High Activity Cue	Interaction term that multiplies Religiosity by High Activity Cue	Range: 0 to 12 Mean: 3.10, SD: 4.64
Homogeneity × High Activity Cue	Interaction term that multiplies Homogeneity by High Activity Cue	Range: 0 to 3 Mean: 0.83, SD: 1.19
Election Interest × Providential	Interaction term that multiplies Election Interest by Providentiality	Range: 0 to 36 Mean: 28.21, SD: 8.99
Providential × High Activity Cue	Interaction term that multiplies Providentiality by High Activity Cue	Range: 0 to 14 Mean: 2.80, SD: 3.93

Identifying or creating a cue (for instance, through an experimental treatment) that will resonate across religious traditions is a challenging proposition. Religion is personal; individual interpretations can vary greatly. Because so much depends on receiver characteristics, one solution is to let respondents determine if they have received a cue (Welch et al. 1993). The potential impact of providential beliefs can vary across individuals, making a measure of perceived political cues received by congregants — as opposed to a measure of object political cues delivered by congregation leaders — most appropriate. Respondents were asked how often they heard sermons in the past year on: getting involved in a local issue, getting involved in a national issue, volunteering in the community, and registering to vote (Burwell et al. 2010), all questions were measured on a four-point scale from 0 to 3.⁷ A binary *High Activity Cue* variable was then created by separating out those respondents who scored in the top 35% (9 or higher on a 0 to 12 point scale) on this summary measure.

Both within and across congregations, congregants reported receiving significantly different levels of cues via sermons — ranging from a low of 6.2 in the Mainline Protestant congregation to a high of 10.2 in the Black Protestant congregation. In each congregation, individuals reported activity cues of 10 or higher. In fact, every congregation but the Mainline Protestant one had respondents reporting the highest score of 12. The standard deviation was highest in the Mormon congregation (1.88) and lowest in the Mainline Protestant congregation (1.34).⁸ Additionally, there is no reason to suspect that the measure of perceived political cues varies by providential belief. The two measures, *Providential* and *High Activity Cue*, are correlated at 0.001.⁹ Those who hold providential beliefs are not any more likely than non-providential believers to report receiving a high activity cue. While Djupe and Gilbert (2009) find that higher rates of misperception are driven by disagreement or disengagement, that pattern is not a concern for the providential measure. Whatever misperception there may be, it is not driven by providential belief.¹⁰

Interestingly enough, the survey of congregation leaders indicates that neither the Mormon congregation leader nor the Mainline Protestant congregation leader reported giving a sermon on a political topic during the time period in question, indicating that, in addition to the many barriers that prevent clergy political messages from reaching congregants (Djupe and Gilbert 2003), it may also be the case that congregants hear political messages even when clergy don't intend to deliver them. The perceptual measure of clergy political cues utilized here is the best one, given the

nature of the data. The impact of providential beliefs on political activity is hypothesized to be greater when a clergy-built bridge (perhaps a congregant-imagined clergy-built bridge) between religion and politics is in place. Thus, the *High Activity Cue* measure is interacted with the *Providential* battery described above to create the interaction term *Providential* × *High Activity Cue*.

The models also contain a measure of how much the respondent cares about the outcome of the 2012 election: *Election Interest*. Because “members tend to receive inspiration, and sometimes perceive inspiration, on issues about which they are motivated to care” (Djupe and Gilbert 2009, 72) the model also includes an interaction term to measure the combined impact of *Election Interest* interacted with *Providential*. As the data do not contain a measure of civic skills, *Election Interest* is the best available proxy for political interest and engagement. Although we might expect *Election Interest* to be highly correlated with high activity cue perception, the correlation is only 0.15.

Given what the literature has shown about the importance of congregational context (Djupe and Gilbert 2009; 2003), appropriate congregation dummy variables were created. Because the Mainline Protestants and Black Protestants in the sample are significantly more politically active than the Mormons, Catholics, and Evangelicals, both a *Mainline Protestant* and a *Black Protestant* religious tradition dummy variable are included in the models.¹¹ A dummy variable for the Atheist group is also included. Additionally, the models include a measure of *Homogeneity*, based on the respondent’s answer to the question “How would you compare your views with other congregation members’ on political issues?” with higher values indicating more homogeneity, that is, the response “about the same,” as opposed to “mine more liberal” or “mine more conservative.” Because political environments are different — and political messages may be received differently — in politically homogeneous congregation environments (Schwadel 2005; Djupe and Gilbert 2006; Putnam and Campbell 2012), the interaction term measuring the combined effect of *Homogeneity* and *High Activity Cue* is also included in the models.

Other variables in the models include a measure of church *Attendance*, and a *Religiosity* measure that combines frequency of prayer and frequency of scripture reading. An interaction term that combines *Religiosity* and the *High Activity Cue* measure is also included. An *Ideology* measure is included, with higher scores associated with more conservative ideology. Standard demographic variables, which the literature has shown often influence political activity, are also included: the dummy variable *Male*

(Schlozman, Burns, and Verba 1999; Verba, Burns, and Schlozman 1997), *Income* (Brady, Verba, and Schlozman 1995), *Education* (Nagel 1987), *Non-white* (Stokes 2003; Wielhouwer 2000) and *Age* (Campbell 2002).

RESULTS

Across the population sampled, the mean providential score was 7.69 with a standard deviation of 1.99, ranging from a low mean of 2.22 for the Atheists (the lowest mean score among religious congregations was 7.56 for the Mainline Protestant congregation) to a high mean of 8.63 for the Black Protestant congregation. Although the standard deviation is narrower when we consider just the religious congregations (1.18), every congregation but the Atheists contain at least one very providential believer (someone who scores 9 out of 9 on the two-question providential battery). The Mainline Protestant and Catholic congregations cover nearly the entire range — from 3 to 9 — the Evangelical and Mormon congregations range from 5 to 9, and the Black Protestant congregation has a much narrower range from 7 to 9. The Atheists range from 2 to 5.¹² Theoretically, providentiality is orthogonal to religious affiliation; Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, and spiritual non-church-going populations can contain providential and non-providential believers (Glazier 2014). Here, we see providential believers distributed across the spectrum of religious traditions measured — and we see them noticeably absent from the Atheist group. Although there are some differences in the demographic profiles of providential believers across congregations,¹³ no single religious tradition or congregation has a monopoly on providentiality. A regression model of providential beliefs across all congregations (including Atheists) indicates that older, non-white, female congregants who hold a conservative ideology are more likely to be providential. Looking at just the church-going population (excluding Atheists) conservative, more educated, non-white women are more likely to be providential. The full results of both models are included in the Appendix.

With a better sense of the distribution and characteristics of providential believers, we can examine the potential political effects their beliefs might have. Providential religious beliefs can be powerful political motivators — when they are connected to politics. Without an explicit bridge linking politics to God’s will, providential believers may actually be *less* likely to get involved in politics, deciding instead to leave it in God’s hands. The first model of *Political Activity* presented in Table 2 includes the

Table 2. OLS regression models of congregation member political activities, calculated from imputed datasets ($m = 5$)

	Without Interaction Term		With Interaction Term		
	Coefficient	Standard Error	Coefficient	Standard Error	First Difference
Election Interest	-0.822	0.849	-0.514	0.851	
Providential	-0.854*	0.387	-0.922*	0.386	-6.437
Attendance	0.543**	0.105	0.571**	0.105	3.397
Religiosity	0.195**	0.052	0.278**	0.058	4.489
High Activity Cue	1.48*	0.727	-0.367	0.909	
Male	0.615**	0.170	0.634**	0.170	0.641
Education	0.074	0.099	0.081	0.099	
Age	-0.004	0.005	-0.005	0.005	
Non-white	0.875**	0.322	0.861**	0.321	0.858
Ideology	0.061	0.091	0.051	0.090	
Income	0.136*	0.056	0.119*	0.056	0.714
Homogeneity	-0.524**	0.135	-0.509**	0.134	-1.174
Mainline	2.284**	0.262	2.245**	0.262	2.247
Protestant					
Black Protestant	0.191	0.489	0.115	0.488	
Atheist	4.101**	0.722	3.914**	0.722	3.919
Religiosity × High Activity Cue	-0.290**	0.051	-0.512**	0.082	-8.156
Homogeneity × High Activity Cue	0.548*	0.229	0.466*	0.229	1.340
Election Interest × Providential	0.252*	0.106	0.214*	0.106	7.737
Providential × High Activity Cue	—	—	0.501**	0.148	4.441
Constant	6.682	3.15	6.466	3.138	
$N = 1,657$	$R^2 = 0.136$		$R^2 = 0.141$		

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.

Note: First differences were calculated using Clarify. The hypothetical individual is a 53 year-old white female, holding the modal scores for ideology, election interest, providential beliefs, church attendance, education, income, homogeneity, and religiosity. She is not a Black Protestant, an Atheist, or a Mainline Protestant and did not report receiving the high activity cue.

independent variables *High Activity Cue* and *Providential* to demonstrate the effects of both without their interaction. The second model in Table 2 adds in the *Providential × High Activity Cue* interaction term to demonstrate the effect of providential religious beliefs when there is a bridge to link those beliefs to political activity.¹⁴

The results in the first half of [Table 2](#) show a number of significant variables. Consistent with prior literature, those who attend church more frequently are more likely to be politically active, as are the more religious, men, and those with higher incomes. Minorities are also more likely to be politically active in this model. The *High Activity Cue* variable is significant in this model — those who report hearing a strong political message from their congregation leader are more likely to be politically active. But when religiosity is interacted with the high activity cue, respondents are less likely to be politically active. This may be a case of congregation leaders preaching to those who need to hear the message the most (Djupe and Gilbert 2003) — those who are religious, and likely regular church-goers, but are not actively participating in politics. We also know that higher religious commitment may inhibit congregants from receiving clergy cues accurately (Djupe and Gilbert 2009); it may be that the more religious respondents in this sample of church-attenders are more likely to discount or even resent clergy political cues and instead focus on religious priorities.

Additionally, being a member of the Mainline Protestant congregation or the Atheist group also makes one more likely to participate in politics. Attending what one personally perceives to be a politically homogeneous congregation is a negative predictor of political activity, but when *Homogeneity* is interacted with reporting a high activity cue, respondents are more likely to participate politically. We know that homogeneous congregations tend to look inwards, “sorting” to become more homogeneous over time, and therefore less likely to engage in politics (Djupe and Gilbert 2009; Putnam and Campbell 2012). It is interesting that this can be reversed with a perceived political message from a congregation leader — under those circumstances, homogeneity may be a benefit for civic engagement (Djupe and Gilbert 2006).

Providential is a significant and negative independent variable in this model. In the absence of a bridge to link their beliefs to politics, providential believers appear to default to a position of leaving God in control and are actually less likely to be politically active than non-providential believers. The nature of the interaction between *Providential* and *Election Interest* reinforces this idea. Strong providential believers have a fairly low level of political activity, no matter their interest in the election, while those who hold lower levels of providential beliefs exhibit higher levels of political activity, even when interest is low.

What is the effect when a providential believer reports hearing political messages from his or her congregation leader? We know that providential

beliefs are not inherently political, but a political cue from a congregation leader might motivate political activity. The second column of [Table 2](#) displays the results of the model that includes the interaction term *Providential* \times *High Activity Cue* to directly test this hypothesis. Many of the same variables are significant in this model, including church *Attendance*, *Religiosity*, and both the *Mainline Protestant* and *Atheist* dummy variables. Once again, men, those with higher incomes, and minorities are more likely to be politically active; those who report political homogeneity in their congregations and the religious who receive a high activity cue are less likely to be politically active. Once again, the interactions between *Providential* and *Election Interest*, as well as between *Homogeneity* and the *High Activity Cue*, are significant and positive. *Providential* is again significant and negative in this model and the *High Activity Cue* doesn't reach significance on its own. Most importantly, the interaction term *Providential* \times *High Activity Cue* is positive and significant. This finding indicates that the combined effect of holding providential beliefs and receiving a strong political cue is greater political activity. Thus, providentiality has a stronger positive effect on political activity when connected to politics by a high activity cue. This finding is directly supportive of the hypothesized idea that providential believers, when exposed to a resonant political connection, will be more politically active.¹⁵

We can further interpret these results by using the Clarify program for Monte Carlo Simulations to produce estimates of the substantive effects of all of the significant variables in the model on an average respondent (King, Tomz, and Wittenberg 2000). All of the independent variables are set to their appropriate measures of central tendency and then each independent variable, in turn, is changed from its lowest to its highest value. The resulting "first differences" make it possible to directly compare variable effects. The interaction term complicates the interpretation and is dealt with independently below. For the hypothetical average respondent used in the calculations here, both the high activity cue and the interaction term are set to their model values of zero.

The results indicate that the interaction term is a moderately powerful variable in the model — it is more influential than church attendance. The "average" individual respondent — one whose characteristics are set to the mean or model value for each variable — is predicted to have a political participation score that is about four-and-half points higher when the interaction term is set to its maximum value of 9, compared to its minimum value of 0. Given that the political participation scale

ranges from 6 to 24, this impact is notable, although not as great as the *Providential* variable alone, which decreases participation by nearly six-and-a-half points, or the *Election Interest* and *Providential* interaction term, which boosts activity by nearly eight points. The only variable that has a stronger effect is the *Religiosity* and *High Activity Cue* interaction term, which negatively influences political activity by just over eight points.

For the first differences presented in Table 2, the values are calculated with *Providential* set to its model value of 9. We can get a closer look at the effect of providential beliefs on political activity by charting respondents' predicted political activity scores at each level of providential beliefs, both with and without the perception of a high activity cue. The results are displayed in Figure 1.

At the lowest levels of providential beliefs, the high activity cue doesn't make much of a difference; the predicted score for those who receive the cue is 11.48 and the predicted score for those who don't is 10.71, a difference that is not statistically significant. At the other end of the providential spectrum, however, there is a significant difference — 4.71 points on the 18-point political activity scale — between those who report receiving

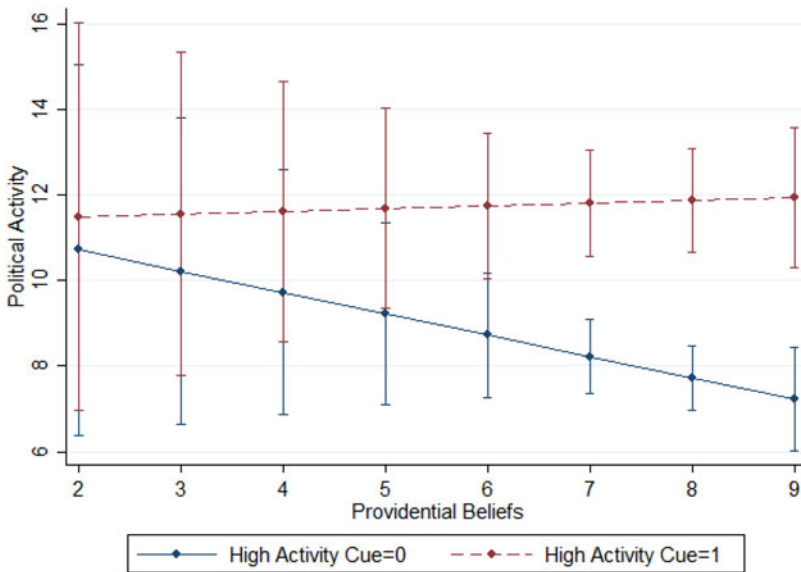


FIGURE 1. (Color online) predicted political activity scores by providentiality, with and without a high activity cue.

the high activity cue and those who don't. Although this difference does not come from a surge in participation by those providential believers who report hearing a cue, there is a significant drop in activity by providential believers who do not perceive a cue. As other results suggest, the providential default appears to be inactivity. A high activity cue boosts the political participation of the strongest providential believers over that of the non-providential believers, but without such a cue, providential believers are much less likely to participate in politics.

CONCLUSION

To understand how religion influences political behaviors and attitudes, we need to know more about the impact of religious beliefs. This study has looked at one particular type of religious belief — providential beliefs — and at the impact providential beliefs have on political activity. The results indicate that providential congregants who report hearing political sermons are more likely to be politically active.

These findings reveal the importance of cues that can bridge the providential and political realms. It appears that those who believe God has a plan may default to the position of leaving politics up to God. In order for providential believers to see the political as a part of God's plan, there must be a compelling connection. Thus, in the results here, providential beliefs matter, but only when they are connected to politics. For the congregants studied, one connection came from the sermons their religious leaders delivered. Providential believers who reported hearing sermons about the importance of political participation were more likely to be politically active. It may be that providential believers are more psychologically "open" to new information, which enables them to make connections between religion and politics. Or perhaps they are more open to cues from clergy because they happen to agree with them. The homogeneity measures begin to get at some of these complex relationships among clergy, congregant, and congregation, but more research is clearly needed to understand providential beliefs and their effects.

The data presented here are neither able to nor meant to generalize to the population at large. The sample is not representative, but includes only five churches (and one Atheist group) in a single, Southern US city: Little Rock. Although far from perfect, the data represent responses from real congregants experiencing real political cues from their own congregation leaders. This provides a very different environment for

evaluating the effect of clergy political messages, when compared to telephone surveys, experimental manipulations, or student convenience samples (Calfano and Djupe 2009; McKeown and Carlson 1987; Sears 1986; Djupe and Gwiasda 2010). The data here provide a look at how the effects of providential beliefs are conditioned by clergy political cues in the context of sermons delivered over a long period of time, which may or may not be heard or remembered by congregants. Essentially, they allow us to see what providential beliefs can do when connected to politics by clergy cues in the “real world.”

Providentiality is still a new concept. The fact that providential religious beliefs cross denominational boundaries is an advantage for survey researchers seeking analytical traction in a limited space. While we don’t have longitudinal data to know if these beliefs are growing in the population, we do have a potential causal mechanism through which the religious beliefs — in this case, knowing and seeking to help bring about God’s will — can have measurable political effects. Thus, although the study sample is not representative, the processes and patterns observed within these congregations provide initial support for a casual story that can be further explored with larger and more representative populations.

NOTES

1. We know, for instance, that church attenders are more likely to vote (Peterson 1992; Wald, Kellstedt, and Leege 1993; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993), although research on more demanding political activities is mixed (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba and Nie 1972; Beyerlein and Chaves 2003; Jones-Correa and Leal 2001).

2. These two questions are subsequently referred to as the “God’s plan” and “religious guidance” questions. The “God’s plan” question really has two components — the belief in God’s plan and the belief that one can help bring it about. Although here and elsewhere this question identifies a population of providential believers that is different from non-providential believers, it is possible that some may agree with only one portion of this statement. Further research is needed to disentangle the influence of belief in the existence of a plan from belief in the opportunity for individuals to play a role in that plan.

3. Other questions may also potentially get at the same concept. For instance, the question used by Driskell and colleagues from the Baylor survey, a yes/no response to the statement “God is directly involved in world affairs,” could be thought of as a providential indicator.

4. Political communication scholars might aptly compare this process to priming (Bartels 2009; Scheufele and Tewksbury 2007).

5. Whereas Black Protestant churches make up 27% of the churches in Little Rock, Black Protestant respondents make up only 5.5% of the sample analyzed here. Similarly, Evangelical churches are 48% of all churches in Little Rock but only 5.5% of the respondents in this study.

6. As with many surveys, the data contained some missing values. For instance, in the pre-election survey, the question about how often the respondent attends church had about 10% of responses missing. In order to deal with the missing data problem, I used multiple imputation, which generates more than one estimate for each missing value (Penn 2007). The imputation proceeds in three steps. First, using the additional variables in the data set, a series of multiple (in this case, 5), separate and distinct values are calculated for the missing data. These values are inserted for the missing data, resulting in five new data sets. Second, regression analysis is conducted on each of the five data sets.

Third, the results of the multiple regressions are combined resulting in one set of regression coefficients and standard errors (Little and Rubin 2002; Rubin 1996). Multiple imputation is the best available technique for dealing with missing data (Penn 2007; Horton and Lipsitz 2001). The pre-election survey, analyzed here, had a total of 274 respondents. Dropping all missing data cases would have left a much smaller dataset (the exact number depending on the model specifications). Multiple imputation allows for the retention of these cases and for greater confidence in the resulting estimates (King et al. 2001). I used the “ice” package created by Patrick Royston (2005a; 2005b; 2009) to generate five imputed datasets and conduct regression analyses.

7. An alternative approach would be to collect sermon transcripts and code them for political content. Drawbacks of this approach include concerns over individual interpretations of political sermons and uneven reception of cues (e.g., congregants who didn’t attend that day or who attended and fell asleep would not receive the cue).

8. There is certainly some causal ambiguity when it comes to the reception of clergy political cues. The variance within congregations indicates that there is a complex mix of projection and objective reception at work.

9. The possible exception might be the Black Protestant church, which has the highest levels of providentiality and the highest reported political cues, where the two are correlated at 0.51.

10. The leaders of each of the surveyed congregations completed an earlier survey in which they answered either yes or no to the question of whether they had given a sermon on a political topic in the past year. The absolute value of this binary measure minus the high activity cue measure yields a “misperception value” of zero or one. Those who correctly perceive clergy cues (reporting a high cue when clergy report giving a political sermon or a low cue when clergy do not report giving a political sermon) score zero and those who misperceive clergy cues (reporting a low cue when clergy report giving a political sermon or a high cue when clergy do not report giving a political sermon) score one. The misperception value shows no relationship with *Providentially* — the two are correlated at -0.034 — nor with *Attendance*, which is correlated with misperception at 0.016.

11. A dummy variable is not included for Evangelical Protestants. Although the literature suggests that Evangelical Protestants may be more likely to be politically active, particularly when mobilized by congregation leaders (Guth et al. 2003; Campbell 2004), the n for Evangelicals in this sample is simply too small and the sample population is not statistically distinguishable from Catholics or Mormons.

12. The overall high levels of providential belief in the church-going surveyed population suggest two possibilities. First, it is possible that providentiality is a valance issue, with almost all Christians agreeing with the providential survey questions. Second, it is possible and even likely that the Southern, church-going population surveyed is more consistently providential than the general population or the general church-going population. Additional research on different populations could yield greater insight.

13. Simple regression models run on providential beliefs for each congregation indicate that those who hold a conservative ideology are more likely to be providential across the board, except for among the Atheists, where providentiality is predicted by a more liberal ideology. Women are more likely to be providential in the Catholic, Mainline Protestant, and Mormon congregations, whereas men are in the Atheist and Black Protestant congregations. The less educated are more likely to be providential in the Mainline Protestant congregation and the more educated are more likely to be providential in the Black Protestant congregation. Older congregants are more likely to be providential in the Catholic, Black Protestant, and Atheist congregations.

14. The models presented here are run on the full data, including the Atheist respondents. The same models were run on a dataset the excluded the Atheists and the substantive results are the same. The full model results of the church-going respondents only are available in the Appendix.

15. As a robustness check on *Providential*, the same model was run using each of the two component *Providential* measures independently. The results indicate that both measures contribute to the significant effect of providential beliefs in the model. Agreement with the statement about God’s plan is not significant itself, but it is when interacted with the high activity cue. Reporting that religion is an important life guide does significantly and negatively predict political activity and the guide measure interacted with caring about the election and interacted with the high activity cue are both also significant.

REFERENCES

- Albertson, Bethany L. 2014. "Dog-Whistle Politics: Multivocal Communication and Religious Appeals." *Political Behavior* 1–24.
- Bader, Christopher, and Paul Froese. 2005. "Images of God: The Effect of Personal Theologies on Moral Attitudes, Political Affiliation, and Religious Behavior." *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion* 1:2–24.
- Barker, David C., and David H. Bearce. 2013. "End-times Theology, the Shadow of the Future, and Public Resistance to Addressing Global Climate Change." *Political Research Quarterly* 66:267–279.
- Barker, David C., Jon Hurwitz, and Traci L. Nelson. 2008. "Of Crusades and Culture Wars: 'Messianic' Militarism and Political Conflict in the United States." *The Journal of Politics* 70:307–322.
- Bartels, Larry. 2009. "Priming and Persuasion in Presidential Campaigns." In *Capturing Campaign Effects*, eds. Brady, Henry E., and Richard Johnston. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 78–114.
- Baylor. 2011. *The Values and Beliefs of the American Public: Wave III Baylor Religion Survey*. Waco, TX: Baylor University.
- Beatty, Kathleen Murphy, and Oliver Walter. 1989. "A Group Theory of Religion and Politics: The Clergy as Group Leaders." *The Western Political Quarterly* 42:129–146.
- Ben-Nun Bloom, Pazit, and Gizem Arıkan. 2013. "Priming Religious Belief and Religious Social Behavior Affects Support for Democracy." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 25:368–382.
- Beyerlein, Kraig, and Mark Chaves. 2003. "The Political Activities of Religious Congregations in the United States." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 42:229–246.
- Brady, Henry E., Sidney Verba, and Kay Lehman Schlozman. 1995. "Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation." *American Political Science Review* 89:271–294.
- Broughton, Walter. 1978. "Religiosity and Opposition to Church Social Action: A Test of a Weberian Hypothesis." *Review of Religious Research* 19:154–166.
- Burwell, Rebecca, Edwin I. Hernandez, Milagros Pena, Jeffrey Smith, and David Sikkink. 2010. *The Chicago Latino Congregations Study (CLCS): Methodological Considerations*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, Institute for Latino Studies.
- Calfano, Brian Robert, and Paul A. Djupe. 2009. "God Talk Religious Cues and Electoral Support." *Political Research Quarterly* 62:329–339.
- Calhoun-Brown, Allison. 1996. "African American Churches and Political Mobilization: The Psychological Impact of Organizational Resources." *Journal of Politics* 58:935–953.
- Campbell, Andrea Louise. 2002. "Self-Interest, Social Security, and the Distinctive Participation Patterns of Senior Citizens." *American Political Science Review* 96:565–574.
- Campbell, David E. 2004. "Acts of Faith: Churches and Political Engagement." *Political Behavior* 26:155–180.
- Campbell, David E., and J. Quin Monson. 2007. "Dry Kindling: A Political Profile of American Mormons." In *From Pews to Polling Places: Faith and Politics in the American Religious Mosaic*, ed. Wilson, J. Matthew. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 105–130.
- Chaiken, Shelly, Roger Giner-Sorolla, and Serena Chen. 1996. "Beyond Accuracy: Defense and Impression Motives in Heuristic and Systematic Information Processing." In *The Psychology of Action: Linking Cognition and Motivation to Behavior*, eds. Gollwitzer, Peter M., and John A. Bargh. New York, NY: Guilford, 553–578.

- Crawford, Sue E.S., and Laura R. Olson. 2001. *Christian Clergy in American Politics*. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press.
- Djupe, Paul A., and Brian R. Calfano. 2009. "Justification Not by faith Alone: Clergy Generating Trust and Certainty by Revealing Thought." *Politics and Religion* 2:1–30.
- Djupe, Paul A., and Brian R. Calfano. 2013. "Divine Intervention? The Influence of Religious Value Communication on US Intervention Policy." *Political Behavior* 35:643–663.
- Djupe, Paul A., and Christopher P. Gilbert. 2003. *The Prophetic Pulpit: Clergy, Churches, and Communities in American Politics*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Djupe, Paul A., and Christopher P. Gilbert. 2006. "The Resourceful Believer: Generating Civic Skills in Church." *Journal of Politics* 68:116–127.
- Djupe, Paul A., and Christopher P. Gilbert. 2009. *The Political Influence of Churches*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Djupe, Paul A., and J. Tobin Grant. 2001. "Religious Institutions and Political Participation in America." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 40:303–314.
- Djupe, Paul A., and Gregory W. Gwiasda. 2010. "Evangelizing the Environment: Decision Process Effects in Political Persuasion." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 49:73–86.
- Djupe, Paul A., and Jacob R. Neiheisel. 2012. "How Religious Communities Affect Political Participation Among Latinos." *Social Science Quarterly* 93:333–355.
- Driskell, Robyn, Elizabeth Embry, and Larry Lyon. 2008. "Faith and Politics: The Influence of Religious Beliefs on Political Participation." *Social Science Quarterly* 89:294–314.
- Driskell, Robyn L., and Larry Lyon. 2011. "Assessing the Role of Religious Beliefs on Secular and Spiritual Behaviors." *Review of Religious Research* 52:386–404.
- Driskell, Robyn L., Larry Lyon, and Elizabeth Embry. 2008. "Civic Engagement and Religious Activities: Examining the Influence of Religious Tradition and Participation." *Sociological Spectrum* 28:578–601.
- Druckman, James N. 2001. "On the Limits of Framing Effects: Who Can Frame?" *Journal of Politics* 63:1041–1066.
- Ellis, Christopher, and James A. Stimson. 2012. *Ideology in America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Finke, Roger, and Amy Adamczyk. 2008. "Cross-National Moral Beliefs: The Influence of National Religious Context." *Sociological Quarterly* 49:617–652.
- Glazier, Rebecca A. 2013. "Divine Direction: How Providential Religious Beliefs Shape Foreign Policy Attitudes." *Foreign Policy Analysis* 9:127–142.
- Glazier, Rebecca A. 2014. "Providential Religious Beliefs: Toward a Better Understanding of Religiously-motivated Political Behavior." Presented at the International Studies Association–Midwest Annual Conference. St. Louis.
- Guth, James L., Linda Beail, Greg Crow, Beverly Gaddy, Brent Nelsen, James Penning, and Jeff Walz. 2003. "The Political Activity of Evangelical Clergy in the Election of 2000: A Case Study of Five Denominations." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 42:501–514.
- Guth, James L. 2009. "Religion and American Public Opinion: Foreign Policy Issues." In *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and American Politics*, eds. Smidt, Corwin, Lyman Kellstedt, and James L. Guth. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Guth, James L., John C. Green, Corwin E. Smidt, and Lyman A. Kellstedt. 1997. *The Bully Pulpit: The Politics of Protestant Clergy*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.
- Guth, James L., Lyman A. Kellstedt, John C. Green, and Corwin E. Smidt. 2002. "A Distant Thunder? Religious Mobilization in the 2000 Elections." In *Interest Group Politics*, eds. Cigler, Allan J., and Burdett A. Loomis. Washington DC: CQ Press, 161–184.

- Guth, James L., Lyman A. Kellstedt, Corwin E. Smidt, and John C. Green. 2006. "Religious Influences in the 2004 Presidential Election." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 36:223–242.
- Harris, Fredrick C. 1994. "Something Within: Religion as a Mobilizer of African-American Political Activism." *Journal of Politics* 56:42–68.
- Horton, Nicholas J., and Stuart R. Lipsitz. 2001. "Multiple Imputation in Practice: Comparison of Software Packages for Regression Models with Missing Variables." *The American Statistician* 55:244–254.
- Hovland, Carl I., Irving L. Janis, and Harold H. Kelley. 1953. *Communication and Persuasion: Psychological Studies of Opinion Change*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Huckfeldt, R. Robert, and John Sprague. 1995. *Citizens, Politics and Social Communication: Information and Influence in an Election Campaign*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Huckfeldt, Robert, Eric Plutzer, and John Sprague. 1993. "Alternative Contexts of Political Behavior: Churches, Neighborhoods, and Individuals." *Journal of Politics* 55:365–381.
- Iyengar, Shanto, and Nicholas A. Valentino. 2000. "Who Says What? Source Credibility as a Mediator for Campaign Advertising." In *Elements of Reason: Cognition, Choice, and the Bounds of Rationality*, eds. Lupia, Arthur, Matthew D. McCubbins, and Samuel L. Popkin. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 108–129.
- James, William. 1985. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. Harvard, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Jelen, Ted G. 1994. "Religion and Foreign Policy Attitudes: Exploring the Effects of Denomination and Doctrine." *American Politics Research* 22:382–400.
- Jones-Correa, Michael A., and David L. Leal. 2001. "Political Participation: Does Religion Matter?" *Political Research Quarterly* 54:751–770.
- King, Gary, James Honaker, Anne Joseph, and Kenneth Scheve. 2001. "Analyzing Incomplete Political Science Data: An Alternative Algorithm for Multiple Imputation." *American Political Science Review* 95:49–69.
- Kohut, Andrew, John C. Green, Scott Keeter, and Robert C. Toth. 2000. *The Diminishing Divide: Religion's Changing Role in American Politics*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- Krosnick, Jon A. 1989. "Attitude Importance and Attitude Accessibility." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 15:297–308.
- Krosnick, Jon A., David S. Boninger, Yao C. Chuang, Matthew K. Berent, and Catherine G. Carnot. 1993. "Attitude Strength: One Construct or Many Related Constructs?" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 65:1132–1151.
- Lasswell, Harold D. 1936. *Politics: Who Gets What, When, How with Postscript (1958)*. New York, NY: Meridian-World.
- Layman, Geoffrey. 2001. *The Great Divide: Religious and Cultural Conflict in American Party Politics*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Leege, David C. 1985. *The Findings of the Notre Dame Study of Catholic Parish Life*. Mahwah, NJ: New Catholic World.
- Lincoln, C. Eric, and Lawrence H. Mamiya. 1990. *The Black Church in the African American Experience*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Little, Roderick J.A., and Donald B. Rubin. 2002. *Statistical Analysis with Missing Data*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Lunn, John, Robin Klay, and Andrea Douglass. 2001. "Relationships Among Giving, Church Attendance, and Religious Belief: The Case of the Presbyterian Church (USA)." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 40:765–775.

- Lupia, Arthur, and Mathew D. McCubbins. 1998. *The Democratic Dilemma: Can Citizens Learn What They Need to Know*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McDaniel, Eric. 2004. "African Methodist Episcopal Church." In *Pulpit and Politics: Clergy in American Politics at the Advent of the Millennium*, ed. Smidt, Corwin E. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 247–258.
- McKeown, Bruce, and James M. Carlson. 1987. "An Experimental Study of the Influence of Religious Elites on Public Opinion." *Political Communication* 4:93–102.
- Munro, Geoffrey D., Peter H. Ditto, Lisa K. Lockhart, Angela Fagerlin, Mitchell Gready, and Elizabeth Peterson. 2002. "Biased Assimilation of Sociopolitical Arguments: Evaluating the 1996 US Presidential Debate." *Basic and Applied Social Psychology* 24:15–26.
- Nagel, Jack H. 1987. *Participation*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Olson, Laura R. 2009. "Clergy and American Politics." In *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and American Politics*, eds. Smidt, Corwin E., Lyman A. Kellstedt, and James L. Guth. Oxford Handbooks Online, 371–393.
- Page, Benjamin I., and Marshall M. Bouton. 2006. *The Foreign Policy Disconnect: What Americans Want from our Leaders but Don't Get*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Penn, David A. 2007. "Estimating Missing Values from the General Social Survey: An Application of Multiple Imputation." *Social Science Quarterly* 88:573–584.
- Peterson, Steven A. 1990. *Political Behavior: Patterns in Everyday Life*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Peterson, Steven A. 1992. "Church Participation and Political Participation The Spillover Effect." *American Politics Research* 20:123–139.
- Putnam, Robert D., and David E. Campbell. 2012. *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.
- Quinley, Harold E. 1974. *The Prophetic Clergy: Social Activism among Protestant Ministers*. New York, NY: Wiley.
- Rosenstone, Steven, and John M. Hansen. 1993. *Mobilization, Participation and Democracy in America*. New York, NY: MacMillan.
- Royston, Patrick. 2005a. "Multiple Imputation of Missing Values: Update." *Stata Journal* 5:1–14.
- Royston, Patrick. 2005b. "Multiple Imputation of Missing Values: Update of Ice." *Stata Journal* 5:527–536.
- Royston, Patrick. 2009. "Multiple Imputation of Missing Values: Further Update of ice, with an Emphasis on Categorical Variables." *Stata Journal* 9:466–477.
- Rubin, Donald B. 1996. "Multiple Imputation after 18+ Years." *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 91:473–489.
- Scheufele, Dietram A., and David Tewksbury. 2007. "Framing, Agenda Setting, and Priming: The Evolution of Three Media Effects Models." *Journal of Communication* 57:9–20.
- Schlozman, Kay Lehman, Nancy Burns, and Sidney Verba. 1999. "What Happened at Work Today?: A Multistage Model of Gender, Employment, and Political Participation." *Journal of Politics* 61:29–53.
- Schwadel, Philip. 2005. "Individual, Congregational, and Denominational Effects on Church Members' Civic Participation." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 44:159–171.
- Sears, David O. 1986. "College Sophomores in the Laboratory: Influences of a Narrow Data Base on Social Psychology's View of Human Nature." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 51:515–530.

- Sernett, Milton G. 1991. "Black Religion and the Question of Evangelical Identity." In *The Variety of American Evangelicalism*, eds. Dayton, Donald W., and Robert K. Johnston. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 135–147.
- Smidt, Corwin E. 1999. "Religion and Civic Engagement: A Comparative Analysis." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 565:176–192.
- Smidt, Corwin E. 2003a. "Clergy in American Politics: An Introduction." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 42:495–499.
- Smidt, Corwin E. 2003b. *Religion as Social Capital: Producing the Common Good*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press.
- Smidt, Corwin E. 2004. *Pulpit and Politics: Clergy in American Politics at the Advent of the Millennium*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press.
- Stokes, Atiya Kai. 2003. "Latino Group Consciousness and Political Participation." *American Politics Research* 31:361–378.
- Verba, Sidney, Nancy Burns, and Kay Lehman Schlozman. 1997. "Knowing and Caring about Politics: Gender and Political Engagement." *Journal of Politics* 59:1051–1072.
- Verba, Sidney, and Norman H. Nie. 1972. *Participation in America: Social Equality and Political Democracy*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: civic voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wald, Kenneth D., and Allison Calhoun-Brown. 2010. *Religion and Politics in the United States*. 6 ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Wald, Kenneth D., Lyman A. Kellstedt, and David C. Leege. 1993. "Church Involvement and Political Behavior." In *Rediscovering the Religious Factor in American Politics*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharp, 121–38.
- Wald, Kenneth D., Dennis E. Owen, and Samuel S. Hill. 1988. "Churches as Political Communities." *American Political Science Review* 82:531–548.
- Wald, Kenneth D., Dennis E. Owen, and Samuel S. Hill. 1990. "Political Cohesion in Churches." *The Journal of Politics* 52:197–215.
- Wald, Kenneth D., and Corwin E. Smidt. 1993. "Measurement Strategies in the Study of Religion and Politics." In *Rediscovering the Religious Factor in American Politics*, eds. Leege, David C., and Lyman A. Kellstedt. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharp, 26–52.
- Welch, Michael R., David C. Leege, Kenneth D. Wald, and Lyman A. Kellstedt. 1993. "Are the Sheep Hearing the Shepherds? Cue Perceptions, Congregational Responses, and Political Communication Processes." In *Rediscovering the Religious Factor in American Politics*, eds. Leege, David C., and Lyman A. Kellstedt, 235–254. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Wielhouwer, Peter W. 2000. "Releasing the Fetters: Parties and the Mobilization of the African-American Electorate." *Journal of Politics* 62:206–222.
- Wielhouwer, Peter W. 2009. "Religion and American Political Participation." In *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and American Politics*, eds. Smidt, Corwin E., Lyman A. Kellstedt, and James L. Guth. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

APPENDIX

Table A1. OLS regression models of providential beliefs, calculated from imputed datasets ($m = 5$)

	Pooled Model (Atheists Included)		Church-going Respondents Only (Atheists Excluded)	
	Coefficient	Standard Errors	Coefficient	Standard Errors
Age	0.011	0.002	-0.002**	0.002
Male	-0.517**	0.082	-0.310**	0.057
Non-white	0.866**	0.131	0.368**	0.089
Education	0.022**	0.045	-0.107	0.031
Conservative Ideology	0.852**	0.034	0.325**	0.026
Constant	4.136	0.246	7.472	0.183
$N = 1,601$	Adjusted $R^2 = 0.129$		Adjusted $R^2 = 0.293$	

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.

Table A2. OLS regression models of congregation member political activities, calculated from imputed datasets ($m = 5$), church-going respondents only (atheists excluded)

	Without Interaction Term		With Interaction Term		
	Coefficient	Standard Error	Coefficient	Standard Error	First Difference
Election Interest	-3.471**	1.025	-3.065**	1.028	-12.138
Providential	-1.972**	0.461	-2.022**	0.459	-12.028
Attendance	0.513**	0.110	0.553**	0.111	3.305
Religiosity	0.194**	0.058	0.251**	0.061	2.255
High Activity Cue	0.572	1.089	-2.599	1.426	
Male	0.749**	0.176	0.748**	0.176	0.752
Education	0.069	0.104	0.055	0.104	
Age	-0.000	0.005	-0.001	0.005	
Non-white	0.936**	0.333	0.980**	0.332	0.984
Ideology	0.009	0.092	-0.006	0.092	
Income	0.169**	0.059	0.165**	0.058	1.001
Homogeneity	-0.573**	0.136	-0.536**	0.136	-1.233

Continued

Table A2. Continued

	Without Interaction Term		With Interaction Term		
	Coefficient	Standard Error	Coefficient	Standard Error	First Difference
Mainline Protestant	2.141**	0.265	2.058**	0.266	2.065
Black Protestant	0.038	0.500	-0.146	0.501	
Religiosity × High Activity Cue	-0.254**	0.099	-0.380**	0.106	-4.576
Homogeneity × High Activity Cue	0.799**	0.235	0.682**	0.236	1.999
Election Interest × Providential	0.574**	0.127	0.526**	0.128	18.772
Providential × High Activity Cue	—	—	0.557**	0.162	4.960
Constant	15.887	3.773	15.643	3.761	
<i>N</i> = 1,552	Adjusted R^2 = 0.135		Adjusted R^2 = 0.141		

QUESTION WORDING

Congregant Survey Questions

By your best estimate, what was your total household income last year, before taxes?

- (1) \$10,000 or less
- (2) \$10,001–20,000
- (3) \$20,001–35,000
- (4) \$35,001–50,000
- (5) \$50,001–100,000
- (6) \$100,001–150,000
- (7) \$150,000 or more

In the past year, how often have you heard sermons or homilies by the pastor/priest here that:

- (1) Never (2) Sometimes (3) Often
- A. Spoke against same-sex marriage?
- B. Encouraged you to get involved in a local political cause or issue?
- C. Encouraged you to get involved in a national political cause or issue?
- D. Encouraged members to serve or volunteer in the community?
- E. Urged you to register to vote?
- F. Spoke against abortion?

In the past 12 months, have you:

- (1) No
 - (2) Yes, once or twice
 - (3) Yes, a few times
 - (4) Yes, many times
- A. Tried to persuade someone to vote
 - B. Donated money to a political candidate or campaign
 - C. Worked as a volunteer for a political candidate or campaign
 - D. Attended a political rally
 - E. Stuck a campaign bumper sticker on your car or window
 - F. Signed a petition

How often do you pray?

- (1) Never
- (2) Occasionally
- (3) About Once a Week
- (4) A Few Times a Week
- (5) About Once a Day
- (6) Several Times a Day

How often do you read Holy Scripture?

- (1) Never
- (2) Occasionally
- (3) About Once a Week
- (4) A Few Times a Week
- (5) About Once a Day
- (6) Several Times a Day

How often do you attend religious services?

- (1) Never
- (2) Occasionally
- (3) About Once a Month
- (4) 2-3 Times a Month
- (5) Every Week
- (6) Multiple Times a Week

Generally speaking, would you say that you personally care a good deal who wins the presidential election this fall, or that you don't care very much who wins?

- (1) Don't Care
- (2) Very Little
- (3) Some
- (4) Quite a Bit
- (5) A Great Deal

Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Democrat, Republican, independent, or what?

- (1) Strong Democrat
- (2)
- (3)
- (4) Independent

- (5)
- (6)
- (7) Strong Republican

What is the highest year in school/degree you have achieved?

- (1) Less than High School
- (2) High School/Ged
- (3) Some College/Applied Degree
- (4) College Graduate
- (5) Post-Graduate

What is your race/ethnicity?

- (1) White
- (2) Black
- (3) Hispanic
- (4) Other

In what year were you born?

How would you compare your views with other congregation members' on political issues?

- (1) Mine more conservative
- (2)
- (3) About the same
- (4)
- (5) Mine more liberal

Providential Beliefs 2 Question Battery

Please circle if you agree or disagree with the following statements about religious beliefs.

God has a plan and I have a part to play in it.

- (1) Strongly Disagree
- (2) Disagree
- (3) Neutral
- (4) Agree
- (5) Strongly Agree

Would you say your religion provides some guidance in your day-to-day life, quite a bit of guidance, or a great deal of guidance in your day-to-day life?

- (1) Religion Really Isn't Important To Me
- (2) Some Guidance
- (3) Quite a Bit of Guidance
- (4) A Great Deal of Guidance