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## Religious Influences on the Risk of Marital Dissolution

*This study examined multiple dimensions of religious involvement and the risk of divorce among a nationwide sample of 2,979 first-time married couples. Multivariate proportional hazards modeling was used to analyze two waves of the National Survey of Families and Households. Results indicated that although each partner's religious attendance bore a modest relationship to marital dissolution, the risk of divorce was lower if husbands had conservative theological beliefs and when both partners belonged to mainline Protestant denominations. Conversely, the risk of divorce was elevated if husbands attended services more frequently than their wives and if wives were more theologically conservative than their husbands. These patterns withstood controls for sociodemographic covariates, marital duration, and marital quality. Directions for future research are discussed.*

Over the past two decades, researchers have renewed their attention to the links between religion and family life (Edgell, 2005; Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar, & Swank, 2001). Recent studies have documented significant religious variations in an array of family-related

attitudes and behaviors, including gender ideology (Hoffmann & Miller, 1997), the division of household labor (Ellison & Bartkowski, 2002), childrearing and discipline (Bartkowski & Xu, 2000; Wilcox, 2002), relations between adult children and their parents (Pearce & Axinn, 1998), grandparenting (King & Elder, 1999), and cohabitation (Thornton, Axinn, & Hill 1992).

One area of particular interest has been the role of religion in shaping marital attitudes, values, practices, and quality (e.g., Booth, Johnson, Branaman, & Sica, 1995; Myers, 2006; Shehan, Bock, & Lee, 1990). In addition, a number of studies over the years have explored the association between religious factors (mainly affiliation, denominational homogeneity, and attendance) and history of divorce (for review, see Mahoney et al., 2001). Yet, despite widespread public and academic controversy over contemporary marital dissolution rates, only a handful of studies have explored religious variations in the risk of marital dissolution. For example, Lehrer and Chiswick (1993) found that couples had a higher risk of divorce when only one partner was religiously affiliated or when only one partner belonged to an exclusivist (i.e., evangelical Protestant or sectarian) denomination. Subsequently, Call and Heaton (1997) reported that dissimilarity in partner's religious attendance patterns—but not other types of religious dissimilarity—is linked with increased risk of marital dissolution.

Our study extends this literature in several ways: (1) by theorizing and examining the effects of multiple aspects of religious

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involvement on the risk of marital dissolution, using prospective data from two waves of the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH), and using Cox proportional hazards models; (2) by considering a broad array of possible religious influences, including (a) religious versus secular marriage ceremonies; (b) the affiliation, practice, and theological conservatism of each partner; and (c) the denominational homo/heterogamy, as well as attendance and theological (dis)similarity among partners; and (3) by exploring the possible roles of baseline marital quality, conflicts, and extramarital options in accounting for observed religious differences in the risk of subsequent separation or marital dissolution.

#### THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL BACKGROUND

The purpose of this study is to analyze the relationships between various religious indicators and the risk of marital dissolution. Specifically, we consider the implications of having a religious wedding ceremony as well as the frequency of each partner's attendance at religious services and the degree of each partner's theological conservatism, as measured by their beliefs about the inerrancy and authority of the Bible. In addition, we explore the role of three types of religious divergence among partners for the risk of dissolution: (a) denominational heterogamy, (b) dissimilar patterns of religious attendance, and (c) differences in theological conservatism among partners. We model these longitudinal relationships with controls for standard sociodemographic covariates as well as with adjustments for variations in multiple indicators of baseline marital quality.

#### *Religious Involvement of Marital Partners*

How and why might religious factors influence the risk of marital dissolution? The degree of religious involvement of the partners may be inversely related to marital dissolution for several reasons. Although few if any previous studies have examined this, one potentially significant indicator of commitment is whether the couple chooses to be married in a religious ceremony, as opposed to a civil ceremony or other procedure. To be sure, couples may have many reasons for choosing a religious wedding, such as pressure from family members and social expectations. Nevertheless, such rituals often

invoke the support of the religious community, family, and friends to help the partners honor their promises and sustain their marital bonds. Moreover, the decision to have a religious ceremony may be reached with the input of parents and other family members, which may signal strong family commitment to faith and marriage and may presage family support for the couple during periods of turbulence or short-term problems that may arise.

The frequency of each partner's religious attendance may also be inversely related to the risk of marital dissolution (Call & Heaton, 1997; Ellison, Bartkowski, & Anderson, 1999). First, attendance may be a barometer of more general religious commitment or devotion. Individuals (and couples) who attend religious services regularly may also enjoy a richer spiritual life, seeking to internalize and enact religiously inspired virtues of love, altruism, caring, and self-sacrifice within their marital and family relationships (Mahoney et al., 1999). Second, regular attenders may benefit from informal support—for their marriage and on other matters—from like-minded members of the congregation or within small group settings, religious education classes, social groups, or other organized activities. Such feedback may foster marital commitment, offer psychic rewards for marital success, limit marital discord, promote conflict resolution and help with other problems that could strain marriages, and discourage marital dissolution as a potential violation of religious norms. Third, some congregations may offer formal ministries, seminars, and other resources for marital enrichment (Wilcox, Chaves, & Franz, 2004). Pastoral guidance and counseling on family matters may also help to address relationship problems, promote persistence, and constrain separation or divorce. Fourth, regular attendance may be part of a broader complex of conventional behaviors; religious groups may tend to draw persons and couples who are comparatively traditional and risk averse in their value orientations (Wilcox, 2002).

In addition to their religious involvement and commitment, the theological conservatism of marital partners may impact the risk of dissolution (Dobson, 1999). In particular, individuals who regard the Bible as the inerrant Word of God and the source of authoritative guidance for human affairs (presumably including family life) are likely to be familiar with scriptural passages on the nature and spiritual significance of

marriage. Among the most prominent of these are injunctions to “Be faithful in marriage” (Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18), and “Have respect for marriage” (Hebrews 13:4). Therefore, one expects that persons who hold conservative theological beliefs about the Bible may be less likely to separate or divorce over time.

### *Religious (Dis)similarity Among Partners*

It is also important to examine the degree of religious (dis)similarity among partners. Despite the popular adage that “opposites attract,” there is ample evidence that partners who share values, activities, and status characteristics are more likely to marry in the first place and may also be more successful in maintaining durable marriages than those couples in which partners are quite different from one another (Kalmijn, 1998; Sherkat, 2004). A number of studies over the years have reported that denominational homo/heterogamy predicts marital satisfaction and happiness (for review, see Mahoney et al., 2001), and a few researchers have linked this aspect of religion with marital dissolution (Heaton & Pratt, 1990; Myers, 2006; Ortega, Whitt, & Williams, 1988). What might explain these associations? Briefly, religious homogamy may indicate shared values with regard to marriage and other aspects of family life (e.g., fertility, childrearing, men’s and women’s family roles) as well as broader lifestyle decisions (e.g., finances, leisure activities, friendship choices). Denominational homogamy may also imply a tendency to associate with—and to draw information and advice from—persons who share basic value orientations, such as church members, friends, relatives, and in-laws. This can reduce the level of dissonant input, may build confidence in the validity and morality of decisions regarding family and other domains, and may reduce the potential for ambivalence or disagreement (Heaton & Pratt; Kalmijn, 1998). Although these dynamics may work to the advantage of same-faith marriages in general, it is reasonable to anticipate that ideological and lifestyle similarity, network homogeneity, and the other mechanisms identified above will be most protective against marital dissolution among same-faith couples in which both partners attend services regularly.

Although most religious groups tend to reinforce traditional orientations toward marriage and family life (Edgell, 2005), there may also be

significant differences among specific denominations with regard to norms and beliefs about the purpose, importance, and permanence of marriage. For example, conservative (i.e., fundamentalist and evangelical) Protestants emphasize that marriage is to be a lifelong commitment between (heterosexual) partners, as part of a broader commitment to specific traditional family arrangements that are believed to be central to God’s plan (Bartkowski, 2001). And the Mormon (LDS) church embraces particularly strong and distinctive convictions regarding marriage as an eternal union (Heaton, Goodman, & Holman, 1994). It is reasonable to anticipate that the risk of marital dissolution may be greater among mixed-faith couples in which only one partner belongs to such an “exclusivist” church (Lehrer & Chiswick, 1993), because (a) such couples may experience fewer areas of commonality (in values, activities, and interests), (b) the partner(s) may be disinclined to compromise or negotiate over important areas of disagreement, and (c) this particular form of denominational heterogamy may carry increased risk of dissonant formal or informal feedback from coreligionists, which may deepen divisions among partners. Consistent with this line of argument, prior research suggests that this specific type of mixed-faith marriage is especially prone to marital conflict and dissolution (Chi & Houseknecht, 1983; Curtis & Ellison, 2002; Lehrer & Chiswick).

Despite the long-standing focus on denominational homo/heterogamy in studies of marital quality and stability, sociologists of religion have identified a number of reasons why the salience of denominational labels has declined in recent decades and why the American religious landscape today is characterized mainly by a sharp division between conservative (or traditionalist) and progressive religious elements (Wuthnow, 1988). One implication of these developments is that theological convictions, especially tendencies toward evangelical belief (e.g., regarding the inerrancy and authority of scripture) may be a better marker of existing religious cleavages than denominational affiliation or preference. Indeed, there is evidence that the link between denominational homogamy and marital quality has weakened across generations (Myers, 2006). On the other hand, several studies suggest that theological (dis)similarities among partners are robust predictors of some marital outcomes (Curtis & Ellison, 2002; Ellison &

Bartkowski, 2002; Ellison et al., 1999). Another strand of argument has accepted the “declining significance of denominationalism” thesis, but has asserted that they key religious differentials in the family arena may reflect degrees, rather than types, of religious involvement or commitment (Alwin, 1986; Thornton, 1985). To the extent that attendance at religious services is an indicator of the degree of religious engagement, this line of argument suggests that (dis)similarities among partners in the frequency of attendance will be linked with marital quality. At least one study of the frequency of arguments among first-time married couples lends credence to this claim (Curtis & Ellison). Thus, it is reasonable to expect that the risk of marital dissolution will be elevated among couples in which partners differ significantly in the frequency with which they attend services.

Finally, it may be important to consider the moderating role of gender in these analyses. Briefly, a wealth of data show that in the United States (and most other Western societies), women tend to be more religious than men by nearly all indicators and at virtually all stages of the life cycle (e.g., Miller & Hoffmann, 1995). Although the reasons for these gender differences remain in dispute, these patterns have implications for our study. For example, one expects that most religiously dissimilar couples will consist of more religiously active—and perhaps more religiously conservative—women married to less religious men. By contrast, couples in which the husband is more religiously committed, or more conservative, tend to be much less common. This nonnormative religious pattern may result in greater strain or conflict than other forms of religious dissimilarity, or it may be associated with other (perhaps unmeasured) nonnormative lifestyle or behavior patterns in these relationships. Perhaps for these reasons previous studies associate this pattern with more frequent arguments, especially over housework and money issues (Curtis & Ellison, 2002) and elevated risk of male perpetration of domestic violence (Ellison et al., 1999). In light of these patterns, our analyses will distinguish among these specific types of religiously dissimilar couples.

#### *Potential Mediating Factors*

As noted earlier, recent studies have documented religious variations in a number of

precursors and indicators of marital quality. First, religious attendance is inversely associated with domestic violence, although certain forms of theological and attendance dissimilarity among partners are linked with more frequent arguments and the risk of abuse (Curtis & Ellison, 2002; Ellison et al., 1999). Second, marital satisfaction tends to be higher among couples with similar denominational ties (e.g., Heaton, 1984); among mixed-faith couples, levels of satisfaction appear to vary by the degree of doctrinal (dis)similarity among the partners’ denominations (Ortega et al., 1988). With regard to satisfaction, attendance and theological (dis)similarity are notably less predictive than denominational homo/heterogamy (Heaton & Pratt, 1990). Finally, marital dependency—the extent to which the partners perceive limited or less desirable options outside their current marriage—also varies by the religious affiliation, practice, and homogamy of the partners. In general, members of more conservative groups, regular attenders, and those in denominationally homogamous unions report greater dependency, although the patterns differ somewhat for husbands and wives (Wilson & Musick, 1996).

#### *Covariates*

We can only be confident about any findings regarding religious effects on marital dissolution when we control for potentially confounding variables, that is, variables that are associated with both dependent and independent variables and that therefore may distort our view of their relationship(s). Previous research (Amato & Rogers, 1997; Cherlin, 1992; Teachman, 2003) has identified several important predictors of marital dissolution, including the following aspects of family composition and relationship history: marital duration, age (particularly age of the woman) at the time of (first) marriage, prior cohabitation, and presence of multiple children (especially young children). In addition, various socioeconomic factors—notably women’s employment status and earnings and educational and earnings dissimilarities among partners—have been shown to predict marital dissolution. Other demographic factors, notably race/ethnic background of partner(s), may also affect the risk of dissolution. Because recent work in the social scientific study of religion has also linked religious affiliation, practice, or both with virtually all of these predictors

(Lehrer, 2004; Mahoney et al., 2001; Sherkat & Ellison, 1999), it is important to include statistical adjustments for them in our models.

*Hypotheses*

The foregoing discussion suggests several hypotheses that will guide the remainder of this study:

1. Couples who marry in a religious ceremony will be less prone to marital dissolution than those who wed in a civil ceremony or other procedure.
2. The frequency of each partner’s attendance at religious services will be inversely related to the likelihood of marital dissolution.
3. The degree of each partner’s theological conservatism, represented as his or her commitment to the inerrancy and authority of the Bible, will be inversely related to the likelihood of marital dissolution.
4. Couples with similar denominational affiliations (i.e., those who are religiously homogamous) will face lower risk of marital dissolution than those from dissimilar faiths.
5. The effects of homogamy on marital dissolution will be most evident among couples who share conservative (i.e., fundamentalist or evangelical) or sectarian Protestant or Catholic affiliations.
6. Couples with similar denominational affiliations and similar religious attendance levels will face lower risk of marital dissolution compared to other couples.
7. Mixed-faith couples in which one partner belongs to an exclusivist faith denomination (i.e., evangelical or fundamentalist Protestant or sectarian) will have a greater risk of marital dissolution than others.
8. Couples in which partners have similar patterns of religious attendance will be less prone to marital dissolution than their dissimilar counterparts.
9. Couples in which partners hold similar theological beliefs regarding the nature and centrality of scripture will be less prone to marital dissolution than theologically dissimilar couples.
10. With regard to each of the hypotheses above, the observed effects of religious

variables will be reduced or eliminated with controls for measures of couples’ baseline marital quality, that is, satisfaction, conflicts (especially violent altercations), and dependency.

METHOD

We analyzed longitudinal data from Waves 1 and 2 of the NSFH, a major survey of U.S. families and households within the 48 contiguous states that was developed and supervised by social scientists at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. (For details, see Sweet & Bumpass, 1996; Sweet, Bumpass, & Call, 1988). Wave 1 was conducted in 1987–1988 and was designed to be a nationally representative probability survey of approximately 13,000 total respondents, including oversamples of several specific underrepresented groups: African Americans, Puerto Ricans and Mexican Americans, single-parent families, blended families, recently married couples, and cohabiting adults. Wave 2 included slightly over 10,000 respondents and was conducted in 1992–1994. We restricted our analyses to first-time married couples for which complete data were available for primary and secondary respondents, that is, for both spouses. An explanation of the sample reduction and the exclusion criteria is included in Table 1. The final sample size was 2,979 couples,

Table 1. *Sample Reduction and the Exclusion Criteria*

Sample Size	Percent of Sample Reduction	Exclusion Criteria
10,008		Total sample size of NSFH at Wave 2
5,648	43.5%	Limit sample of primary and secondary respondents who are married
4,567	54.3%	Drop respondents who report American Indian, Asian, and West Indian as their race
4,494	55%	Information on secondary respondent is unavailable
4,468	55.3%	No information on date of current marriage
3,156	68.4%	Limit sample to first-time marriages
2,979	70.2%	Theological beliefs, attendance, denominational affiliation of primary and secondary respondent is unavailable

of whom 311 were divorced or separated by the time of the Wave 2 interview.

### Outcome Measures

We model the risk of *marital dissolution* using a Cox proportional hazards regression model. Information about the event timing and occurrence was assessed using the date of separation or marital dissolution before Wave 2 for respondents who were in their first marriage at the time of data collection for Wave 1. For those who separated or divorced before Wave 2, the duration of the marriage was assessed using the number of months between the date of their current marriage (prior to Wave 1) and the date of their separation or divorce (before Wave 2). For those who remained in a first marriage at the time of data collection for Wave 2, duration of marriage was censored at the number of months between the date of current marriage (at Wave 1) and the date of the Wave 2 interview. Thus, the outcome measures consist of the timing of separation or marital dissolution and an indicator variable denoting whether the event time is observed or right censored.

### Independent Variables

All independent variables were measured at Wave 1. Independent variables regarding religious beliefs were (a) religious or civil marriage ceremony, (b) religious attendance, (c) religious dissimilarity, (d) theological beliefs of each spouse, (e) theological dissimilarity, (f) denomination, and (g) and denominational dissimilarity.

*Ceremony.* Using a dummy variable, we distinguished between couples that were married in religious ceremonies (i.e., by a priest, minister, or rabbi) from those who were married in civil ceremonies or other processes.

*Religious attendance.* Self-reported frequency of religious attendance is perhaps the most commonly used indicator of religious involvement in the social science literature. This was measured via responses to the item "How often do you attend religious services?" Based on their answers, respondents were categorized as (a) nonattenders, (b) sporadic attenders (i.e., those who attend services a few times per month or less), and (c) regular attenders (i.e., those who

attend weekly or more). In our analyses, we identified individual respondents who attend services regularly with a dummy variable (1 = *weekly or more*, 0 = *less often*). Preliminary analyses (not shown, but available upon request) revealed no evidence that more fine-grained attendance categories were linked with divorce.

In addition to considering the attendance patterns of each spouse, we also gauged the *attendance (dis)similarity* among marital partners. Similar to Curtis and Ellison (2002), the three attendance categories described above were used to identify (a) couples in which husbands attend more often than their wives and (b) couples in which wives attend more often than their husbands. Dummy variables were then used to code each of these two groupings, which were then compared to couples in which partners report similar religious attendance patterns.

*Theological beliefs.* The theological beliefs of each spouse were assessed using their (dis)agreement with the following statements: (a) "The Bible is God's Word and everything happened or will happen exactly as it says." (b) "The Bible is the answer to all important human problems." Original responses to the two items range from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*); responses were highly correlated ( $r = .78$ ). In classifying individual respondents as theologically conservative, we recoded each item, assigning a score of 1 on each item to those persons who agreed or strongly agreed and a 0 to all others. Preliminary analysis (not shown, but available upon request) showed no evidence that more fine-grained categories of theological conservatism were related to marital dissolution.

In determining the *theological (dis)similarity* of marital partners, we used the original coding of the items, subtracting the mean score for husbands from the mean score of wives. On the basis of these scores, we then created dummy variables to identify (a) couples in which husbands are more theologically conservative than their wives and (b) couples in which wives are more theologically conservative than their husbands. These two sets of couples were then compared to couples in which the partners report similar theological orientations. When a valid response to only one item was available for an individual respondent, that value was used as the basis for constructing these measures; this was done in order to maximize our sample size.

*Denomination.* Each NSFH respondent was asked "What is your religious preference?" For individuals who self-identified as Protestant, the interviewer was instructed to probe for a specific denomination. The resulting information was used to construct several denominations of homo/heterogamy. First, a single dummy was used to identify couples in which both spouses have identical affiliation (e.g., both Southern Baptist, both ELCA Lutheran, both United Church of Christ). Second, as an alternative, all denominations were categorized according to the scheme proposed by Steensland and colleagues (2000), yielding the following specific categories: (a) conservative (i.e., fundamentalist or evangelical) Protestant, (b) mainline Protestant, (c) Catholic, (d) other (non-Christian) religions, (e) no religion, and (f) miscellaneous other Protestant groups. Individuals who reported belonging to one of the other Protestant bodies were included in the conservative Protestant category if they reported regular attendance at religious services or held theologically conservative beliefs concerning the Bible; this practice parallels the advice of Steensland and colleagues (2000). Once each spouse was classified according to this scheme, we then created a series of dummy variables to identify the various types of same-faith couples (1 = *both conservative Protestant*, 1 = *both mainline Protestant*, 1 = *both Catholic*, 1 = *both other Protestant*, 1 = *both non-Christian*, 1 = *both nonreligious*), who were then compared with their religiously dissimilar counterparts (0 = *mixed-faith*). For example, according to the latter, more relaxed classification scheme, a couple in which one spouse is Southern Baptist and the other spouse belongs to another evangelical church would be considered homogamous. This would be classified as a mixed-faith (heterogamous) couple according to the first approach. Furthermore, our analyses classify couples according to whether husbands and wives are *homo/heterogamous in denominational affiliation and high, low, or mixed religious attendance levels*. In addition, we followed the practice of Lehrer and Chiswick (1993) and Curtis and Ellison (2002), using dummy variables to identify that subset of mixed-faith couples in which one partner was a member of an "exclusivist" faith (see the appendix for details).

#### *Intervening Variables: Marital Quality and Dependence*

To measure *marital satisfaction*, married respondents and spouses were asked: "Taking all things together, how would you describe your marriage?" Response categories ranged from 1 (*very unhappy*) to 7 (*very happy*). We include responses from each partner in our analyses. We also consider the possible role of *interpersonal violence* on the risk of subsequent marital dissolution. Briefly, each partner was asked: "Sometimes arguments between partners become physical. During the last year has this happened in arguments between you and your husband/wife?" Couples in which either spouse (or both spouses) answered this question in the affirmative are identified via a single dummy variable (1 = *presence of physical violence*, 0 = *no physical violence*). Finally, following Wilson and Musick (1996), we constructed measures of each partner's *marital dependency*, based on each spouse's perception of how much better or worse off she or he would be if not married to her or his current partner, as gauged via responses to the following item: "Even though it may be very unlikely, think for a moment about how various areas of your life might be different if you separated. For each of the following areas, how do you think things would change?" Specific areas included (a) standard of living, (b) social life, (c) career opportunities, (d) overall happiness, (e) sex life, and (f) being a parent. Responses to each item ranged from 1 to 6 and were recoded as needed so that higher scores represented greater dependency, that is, perception of fewer attractive options outside the current marriage. To create scales, responses were summed and then averaged across the number of items (Cronbach  $\alpha = .63$ ). Only respondents who answered all questions to create the marital dependency measure were included in the analysis.

#### *Sociodemographics*

Sociodemographic predictors of divorce incorporated into our analyses include (a) wives' age at marriage (measured in years), (b) wives' employment status (1 = *working outside the home*, 0 = *not working*), (c) couples' ethnicity (1 = *African American*, 1 = *Latino/a*, 1 = *mixed-race/ethnic couple*, 0 = *non-Hispanic White*), (d) residence in the South (1 = *residing*

in southern state, as classified by U.S. Census, 0 = living outside the South), (e) premarital cohabitation (1 = cohabited with a romantic partner prior to marriage who is not their current spouse, 0 = did not cohabit), (f) children under age 5 in home (actual number), and (g) children ages 5–18 living at home (actual number). In addition, these analyses control for duration of the marriage until the time of the baseline interview, which is measured via a series of dummy variables in which 2–3 years of marriage is the comparison group. Couples in which wives contributed the majority of the couple's total earned income were identified with a dummy variable (1 = woman contributed over 50%, 0 = all others). These analyses also include a measure of educational (dis)similarity among marital partners. Briefly, each spouse's education was coded in terms of the highest level completed; categories included less than high school, high school degree, some college or 2-year associate degree, college degree (baccalaureate), or graduate or professional degree. Couples with divergent levels of education were identified using a dummy variable (1 = dissimilar education, 0 = similar education).

#### ANALYTIC STRATEGY

This study used Cox proportional hazard regression to examine the impact of predictors on the risk of marital dissolution. We adjusted for the complex clustered sampling design using Sudaan (Research Triangle Institute, 2005), which provides robust standard errors for significance tests. The Cox regression model is widely used when time dependence in the baseline hazard is unknown (Vuchinich, Teachman, & Crosby, 1991). The Cox model provides less efficient estimates than a correctly specified parametric model. In the absence of knowledge about the "true" distribution of event times, however, the Cox model is preferable to a model that makes an incorrect assumption about the shape of the hazard over time. The Cox model makes no assumptions about the baseline hazard except that it is the same for all individuals who are at risk at any particular event time. It can be shown that the baseline hazard cancels out of the expression for the (partial) likelihood, and, as such, it is not directly estimated. This semiparametric model specification is considered to be a desirable feature that generally

outweighs concerns about modeling the specific nature of duration dependence. The exponentiated coefficients (hazard ratios) from the Cox regression provide for a convenient interpretation of results. A hazard ratio greater than 1.0 implies an increasing—or, if less than 1.0, a decreasing—risk of marital dissolution for a 1-unit increase in the independent variable at any event time.

The standard Cox proportional hazard model assumes that the effects of independent variables are constant over time. It may be the case, however, that religious characteristics and differences are more stressful at earlier points in a process than they are later on. Given the short (8-year) window of time between Waves 1 and 2, the issue of nonproportionality is of less concern than it would be if we were examining complete marriage histories. Nevertheless, we carried out checks of the proportionality assumption on all of the variables in our model. We found no evidence of nonproportional effects, either from statistical tests using Schoenfeld residuals (Schoenfeld, 1982) or from models estimated with linear time-varying effects, that is, using significance tests on the interactions with event time  $t$  for those at risk of separation or marital dissolution at time  $t$ .

#### RESULTS

##### Sample Characteristics

To conserve space, only the estimated net effects of religious variables and hypothesized mediating variables are discussed in the text. Weighted descriptive statistics on all variables used in these analyses are presented in Table 2. Approximately 9% of the couples in the sample separated or divorced between the Wave 1 and Wave 2 interviews. In terms of religious characteristics, several patterns were noteworthy. Eighty-five percent of these couples married in religious ceremonies, as opposed to civil or other procedures. Levels of self-reported religious attendance were relatively high: roughly 22% of the wives and 19% of the husbands attended religious services at least once per week. Where disparities in attendance exist, they tended to favor wives (30% of the cases) more than husbands (14%). Approximately 36% of wives were theologically conservative, according to our definition, as compared with 31% of husbands. In theologically dissimilar couples, wives reported greater conservatism

Table 2. *Weighted Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranges of All Predictors (N = 2,979)*

Variables	Percent	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.
Couples divorced or separated before Wave 2	9			0	1
Civil ceremony	15			0	1
Religious ceremony	85			0	1
Husbands attend once a week or more	19			0	1
Wives attend once a week or more	22			0	1
Husbands are theologically conservative	31			0	1
Wives are theologically conservative	36			0	1
Both same denomination/religion	74			0	1
Both Evangelical Protestant	19			0	1
Both Mainline Protestant	26			0	1
Both Catholic	25			0	1
Both Conservative Nontraditional	3			0	1
Both other religion	3			0	1
Both no denomination/religion	2			0	1
Mixed-faith	26			0	1
Homogamous, high attendance	21			0	1
Homogamous, low attendance	21			0	1
Homogamous, mixed attendance	30			0	1
Heterogamous, high attendance	3			0	1
Heterogamous, low attendance	11			0	1
Heterogamous, mixed attendance	14			0	1
Mixed-faith, neither exclusivist	14			0	1
Husbands are exclusivist, wives not	6			0	1
Wives are exclusivist, husbands not	7			0	1
Husbands attend more	14			0	1
Common attendance	56			0	1
Wives attend more	30			0	1
Husbands more theologically conservative	28			0	1
Common theological conservatism	30			0	1

Table 2. *Continued*

Variables	Percent	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.
Wives more theologically conservative	42			0	1
Husbands' marital satisfaction		6.4	0.77	1	7
Wives' marital satisfaction		6.0	1.2	1	7
Physical altercations	10			0	1
Husbands' marital dependency		3.6	0.6	1	6
Wives' marital dependency		3.7	0.6	1	6
White	87			0	1
Black	5			0	1
Hispanic	3			0	1
Mixed-race couples	4			0	1
Wives' age at marriage (in years)		22	4.5	18	71
Wives' employment status	58			0	1
Cohabitation	4			0	1
Southern region	33			0	1
Wives' income ratio	10			0	1
Same education level	62			0	1
Dissimilar education level	38			0	1
Number of children ages 5–18		0.8	1.1	0	8
Number of children ages 4 or less		0.3	0.6	0	5
Marital duration is 1 year or less	5			0	1
Marital duration is 2–3 years	6			0	1
Marital duration is 4 years	2			0	1
Marital duration is 5 years	3			0	1
Marital duration is 6 years	4			0	1
Marital duration is 7 years or more	79			0	1

(42%) than husbands (28%). Turning to other characteristics, the sample consisted mostly of non-Hispanic White couples, with small proportions of African American, Hispanic, and mixed-race/ethnicity couples. In this sample, the women's average age at marriage was 22 years and around 4% had cohabited prior to marriage. About 3 in 5 (58%) of the wives worked outside the home, and 1 in 10 (10%) contributed more to the household income than their husbands. The mean number of children under 18 was slightly under 1. In the baseline survey (Wave 1), these couples expressed relatively high levels of marital satisfaction, with an average score of 6 on

Table 3. *Estimated Hazard Ratios From a Cox Proportional Hazard Model of Marital Dissolution With Main Effects of Ceremony Type, Attendance, and Theological Belief (Weighted) (N = 2,979)*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
Black	1.09	0.94	1.13	0.88	1.21	0.94
Hispanic	0.64	0.83	0.70	0.75	0.73	0.76
Mixed-race couples	1.60**	1.58+	1.67**	1.52*	1.71**	1.50*
Reference: White						
Wives' age at marriage	0.93**	0.94**	0.93**	0.93**	0.92**	0.93***
Wives' employment	1.47**	1.27*	1.43**	1.33+	1.42**	1.32+
Dissimilar education	0.91	0.88	0.89	0.89	0.87	0.87
Income ratio	1.21*	1.13	1.23	1.08	1.23	1.09
Cohabitation	2.26***	1.71**	2.29***	1.96**	2.44***	2.03**
Southern region	1.26***	1.25***	1.30+	1.25	1.34+	1.30
Children ages 5–18	1.39***	1.30**	1.41+	1.35***	1.40***	1.35***
Children ages 4 or less	1.43***	1.27**	1.45***	1.36**	1.47***	1.38**
Married 1 year or less	2.43***	2.96***	2.48***	2.58***	2.50***	2.61***
Married 4 years	0.45***	0.53**	0.44***	0.50**	0.44**	0.49**
Married 5 years	0.19***	0.18***	0.20***	0.21***	0.19***	0.21***
Married 6 years	0.14***	0.15***	0.14***	0.15***	0.13***	0.14***
Married 7 years or more	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***
Religious ceremony	0.70*	0.79				
Husbands' attendance			0.75	0.93		
Wives' attendance			0.70+	0.78		
Husbands' belief					0.69**	0.71*
Wives' belief					1.11	1.10
Husbands' marital satisfaction		0.91		0.91		0.90
Wives' marital satisfaction		0.76***		0.76***		0.76***
Physical altercations		1.65**		1.65***		1.67**
Husbands' marital dependency		0.94***		0.94**		0.94***
Wives' marital dependency		0.95***		0.95**		0.95***
<i>df</i>	17	22	18	23	18	23
$-2\log L^a$	3488.4	3354.8	3484.7	3354.0	3487.4	3351.7

<sup>a</sup>*L* denotes the partial likelihood.

+*p* < .10. \**p* < .05. \*\**p* < .01. \*\*\**p* < .001.

a scale of 1 to 7, and both husbands and wives indicated moderate levels of marital dependency. Ten percent of couples reported a recent history of physical altercations in the Wave 1 survey.

### *Multivariate Effects of Religion*

In Tables 3–5, we present the weighted results of multivariate Cox proportional hazards models, estimating the net effects of religious variables and covariates on the risk of marital dissolution. Odd numbered models gauge religious effects without controls for baseline measures of marital quality; even numbered models include these additional controls. In Table 3, consistent with Hypothesis 1, we find

that couples married in a religious ceremony face a 30% lower risk (risk ratio = .70, *p* < .05) of separation or marital dissolution at any time during the study period than those who married in civil or other ceremonies, according to Model 1. This religious effect was sharply diminished when adjustments for marital satisfaction, conflicts, and dependency were included. A similar pattern surfaced with regard to Hypothesis 2; in Model 3, wives' attendance (risk ratio = .70, *p* < .10) was inversely related to the risk of subsequent marital dissolution. These effects of religious attendance disappeared when baseline marital quality was controlled for. Confirming Hypothesis 3, there was a protective effect of conservative theological beliefs in Model 5, and once baseline

Table 4. Estimated Hazard Ratios From a Cox Proportional Hazard Model of Marital Dissolution with Denominational Homogamy and Heterogamy Covariates (Weighted) (N = 2,979)

Variables	1	2	3	4
Black	1.17	0.86	1.12	0.85
Hispanic	0.75	0.78	0.74	0.77
Mixed-race couples	1.72**	1.54*	1.67**	1.51*
Reference: White				
Wives' age at marriage	0.92**	0.93**	0.93**	0.94**
Wives' employment	1.44**	1.34*	1.43**	1.32+
Dissimilar education	0.88	0.89	0.88	0.89
Income ratio	1.24	1.08	1.24	1.08
Cohabitation	2.37***	1.99**	2.19**	1.89**
Southern region	1.29+	1.24	1.27	1.21
Children ages 5 – 18	1.40***	1.35***	1.41***	1.36***
Children ages 4 or less	1.46***	1.36**	1.45***	1.36**
Married 1 year or less	2.44***	2.57**	2.46***	2.61***
Married 4 years	0.45***	0.50**	0.46**	0.53**
Married 5 years	0.19***	0.21***	0.19***	0.22***
Married 6 years	0.13***	0.14***	0.14***	0.15***
Married 7 years or more	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***
Both same denomination	0.82	0.94		
Both Evangelical Protestant			0.77	0.89
Both Mainline Protestant			0.73	0.79
Both Catholic			0.70+	0.71+
Both Conservative Nontraditional			0.45	0.52
Both no denomination			1.04	1.20
Both other religion			0.92	1.00
Reference: mixed-faith couples				
Husbands' marital satisfaction		0.91		0.92
Wives' marital satisfaction		0.76***		0.76***
Physical altercations		1.66**		1.65**
Husbands' marital dependency		0.94***		0.94***
Wives' marital dependency		0.95***		0.95***
df	17	22	22	27
-2log L <sup>a</sup>	3, 489.1	3, 355.5	3, 486.0	3, 350.0

<sup>a</sup>L denotes the partial likelihood.

+p < .10. \*p < .05. \*\*p < .01. \*\*\*p < .001.

marital quality was controlled, husbands' (but not wives') theological conservatism had a protective effect on the risk of marital dissolution in Model 6 (risk ratio = .71, *p* < .05).

The estimated net effects of denominational homo/heterogamy are displayed in Table 4. As noted earlier, we measure homogamy in two different ways: (a) couples in which partners shared identical religious affiliations and (b) couples in which spouses belonged to different specific denominations within the same religious category. Somewhat surprisingly, and contrary to our expectation (Hypotheses 4

and 5), neither approach revealed advantages of religious homogamy. There was a modest estimated effect in Model 3; homogamous Catholic couples (risk ratio = .70, *p* < .10) appeared somewhat less prone to marital dissolution than their mixed-faith counterparts. This modest advantage remained with controls for baseline marital quality.

The models in Table 5 examine the role of other types of religious (dis)similarity, denominational homo/heterogamy and high, low, or mixed religious attendance levels of couples in our sample. Consistent with Hypothesis 6,

Table 5. *Estimated Hazard Ratios from a Cox Proportional Hazard Model of Marital Dissolution with Denomination and Attendance Dissimilarity Measures (Weighted) (N = 2,979)*

Variables	1	2	3	4
Black	1.11	0.90	1.12	0.88
Hispanic	0.71	0.75	0.73	0.77
Mixed-race couples	1.76**	1.63**	1.72**	1.55*
Reference: White				
Wives' age at marriage	0.92**	0.93**	0.93**	0.94**
Wives' employment	1.37**	1.30+	1.45*	1.35*
Dissimilar education	0.88	0.89	0.88	0.89
Income ratio	1.23	1.08	1.22*	1.08
Cohabitation	2.19**	1.94**	2.37**	2.00**
Southern region	1.28+	1.23	1.27	1.23
Children ages 5–18	1.43***	1.36***	1.40***	1.35***
Children ages 4 or less	1.44***	1.33**	1.45**	1.36**
Married 1 year or less	2.34***	2.45***	2.49***	2.55**
Married 4 years	0.46***	0.50***	0.45***	0.50**
Married 5 years	0.19***	0.20***	0.19***	0.21***
Married 6 years	0.14***	0.14***	0.13***	0.14***
Married 7 years or more	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***
Homogamous, low attendance	2.08**	1.65*		
Homogamous, mixed attendance	2.36***	1.91**		
Heterogamous, high attendance	2.11*	2.04+		
Heterogamous, low attendance	2.45**	1.72*		
Heterogamous, mixed attendance	2.66***	1.94**		
Reference: homogamous, high attendance				
Husbands are exclusivist faith			1.02	0.97
Wives are exclusivist faith			1.57*	1.26
Husbands' marital satisfaction		0.76		0.91
Wives' marital satisfaction		0.91***		0.76***
Physical altercations		1.65***		1.66**
Husbands' marital dependency		0.95***		0.94***
Wives' marital dependency		0.96**		0.95***
<i>df</i>	21	26	18	23
–2Log likelihood	3,469.9	3,345.5	3,487.8	3,354.3

+ $p < .10$ . \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Model 1 showed that couples with similar denominational affiliations and high religious attendance levels appeared to be protected from marital dissolution compared to all other couples. Once baseline variations in marital quality variables were controlled in Model 2, these differences remained. Couples that differ in religious affiliation and had mixed attendance levels were at an elevated risk of marital dissolution (risk ratio = 1.94,  $p < .01$ ). Furthermore, consistent with Hypothesis 7, Model 3 indicated that mixed-faith couples in which wives belonged to an exclusivist (conservative Protestant or sectarian) faith displayed a markedly higher risk of marital dissolution (risk ratio = 1.57,  $p < .05$ ).

This pattern, however, diminished after statistical adjustments for baseline indicators of marital quality were added in Model 4. Contrary to Hypothesis 7, with mixed-faith couples in which the husband was exclusivist, there was no such elevated risk of dissolution.

The models in Table 6 examine the role of other types of religious (dis)similarity, specifically attendance and theological differences among spouses. Consistent with Hypothesis 8, Model 1 shows that couples in which the husband attended services more often than his spouse (risk ratio = 1.71,  $p < .01$ ) appeared to be more marital dissolution prone than those couples in which spouses reported similar attendance

Table 6. Estimated Hazard Ratios From a Cox Proportional Hazard Model of Marital Dissolution With Attendance and Belief Dissimilarity Measures (Weighted) (N = 2,979)

Variables	1	2	3	4
Black	1.10	0.87	1.15	0.88
Hispanic	0.70	0.76	0.72	0.76
Mixed-race couples	1.68**	1.51*	1.74**	1.54*
Reference: White				
Wives' age at marriage	0.92**	0.93**	0.92**	0.93**
Wives' employment	1.44**	1.35*	1.44**	1.34*
Dissimilar education	0.89	0.89	0.87	0.88
Income ratio	1.23	1.07	1.24	1.09
Cohabitation	2.50***	2.11**	2.37***	1.98**
Southern region	1.28+	1.25	1.31+	1.27
Children ages 5 – 18	1.39***	1.35***	1.39***	1.34***
Children ages 4 or less	1.46***	1.36**	1.45***	1.37**
Married 1 year or less	2.56***	2.60***	2.54***	2.67***
Married 4 years	0.44***	0.48***	0.44***	0.51***
Married 5 years	0.19***	0.20***	0.19***	0.22***
Married 6 years	0.14***	0.15***	0.14***	0.15***
Married 7 years or more	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***
Husbands attend more	1.71**	1.60**		
Wives attend more	1.22	1.12		
Reference: Homogamous attendance				
Husbands more theologically conservative			1.10	0.97
Wives more theologically conservative			1.37*	1.28+
Reference: Homogamous theology				
Husbands' marital satisfaction		0.90		0.90
Wives' marital satisfaction		0.76***		0.76***
Physical altercations		1.65***		1.67**
Husbands' marital dependency		0.95***		0.94***
Wives' marital dependency		0.95**		0.95***
df	18	23	18	23
-2log L <sup>a</sup>	3,482.0	3,348.2	3,489.1	3,352.6

<sup>a</sup>L denotes the partial likelihood.

+  $p < .10$ . \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

patterns. Once baseline variations in marital quality variables were controlled in Model 2, these differences remained (risk ratio = 1.60,  $p < .01$ ). And in partial support of Hypothesis 9, the estimates in Model 3 indicated that couples in which wives were more theologically conservative than their husbands were more prone to dissolution (risk ratio = 1.37,  $p < .05$ ) than theologically similar couples. Although this pattern was largely reflective of baseline differences in marital quality variables, a modest difference (risk ratio = 1.28,  $p < .10$ ) still persisted in Model 4. There were no comparable effects for couples in which husbands were more theologically conservative than their spouses.

### DISCUSSION

This study has examined religious variations in the risk of marital dissolution, complementing previous work in this area in several ways: (a) by giving attention to multiple dimensions of religious involvement (i.e., affiliation, practice, theological conservatism) as well as multiple aspects of religious (dis)similarity for each couple, (b) by analyzing prospective data using Cox proportional hazards models, and (c) by considering the potential mediating roles of multiple measures of baseline marital quality and dependency. Several of the broad empirical patterns identified here deserve special comment.

First, indicators of religiousness or religious commitment (i.e., decision to have a religious vs. civil marriage ceremony, wives' religious attendance) bear a modest inverse relationship to the risk of subsequent marital dissolution. The weak estimated net effects of these general religious measures, however, are essentially eliminated once baseline marital quality and dependency are controlled, suggesting that more religious couples are less prone to divorce because, on average, they enjoy higher marital satisfaction, face a lower likelihood of domestic violence, and perceive fewer attractive options outside the marriage than their less religious counterparts. Beyond these factors, there is little independent effect of religious involvement *per se* on marital dissolution.

A second key finding is that the theological conservatism of husbands (but not that of wives) is inversely related to the risk of divorce. In contrast to the patterns involving religious ceremony and partners' religious attendance, the protective effect of the husband's theological conservatism persists even with controls for baseline marital quality and dependence. Some studies address the effect of conservative religion on men (Bartkowski & Xu, 2000; Wilcox, 2002, 2004). For example, Wilcox (2004) assigns special importance to the role of conservative religious norms, expectations, and networks in constraining the behavior of men. According to Wilcox (2004), conservative religion helps to discipline and domesticate many men, such that they are more focused on family related responsibilities, domestic needs, and emotional nurturing (Bartkowski, 2001). In these families, conservative theological beliefs may protect against divorce.

A third major issue addressed in this study centers on the role of denominational homogamy in shaping marital duration and the hypothesis that mixed-faith marriages face greater challenges than others. Here the findings are mixed. Although the benefits of same-faith marriage *per se* are negligible, the effects of denominational homogamy are contingent upon the degree of the partners' religious participation, as suggested by Waite and Lehrer (2003). Specifically, the risk of dissolution is substantially lower among homogamous couples in which both partners attend religious services regularly. This pattern—altered only slightly by controls for baseline marital quality—is broadly consistent with the popular adage that “families

that pray together, stay together.” Such a result may reflect the long-term benefits of ideological and lifestyle similarity among partners or the consistency and homogeneity of their social networks or their access to congregational resources that could bolster marital bonds, for example, specific support programs or pastoral counseling. It is conceivable that these couples could also incur higher social costs (e.g., stigma, social awkwardness) that could deter or delay marital dissolution. Clearly further investigation is warranted on this score.

This analysis demonstrates that similar denominational affiliation and frequent religious attendance by both spouses offers a protective effect against marital dissolution over time. By categorizing couples in this manner, we show that religious dissimilarity in multiple areas of religious life influences marital dissolution beyond gender-specific differences. In addition, one particular type of mixed-faith marriage appears to carry a greater risk of dissolution than others: Heterogamous couples in which wives, but not husbands, are members of an exclusivist (i.e., fundamentalist, evangelical, or sectarian) faith are especially prone to divorce. In a parallel finding, couples in which wives are more theologically conservative than husbands also face elevated risk of marital dissolution. This consistent gender-specific effect of mixed-faith marriage clarifies and extends the results of previous studies, several of which also identified exclusivist/nonexclusivist denominational heterogamy as a risk factor for divorce (Chi & Houseknecht, 1983; Lehrer & Chiswick, 1993). What might account for the comparatively greater risk of marital dissolution among these kinds of mixed-faith couples? Viewed broadly, the possible reasons may include such factors as (a) value and lifestyle dissensus among partners, (b) dissonant network composition and feedback concerning marital issues or other matters, and (c) negative conflict and conflict resolution approaches (e.g., nagging, preaching). Studies focused on the general population indicate that women are more likely to initiate marital dissolution than men (e.g., Brinig & Allen, 2000); we have no direct information on whether this pattern is also found among religious conservatives. If this is indeed the case, however, then the specific pairing at elevated risk—exclusivist, theologically conservative women and nonexclusivist, nonconservative men—seems particularly significant. As we

noted earlier, recent studies emphasize the role of conservative religious ideals and communities in domesticating men, inclining them toward greater family responsibility and spiritual leadership within the home. Women who embrace these expectations of “Godly men” may be easily disappointed by the failure of their husbands to live up to these images; expressions of such frustration surface occasionally in the literature on religion and gender (e.g., Rose, 1987). Thus, if they have adequate social support and material resources, conservative women may opt to terminate unsatisfying marriages. This explanation is admittedly speculative and tentative, but this and other explanations for the observed pattern clearly warrant further investigation.

Another noteworthy finding in this study concerns the elevated risk of divorce among couples in which the husband attends religious services more often than his spouse, even with statistical adjustments for baseline marital quality and dependency. Three possible, but admittedly speculative, explanations occur to us. First, it is possible that some highly religious men may tend to embrace strict moral codes or lifestyle norms to which their wives may be less committed. This could fuel discussions and disputes about joint and individual leisure activities as well as other matters. Second, it is conceivable that some highly religious men endorse patriarchal gender ideology, including expectations concerning the division of household labor, female labor force activity, and other issues (Ellison et al., 1999; Sherkat, 2000). Although traditional roles appeal to some women, less religious wives may experience these scripts as constraining or demeaning. Finally, the husband’s religious involvement itself may become a source of conflict; this can result from disagreements over his commitments of time or money to the congregation or from pressures on his partner to convert or attend more often. To our knowledge, this issue has not been examined in previous research, but in light of our findings it deserves investigation in the future.

In sum, our findings demonstrate modest but important influences of multiple dimensions of religious involvement on the risk of marital dissolution. Although some of these relationships can be explained in terms of the more general links between religion and aspects of marital quality and dependency, others seem to involve direct effects on

dissolution per se. Taken together, these findings suggest that even if the salience of some religious factors (e.g., denominational homogamy) for marital quality may be diminishing (Myers, 2006), other dimensions of religion continue to influence marital outcomes. Further research along the lines indicated above will enrich our understanding of these complex relationships.

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APPENDIX

Respondents were considered as exclusivist faith if their reported denomination was Baptist, Mormon, Assemblies of God, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Christian Reformed, Church of God (Anderson, IN, Cleveland, TN, no affiliation specified, in Christ), Church of the Nazarene, Church of Christ, Evangelical Free Church, Evangelical Covenant Church, Full Gospel Fellowship, International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, Jehovah’s Witness, Pentecostal, Reformed Church, Reorganized Mormon, Salvation Army, Seventh Day Adventists, Wesleyan, All Reformed Presbyterian Churches, and all members of the Pietist, Holiness, Pentecostal, Adventist, Latter-Day Saint, and Independent Fundamentalist families. This group included respondents who reported they were “born again Christian” or “charismatic.”

APPENDIX: RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS BY GROUP

*Evangelical Protestant*

Assembly of God (or Assemblies of God), Baptist, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Christian Reformed, Church of God-Anderson, IN, Church of God-Cleveland, TN, Church of God (no affiliation specified), Church of the Brethren (Brethren), Church of the Nazarene (Nazarene), Church of Christ, Evangelical Covenant Church, Evangelical Free Church, Full Gospel Fellowship, International Church of the Foursquare Gospel (Foursquare Gospel), Mennonite Pentecostal or all churches with Pentecostal in

title, all other members of Pietist Family, Salvation Army, Seventh Day Adventists, Wesleyan, all other members of Holiness Family, all other members of Pentecostal Family, all other members of European Free Church Family (Mennonites, Amish, Brethren, Quakers), all members of Independence Fundamentalist Family, all other members of Adventist Family, those who report that they are “born again Christian,” or “Charismatic.”

*Mainline Protestant*

Church of God in Christ (Black Protestant), Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Church—any modifier such as First, Eastside, Community, etc., Christian-Disciples, Christian—not including “just a Christian” or “Christian-no denomination,” Christian Congregation, Christian Reformed Church of North America (Christian Reformed), Churches of Christ subfamily—Restoration “Christian” (no other description given, could be “just a Christian” or member of Christian Church), all other members of the Christian Church, Episcopalian, Lutheran, Methodist Reformed Church (Reformed), Presbyterian Reformed Church (Reformed), United Church of Christ (Congregational), all other Reformed-Presbyterian Churches, Protestant (no denomination given).

*Catholic*

All other Western Catholic Churches, Roman Catholic

*Conservative Nontraditional*

Church of Christ, Scientist (Christian Scientist), Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormon, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Reorganized Mormon), and all other members of Latter-day Saint Family Protestant (Unspecified denomination).

*Liberal Nontraditional*

Community churches (Interdenominational; nonsectarian), all members of communal groups, all New Thought Family, all Psychic Group, all Ritual Magick Groups, Personal churches (my own, practice at home, studying different

churches; personal Bible study, believe in Supreme Being), Unitarian.

*Other Religion*

Jewish, Orthodox Churches (any Eastern, Greek, Russian, Serbian, or Ukrainian Orthodox,

churches including Orthodox Church in America, American Orthodox Church, Non-Chalcedonian Orthodox Churches, including Armenian, Assyrian, Syrian, Coptic, and Ethiopian), all Islamic subfamily, all Hindu subfamily, all Buddhist subfamily, all Shinto and Taoism families, all miscellaneous religious bodies.