Are the Evangelicals an Ethnic Group?

Thoughts on Scots-Irish Politics

Ronald R. Stockton

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This paper has a simple thesis: We cannot understand the Evangelical religious right as a political force unless we understand that *at the core of that political force* is not merely a doctrinal system but an ethnic group. The ethnic group are the Scots-Irish, a group with exceptional significance in American history but a group seldom seen today in ethnic terms even by themselves. Their history was so odd compared with other immigrant groups, and they were so outspoken and passionate, even pig-headed, about doctrinal issues, that they were classified as a doctrinal group rather than as an ethnic group. (The apocryphal prayer of the Scots-Irish Presbyterian was, "Lord grant that I may be always right, for thou knowest I am hard to turn"). Nor did they want to be seen in ethnic terms. When they came to American in the 1700s, they left a place, not a homeland. They carried no residual territorial identity with them. Hyphenating them would for many be an incomprehensible offense. Their identity was and remains *by gum* American.

First, a personal story. In 1969 when I was a graduate student I was reading the *Detroit Free Press* and had faithfully finished the editorial page when I saw the *Ask Billy Graham* column. Graham was asked about Flag Day and whether it was appropriate for a Christian to honor a flag. He said Christians were expected to be loyal citizens and should show respect for the flag. I realized that many more people would read Graham than the Op Ed page and that I needed to think of religion as a political paradigm. Later, I spent over of a year reading books by and about Graham, scores of his sermons, hundreds of his Question columns. I also got interested in Jerry Falwell when he became the point man of the Republican right in their efforts to lure Evangelical Protestants into the Republican Party. Moral Majority was founded in 1979 to break Evangelicals away from the Democratic Party by appealing to their sense of religious estrangement, patriotism, and hostility to authority, as well as their adherence to traditional values. These are the so-called wedge issues, and the strategy worked well. Carter carried this vote in 1976 but it was in the Republican camp by 1980, and remained there. Pat Robertson ran for President in 1988 under this banner.

I also noted that many politicized Evangelical leaders had border-state accents. They were not southern but were from Kentucky, Tennessee, the Carolinas, and places in Oklahoma, Texas and northern Georgia populated by people from those states. To me, these men were political figures as much as religious figures. This produced a second insight, that there was a religio/cultural core at the heart of this movement. For decades, I thought of this as a sub-culture, but now I think it is an ethnic group.

The Scots-Irish became the core of what in the 1980s was known as the New Religious Right. Jerry Falwell became the point man of the Republican right in their efforts to draw Evangelical Protestants into the Republican Party. Moral Majority was founded in 1979 to break Christian conservatives away from the Democratic Party by appealing to their sense of religious estrangement, patriotism, and hostility to authority, as well as their adherence to traditional cultural values. These are the so-called wedge issues, and the strategy worked well. Carter carried this vote in 1976 but it was in the Republican camp by 1980, and remained there. Pat Robertson ran for President in 1988 under this banner. Anyone paying attention to the key leaders of the Evangelical movement would note that they had not southern accents but border state accents. They were from Kentucky, Tennessee, the Carolinas, and places in Oklahoma, Texas, southern Ohio and northern Georgia populated by people from those states. In addition to Falwell and Robertson, there was Billy Graham, and the leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention (Charles Stanley, Paige Patterson, W. A. Criswell, Judge Pressler). In many ways, these men were political figures as much as religious figures. The old Evangelical religious tradition of leaving politics to the politicians and putting your emphasis on saving souls yielded to a new politicized understanding of religious obligation. In a broad sense, there was a regional/cultural core at the heart of this movement. One might think of it as a sub-culture, but it is really an ethnic group.

Wald and Calhoun-Brown (2007:206) observed in their book on religion and politics that "The chances are very good you would not be reading this book if it wasn't for the social movement known as the Christian Right."[1] But how do we explain the

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[1]Wald and Calhoun-Brown (2007: 206-7) note that in past eras, evangelicals were associated with progressive causes. In the antebellum north they were strongly anti-slavery, and after that war they "generally sided with a variety of movements designed to purify American politics of various corrupting influences." In particular, "the evangelical impulse was a driving force behind such disparate movements

Christian right as a political movement? I believe we have been distracted by religious labels and rhetoric and have mis-conceptualized the Evangelicals by focusing disproportionately upon one aspect of their identity, that being the doctrinal aspect. To be sure, there is within that religious tradition **"**an authentic conservatism" but there is more than that.[2] They will often describe themselves as "bible believing Christians" but will then describe positions that sound remarkably like a Republican platform. The external voice of the Evangelical political movement is religious but the base of that movement is more than that. Seeing Evangelicals only in doctrinal or theological terms takes people out of history and mistakes their rhetoric for their lives. As Bruce Lincoln (2003:6) noted, a belief system has to be sustained by a community, and a community exists in the political system

But assuming that we can understand Evangelical political behavior by reading their theology makes no more sense than assuming we can understand how Jews will vote by reading the Torah. By reconceptualizing Evangelicals as *an ethnic group engaging in ethnic politics,* a whole range of scholarly literature opens up to us and we get a much better understanding of who they are and why they behave as they do. It also helps us see why so many doctrinal Evangelicals do not support the Evangelical right.

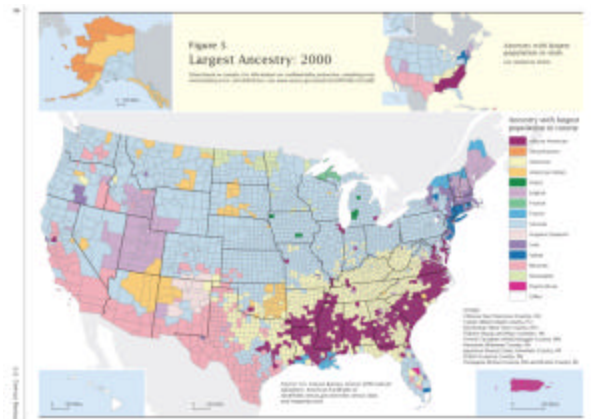## Who are the Scots-Irish as a historic people?

The Scots-Irish are described well by Fischer (1989) in his book *Albion's Seed.* He says we tend to reduce four distinctive British religio-ethnic groups to a common "Anglo" heritage while in fact they are quite different from each other in culture, religion, class, and political expression. These four groups are the Puritans (New England Yankees), Cavaliers (Virginia planter elite, with their white indentured servants and African slaves), the Quakers of Pennsylvania and New Jersey, and the Scots-Irish of

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as currency reform, women's suffrage, regulation of corporate abuses, arbitration of international conflicts, and the adoption of 'direct democracy' through the initiative, referendum, and recall election."
[2] If I may offer a personal story. In 1969 when I was a graduate student I was reading the *Detroit Free Press* and had faithfully finished the editorial page when I saw the *Ask Billy Graham* column. Graham was asked about Flag Day and whether it was appropriate for a Christian to honor a flag. He said Christians were expected to be loyal citizens and should show respect for the flag. I realized that many more people would read Graham than the Op Ed page. I realized that I needed to think of religion as a political paradigm. Later, I spent over of a year reading books by and about Graham, scores of his sermons, hundreds of his *My Answer* columns.

the hilly backcountry. The Scots-Irish arrived in a massive wave of a quarter of a million in the decades before American independence. Ironically, they were "neither entirely Irish nor still fully Scotish" but were a distinctive people with "distinctive origins" Phillips (1991: 179). They were originally from the border where Scotland and England came together. This was an area where "endemic violence shaped the culture" (Fischer, 1989: 623). For 700 years, every English monarch except three experienced a war on that border (Fischer 1989: 623). It was a place of blended culture whose people were marginalized in economic, political, and theological terms. Many were nominally Baptists or Presbyterians but they were really independents. They had "a deep interest in reformed religion, a settled hostility to the established church, a belief in 'free grace,' a habit of field meetings, and 'a bias toward New Light Christianity'" (Fischer, 1989: 616). When England conquered Ireland, and Northern Ireland/Ulster was opened to settlement, many migrated to that place. But they were also second class citizens there, marginalized by the English elite. They were suspicious, hostile to bishops and rulers, biblically intense, with a strong sense of persecution. A century later when they left for America they were "a toughened frontier breed, quite different from other Britons," hardened by "two or three generations on a bloody and rugged frontier" (Phillips, 1991: 179).

They arrived in America just in time to join the revolution. Unlike the Scots, who tended to be Tories, the Scots-Irish were mostly on the patriot side. In 1781, General William L. Davidson, his North Carolina army undermanned in confronting the British, sent emergency messages to all Presbyterian churches in the area. It was

a Sunday and within hours he had a large mobilized force at his command (Phillips:1999: 185). In the critical Battle of King's Mountain, 1790, when American militias in South Carolina smashed Tory forces and forced Cornwallis into a war-ending change in British strategy, eight of the ten militia commanders had arrived from 1726-1740, and seven of nine whose origins were known came from the borderlands of north Britain (Fischer,

1989: 649). Of the five key militia leaders, all five were Presbyterian elders. In a political sense, the congregation was the organizational manifestation of the people.

What is an Ethnic Group?

Why are the Evangelicals an ethnic group? An ethnic group is an ideological construct, i.e., a socially defined category which exists only if we think it exists. The boundaries of any ethnic or cultural group are porous. If we say the Scots-Irish dominated eastern Tennessee in the decades after the American Revolution, it is easy to go to the census records and show that many of the people in that area had German, English, Scots or French names. Likewise, if we say the Evangelical movement is dominated by Scots-Irish, it is easy to make a list of names of prominent leaders and find exceptions. But cultures have power, including the power to absorb others. As Fischer (1989: **xx)** puts it, "So well adapted was the border culture to this environment that other ethnic groups tended to copy it." Moreover, ethnic groups have interests, both class interests and interests vis-à-vis the power centers of society. They also tend to behave, through their leadership and through their voting patterns, in ways that political scientists can identity.

There are several definitions of an ethnic group but they have parallel themes. Most make reference to a sense of common history and identity, typically linked to a national origin. Most involve cultural values, perhaps a religious tradition, and a sense of boundaries as to who is in the group and who is not. An ethnic group typically occupies a position within the economic and power structure. Christiano *et al* (2002: 155) define ethnicity as "people who are presumed, by members of the group itself and by outsiders, to have a shared collective origin and history, and a common set of cultural attributes that serve to establish boundaries between the group and the larger society." Aswad (1993:6) says they are a collectivity within a larger society having a real or fictive common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past and a cultural focus on symbolic elements. These elements may include language, religion, physical appearance,

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tribal identification. Ethnic groups occur in stratified societies and include persons from different classes. They have institutional components such as religious centers, newspapers, clubs. They have norms, values and beliefs. But ethnic boundaries are not deterministic or fixed. Putnam and Campbell (2010:504) define an ethnicity as "a shared history, legacy of persecution, mass migration, and geographic concentration." Rudolph and Rudolph (1967) note that boundaries can change across time, absorbing or losing sub-groups and individuals. As a general rule, when tensions with society or other groups disappear or when the group loses its class position, or when individuals leave the core class, group boundaries fade.

The Scots-Irish are a difficult group to detect in today's political system because they lack two characteristics associated with ethnic groups. First, they left a place, not a homeland, and were pleased to be out of it. Second, they never identified themselves with ethnicity, but with religion. They were a "people with no name" (Griffin, 2001).

How have Scholars viewed the "Fundamentalist" or "Evangelical" Movements?

Scholars have tended to obliterate Scots-Irish identity by blending them into other broad groups. Public opinion researchers developed the concept of a "Protestant," which Glock and Stark as early as 1968 renounced as a "statistical fiction" (p. 56). Not until the 1980s did surveys tap Evangelical identity. For a time, WASP had its day in the sun, and today there is the concept of "white" or Euro-American (Alba, 1990). As Webb (2004: 323) put it in his book on the Scots-Irish, "white America is so variegated that it is an ethnic fairy tale." He adds that the concept of the WASP lumped the Scots-Irish "in with the New England Brahmin elites. In this perverted logic, those who had been the clearest victims of Yankee colonialism were now grouped together with the beneficiaries."

Most scholars have seen the Evangelicals in terms of doctrinal disputes. Sandeen (1970) analyzed the roots of fundamentalism over a 130-year period, focusing primarily upon doctrinal issues. When *Christianity Today* (1979) conducted a major poll of religious beliefs, they defined Evangelicals in terms of belief in the divinity of Christ, salvation through Jesus, the Bible as the word of God, a born again experience, a willingness to encourage others to believe in Jesus, and a literal interpretation of the Bible. Gallup focuses upon born again experience, encouraging others to believe in Jesus,

and a literal interpretation of the Bible. Rothenberg and Newport (1984: 18) looked at those who believed Jesus was a real person, the unique son of God, salvation only through Jesus, and a born again experience. Fowler and Hertzke (1995: 14-15) defined "the evangelical dimension" in a personal sense (adherence to traditional tenets of the Christian faith, an adult conversation experience, and aggressive evangelizing), and as having evangelizing institutional strategies. These are very broad categories. They are doctrinal rather than political, and include many people not of the religious right.

But others identified a cultural dimension. Longfield (1991) noted that while "the Presbyterian controversy" of the early twentieth century, which split the church, took the form of disputes over theology and ecclesiology, it was also a battle over a culture at risk and the role of Christianity in reviving that culture. As he put it, "Matters of religion and culture were inextricably intertwined. While the leaders of the conflict fought on the battlefields of doctrine, polity, and administration, cultural concerns dramatically affected the controversy and its outcome" (p. 8). Marsden (1980: 231) saw political militancy as different from theological fundamentalism and described the conflicts in the following way: "While militancy against modernism was the key distinguishing factor that drew fundamentalists together, militancy was not necessarily the central trait of fundamentalists. Missions, evangelism, prayer, personal holiness, or a variety of doctrinal concerns may often or usually have been their first interest. Yet without militancy, none of these important aspects of the movement set it apart as 'fundamentalist.'" In other words, the movement was *a militant style* rooted in a religious tradition, but was distinct from the religious tradition.[3]   Marsden also noted an ethnic element in these struggles, and linked it directly to the Scots-Irish. In the 1920s and 1930s, religious militancy "began to take on more of a Southern accent" (1980:194). Among Presbyterians, the militant wing was associated with a "Scotch-Irish party" whose "ethnic identity…had been preserved largely by the perpetuation of a highly articulated and heavily theological religious tradition" (*Ibid.,* 109-110). Still others missed the point entirely. Swieringa (1990) offered an insightful overview of "ethnoreligious political behavior" in mid-century but with not a single reference to the Scots-Irish

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[3] Weston (1997) observed that when the Presbyterian church fragmented a century ago, the mainstream was in basic agreement with the dissenters. The reason for the conflict was something else.

What is the Scots-Irish Culture?

Two scholarly sources will help us understand Scots-Irish culture. The first is David McCullough (1992:6). In his powerful biography of Harry Truman, he described the Scots-Irish culture of which Truman was a part:

> The great majority of these people were of Scotch-Irish descent. They were Baptists and they were Democrats, and like Thomas Jefferson they believed that those who labored in the earth were the chosen people of God. They saw themselves as the true Americans. Their idol was Andrew Jackson, Old Hickory of Tennessee, "One-man-with-courage-makes-a-majority" Jackson, the first President from west of the Alleghenies, who was of their own Scotch-Irish stock. It was for him that Jackson County had been named, and like him they could be tough, courageous, blunt, touchy, narrow-minded, intolerant, and quarrelsome. And obstinate. "Lord grant that I may always be right, for Thou knowest I am hard to turn," was a line from an old Scotch-Irish prayer.
>   With their Bibles, farm tools, and rifles, their potent corn whiskey, their black slaves, they brought from Kentucky a hidebound loathing for taxes, Roman Catholics, and eastern ways. Their trust was in the Lord and common sense. That they and their forbearers had survived at all in backwoods Kentucky—or earlier in upland Virginia and the Carolinas—was due primary to "good, hard sense," as they said, and no end of hard work. They were workers and they were loners, fiercely independent, fiercely loyal to their kind. And they were proudly prolific.

The second is Jensen (2001) who describes this very nicely in his history of Illinois. He writes of two cultures in conflict, cultures he calls "traditional" and "modern." The traditional culture of the southern counties came from Kentucky, Tennessee, and other places in the "backcountry." The modern culture in the northern counties came from New England. Traditionalism could be "understood in terms of two related values, masculine supremacy and intense, parochial loyalty to a narrow circle of people: self, family, kinfolk, perhaps the church congregation, and certainly to the white race." The family, and frontier society generally, were organized "by and for the benefit of men" (p. 5). Education was hard to acquire so "the boy of the frontier wasted little energy acquiring skills that could not be used in his environment. What he did learn was that loyalty to family and kind was repaid with help in time of trouble; that strength and stamina could enable him to land his game or wrestle his opponent to the ground; that strangers meant trouble; that boys should always protect the girls…" (p. 17). Regarding social organization, "next to the group of kin, the church was the strongest force in the

life of the individual…" (p. 20). The congregation produced "bonds of fellowship" and "the conviction of moral superiority" (p. 21). A church member in good standing "carried credentials of upright moral behavior that were otherwise impossible to obtain" (p. 24). In time, "the overlap of church communities and family networks gradually permitted the diffusion of the churches' moral standards throughout southern Illinois" and "the moral influence of church discipline slowly became the community standard" (p. 24-25).

As Jensen saw it, the modernizers in the Illinois north shared four interrelated values that were quite different: faith in reason, a drive for middle class status, equal rights, and a sense of mission to transform the world in their image (p. 34). They had smaller families, anguished over child rearing, emphasized cleanliness and civic hygiene, repudiated folk remedies in favor of modern science, rejected male supremacy, and created distinctive spheres of male and female behavior, women in the home, men on the farm. Ironically, this empowered women. Morality was enhanced, a "feminized, romantic religion" emerged around Sunday Schools and women's auxiliaries (p. 39). There was pressure for women's suffrage and expanded education. The modernizers tended to have a class base, mostly non-farmer. They voted Whig rather than Democratic. Reform issues would sweep the modernist north but "be buried" in the south. In 1860 Lincoln won 70% of the vote in the north, 20% in the south, where Douglas was strongest. Ironically, Lincoln was from a traditionalist culture in Kentucky, Douglas from a modernist culture in Vermont. Modernists were Methodist, New School Presbyterian, Congregational, Episcopalian, pietistic German, and New England Baptist. Traditionalists were Old School Presbyterian, Baptist, Holiness, Nazarene, Pentecostal, and Church of Christ.

How can we describe the Scots-Irish culture?

- They have what scholars call an Oppositional Culture (Harris, 1999). This is associated with ethnic groups with a historic sense of grievance against the power structure, and a belief that they continue to be marginalized, ostracized, or demeaned. Black culture is oppositional, as is Jewish culture and Arab-American culture. They have a cultivated nostalgia for the past, a dwelling upon past wounds.

- They have a culture of honor, which can be difficult. They tend to have a chip on their shoulder, the first to offend and the first to take offense. In the film *Godfather,* we learn that violence is "not personal. It's business. But Gladwell (2008) discovered a different pattern in the honor culture: "In the backcountry, violence wasn't for economic gain. It was personal. You fought over your honor" (p. 169).

- They have a clear concepts of gender roles. In the border culture of the old world, and in the frontier, backcountry culture of 19th century America, boys grew up knowing they would go to war and girls grew up knowing their brothers and husbands would go to war and it would be up to them to hold the home together. These were strong women, but women who took a second place (Kahn, 1973).

- They take pride in military service. With good reason, Tennessee is called The Volunteer State, and America's military leadership has traditionally been characterized by southern and border state accents. Serving your country is not just done to escape poverty. It is a cultural value. As Webb (2004: 307) writes: "The Scots-Irish, whose ethos has always been so closely identified with patriotism and respect for military service, would serve in great numbers during this war [Vietnam] and in a historic anomaly would, in many cases, be ostracized from many academic and professional arenas as a direct result of their service…It was above all the war in Vietnam that allowed the radicalism that had been spawning for two decades in academia and the professorial journals to burst forth as a political movement that would challenge many of the basic presumptions about American society… the South had by far the highest casualty rate during the war, a rate 32 percent higher than the Northeast, and the Scots-Irish stronghold of West Virginia had the highest casualty rate of any state." He notes that 2/3 who served were volunteers.

- They have what political scientists might call weak institutions of political articulation but strong leaders (Almond and Verba, 1963). This is typical of less developed systems. In societies lacking structure and lacking organized political groups, religious leaders represent the people and express their interests, goals, and grievances through religious rhetoric.

- They are hostile to government authority, especially when it regulates or restrains individual behavior. They define freedom as "natural liberty," that is, freedom from restraint. The government should be there to help people get an education or find a job, but should not require them to register their shotguns, get their local school curriculum approved by outside authorities, or tax them up to their eyeballs. "They shun everything which appears to demand of them law and order, and anything that preaches constraint." Fischer, 1989: 777-782)

- They experience cultural and religious marginalization. They are often referred to as racists (rednecks or crackers), the underclass (trailer trash, white trash), religious bigots or fanatics (fundis), culturally marginalized people (hillbillies).

None of these terms is ever even remotely respectful. As Webb (2004: 293) puts it, in the name of social justice there was "a full-blown war against the entire value system of a region….the Southern redneck became the enemy, the veritable poster child of liberal hatred and disgust, even today celebrated in film after film, book after book, speech after speech…"

- They experience economic marginalization. A 1974 study by NORC ranked the population into seventeen religio-ethnic categories. By way of income, the top five were Jews, Irish Catholics, Italian Catholics, German Catholics, and Polish Catholics. The bottom eight, and ten of the bottom twelve, were white protestants. Most were groups concentrated in the South, border south, and Midwest. More recent NORC data from 1980-2000 show white Baptists and "Irish protestants" well below other white groups in income and education (Webb, 2004: 325).

- Their musical culture is country music, the ballads of the Scots-Irish. It exhibits a defiant contempt for authority, a defiant affirmation of national symbols, and a defiant affirmation of survival. Examples: "Take this job and shove it" by Johnny Paycheck; "I'm proud to be an American," by Lee Greenwood, the ballad of the Gulf War; "Okie from Muskogee" by Merle Haggard; and "A Country Boy Can Survive" by Hank Wiliams Jr.
    You can't stomp us out and you can't make us run
    Cause we're them old boys raised on shotguns
    We say grace, and we say 'ma'am,'
    And if you ain't into that we don't give a damn.

How do Evangelical Values and Scots-Irish Values Compare?

Anyone reviewing these traits, will find overlap with the positions of the Evangelical Right. Consider Jerry Falwell's *Listen, America!,* in some ways the founding guidebook of the Evangelical Right. In that book, Falwell outlined several positions (Falwell, 1979; Stockton 1989).
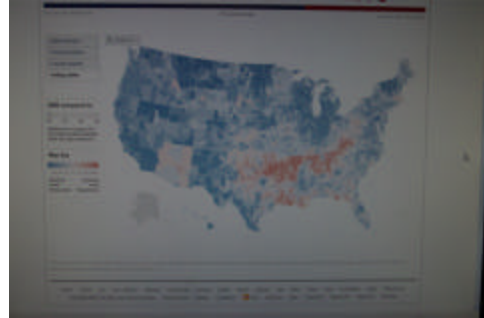
- First, an embrace of the American Civil Religion, that America is a land of covenanted people with a unique role in world history. (Bellah, 1992).
- Second, an embrace of Scotish Common Sense theology, which dates back to the 1500s. This is not literalist theology. No one believes that the story of the Valley of Dry Bones, when the bones rise up and dance, is to be taken literally. What they do emphasize is the plain meaning of the text, that any sincere believer, reasonably informed by study, can read the Bible and understand its meaning. When the Bible says homosexuality is an

abomination, it means homosexuality is an abomination. In other words, it means what it says, and it says what it means.

- Third, the idea of dispensations, that there are times when God intervenes in history to redefine the rules. When God expelled Adam and Eve from the Garden and said women would deliver their children in pain and men would earn their bread by the sweat of their brow, that was a new set of rules. The relationship between God and humans was changed, as was the relationship of humans to each other. The last dispensation was when Christ rose from the dead. It will end with the Return. Within a dispensation, there is no History. Nothing has changed and nothing will change. Trying to perfect society is as futile as it is heretical. This theology is socially and politically conservative. It is profoundly skeptical about reform movements.

- Fourth, conscience as a right. There must be strict freedom of religion with no pressure on individuals. The government should not limit religion or faith in any way. While "witnessing" to one's faith is admirable, the individual ultimately has a personal responsibility about faith decisions. When it came to public policy, there was division in America between the New England tradition of religious *toleration* and *establishment*, and the Virginia tradition of *separation* of Church and State. Historically the Scots-Irish were of the Virginia tradition. The Evangelical Right is more of the New England tradition.

- Fifth, to borrow from Saint Paul, government should be a terror unto evil doers (Romans 13:3). It must oppose gambling and prostitution, pornography, sexual misbehavior, drugs, indiscipline, crime. It must protect and affirm life by banning abortion, imposing harsh sentences, and executing murderers.

- Sixth, there is a stand-by-your-man feminism. This is not seen as restricting women but as empowering them. It means a preference for the patriarchal family and a predisposition to a father-knows-best culture. Marriage is between a man and a woman. There was strong opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment, which was seen as a challenge to the traditional family.

How does this matter politically?

Seven states are the core of Scots-Irish culture: North Carolina, South Carolina, West Virginia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Arkansas, and Missouri to an extent. These states went to Bush in 2004 by a margin of 15%. There are also areas of Scots-Irish heritage that border those states. Those would include south and southwest Pennsylvania, southern Indiana and Illinois, northern Alabama, and parts of Georgia and Maryland. Some historians would push the boundaries even further west and south, to include Missouri, Arkansas, and even parts of

Texas. These areas in the 2008 Democratic primaries went strongly for Clinton over Obama, and went for McCain in the general election. If we look at those counties that resisted the national trend towards the Democrats and actually shifted towards the Republicans, almost all of them are in the Scots-Irish areas (New York Times website). The cable punditocracy often describe theses areas, including western South Carolina and Virginia, as "white" or "rural" areas or even as "religious" areas, showing how far they are from a clear understanding of the true political dynamic.

For both Democrats and Republicans, this ethnic group is critical in a presidential election. Any Democrat who can carry three of the seven Scots-Irish states can win the Presidency. A strong Democrat will have California, New York, Massachusetts, Michigan and New Jersey. But that will not win the election. Someone who can carry West Virginia and Tennessee will also pull voters in southern Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Illinois. A Democrat in North Carolina will carry the Black vote and the Research Triangle, but that is not enough to carry the state. A smart campaign strategy for any Republican should be to save the Scots-Irish vote. The strategy of any Democrat should be to split that vote and grab a large minority. Whoever wins this vote, or penetrates it deeply if a Democrat, will carry these states and will win the Presidency.

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