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**Evangelical Electoral Behavior during 2016 and 2020 Presidential
Elections in the United States**

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Dedication

I would proudly dedicate my humble work to my self.

To my grandfather and grandmother, who raised me with unconditional love and the warmest hugs. Thank you for creating my most beautiful memories. I will always love and hold you in my heart.

To my parents, thank you for always being there for me. I hope I continue making you proud in all my future endeavors.

To my little family, thank you for being a constant source of strength and care. I am grateful for your unwavering presence in my life.

To my dearest person, who made me feel the intimacy of being loved and understood, the person I love the most who made all of this possible.

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Dedication

I humbly begin this dedication by acknowledging the blessings and guidance bestowed upon me by Allah. It is with utmost gratitude that I dedicate my research to my parents, siblings and fiancé, who have been instrumental in my academic pursuits.

To my beloved parents, words will always fall short in expressing the depth of my gratitude and admiration for you both. You have been my pillars of guidance and wisdom. Every step I take, every achievement I reach, bears the indelible imprint of your touch. To the rose of my life, my beloved mother Warda, and to my soul, my dear father Aziz.

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Abstract

Religious interference in the US elections has always been a matter of academic debate. In their turn and as a crucial religious group, Evangelicals form an important voting bloc for both Republican and Democrat candidates. This dissertation examines the electoral behavior of Evangelicals and their effect on the results of presidential elections in the country, taking the elections of 2016 and 2020 as a case study. It argues that President Trump enjoyed strong white Evangelical support during 2016, which was not affected neither by the Democrats' complaints against him, nor by the negative perceptions of his personal character. The present study goes further in analyzing factors behind such support that sparked controversy, as Trump does not know any verse of the Bible. White Evangelicals largely see Trump as fighting for their beliefs and advancing their interests; a reason to vote for him again in 2020. In addition, the dissertation sheds light on highlighting whether all members of the target religious group expressed the same voting behavior for Trump in both election dates or there were exceptions.

الملخص

لطالما كان التدخل الديني في الانتخابات الأمريكية دائماً موضوعاً للنقاش الأكاديمي. بدورهم وكمجموعة دينية حاسمة، يشكل الإنجيليون كتلة تصويتية مهمة لكل من المرشحين الجمهوريين والديمقراطيين. تناقش هذه المذكرة السلوك الانتخابي للإنجيليين وتأثيرهم في نتائج الانتخابات الرئاسية في البلاد، وتأخذ الانتخابات الرئاسية لعامي 2016 و 2020 كدراسة حالة. تقترح المذكرة أن الرئيس ترامب حظي بدعم قوي من الإنجيليين البيض في عام 2016 والذي لم يتأثر بشكاوى الديمقراطيين ضده أو بالتصورات السلبية حول شخصيته. تتطرق الدراسة الحالية إلى تحليل العوامل وراء هذا الدعم الذي أثار جدلاً، حيث إن ترامب لا يعرف أية آية من الكتاب المقدس. يعتبر الإنجيليون البيض إلى حد كبير أن ترامب يقاتل من أجل معتقداتهم ويعزز مصالحهم، و كان هذا سبباً للتصويت له مجدداً في عام 2020. علاوة على ذلك، تسلط المذكرة الضوء على ما إذا كان كل الاعضاء الذين ينتمون الى هاته المجموعة الدينية المدروسة قد عبروا عن نفس سلوك الاقتراع لصالح ترامب في كل من تواريخ الانتخابات أم كانت هناك استثناءات.

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

AP	Associated Press
GOP	Grand Old Party
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender
MRA	Moral Re-Armament
PRRI	Public Religion Research Institute
WEA	World Evangelical Alliance

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Introduction

The United States is historically known as a religiously diverse and pluralistic landscape, compared to other developed democratic nations, and more religiously devoted. Religion has always been an influential factor in shaping American culture, history, politics, and social norms. The country's founding principles of freedom of religion and separation of church and state have allowed various religious beliefs and practices to coexist freely. Hence, the relationship between religion and politics has historically shaped sociologists' writings as a dynamic, complex issue. Although they are not identical, their spheres overlap. According to the sociologist Christian Smith, religion is a collection of culturally prescribed practices based on assumptions about supernatural power. It might also be used by religious leaders and presidents to influence society and to pursue authority. In addition to their pursuit of ideals and exercise of power over individuals' lives, politics and religion are both dynamic entities, therefore they are intertwined to some extent in any community. Evangelicalism was among the most dynamic religious movements that brought such debate to the US.

Evangelicals, as a religious group, have played a key role in changing religious, political, and social landscapes around the world, owing to their strong devotion to personal faith and zealous dedication to spreading the Gospel. They have profound roots in the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century, which aimed to reform and challenge the Roman Catholic Church's practices and teachings. Theological underpinnings of evangelicalism were shaped by key thinkers such as Martin Luther and John Calvin, who emphasized salvation by faith alone and the authority of Scripture. Evangelicalism evolved and spread around the world over the centuries, with many movements and awakenings influencing its evolution. The 18th-century First Great Awakening, spearheaded by leaders such as George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards, rekindled religious passion and highlighted personal conversion experiences. The Second Great Awakening, defined by camp meetings and revivalism in the

early nineteenth century, stimulated social reform movements and contributed to the Civil War. They emerged to be a vital factor in shaping American politics and embracing the values changing in the society.

A variety of significant societal and political shifts occurred in 1960. Thus, worries among Evangelicals were sparked by local disputes involving homosexuality rights, legalization of abortion, and sexuality instruction in public schools. These ethical dilemmas, which predominated American public life, emerged a new perspective of Evangelicals on their relationship with the community. They started recognizing a new duty to promote Christianity as a cornerstone of the nation's identity and as a moral guide for public behavior rather than a governmental directive. In response to this new sociopolitical identity concept, evangelical Christians started to get politically involved with the American government and ended by their joining the Republican Party. They have attempted to restrain that degradation through political means, mainly through an authority person who would defend their wants, approve measures that would benefit evangelicalism, and advocate for their beliefs.

Donald Trump's relation with Evangelicals was marked by a combination of support, enthusiasm, and condemnation in 2016 and 2020 elections. He avidly sought evangelical Christian support throughout his presidential campaigns and presidency, understanding their importance in his political base. Many Evangelicals were lured to Trump's conservative stances on abortion, religious liberty, and conservative court appointments. They saw him as someone who would further their goal while still protecting their principles. Many Evangelicals supported Trump's actions, including as choosing conservative judges and enacting legislation that coincided with evangelical values. Concerns were expressed, however, regarding his personal character, past actions, and divisive speech. Trump's connection with evangelicals demonstrated the range of views among this group.

Evangelical Christians played a crucial role in changing the political landscape in the United States. This religious group comprises nearly half of US voters, which significantly contributed to Trump's victory in 2016. The multiple statistics concerning Evangelicals' massive support for Donald Trump in 2016 and 2020 demonstrate how evangelical leaders and groups actively engaged their members, encouraging them to vote and supporting Trump as the candidate who would safeguard and advance their values. They believed that Donald Trump was not their ideal president because of his beliefs but due to his conservative theology and his policies that matched and aligned with those of evangelicals. However, there were disagreements among the evangelical community, with some voicing reservations about Trump's behavior and character.

This dissertation aims to investigate the interrelation between religion and politics, besides analyzing Evangelicals' roots, historical context, and political engagement. It examines the elements that influenced Evangelicals' voting behavior and political activity. Additionally, it investigates the influence of religious identity, moral ideals, and policy interests in molding their political choices during presidential elections of 2016 and 2020. Furthermore, the study aims to analyze the relationship between Evangelicals and the Republican candidate Donald Trump during his presidency and their support during the elections of 2020.

Despite the complicated nature of the topic, this research study seeks to provide various clarifications and examinations concerning Evangelical behavior during the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections in the United States, along with addressing additional questions related to religion involving like: How does religion intertwine with politics? How do their realms overlap? What are the major theories that tend to explain the intersection of these disciplines? How is religion employed to pursue power and justify governmental actions? What is the governmental position toward religion? In addition, it attempts to cover entries related to Evangelicals, such as: Who are the Evangelicals? What are their fundamental attitudes, beliefs,

and perspectives? How was Evangelicals' reaction towards Donald Trump's presidential candidacy during the 2016 and 2020 elections? Did they support him? How did Trump gain Evangelical support, unlike other candidates? What were his most significant contributions, procedures, and policies during his presidency? Did they match those of Evangelicals?

The subject of Evangelicals position in the United States has spawned a broad spectrum of perspectives among academics and researchers and has been intensively addressed in articles and book chapters. In their book *Politics and Religion in the United States*, Corbett, Michael, and Julia Corbett Hemeyer explore the complex relationship between politics and religion in America. The book examines how religion has influenced American politics throughout history, and how political leaders have used religion to advance their agendas. The authors also explore how religious beliefs and practices shape the political attitudes and behaviors of ordinary Americans. Through a combination of historical analysis and contemporary case studies, the book provides a nuanced and insightful analysis of the intersection of politics and religion in America.

Another work entitled *Religion in American Public Life* conducted by Reichley A. James, works on exploring the religious role in the American political agenda. The book examines how religious beliefs and practices have shaped American political culture, and how political leaders have sought to balance the competing demands of religious freedom and the separation of church and state. Reichley also explores the role of religion in shaping public policy on issues such as abortion, same-sex marriage, and civil rights. Moreover, Grant J. Tobin tended to examine the ways in which religion, politics, and civic engagement intersect in American society. The book examines how religious beliefs and practices shape political attitudes and behaviors, and how political leaders have used religion to mobilize voters and advance their agendas. Tobin also explores the role of religion in shaping civic engagement,

including volunteerism, charitable giving, and community activism in his book, *Religion, Politics, and Civic Engagement interest in the United States*.

In *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and American Politics*, Smidt, Corwin, James L. Guth, and Lyman Kellstedt provide an overview of the intersection of religion and politics in America. The book examines the ways in which religion shapes political attitudes and behaviors, and how political leaders have used religion to mobilize voters and advance their agendas. The authors also explore the role of religion in shaping public policy on issues such as abortion, same-sex marriage, and civil rights. Additionally, the book examines the relationship between religion and political institutions, including political parties, interest groups, and the media.

In the article “A History of Evangelicalism in the United States”, Mathew A. McIntosh tried to provide an overview of the history of evangelicalism in America. McIntosh shows evangelicalism has influenced American culture and politics, and how it has been shaped by social and political movements, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Christian Right. Additionally, the article explores the diversity of evangelical beliefs and practices, and the tensions and conflicts that have arisen within the movement over issues such as race, gender, and sexuality. Further, Bebbington's essay “Evangelical Christianity and Modernism” explores the relationship between evangelical Christianity and modernism. In the essay, Bebbington argues that the rise of modernism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries posed a significant challenge to traditional Christian beliefs and practices. He examines how evangelicals responded to this challenge, and how their response helped to shape the contours of modern evangelicalism.

In multiple studies, Evangelical church membership is implicated in shaping its members' political opinions and influencing their behaviors. In his article “Acts of Faith: Churches and Political Engagement,” David E. Campbell analyze how this religious organization affects and

contributes to political life and mobilizes its adherents to engage in political matters. They also examine how the church promotes political participation. Furthermore, he asserts in this article that church attendees increase the church's potential to shape their attitudes and actions through their own preferences and outside life experiences. He attempted to provide an overview of religious influence on the US political level.

Evangelical support for Donald Trump in the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections opened a series of questions, and many scholars attempted to determine the reasons behind this massive backing in their studies. In her article “White Evangelicals Voted Overwhelmingly for Donald Trump Exit Polls Show,” Sarah Pulliam Bailey tends to explore the factors of white Evangelicals' steady support for Trump between 2016 and 2020. She claims that the need to boost the economy is the core of Evangelicals' conditions in their voting decisions rather than the candidate's character. The author cites Evangelicals' belief that Trump has improved the US economy since 2016. She also explains why they remained optimistic regarding his economic management despite the COVID pandemic. Additionally, she illustrates Trump's success in gaining Evangelical support by paying attention to abortion and religious freedom, their significant issues.

The present research is conducted to investigate Evangelicals' role in the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections. It would be assisted via historical, qualitative and analytical methods to explore the historical background of Evangelicals' religion and analyze their dominant role in shaping American politics. Based on the historical research method, this study focuses the analyses on the reciprocal relationship between religion and politics precisely between 2016 and 2020. As another benefit, the qualitative method offers detailed explanations of the causes and impacts of Trump's Evangelical supporters during the same period. These are the controlling approaches used to complete this dissertation.

A total of three chapters are present in this research. The first chapter's title is "Theoretical Background about the Conversion between Religion and US Politics." It is about analyzing the intertwining of religion and politics alongside its prominent theories. It also covers the religious engagement in American society and its significant role in shaping the United States political landscape.

The second chapter, entitled "Evolution Perspectives for Evangelicalism in the United States," provides historical background about the evangelicalism roots. The latter was backed to the 16th-century Protestant Reformation. Supplementary to their great awakenings, which had a tremendous impact on evangelicalism since they generated a revival movement marked by impassioned preaching, intense worship, and a focus on personal conversion and spiritual reform. This revival reignited religious zeal and raised the spread of evangelicalism, affecting its evolution and impact in the years since.

Through an analytical method, the third chapter, "Evangelical Engagement in United States Elections in 2016 and 2020," sheds light on the evangelical contribution in both years and examines their relationship with presidential electoral candidates, particularly with the Republican candidate Donald Trump. Furthermore, this section explores the reasons behind the massive evangelical support for Trump that opened a series of questions and contradictions.

Religious Relevance in US politics continues to be one of the most dynamic, complex issues in sociologists' and political philosophers' writings, investigating the relationship's nature that seeks to link these disciplines despite their differences. The emergence of the Evangelicalism movement to be a crucial political part of the US government raised a vivid debate among scholars about its influential impact in shaping the American political agenda, especially during the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections. The unexpectedly massive

Evangelical support for Donald Trump during his presidential candidacy despite his traits and behavior that do not align with their ethical standards and ideals remains a vital part of US history and an open door for the present dissertation.

Chapter One

Theoretical Background about the Conversion between Religion and US

Politics

“We know that part of living in a pluralistic society means that our personal religious beliefs alone can’t dictate our response to every challenge we face. But...We can’t leave our values at the door. If we leave our values at the door, we abandon much of the moral glue that has held our nation together for centuries, and allowed us to become somewhat more perfect as a union. Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln, Jane Addams, Martin Luther King, Jr., Dorothy Day, Abraham Heschel - the majority of great reformers in American history did their work not just because it was sound policy, or they had done good analysis, or understood how to exercise good politics, but because their faith and their values dictated it, and called for bold action -- sometimes in the face of indifference, sometimes in the face of resistance.”

(President Barack Obama, speech at the National Prayer Breakfast,
February 2,2011)

The above quote from the previous American president Obama suggests that religion and politics have been intertwined and influenced by one another creating a symbiotic relationship throughout the United States history. At the same time, the American nation has been known for decades as a religiously diverse and pluralistic landscape. As recommended in the first amendment of the US Constitution, the American government is forbidden from establishing a specific domination like an official religion such as the US of Methodist or US of Anglicanism, and also, from favoring a particular religion over another. Otherwise, the government shall respect the free exercise of any faith in the US. It implies that the constant debate over mixing religion and politics, religion has not been kept apart from the government but, it has been inseparably twisted and played a vital role in the American political frame. This ongoing recital is told further down.

1.1. Conceptualizing Religion

The issue of understanding how religion and policy intersect has plagued nations around the world for centuries. In order to describe the relationship between them, first it is needed to clearly define the meaning of each of the two terms. Both offer an interesting juxtaposition. First, with religion, which deals with human perceptions; and second, with politics, which addresses the control and governance of human beings. The following sections focus on the way in which religion is played out in politics and vice versa.

Religion has been an integral part of the history of human culture, which began with humanity so long ago. Generally, religion can be considered as a human social and cultural fact, furthermore, human sapiens had never existed without having a doubtless belief in particular supernatural beings, which collected and unified them together into one unified framework. Religion is one of the vital themes that so many scholars and scientists attempt to understand its academic meaning prescribing their findings in different evolutionary, psychological, social, anthropological, historical, and philosophical manuscript studies (Atherton 7).

As a noticed figure in the Methodist Theological School in Ohio, Corbett-Hemeyer's definition of religion is one of the significant prescriptions that is grounded in social science and addresses the behaviors of humans in a clustered area. She stated:

[A] developed religion is an integrated system of beliefs, lifestyle, ritual activities, and social institutions by which individuals give meaning to (or find meaning in) their lives by orienting themselves to what they experience as holy, sacred, or of ultimate value. (Corbett-Hemeyer, 16).

In her opinion, religion can only be an integrated system if its four dimensions beliefs, lifestyle, rituals, and social institutions are linked, work together and mutually reinforce each other. Such aspects are, therefore, systematically organized and formally established.

Religious beliefs are a crucial component of that broader concept. They can be defined as sincere faith in a supernatural power or powers that control human destiny. They include the true meaning of life, how the world was established, and how it is controlled in addition to, the reality of death and the afterlife, and a multitude of moral and ethical rules and regulations.

Both lifestyles and rituals are tied up to individuals' daily life activities. On the one hand, lifestyles are a set of practices to which the individuals attribute a unified meaning shared by their community. They prescribe the way their relationships are established regarding belonging. Rituals, on the other hand, are repetitive, routinized, and stylized behaviors belonging to a certain religion. They take place at a set time, location, and ceremony.

Organizational structure is an essential dimension in any religion. It is necessary to preserve the individuals' life in their community, enabling them to understand the ongoing world, and its policy, and be a part of it. These social institutions were established in accordance with the norms, codes, and moral principles of the community (Palomino 6).

Religion, therefore, is just another activity individuals engage in. It has various functions. It affirms life's meaning and purpose while fostering societal unity and stability. It integrates a set of customs and beliefs related to sacred objects and guides people's day-to-day lives. Moreover, religion provides comfort and solace during difficult times, and it also offers a moral framework for individuals to make ethical decisions. However, it can also be a source of conflict and division when different religious beliefs clash with one another.

As it is mentioned above, religion is a crucial part of any individual's life. It provides a link that keeps him attached to what he believes in and facts that prove their transcendent existence. It also motivates him to work for positive social change. On the one hand, religion

is a model that establishes policies to organize men's lives in their communities, sets guidelines that discipline their behaviors, and indicates what is morally right and wrong. Also, it promotes stability and unity in societies, which spread peace and enable social development. Furthermore, religion defines appropriate roles for individual members of a culture and indicates the boundaries of acceptable behaviors among the community (McGivern).

Additionally, religion illustrates the real meaning of life and its purpose and clarifies the mysterious things that will happen after death. It is also a source of comfort and guidance, since it gives a model for the life, following which a person can lead a healthy and prosperous life that would be cherished able for him. Religion provides support for its adherents, both in their daily lives and at specific times of crisis and celebration. Therefore, religious beliefs flourish believers' cognitive framework and spell out the various answers to questions of human nature, soul, life, identity, and daily life practices and attitudes (McGivern).

1.2. Politicized Religion and the Religionisation of Politics

Religionisation is defined as a process by which individuals become more religious or religionistic in nature. It is also defined as the use of religious identity, recitation of religious sources and use of religious symbols and references to assert one's religiosity, piety, and righteousness. Religionisation is proposed as a heuristic term that highlights practices that homogenize and reify religion. The term emphasizes the process by which certain assemblages of knowledge is expressed in discourses and practices become dense and identifiable as religion (Drebler). Whereas, Politicization is defined as a notion of fundamental ties with politics and also power that forms dimensions of discursive ideology that promotes politically guided messages in order to influence the vulnerable recipient (Abdulmajid 55-56).

What appears to be religious conflict is often described as politics, not religion. This is a widely held belief in the West, particularly in foreign policy, international relations, and

human rights circles. Similar claims have been made that what is happening is economic, not religious, or ethnic, not religious. Politics can cause people to misunderstand the nature of religion and politics. It is like saying a table is not round, but rather red. However, tables can be round or red, and policies and persecutions can be both religious and political in nature (Marshall).

Christian Democratic parties in Europe and Latin America claim religious inspiration as well as political ambition. God is mentioned in the founding documents of the United States and Canada, as well as many other countries. Religion almost always has an impact on politics. Usually, rather than attempting to create an imagined "theocracy," efforts are made to shape hearts and minds, hopes and dreams. The ultimate beliefs and faiths shape perspectives on history, justice, law, mercy, power, human nature, and evil. Of course, it is impossible to approach politics without considering history, justice, law, mercy, power, human nature, and evil. Many people at this conference defend religious and belief freedom not in spite of their religion, nor apart from it, but precisely because of it. Religion can motivate people to support human rights. The key questions are not whether religion and politics will be intertwined or whether politics will affect religion, but rather how religion will affect politics (Marshall).

1.3. Theoretical Perspectives about the Intersection of Religion and Politics

The relationship between religion and politics is still one of the common trends and a significant theme in philosophers' and sociologists' writings. One of the major reasons that gave this topic much importance is that both of them pursue values and exercise power in human life. First, religion is a crucial part of the individual's life. It provides values and has a strong impact on its adherents. Second, the demands of politics sometimes can come into conflict with religious beliefs and these norms (Callaway).

Religion and politics can be intertwined in a symbiotic relationship in all states. Reichley, the Senior Fellow at McCourt School of Public Policy at Georgetown University, argues

that "the chief thing that religion and politics have in common is that both are concerned with the pursuit of values—personal, social, or transcendent" (9). According to him, religion and politics are both concerned with values and power in the society. Both of them shared one common goal that is to acquire political power and use it to gain support for their own interests using different methods. Religious leaders might sometimes use the state's power and authority and mobilize religious sensibilities of individuals in order to enforce and to apply their own religious beliefs, and to capture power and influence over society. They claim that their missions are holy and derived from divinity and transcendent himself, so that they have the right in gaining such power in the state. They even might engage in conflicts with other religious groups who have different religious perspectives, just to prevail their own values. Therefore, politicians attempt to use religious values and intrigue to influence people, to win public opinion, and to fulfill their own aims and wants (Corbett and Corbett-Hemeyer 8-9).

The interrelation between politics and religion is not easily identified and clarified. Plenty of theories and arguments have been established by different anthropologists and sociologists. They attempt to understand what kind of relationship should link religion and politics together. However, they are substantially influenced by three concepts: dominance, establishment, and religious separation.

According to the dominance theory, one of the two social systems overpowers the other and threatens its existence in society. On one hand, it implies theocracy, where the government is under divine rule and all the political functions are performed by religious entities under religious authority. Usually, it is controlled by a human on behalf of a divinity according to its principles and requirements. Theocracy is defined as a state where the ruling elite draw its power only from a particular religion, typically through appealing the rule of a divinity (Abbas and Asim, 390-391). The ancient Hebrews, ancient Egypt, and both ancient and present Islamic nations are notable examples. The populace in these states believes that

the government is supreme because it is governed by revelation. Government officials are either priests or have ties to important figures in the clergy (“Political Ideology”). Moreover, in such type of government, laws are based on religious scriptures. Contrary to theocracy, the governmental suppression of religion tends to make government the highest value and the greatest power of the state. It predicts a decline of religion and its disappearance as a significant social force in the public sphere. In this situation, religious leaders do not have the same authority and strong influence on society they have in the theocratic government. Usually, it leads to attempts to destroy religious institutions, since people are not influenced by religion and the supernatural or the holy (Abbas and Asim 390-391).

Additionally, many theories and practices concerning the intertwining of religion and politics come under the heading of establishments of religion. Yet they all shared one major principle that is “the civil government supports religion, either directly or indirectly”. This religious establishment may take various positions. First, the government may support religion in a prescriptive form, where individuals of a specific state must support the official religion that the government favors. They may show their support in different ways, such as by paying taxes to help religious leaders. Or permissively, it is a situation where the government authorizes the predominance of a certain religion’s culture, and allows its residents to acquire and practice its knowledge. On the other hand, governmental support for religion may appear in exclusive, dual, or multiple forms. An exclusive establishment is when the government preferred an official religion in its state. Yet, it can favor two different religions at the same time with equal treatment for both, as it can favor more, which is known as multiple religious establishments (Corbett and Corbett-Hemeyer 15).

Another theory that attempts to depict the relationship between religion and politics is the separation of church and state theory. The concept has been highly controversial in both culture and law. Religion and government are different things that are instituted for different

ends. The religion's role is to procure the salvation of souls, whereas, the other one's aim is to promote temporal happiness, by mixing them together peace and welfare of a community will be preserved (Green).

1.4. Historical Overview about Religion in The United State

1.4.1. Religion Consideration in the US Constitution

Religion has always played a pillar stone role in the United States domestic policy. The Founding Fathers did consider church-state separation when the Constitution and Bill of Rights became the law of the nation. The reference is found in the First Amendment, known as the “Religion Clauses”. The latter identifies, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances” (Constitution of the United States). The Establishment and Free Exercise Clauses were ratified in 1791 as a component of the Bill of Rights and are now incorporated into the Fourteenth Amendment to apply to the states. These clauses support a person's right to practice their religion freely and the separation of church and state, along with the constitutional provision that forbids religious tests as eligibility requirements for office.

Roger Williams, the founder of Rhode Island, was the first to use the clause of establishment "Wall or hedge of separation". Moreover, the most famous use of the metaphor was by Thomas Jefferson in his 1802 letter to the Danbury Baptist Association. Jefferson declared in the letter that when the American people adopted the establishment clause, they built a “wall of separation between the church and state.” As he witnessed the turmoil of the American colonists and the struggles to combine government and religion, both Jefferson and James Madison aided for disestablishment by the Baptists, Presbyterians, and other dissenting faiths of Anglicans Virginia. Religious groups feared that the constitution offered unfairness

of religious rights, for that Madison issued proclamations of religious fasting and Thanksgivings, however, Jefferson signed treaties that sent religious ministers to Native Americans (Constitution of the ...).

1.4.2. Religion Consideration in the US Society

Religion and Politics in the United States aim at providing a comprehensive overview of the institutional shifts throughout the American history, and how religious re-establishment came about in the modern era. During the 19th century, the United States was quite different than the present day. Religious diversity was scarce in the state because Christianity dominated most of it. Since Protestantism dominated society, separating church and state was unnecessary. As a result, the state was controlled and influenced by religious leaders who leveraged their religious values and authority to influence and control society. In due course, most people adhered to conventional religious rituals and beliefs which made them traditionalists (“The Formation and ...” 2).

With the removal of immigration limitations, a profound transition took place by the 1960s. New religions started to enter and kept expanding in the United States. When the decade came to a halfway point, people started adopting new Eastern religions more openly, adding to the state's variety. Also, Evangelical Christianity attracted young people during that time, and mega churches proliferated-neither of which were commonplace before the late 1960s. Protestantism started out as the main religion in the 1960s but eventually became just another creed. Instead, Catholicism has developed as a brand-new religion, and John F. Kennedy's election as president was one of the main turning points in the acceptance of Catholics. Yet, the most common belief in the state today is still Christianity (“The Formation and...” 3).

Additionally, by the 20th century, numerous occasions contributed to the expansion of religious freedom or tolerance, resulting in the separation of state politics from religion and a decline in its prevalence. There were numerous occasions involving religious views. The

event that transformed the United States into what it is today was the arrival, growth, and modification of variety, which altered traditions and altered the popularity religiosity popularity (Beckman).

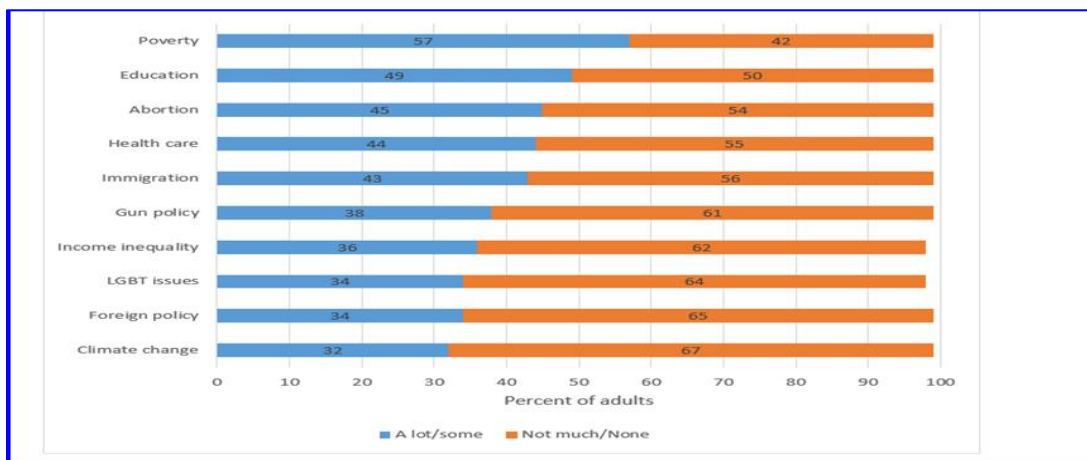
1.4.3. Religion and Politics in the American Public Opinion

Although church and state are separated, religion and politics are intertwined. As Alexis de Tocqueville writes in his classic “Democracy in America”, The nation is both highly religious and democratic. Since the settlement of the Plymouth colony in 1621, the American political thoughts have been deeply influenced by religious beliefs, texts and ideas. Some of the most effective political movements in the United States political development include the involvement of churches and religious groups which is a reason that churches and other religious groups in US encourage civic engagement. Religious faith motivates people to mobilize around spiritual and political goals, and also forming groups that can be social actors, whether within civil community or as political parties which is directly engaging with state authority (Grant).

American attitudes of religion's place in society are generally favorable, but they want it out of politics. The majority claim that it has less impact on American public life. When it comes to how much of a role religion should have in politics and governmental decisions, the general people are not in agreement. Those who do not identify with a particular religion are more likely to think that religion has either the appropriate amount of influence or too little, whereas those who do are more likely to think that religion has the right amount of influence or not enough (“The Role of ...”).

According to a nationwide poll, there are significant disparities by religious affiliation, but most Americans believe that religion should have little or no bearing on the majority of legislative problems. The following figure presents the outcomes of the study.

Fig.1. Americans' Opinions about How Much Influence Should Religion Have on Government policies

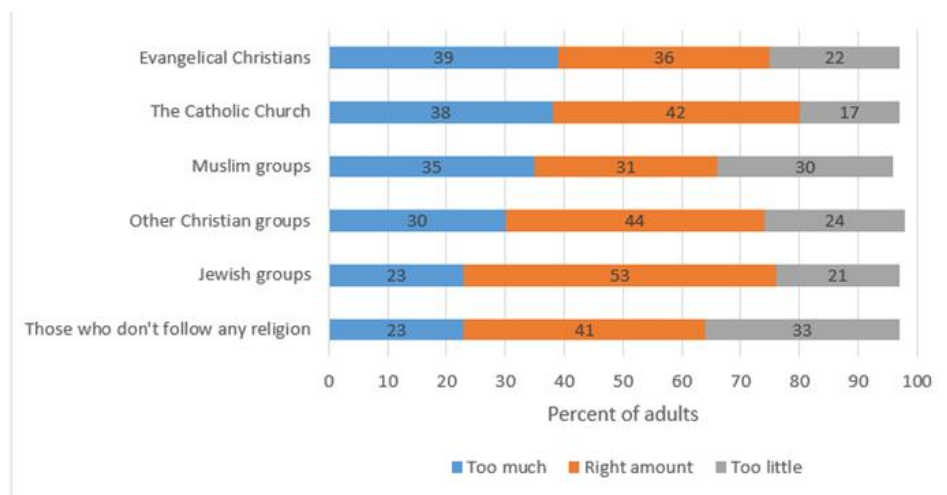


Source: “The Role of Religion in Politics.” *AP-NORC*, 2018.

<https://apnorc.org/projects/the-role-of-religion-in-politics/>

As the figure identifies, few think that candidates' religious beliefs should be taken into consideration when casting a vote. For instance, only 33% of Catholics and 14% of Americans without a religious affiliation believe that religion should have a role in LGBT matters, compared to 61% of white born-again Christians. There are significant disparities by religious affiliation, but most Americans believe that religion should have little or no bearing on the majority of legislative problems. Nonetheless, the majority of Americans think that religion ought to contribute to the reduction of poverty. In total, 57% of individuals agree that religion should have an influence on how the government deals with poverty, including 65% of people who identify as belonging to a particular religion and 34% of non-believers. There is division among the public as to whether religion should be allowed to influence education. While only 18% of unaffiliated Americans believe religion should have some influence on education policies, 60% of those who identify with a religious denomination believe religion should have some influence on education.

Fig.2. Religious Groups Influence on American Politics



Source: “The Role of Religion in Politics.” *AP-NORC*, 2018.

<https://apnorc.org/projects/the-role-of-religion-in-politics/>

For figure 02, Evangelical Christians and the Catholic Church, according to nearly 4 in 10 Americans, have an excessive amount of influence over American politics. White born-again Christians, however, account for 47% of those who believe evangelical Christians are under-represented in society. 53 percent of Catholics believe that their Church has the sufficient level of impact. White born-again Christians have a tendency to believe that religion has an insufficient influence on numerous parts of American life, whereas nonreligious people believe that religion has an overwhelming influence. For instance, whereas 59 percent of Americans who are not religious believe that most members of Congress are too influenced by religion, just 52 percent of white born-again Christians agree with this viewpoint.

1.5. The Means of Religious Engagement in US Politics

1.5.1. The Role of the Church

Though church and state are legally distinct, religion and politics are frequently intertwined. Churches and religious communities were active participants in some of the most effective political movements in US political development. One reason for this is that

churches and other religious communities in the United States frequently encourage civic participation. Civic participation is a broad concept that encompasses any activity aimed at influencing society, government, or policy. Education and psychology frequently emphasize civic activities such as volunteering or joining a nonprofit organization (Grant).

In political science and sociology, the term "civic engagement" is often used more narrowly to mean political participation. This would include activities aimed at influencing political outcomes. Voting, persuading others to vote, campaign contributions, campaign work, contacting or lobbying public officials, and protesting are all examples of political participation. A consistent empirical finding in the study of religion and civic life is that religious people are more likely to be civically engaged as voters, volunteers, and activists. Churches and other religious communities can establish themselves as organizations. They can also increase their supporters' civic engagement by mobilizing them, providing them with the necessary skills, or promoting democratic values. Religious voters are targeted by political parties and candidates in order to bring them into the political process. Religion and civic engagement research continue to look into the various ways religion influences civic engagement in the United States (Grant).

On the one hand, churches can be thought of as institutions that shape the behavior of their members. Specifically, different types of churches offer their members varying behavioral incentives to participate in religious activity, which has systemic implications for political participation. This approach is similar in spirit to the work of Verba, Schlozman, and Brady in which they examine church organizational characteristics to understand their impact on political participation. The authors focus on opportunities for civic skill development, arguing that a hierarchical church (e.g., the Catholic Church) will provide fewer opportunities for its members to develop such skills than a more congregationally-based organization (e.g., Protestant churches). By "civic abilities," the capacity to engage in the mundane activities is

identified through which people express their voice in the political process, such as running meetings or giving speeches (Campbell 156).

Church-state intertwining has been contentious throughout history, particularly when the church embraces party politics. They assist people in identifying daily decisions that could advance human rights, gender justice, unity, dignity, and peace since they are an integral component of society and have a calling to serve communities and the broader society. Hence, religious institutions are regarded as socializing agents because they play a prominent role in socialization. Typically, they are expected to address socioeconomic issues such as hunger, crime, and sexism. They serve as the leading educators of religious concepts and moral integrity, with the ability to disseminate group norms, cultivate civic virtues, and serve as hubs for political mobilization (Msebi 229-230). Furthermore, it is their responsibility to help each Christian carry out his prophetic role in society rather than only loudly denouncing evil in society (Daila Baba 164).

Otherwise, American churches have traditionally taken a more active role in politics and political movements, particularly by criticizing social injustices. These organizations are receiving more and more concern, especially from students of American politics. US citizens tend to be more likely than those from other nations to be members of religious organizations, attend services, and participate in religiously related educational, philanthropic, or social interactions (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, 18). In addition to teaching citizens civic virtues, these religious organizations have a profound impact on increasing political engagement and maintaining its instant boost. Church members are supposed to get assistance from the church in identifying their leadership gifts to promote political participation. Such people ought to be encouraged to enter politics so they can use their talents to help others, especially the disadvantaged and underprivileged. Christians should get active in politics not merely to represent the church in the government but also-and maybe more importantly-to confront the

concerns about discrimination, corruption, and bribery that exist in the nation(Daila Baba 165).

1.5.2. Religious Interest Groups in the US Politics

Religious interest organizations have progressively become the center of political activism in the United States over the past three decades. These organized religious interest organizations have very different organizational structures, ideologies, and areas of concentration, but regardless of their objectives, tactics, and levels of success, they all aim to have an impact on the state's public policy. An interest group is, broadly speaking "a group of people who share some interest or set of interests and pressure through the political system" (Corbett-Hemeyer 292). They may pursue private interest policies that advance their vision of the good society. They have come together to lobby the government from the colonial era to the republic's formation. Pitched conflicts over government institutions and free speech, particularly after independence, were among the most significant cases. They have historically been interested in a wide range of American political problems, including civil rights, abortion, global human rights, foreign affairs, same-sex marriage, and other topics. On several of these issues, various religious organizations have disagreed with one another. Due to this, religious groups have multiplied dramatically and broadened their issue agenda in recent decades, reflecting the growing importance placed on such social issues in the United States (Corbett and Corbett-Hemeyer 488-489).

These lobbying groups play a significant role in the American political system because they act as one type of "intermediary" agent between the general public and elected leaders. They play a crucial role in the political process by outlining and advocating for policy concerns. They act as a mediator between the general public and the government because the latter tends to be only sporadic in its interest in how things are done on a daily basis; as a result, they differ from the general public. They have a large and powerful intention of

bringing forward policy issues for the government to examine, but they are also extremely concerned “about the electoral consequences of their acts” (Carmines and Stimson 108). They are regarded as policy change agents in the United States, urging both the general public and elected officials to support their claims (Smidt, Guth and Kellstedt 301).

Although these religious interest groups use many of the same tactics as other interest groups, yet, they differ in that they stand for a single religious institution, doctrinal traditions and ideals, and international religious organizations. They attempt to influence voter behavior, mold public opinion, express their positions through the media, and occasionally pursue public office for some of their members. Typically, they tend to represent the opinions of the interest group participants. To begin, the majority of them, work for church organizations. Church organizations do have measurable institutional interests because they run schools, hospitals, community colleges, and other businesses as well as own property, employ people, and enjoy tax exemptions, even though their primary concerns are moral issues. Church organizations have a variety of material interests to safeguard as institutions (Corbett and Corbett-Hemeyer 593).

Other kinds of interest groups, on the other hand, frequently prioritize achieving concrete, material advantages for its members. Additionally, instead of just American organizations, they speak for global church organizations like the National Association of Evangelicals. These connections inevitably influence the viewpoints and objectives of a religious lobbying group, particularly when it comes to foreign policy matters (Corbett and Corbett-Hemeyer 590).

Politics and religion have traditionally been intertwined. Their relationship has remained a significant trend in philosophical and sociological writings owing to the values and power they persuade. The first section of this chapter begins with a brief conceptualization of religion and its role in human life. It also explores the dominant theories that attempt to

explain the intersection of religion and politics. The chapter additionally presents a historical overview of religion in the US and outlines its relevance in US society and the Constitution. Afterward, it analyses the religious, and political engagement in the American mainstream, exploring American public opinion, and ends up with examining the means of religious engagement and their influence in US politics.

Chapter Two

Evolution Perspectives for Evangelicalism in the United States

Evangelicalism is potentially the most Americanized and vibrant religious group in the United States, as well as, it exerted enormous influence in American politics at the very least since the seventeenth century. Nonetheless, this political force's influence has fluctuated throughout time, as have the media coverage and academic interest it receives. This chapter seeks to demonstrate the historical growth of Evangelicals in the United States and their progression and roots throughout history. Also, it highly explores the Fundamentalist-Modernist conflict over biblical faith that grew in strength and led to the split of Evangelicals. Along with presenting their identity politically, this section also discusses the origins of Evangelicalism's political engagement.

2.1. Who is an Evangelical?

Evangelical Christianity is arguably the hardest to like or comprehend of any group in North America. This might be a result of what it is learned about some extreme fanatical groups in the media. The term "Evangelical" can elicit strong reactions for these questions: Do not they despise women and gays? Are not those people who are scared of science and social progress? Do not they always believe that their way is the only way?" To be sure, some people who are Evangelicals often fit the negative stereotype that has come to be associated with the term, and all too often, loud voices claiming to speak for all Evangelicals, and spread a message that resembles a political agenda or cultural crusade rather than Jesus Christ (Rainy).

Moreover, Evangelicals globally are incredibly diverse and vibrant people of faith. They are united by spiritual convictions. For them, the latter is regarded as non-negotiable, while accepting a wide range of expressions is non-essential matters, such as their worship styles. In addition, Evangelicals stress the importance of an individual and personal relationship with

God, which is not defined by any political, cultural or social association, but rather it is automatically granted by nominal membership in any specific denomination. Instead, they are recognized by their high regard for the Bible as the word of God that guides their lives, the conviction that salvation is only received by faith through Jesus Christ who died on the cross, and was resurrected to life that God is triune as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Many people are confused about who are Evangelicals! (Morris).

The term Evangelical comes from the Greek word "Euangelion" that means "gospel" or "good news." This term is translated in the King James Version by the English word "Gospel." The Gospel is, of course, "the good tidings, coming from God, of salvation by His free favor through Christ," and it necessarily implies that through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ men are saved by faith alone (*sola fide*). Furthermore, an evangelical is someone who is concerned for the gospel, i.e., for an evangelical, the gospel of Christ is central. It is of course his message and he preaches it, but it is more than subject of preaching. The gospel is at the center of his thinking and living (Merritt).

2.2. Evangelicalism in its Historical Context and Origins

2.2.1. Global Contextualization for Evangelicalism

Evangelicalism is one of the largest and most active denominations of Protestant Christianity in the contemporary world, which has a global following. According to the British Archbishop William Temple during World War II, as the name implies, Evangelicalism holds that Jesus Christ has been revealed in glory by the Holy Spirit and through him, believers can trust in God, accept him as their sinners' savior, and join his church in serving him as their Lord. It entails putting Jesus Christ forth in the Holy Spirit's might and believing he is the good news. By emphasizing the concept, he gets people to place their confidence in God rather than merely having faith abstractly (Green35).

Evangelicalism's origins can be traced to the Protestant Reformation; a time when the Bible was made accessible to the public. The Evangelical focus on having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ began in the sixteenth century, with Martin Luther and his adherents. They emphasized justification by faith in Jesus Christ and founded their religious convictions solely on the Bible. This term was used to distinguish Luther's supporters from John Calvin's, who were referred to as Reformed, during this Reformation. In the eighteenth century, religious revivals that occurred in continental Europe (the Pietist movement), the Methodist revival in Great Britain, and the Great Awakening in North America, were collectively referred to as the Evangelical revival. Over the rituals of the traditional churches, these movements strongly emphasized missionary work, a faith based on the Bible, and conversion experiences (Melton).

Then, an alliance of Evangelicals from different countries, denominations, and denominational backgrounds was formed in the nineteenth century in London as the movement grew and shared interests emerged. Also, this message had reached already circles in both Europe and the US through some American revivalists. Additionally, by the end of this century, the movement had given rise to a global evangelical mission to numerous nations, and Christian leaders boldly spoke of the Evangelization of the entire world (“Evangelical Alliance”).

In the mid-20th century, US fundamentalists coined the term Neo-Evangelicals to distinguish themselves from separatists, but it was quickly abbreviated to Evangelicals. It is a term given to a group that arose from the ongoing fundamentalist controversy when some fundamentalists left their old churches in search of new ones and called for a break with modernism in 1869. This resulted in a break with church-sponsored institutions of higher learning and the establishment of new fundamentalist colleges and seminaries.

Meanwhile, in the decades that followed World War II, the movement saw significant growth on a global scale and rose to prominence as a major force in Christianity. The World Evangelical Fellowship, later known as the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), was founded in 1951, when Evangelicals from the United States and other countries joined forces with the predominately British Evangelical Alliance. More than 600 million Evangelical Christians were served by the WEA in 2022, which was a network of churches in more than 140 countries. Evangelicals have widened their intellectual perspectives with the arrival of the twenty-first century. While maintaining their stance that the Bible is the inspired word of God, their movement grew at the fastest rate of any movement before (Melton).

2.2.1. Evangelicalism Historical Development in the United States

Throughout the 1730s and 1740s, the United States was subjected to a succession of theological insights known as the Great Awakening that occurred in the English colonies. The movement started to fade off in a period when the emphasis was placed on the concept of secular reason, and religious zeal had lost its freshness. Christian preachers typically traveled from town to town preaching the gospel, highlighting deliverance from sin, and igniting Christian fervor. A newfound dedication to religion arose as a result. According to many scholars, the Great Awakening left a deep impression on both American cultures along with numerous Christian denominations (Editors).

2.2.2.1. The First Great Awakening

The Great Awakening began in New England's Congregational churches. Jonathan Edwards' sermon on justification by faith sparked a revival in Northampton, Massachusetts, in 1734. Earlier Puritan revivals had been brief and local, but the Northampton revival was part of a larger wave of revival that also affected the Presbyterian and Dutch Reformed churches in the Middle Colonies. The Great Awakening peaked in 1740, but it shaped a new form of Protestantism that emphasized "seasons of revival, or outpourings of the Holy Spirit,

and on converted sinners personally experiencing God's love," according to historian Thomas S. Kidd(p.xiv).

Evangelicals believed in the "new birth"-a discernible moment of conversion-and that having assurance of faith was normal for a Christian. While the Puritans believed that conversion was necessary, they held that assurance is rare, late, and the fruit of struggle in the experience of believers. Its emphasis on the individual's relationship with God gave it an egalitarian bent, which anti-revivalists saw as undermining social order. Uneducated ministers (sometimes nonwhite men) were ordained by radical evangelicals, and nonwhites and women were sometimes allowed to serve as deacons and elders. They also backed laypeople's right to disagree with their pastors and start new churches. The Congregational and Presbyterian churches were divided over support for the revival between Old and New Lights during the Great Awakening. The evangelical New Lights eventually became the dominant faction among both Congregationalists and Presbyterians. Based on Jonathan Edwards' work (a Northampton Anglican minister, he was a great academician and apologist of the Great Awakening), New England Theology would become the dominant theological outlook within Congregational churches (McIntosh).

Separate Baptist congregations were formed in New England by radical New Lights who broke away from the established churches. In the 1740s and 1750s, New Side Presbyterians and Separate Baptists began establishing churches in the Southern colonies. They confronted the Anglican religious establishment, which was associated with the planter elite, there. In contrast, Evangelicals tended to be neither rich nor poor, but hardworking farmers and tradesmen who despised the planter class's worldliness. The first Methodist missionaries arrived in America in the 1760s and concentrated their efforts in the South as well. In the South by 1776, Evangelicals outnumbered Anglicans. The Anglican Church (now known as the Episcopal Church) was greatly disrupted during and after the American Revolution, and it

lost its special legal status and privileges. Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists were now the four largest denominations. Baptists and Methodists experienced rapid growth in the 1770s and 1780s. There were only 150 Baptist and 20 Methodist churches in 1770, but there were 858 Baptist and 712 Methodist churches in 1790. These two evangelical denominations remained most popular in the southern states and along the western frontier. They also appealed to African slaves; for example, on the Delmarva Peninsula, more than a third of Methodists were black. Evangelical influence on smaller groups such as Quakers, Lutherans, and Dutch and Germans increased in the 1790s (MCIntosh).

Thus, the First Great Awakening accomplished more than simply converting the people. It enabled a new sort of preacher to serve God in both independent and traditional churches. The preachers' grip over the existing churches was broken, allowing lay people to participate. Expression, lay ministry, and lay involvement are all examples of lay involvement. The opening of the churches to democracy served more than anything else to lay the groundwork for the American Revolution. If Americans can participate in the governance of their churches, why not their country? As is often the case, spiritual awakening triggered other types of awakening (Towns and Porter⁵¹).

2.2.2.2. The Second Great Awakening

Evangelicalism grew in the nineteenth century as a result of the Second Great Awakening (1790s–1840s). The revivals influenced all of the major Protestant denominations, converting the majority of Protestants to Evangelicals. Evangelicals were the most powerful religious leaders in the United States from the 1790s until the Civil War. There were three major revival hotspots. By the 1820s, a major revival among Congregationalists in New England had begun, led by Edwardsian preachers such as Timothy Dwight, Lyman Beecher, Nathaniel Taylor, and Asahel Nettleton. The revival in western New York, known as the "burned-over

district," was primarily led by Congregationalists and Presbyterians, with some Baptist and Methodist participation (Hankins4).

The Cumberland River Valley in Tennessee and Kentucky was the third major revival area. Unlike on the East Coast, where revivals were more solemn and quiet, western revivals were more emotional and dramatic. Kentucky was the site of the 1800 Revival, which was led by Presbyterian minister James McGready. The traditional Scottish communion season began to evolve into the American camp meeting here. A year later, the Cane Ridge Revival, led by Barton Stone, drew 20,000 people from the sparsely populated frontier. Many converts experienced religious ecstasy and "bodily agitations" at Cane Ridge. Some worshipers experienced holy laughter, barked like dogs, convulsions, trances, danced, shouted, or were slain in the Spirit. Similar things had happened in previous revivals, but at Cane they were more intense (7).

The Methodist Episcopal Church was the most successful in converting people during the Second Great Awakening. Camp meetings were enthusiastically adopted as a regular part of church life, and resources were devoted to evangelizing the western frontier. Circuit riders, or itinerant ministers, traveled hundreds of miles each year to preach and serve scattered congregations. The Methodists approached ministry in a democratic and egalitarian manner, allowing poor and uneducated young men to become circuit riders.

Theology underpinning the First Great Awakening was predominantly Calvinist. Calvinists taught predestination, which held that God only saves a small number of the elect and condemns everyone else to hell. The Calvinist doctrine of irresistible grace denied humans free will and any participation in their own salvation. Arminianism, a theology that allows for free will and gives humans a greater role in their own conversion, had a significant influence on the Second Great Awakening. The Methodists were Armenians who taught that everyone had the ability to choose salvation. They also taught that Christians could lose their

salvation if they slid back into sin. Charles Grandson Finney was the most influential evangelical of the Second Great Awakening (MCIntosh) .

Evangelical perspectives on eschatology (end-of-the-world doctrine) have evolved over time. The Puritans were premillennialists, believing that Christ would return before the Millennium (a thousand years of godly rule on earth). The First Great Awakening, on the other hand, persuaded many Evangelicals that the millennial kingdom was already in place when Christ returned, a belief known as postmillennialism. The latter is the expectation that society would gradually become more Christianized. It became the dominant view during the Second Great Awakening because postmillennialism supplemented the Arminian emphasis on self-determination and the Enlightenment's positive view of human potential (Wilkins and Thorson 48).

This postmillennial optimism fueled a number of social reform movements among northern evangelicals. The most noticed were temperance (teetotalism became a "badge of honor" for evangelicals), abolitionism, prison reform, and educational reform. They started a campaign to put an end to dueling. They built asylums for the physically disabled and mentally ill, deaf schools, and tuberculosis hospitals. They formed organizations to provide immigrants and the poor with food, clothing, money, and job placement. Evangelicals established Sunday schools, colleges, and seminaries in order to "impress the new nation with an indelibly Protestant character." Through organizations such as the American Tract Society and the American Bible Society, they published millions of books, tracts, and Christian periodicals (MCIntosh).

The resurgence in America revolutionized an entire society. As one historian puts it, by the 1820s, evangelical Christianity had become "one of the most dynamic and important cultural forces in American life."As the First Great Awakening molded the character of a

developing nation, the Second Great Awakening refreshed that character and revitalized the church for the century's unique challenges (Towns and Porter67).

2.3. The Split over being Fundamental or Modern Concerning Biblical Faith

The church liberalization debate that arose in the US after World War I was not an unanticipated development. This theological controversy has its origins at least as far back as the 1869 split between Old School and New School Presbyterians (Muether). The dominance of Evangelical Protestantism was contested during this period by the rise of Modernism, a new movement that sought to adapt Christian doctrine in light of contemporary intellectual trends, specifically romanticism, evolutionary science, and higher criticism of the Bible (Hankins3). Religious orthodoxy was in jeopardy between 1920 and 1930 as the Bible was subjected to scientific research and higher criticism by scholars, casting doubt on dogmas and teachings formerly believed to be eternal, unchanging truth. Meantime, Fundamentalism also was developed as a fresh conceptual history in the early 20th century, which was plainly a theological response to modernity (Chandler).

In opposition to what they saw as the liberal and irreligious trends of contemporary science and theology, fundamentalism was a movement of protest and defense meant to safeguard, preserve, and describe Christians' core religion. While it is a movement founded on the idea that the Bible is infallible and should be applied to all people, it also demands that Scripture be read literally and imposes a rigid set of guidelines on its adherents. With logical justifications and empirical data, there is no room for scrutiny or even critique of the scriptures. The modernists appeared to deny the supernatural origins of the Christian faith and disparaged literal readings of Bible passages while using scholarly approaches to study sacred texts and compare different religions. With the adaptation of Christian teachings and concepts to quickly evolving worldviews, they attempted to reconcile the new knowledge with the outdated religion. In particular, with regard to the "secular contemporary world," religious

fundamentalism is a countercultural response to societal changes. Generally, fundamentalists advocate returning to the tenets of their religion. They are frequently renowned for their strong participation in public life and frequently concentrate on the authority of religious writings as understood by believers (Chandler).

Evangelical Christianity was only slightly impacted by modernism before to the 1960s. Throughout the interwar years, the Oxford Group was primarily responsible for its impact. The Oxford Group was an evangelistic movement that focused on reaching out to the prosperous and young, particularly recent college graduates. Frank Buchman, a Lutheran clergyman, formed it in 1919 with the goal of achieving the broadest possible national "awakenings." It began as a group dedicated to evangelizing American college students (Bebbington4).

Meanwhile, Evangelicals' efforts to influence American politics over the years have yielded varying degrees of outcomes. Hence, a large number of Evangelicals engaged in both social and political reform movements throughout the 19th century. However, as the world progressively modernized and new scientific theories developed, theological differences grew. Eventually, disagreements occurred over various interpretations of God's role in history and conflicting theories about human nature. A movement known as fundamentalism was established by theological conservatives who encouraged Christians to maintain the principles of their faith and emphasis on personal salvation (Black).

By the 1925s, a new ideological debate known as the Fundamentalist-Modernist conflict had developed, showing the escalating conflicts between various religious organizations and their reactions to scientific advancements. Many fundamentalists formed institutions that revealed their religious beliefs to withdraw from the public sphere, such as publishing companies, schools, and other organizations. Nevertheless, theologically conservative Protestants did not all follow this course. In 1941 and 1942, a few Christian leaders, who were

worried about the fundamentalists' seclusion, got together. They created strategies for like-minded Christians to collaborate for more social activism. Consequently, they established an association, the National Association of Evangelicals. The overall outcome was a new movement that regained the name Evangelicalism (Black).

The movement attracted a lot of attention and was referred to be a fresh revival by many Christian leaders in the early 1930s. Although though many Evangelical Christians remained devoted members after World War II, the movement lost a lot of its Christian identity. It attempted to have a significant political impact and identified with anti-Communism. The organization's most recent evolution is the MRA, or Moral Re-Armament. It evolved into a significantly more loosely organized and populist revival movement. Nowadays, the term evangelical incorporates and outnumbers fundamentalism by a wide margin (Bebbington4).

2.4.The Roots of Evangelical Political Activism: The Christian Right

A second wave of quick cultural and political changes began to emerge in the 1960s. Concerns were generated by local disputes involving Gay rights, tax exemptions for religious institutions of higher learning, textbooks, and sex education in public education. Religiously-driven activists started local grassroots campaigns to further their interests, and as a result, their work attracted national notice. Then, around the 1970s, prominent Christian leaders started discussing politics more openly, and some of them created groups to motivate theologically conservative Christians to become more active. As a result of their right-of-center political views and their opposition to abortion and homosexuality, these groups and activists came to be known as the Christian Right over time (Black).

The Christian Right Organization was established in the 1920s when fundamentalists were on the attack following the release of *The Fundamentals* in 1910, which were widely disregarded by liberals and intellectuals. This conservative-liberal divide became wider over time. The teaching of evolution in public schools, a contentious topic that led to the

development of the first wave of Christian Right organizations in this century, severely split the two factions, notwithstanding their shared support for Prohibition. Fundamentalist leaders perceived the teaching of evolution as undermining their belief in biblical literalism and as one of the gravest violations of the modernist movement. Their success was due to support from fundamentalist religious organizations. Towards the end of 1926, the support was mainly from fundamentalists. Although, as a response to evolution faded, the leaders switched to anticommunism, a prevalent ideology since 1919. Following the Scopes decision, the 1920s conservative Christian Right disbanded from public consciousness (Wilcox661).

The fundamentalist political philosophy had later, in the late 1920s, evolved toward anticommunism, which was expressed in the second wave of organized Christian Right activism in the 1950s. While McCarthy was waging his crusade, the Christian Right group started taking shape. Organizations in the 1950s took stances on domestic concerns, and these positions were typically somewhat connected to communism. As they had in the 1920s, anti-communist institutions used national radio programs to reach out to their supporters while taking a strong stance on education-related problems. As well as being criticized for reducing ethical standards, sex education in schools was viewed as a communist plot. Following Goldwater's loss in 1964, Christian Right groups surrendered their separatist ambitions and joined with more secular organizations (662).

The Christian Right grew powerful in the '80s because of TV evangelism and a symbiotic relationship with Ronald Reagan. Conservative Christian support had been instrumental in Reagan's 1980 and 1984 victories. Then, through the decade, the movement struggled to become a force in its own right, playing a significant role in congressional races and defeating Democrats (D'Antonio). New Christian Right organizations of the late 1980s started to penetrate politics by securing the backing of conservative lawmakers (Magiil6). The politically conservative Moral Majority, founded by the Rev. Jerry Falwell, became one of the

most well-known and prosperous groups most frequently linked to the developing New Christian Right (Mucke). With the selection of candidate Robertson for president, the Christian Right finally achieved substantial strides by joining forces with the Republican Party. Robertson advocated his conservative ideas on television to further his campaign encouraging Christians to become politically active once more (Moen113).

Since the emergence of the Christian Right in the United States in the 1970s, Evangelicals have grown to be a prominent part of the Republican Party's base. They have consistently been a significant Republican voter group in the electoral process. Nevertheless, this vigorous political participation and Republican Party affiliation are fairly recent developments, and they conceal the smaller but still sizable minority of Evangelicals who support Democrats. In 2004, evangelical Christians displayed a high degree of political uniformity, with 77.5% of them backing the Republican presidential candidate (Hatcher 20). It is hardly surprising, given these numbers, that Evangelicals have taken a central role in the Republican platform. Numerous Democrats have speculated that if their party made a bigger attempt to redefine social concerns in moral language, some Evangelicals may turn away from the Republicans. They contend that the Evangelical backing of the Republican Party is socially created rather than stemming from a classic or genuine Evangelical worldview (Bean1).

Furthermore, since the 1960s, this religious sect has reworked earlier varieties of religious nationalism that had dominated American public life and established a new sense of their relationship to the community as an entire. This identity change had considerable political repercussions. They had been cautious of politics, feeling that the church should be more involved in spiritual matters rather than temporal ones as politics. Although Evangelical churches addressed ethical concerns as divorce, they did it as questions of private morality rather than government policy. Yet, more and more American evangelicals began to feel a special duty to uphold Christianity as a pillar of the country's identity and as a moral standard

for public conduct. Meanwhile, they were particularly concerned about various ethical dilemmas, such as poverty and the environment, because of their concept that America held a unique position in God's plan. Additionally, they assumed that the need to rescue America was associated primarily with two additional moral issues, the legalization of abortion and the acceptance of homosexuality that represented America's departure from God. In response to this new sociopolitical identity concept, evangelical Christians started to get politically involved with the American government (Bean3-4).

Over the course of recent history, the vast majority of Evangelicals have gravitated toward the current Republican Party due to a number of pivotal events and circumstances. The current Civil Rights movement and the struggle for Black liberation were two factors in this transformation, in addition to public school segregation that was forbidden by the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board* ruling. In response, a number of Evangelical groups established segregation academies as private schools in an effort to fight school desegregation and as an expression of their religious freedom instead of support for racial segregation (Fea et al.).

2.5. From Issue-Based to Party Politics

2.5.1. The God Gap

As the 2004 presidential election drew near, journalists found out about a seemingly unusual political concept: the "religion gap," or the propensity of the most religious Americans to support conservative political ideologies and vote for Republican nominees (Olson and Green455). Regardless of their religious background, those who regularly attend religious services are more likely to vote for Republicans. Unlike people who infrequently or never do so are more likely to vote for Democrats. Thus, when developing their strategy, candidates, and parties take religion into account. Democrats aim to broaden their appeal by discussing religion without alienating secular voters, while Republicans seek to maintain and expand their Evangelical base without losing support from less religious individuals (Black).

The religion gap reflects a crucial aspect of modern politics, maybe even one that distinguishes a new period from the past. Analysis of a potential religion gap is simple since public opinion polls frequently assess worship attendance. Additionally, a significant aspect of daily life is connected to political behavior by the generational, gender, and religion gaps. It can illustrate the effects of religion. It's likely that weekly attendance predominates in specific religious organizations but not in others or that less-frequent attendance is unaffected considerably by certain ideals of religious groups. The religion gap may also reflect the importance of religion in politics. For instance, those who regularly attend worship services may have a higher likelihood of holding particular religious views, unlike those who go less they have the opposite opinion (Olson and Green 455-458).

2.5.2. Evangelical Political Party Affiliation

Even yet, Evangelicals continued to lean Democratic throughout the 1970s. Many of them were becoming increasingly engaged in individualized political problems but were not very active in party politics, finding Jimmy Carter's 1976 presidential election effective. A while later and during the Carter presidency, Evangelical support started shifting in favor of the Republicans. From the late 1970s, they recognized the significance of the abortion debate and its relationship to essential Christian doctrine. It was a vital issue for the Religious Right during the previous presidential election. By 1980, the Republican platform incorporated tenets endorsing structured prayer in public schools and defining human life as beginning at conception, the party also used the label "pro-family" to characterize its goal. As a result, Evangelical voters gave Reagan substantial support in 1980 and 1984 (Black).

By the 1990s, more decentralized, charismatic and contentious organizations had begun to appear. These groups stressed grassroots organizing and strong supporter networks. Although the majority of the most influential and well-funded Christian advocacy groups were ideologically conservative, other Christian organizations for social action soon developed,

offering an intellectual alternative and voicing more progressive concerns. Evangelical voters later developed into a critical component of the Republican base by the end of the 1980s.

One of the groups that continuously supported George W. Bush during his presidency was the Evangelical Protestant community. His candidacy, his views on social issues, and his open discourse on religion encouraged Evangelical conservatives and helped Republicans to take power in the White House and Congress. Thus, Evangelical leaders have anticipated much election success. However, the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, caused the Christian Right to turn its attention away from domestic issues and toward national security and foreign policy. As a result, Evangelicals worked for Bush's reelection in 2004, hoping that Bush would put their objectives first in his second term. Yet, some of his former followers accused him of ignoring their domestic matters and claimed that the Republican Party took the Evangelical side of the electorate in favor (Dowdle and Wekkin18).

2.6. Opponents of Evangelizing Politics

"Disillusionment" is another term commonly associated with Evangelicalism. Although the Evangelical front appears to be impenetrable in terms of voter turnout, followers are leaving the movement in droves. Even though the United States remains largely a traditional Christian nation, fewer and fewer Americans, particularly younger Americans, are willing to identify with Evangelical doctrine. Many people express growing distrust and dissatisfaction with the movement's leaders and their often-eccentric values. Popular theologian Russell Moore contends that, rather than disbelief in religious ideals, people are turning away from the church due to frustration with the hypocrisy of its public figures. He explains, "[w]e sees young Evangelicals walking away not because they disagree with what the church teaches, but because they disagree with the church" (qtd. in DeRoco). This understanding of hypocrisy has always existed, but it has been exacerbated by the church's politicization. The "us vs. them" narrative of extreme right-wing politics is difficult to reconcile with ostensibly declared

messages of welcome and understanding from the pulpit. The startling disparity between words and actions has prompted many young religious members to leave the church (DeRoco).

Others realized it was the process of gradual radicalization that had transformed the Church into something it was not. Ex-mega church pastor John Pavlovitz writes about how people who are drawn in at the beginning end up on the other side of the fence. He describes watching in horror as former friends and people he agreed with and understood now exhibit an unrecognizable theology, having become disillusioned with such political beatification. He defends "[their] Jesus and mine bear no resemblance to one another," he writes. "I no longer belong in this tribe" (qtd. in Barrett).

As a result, the Evangelical movement is rapidly losing members (particularly young people). Does this imply that it will perish soon? On some levels, it appears to be stronger than ever. With each new event and debate, its adherents become even more dogmatic and invested in its hyper-politicized beliefs. However, as it becomes more radical, newer and younger members are alienated from its embrace. Although the institution is far too ingrained in the culture and wields far too much political power to be destabilized quickly, this polarization will inevitably lead to a collapse unless the Church can depoliticize and return to religious ideals that its congregation can support (Barret).

From a historical and sociological perspective, Evangelicals were a vital part in reshaping US politics. Sociologists and politicians have spent the last several years debating the various phases of their political activism involvement. The first part of this chapter explores Evangelicals' fundamental attitudes, beliefs, and perspectives. It has also covers their revolutionary awakenings in the American mainstream. Their efforts to influence American politics over the years have yielded varying degrees of outcomes by engaging in both social and political ideologies. As a fundamentalist movement against modernism concerning Biblical faith, their history is replete with conflict. Additionally, this chapter examines

Evangelicals' political activism development in the US, forming a dominant political based party in the political agenda and ends up with analyzing their political opponents' voice.

Chapter Three

Evangelical Engagement in 2016 and 2020 Elections in the United States

Since the nineteenth century, Evangelicals has been an influential part of American politics. This religious group comprises nearly half of US voters, which significantly contributed to Trump's victory in 2016. In addition to 2016, when he campaigned against Hilary Clinton, he saw a slight rise in his popularity among them winning 81% of their votes compared to 74% in 2020. As part of this chapter, it examines the reasons why American evangelical Christians, specifically white evangelicals, have given overwhelming support to Donald Trump in both 2016 and 2020. Furthermore, it summarizes Evangelicals' reasons for overcoming Trump's traits and behavior that do not match their values and ideals. Additionally, it analyses Evangelical reports during the 2016 election to those during 2020. The section also addresses why Evangelicals refused Donald Trump's second term in 2020.

3.1. Evangelical Support for Donald Trump in 2016 Elections

One of the most divisive presidential campaigns in American history was the 2016 election. The decision between Donald J. Trump and Hillary Clinton ultimately came down to the most significant ideological and moral conflict unseen in decades (Melatti 2). Exit surveys show that 81% of white Evangelical Christians who identify as such voted massively in favor of Donald Trump for President and have remained his supporters afterward. It is the highest number of votes they had cast for a Republican presidential candidate since 2004, when they decisively supported President George W. Bush by 78-21 percent. Furthermore, according to the 2014 Religious Landscape Survey's white Evangelicals have always held prominent positions in American politics. They are the most highly religious group that backs the Republican Party, with 76 percent were identified as Republicans or leaning that way. An estimated one-third of all Grand Old Party(GOP) voters identify with or lean toward the GOP, while around one-fifth of all white Evangelical voters are members of this group (Bailey).

White Evangelicals were a substantial voting bloc in the 2016 election, and it was assumed that they would support the GOP candidate, but Donald Trump stood out from other conservative candidates. In contrast to standard campaigns, Trump was a candidate with a history of divorce and adultery, coarse language, and boasting about having extramarital affairs. From the standpoint of white Evangelicals, Donald Trump would be viewed as unethical. Even though, compared to the other four GOP contenders, Trump received higher support among white Evangelicals (Martinez and Smith).

Others have referred to it as one of the essential contradictions of the 2016 election. In another sense, why would a devout person back a politician who "flaunted his infidelity, supported abortion services, and professed never to seek God's pardon?" Republicans, including Ted Cruz and Jeb Bush, started attacking Trump directly as a response. Most of these criticisms focused on President Trump's personality and his prior actions, which were deemed "unchristian" by senior Republicans. This idea of being unchristian launches a debate on what Christians or members of any other religion thought about Trump. Later, many religious leaders finally backed Trump, but that was not how they started. For instance, Ted Cruz seemed to be the right's first in the lead concerning religion. Yet as the election went on, political and religious figures began to accept the notion that Trump would win the nomination and ultimately stand in for the Republican Party. Eventually, certain voters decided to openly support Trump, while others opted to support Clinton instead or to keep it quiet during the election (Mellati 2).

3.1.1. Evangelical Perspective on Trump and Clinton in the 2016 Election

There would be no ambiguity regarding Trump's support from white Evangelicals if he was the typical Republican candidate. Yet Trump seems to be notably different from other Republicans in terms of both his personal religious beliefs and how evangelicals perceive him. White Evangelicals have condemned other candidates for what they saw to be moral flaws,

regardless of their general support for previous Republican candidates. However, Donald Trump's approach to religion and the courting of religious supporters was far different from that of Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush God speaks (Coe and Domke 309-325). Evangelicals faced a hard decision as the 2016 presidential election neared. It was impossible to deny that Donald Trump's behavior and attitude frequently fell short of the beliefs and goals they constantly proclaimed. Many Evangelical circles were puzzled by this, especially since they had for over 40 years claimed that only candidates with high moral and ethical standards and civic virtue that were eligible for the presidential election (Zichterian).

On the one hand, Hillary Clinton's reputation was tarnished for decades because of her deep implicated in the highly publicized scandals that characterized her husband's governmental endeavors. Nevertheless, she made almost any effort to engage with their community and did not identify as an evangelical Christian by profession. Unlike her, Trump worked on gaining Evangelicals' trust and winning their support by giving their leaders extensive access to his administration. She also supported several policies that Evangelicals vehemently disagreed with. Also, Clinton appeared to harm the fundamental roots of religious freedom in the United States as when she stated that "deep-seated cultural values, religious beliefs, and structural prejudices needed to be altered" at the "Women in the World Conference" in 2015. Moreover, she supported same-sex marriage at the time. After she explicitly referred to half of Trump's followers as being in a basket of deplorable only two months before the election, many Evangelicals even believed she was overtly antagonistic against them (Zichterian 46-47).

Meanwhile, Evangelicals did not respond as expected to Trump. Although there were evangelical criticisms of him, it appears that it was mild compared to the severity of his transgressions compared to those of other competitors. For example, in a part of his speech, Donald Trump referred to Barack Obama as the founder of Isis, said that the terrorist

organization was praising him, and implied that Hillary Clinton was equally to blame for Isis (Siddiqui). Such assaults are inappropriate for Republican candidates. Presumably, the reason Donald Trump is likely to receive a more positive view differently than other Republican candidates is that his policies resonate with white Evangelicals and their business leaders. Considering white evangelicals' political history, it is not unexpected. They did not necessarily favor the most moral politicians, yet, they did so because the morality of the policies they advocated aligned with their policies. Historically, white evangelicals have responded favorably to politicians who applied plenty of religious concepts to reach them. However, what Trump delivered seemed more significant than his lack of religion (Nelson 30-33). He also frequently posed for photographs as famous evangelical pastors prayed for God to bless his campaign while laying their hands on him (Coppins).

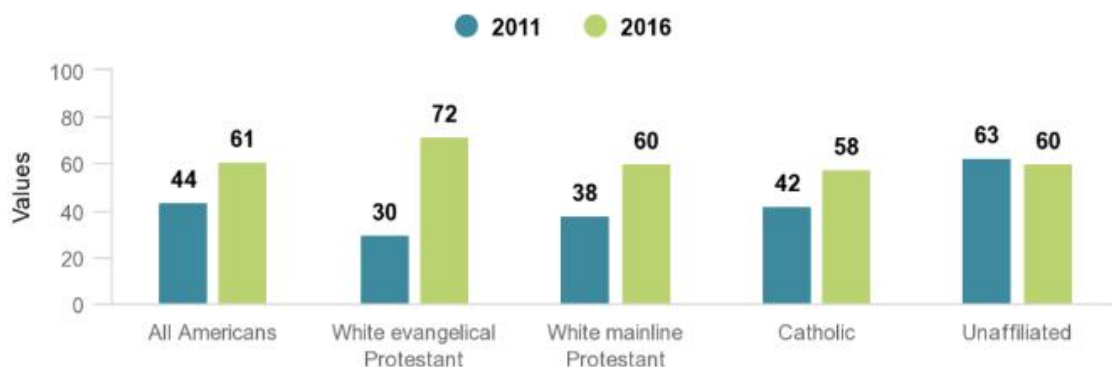
Because of his religious rhetoric use, Trump has met the expectations of many prominent white Evangelicals, even if he may not be the ethically perfect option. These Evangelicals have been accused of supporting Trump out of an uncontrolled ambition for power because they considered him their savior. According to them, he did not appeal to them by emphasizing his faith. He also rewarded his Evangelical followers with multiple high-level positions in his government. As a result, they overwhelmingly backed him in 2016 though they believe that Trump is not their ideal president but at least maintain a conservative theology (Nelson 33).

3.1.2. Reasons behind Evangelical Support for Donald Trump

The 2016 election was the finest example of religious groups' willingness to compromise their values and beliefs to further their political interests. So, although Trump's attitude and behavior frequently did not reflect the Evangelical norms and standards, some of them considered him a better choice to advance their legislative agenda than Clinton (Melatti 2-3). Trump's backing from white Evangelicals is also a result of their shared political ideologies.

Evangelicals are a regressive political group that has set themselves against American society's efforts to advance reform. They had created new fundamental beliefs in reaction to the shifting political climate in the United States, and their vital concerns when they first emerged have mostly stayed constant. Eventually, Donald Trump's positions and rhetoric seem to agree with those of white Evangelicals with all of their central concerns. Additionally, Evangelicals now care less about the candidate's moral character than any other group demonstrating a shift in their perception of candidates. Their support is not significantly hindered by the behavior of Trump, since they had begun to believe that he was on their side and that the issue of his unethical behavior had been overcome (Nelson 4). Further details are presented in figure 1.

Fig.1. Religious Americans Grow More Accepting of Politicians' Personal Indiscretions.



Source: Robert P. Jones. “Backing Trump, White Evangelicals Flip Flop on Importance of Candidate Character.” PRRI/RNS; PRRI/Brookings Survey. Web. June 2011- Oct 2016.

A questionnaire survey in figure 1 examined how Americans, especially white Evangelicals behaved toward politicians who performed unethical behavior. Yet, respondents thought they could still act ethically and carry out their responsibilities in the civic and occupational spheres. Just 30% of white Evangelicals, as seen in the graph from 2011, thought an elected politician could engage in immoral behavior and carry out their responsibilities in their official role compared with 38% for mainline Protestants, 42% for Catholics, and 63%

for unaffiliated citizens. However, that percentage increased to 72% in 2016; 42% higher than in the previous five years. Hence, in conclusion, white Evangelicals support politicians who will solve their matters of concern, just like other voters. For this reason, they backed Donald Trump during the 2016 election and continued to support him after (Robert P. and Cox).

It is also possible to attribute some of the Evangelicals' support for Trump to their intense hostility toward Clinton. Like other supporters of Trump, many evangelical voters are driven more by their opposition to Hillary than by their support for Trump. The Pew Research Center had made a survey from August 16th to September 12th, 2016 to highlight religious groups' voter turnout purposes and reasons. Results are present in figure 2.

Fig.2. Eight-in-ten Trump Supporters Cite His Views on Terrorism as ‘Major Reason’ for Supporting Him.

	All Trump supporters	White evangelical Protestant	White mainline Protestant	Catholic	Religiously unaffiliated
	%	%	%	%	%
His views on terrorism	78	80	79	82	73
His views on the economy	76	78	80	82	70
Dislike for Hillary Clinton	67	76	68	61	63
His views on immigration	64	66	66	61	65
His leadership ability	59	66	55	62	52
He has not worked in government	47	44	46	55	49
His views on race relations	28	29	25	28	27
He is the Republican nominee	28	38	19	23	13
His personality	18	16	16	21	16

Source: Smith, Gregory A. “Many evangelicals favor Trump because he is not Clinton.” Pew Research Center survey, 2016. <https://rb.gy/rshfe>

In fact, 76% of white evangelical voters who backed Trump said that part of the reason they did was that he was not Hillary. Notwithstanding their disagreement with Clinton, Evangelicals mention additional factors for their support for Trump. A high percentage is too found among other religious groups. Precisely, 68% of white mainline Protestants, 61% of Catholics and 63% of religiously unaffiliated voters express the same reason of support.

Trump's views on terrorism and economic issues form a credible factor for his support in the elections. According to figure 2, Evangelicals did agree with those points with 80% and 78% respectively. In comparison, White mainline Protestants support the president with 79% and 80% respectively. For Catholics, they shared the same view with Trump with 82% for both views. Religiously unaffiliated voters did the same with 73% for terrorism views and 70% for Trump's views on economy.

Trump's view on immigration issues and race relations are another reason for Evangelical support. This group had defended immigration suggested policies with 66% whereas they did with 29% for race issues. The same percentage was shared with the white mainline Protestants concerning immigration topic but less for race with 25%. 61% and 65% were the percentage support among Catholics and religiously unaffiliated voters linked to immigration views. Last, race views constitute 28% and 27% among the same groups respectively.

3.2. Trump's Policies after being in the White House

Trump committed to supporting six crucial measures that Evangelicals had highly emphasized. Nine months before the election, he announced his intention to choose conservative justices by releasing a desirable list of candidates. Progressives successfully undertook to legislate from the bench, circumventing the Congressional process of balanced government, which was incorporated in the Constitution, despite the early founders' designation of the judiciary as the authority's weakest component. As a result, the courts evolved into the primary ideological battleground of the country (Zicherman 53- 98).

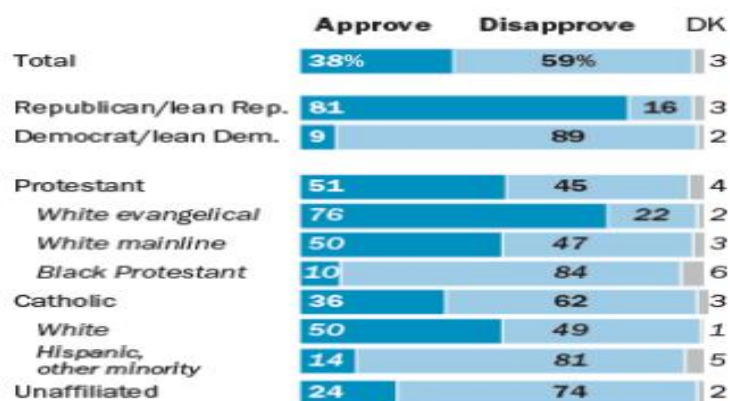
Additionally, Trump pledged to defend religious freedom, which evangelicals said was openly being violated. It was much plainly, current policies that tried to preserve LGBT rights and the rights of women, in particular, their access to abortion. Meanwhile, his consideration for Christians who wished to practice their faith in public and share their beliefs freely has prevented progressives from pursuing their anti-religious goals. He promised them also to

support Israel's welfare, which many evangelicals thought was crucial to maintaining God's blessing on the United States. As a result, many evangelicals rejoiced, when Trump announced that the US embassy in Israel will move to Jerusalem in December 2017 (96).

Furthermore, upon taking office, Trump also committed to advancing a pro-life policy since Evangelicals believed that except in dire circumstances where the mother's life or health was really in danger, abortion was malicious in God's eyes. He also required health insurers to clarify whether their policies covered abortions. Additionally, he terminated all active government contracts for experiments on aborted babies for scientific purposes becoming the first president to deliver a live speech at a rally for the "Right to Life" in Washington, D.C.

Also, Evangelicals thought that the Christian norms called for fewer state taxes and strict welfare regulations and that practically all charitable donations should be made locally, to provide the necessary responsibility. So, Trump pledged to respect Republican budgetary principles and ensured that the old political and economic power structures would be kept functioning as before. He committed to upholding immigration law, making it a central part of his campaign platform. He was warmly supported by Evangelicals to eliminate the increase in immigration, especially of Muslims, whom they considered a danger to the national identity of American Christendom. He received evangelical backing since no prior Republican president put forth more effort or achieved more in this attempt (99). Further details are mentioned in figure 3.

Fig.3. Most White Evangelicals Approve of Trump’s Refugee Policy



Source: Smith, Gregory A. “Most white evangelicals approve of Trump travel prohibition and express concerns about extremism.” *Pew Research Center* , 2017.
<https://rb.gy/8wniu>

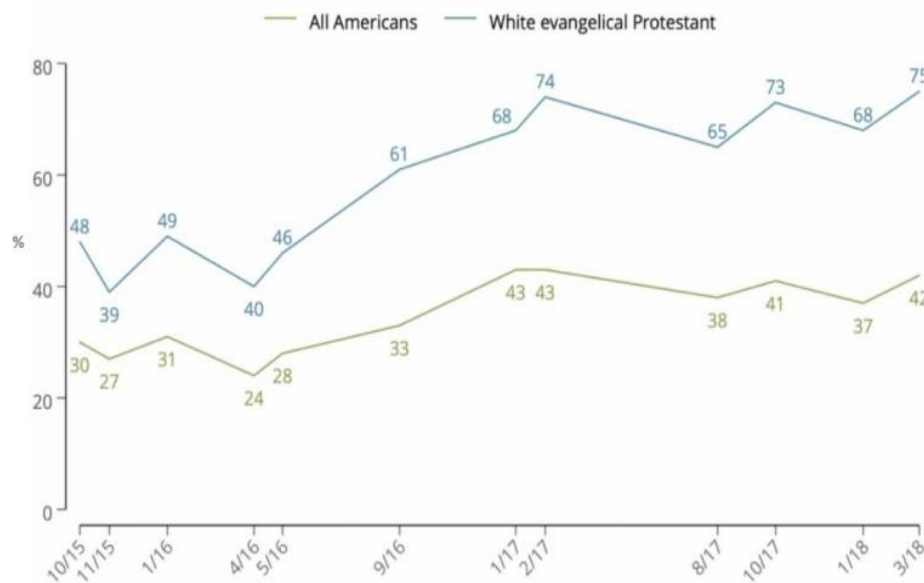
This analysis by Pew Research Center showed that major religious organizations in the country have a significant gap on the subject, even though most Americans disagree with Donald Trump's executive order that would bar refugees and travel from several countries with a majority of Muslims. As figure 3 represents, Partisan disparities reflect religious divides. Travel ban supporter numbers hover around 76% among white evangelical Protestants, most of who identify with or lean towards the Republican Party. This level of backing is the greatest of any non-political ethnic category. Statistics demonstrate how well Trump's anti-Muslim policies are countering white evangelicals' concerns about militant Islam. Approval of his decisions as president reveals that he has been effective in meeting the needs of white Evangelicals, proving that their fear of Muslims influenced their 2016 vote (Smith).

3.3. Evangelical Support for Trump in the Post-Election Period

There was no surprise that white evangelicals supported Donald Trump throughout the election, owing to his position as the Republican candidate. The fact remains, however, as noted, support for white evangelical candidates did not just go to the Republican nominee. As

well as supporting Trump's agenda, White evangelicals hold him in greater regard than the rest of the country. Over time, their backing for Donald Trump has grown gradually (Nelson 72). More clarifications are presented in the following figure.

Fig.4. Favorability of Donald Trump among White Evangelical Protestants, 2015-2019.



Source: “White Evangelical Protestants Attitudes Toward Donald Trump, 2015 – 2019.”

PRRI Staff, 2020. <https://rb.gy/z3nlr>

Significantly, during the 2016 primaries, Trump's favorability among white evangelicals never ranked at 50%, yet, it increased to 61% by the early fall of 2016 following his nomination. Through the time of the election, his favorability increased to 68% and shortly following the inauguration, it jumped to 74% in February 2017. Significantly, during the 2016 primaries, Trump's favorability among white Evangelicals never ranked at 50%, yet, it increased to 61% by the early fall of 2016 following his nomination. Via the time of the election, his favorability increased to 68%, and shortly following the inauguration, it jumped to 74% in February 2017. During 2017 Trump's support with white Evangelicals fluctuated slightly throughout this period, but it never dropped below 65%. At this point in his administration, Trump enjoyed unexpectedly consistent support from white Evangelicals.

Compared to the data range, it increased to 75% in March 2018. Furthermore, all Americans now have a lower favorable perception of Donald Trump than white Evangelicals, increasing the disparity between the two groups. White Evangelicals had a 25% increase in support for Trump in September 2019 compared to an 18% increase in October 2015 (“White Evangelical Protestants Attitudes..”).

Consequently, according to these findings, white Evangelicals' backing for Trump has primarily increased since the election, which sets them apart from the overall population. This increase in support demonstrates that white Evangelicals did not only back Trump as the Republican candidate, or in contrast Hillary Clinton since they have continued to see him favorably among the vast majority of them more than a year into his administration. White evangelical support for Trump has remained high since gaining his office. It can be argued that his policies, besides his unchanging objectives during his presidency, were the fundamental basis for white Evangelicals continued backing (Nelson 73).

3.4. Evangelicals and Election Polls for Presidential Elections in 2020

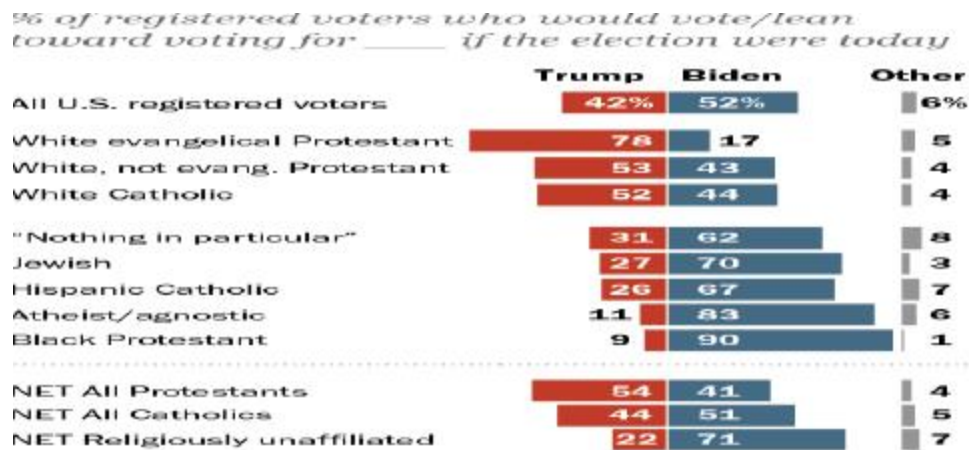
3.4.1. Evangelical Votes in 2020 Presidential Pre-Elections in United States

Within the 2020 elections, both former President Donald Trump and Vice President Joe Biden had differing connections with evangelicals, an important voting constituency in the United States. Evangelicals are a broad group, and their backing for candidates can vary depending on a variety of criteria, including religious views, policy opinions, and personal values.

On the one hand, President Donald Trump is the preferred candidate of White Christians for the November election, but backing among voters in three major traditions - White Catholics, White believers in Protestantism who are not evangelical, and even White evangelical Protestants - has dipped since August 2022. Democratic candidate Joe Biden, on the other hand, lead the presidential race among every other religious group studied in the poll,

including Black Protestants, Hispanic Catholics, Jews, and the religiously unaffiliated (Gregory). Numbers are detailed in figure 5.

Fig.5. In 2020 Entrance Polls, deep divisions between White Christians and Everyone else



Source: Pew Research Center, August-Oct, 2022.

<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2020/10/13/white-christians-continue-to-favor-trump-over-biden-but-support-has-slipped/>

As presented in the figure, Trump lead Biden by 8 percentage points among White Catholic voters: 52% say they would be voting for Trump (or lean that way) if the election were conducted today, while 44% support Biden. This difference has shrunk dramatically since the last time this issue was asked in late July and early August, when Trump scored 19 points ahead of Biden (59% to 40%). Support from White Protestants who are not evangelical or born-again has declined at a comparable rate: 53% say they would cast their ballots for Trump if the election were held today, down from 59% in the summer poll although White evangelical Protestants dropped their support for Trump marginally. Meanwhile, 90% of Black Protestant registered to vote, 70% of Jews, and 67% of Hispanic Catholics support Biden. Biden is the favorite candidate of 83% of skeptics and nonbelievers, and 62% of persons who characterize their religion as "nothing in particular." Support for Biden is similar

in all of these groups to what was found in the August poll. While support for Trump has declined among all three a number of White Christians polled, support for Biden has not increased in a comparable (statistically significant) manner. One possible explanation for Trump's dropping support among White Christians is that the new survey, for the first time, allowed respondents to indicate who they would vote for (Gregory).

3.4.2. The 2020 Vote for Trump during the Election Day

Evangelical supporters swung against President Trump in large enough numbers in a few key states to decide the election. According to an exit survey conducted by the New York Times, Trump's nationwide evangelical support has decreased from 81% in 2016 to 76% in 2020. Biden garnered 24% of the Evangelical vote, or approximately 4 million more votes than Hillary Clinton received in 2016. White evangelical support for Trump fell from 81% to 70% in crucial battleground states like Michigan, according to the Times exit poll, while support for Biden increased from 14% to 29%. In Georgia, Biden garnered 14% of the evangelical vote, compared to 5% for Clinton in 2016 (Doug).

For the AP Vote Cast study, 81% of White evangelical Protestant voters supported Trump, while 18% supported Biden. According to Edison exit surveys, 76% of White Evangelicals voted for Trump, while 24% went for Biden .Of course, this is not new. For many election cycles, Republican presidential candidates have received a sizable majority of White evangelical Protestant votes. The White evangelical vote in 2020 is not just similar to the same group's vote in 2016 but it is also similar to what it was when Mitt Romney ran against Barack Obama in 2012, when John McCain ran against Obama in 2008, and when George W. Bush ran against John Kerry in 2004. Thus, the White evangelical vote (as defined by exit pollsters) has overwhelmingly favored the Republican candidate in five consecutive elections (Newport).

In many ways, the 2020 presidential election was momentous. Despite a global epidemic and significant changes in how Americans voted, voter turnout increased by 7 percentage points over 2016, with 66% of US adult citizens voting in the 2020 election. Joe Biden defeated Donald Trump in the Electoral College 306-232 and won the popular vote by a 4-point margin. While Biden's popular vote difference was more than Hillary Clinton's 2-point lead in 2016, it was not as significant as congressional Democrats' 9-point edge over Republicans in votes cast in the 2018 elections for the United States House of Representatives (Igielnik et al.).

3.5. Controversial Support of Evangelicals for Trump during 2020 Presidential Election

3.5.1. Factors behind Evangelical Vote for Trump Again

During the 2020 elections, a significant number of evangelicals continued to support and vote for Donald Trump. Many Evangelicals supported Donald Trump's candidacy in the 2020 elections because of his stance on abortion. Trump campaigned as a pro-life candidate, arguing for legislation that would limit or eliminate abortion rights. This hit home with Evangelicals, who tend to be conservative on the topic owing their strong religious beliefs. They saw Trump as a potential partner in the anti-abortion movement, believing that his presidency would result in the selection of conservative judges who would rethink or overturn the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court judgment. According to a Pew Research Center poll done in 2020, 77% of white Evangelical voters believed abortion to be a crucial issue, while 81% supported Trump (Schwadel, Gregory).

Another factor is that Evangelicals' endorsement of Trump was also motivated by his promises to safeguard religious liberty. Many Evangelicals perceived a threat to their religious freedoms, in particular domains such as same-sex marriage and gender identity difficulties. Trump promised to preserve their rights and chose conservative justices seen as sensitive to religious liberty concerns. Evangelicals' backing for Trump was strengthened by their

agreement on religious freedom concerns. According to a 2020 poll performed by the Public Religion Research Institute, 72% of white Evangelical voters said religious liberty was under threat, and 81% supported Trump (PRRI).

Additionally, economic factors also played a role in Evangelicals' vote for Trump. Many Evangelicals backed Trump's pro-business policies, such as tax cuts and deregulation, believing that they would spur economic growth and job creation. Evangelicals considered economic stability as critical for their families and communities, and Trump's emphasis on the economy and promise to emphasize the needs of American workers resonated with them. According to a 2020 poll performed by the Public Religion Research Institute, 58% of white working-class Evangelicals thought that Trump's economic policies would help them personally (PRRI).

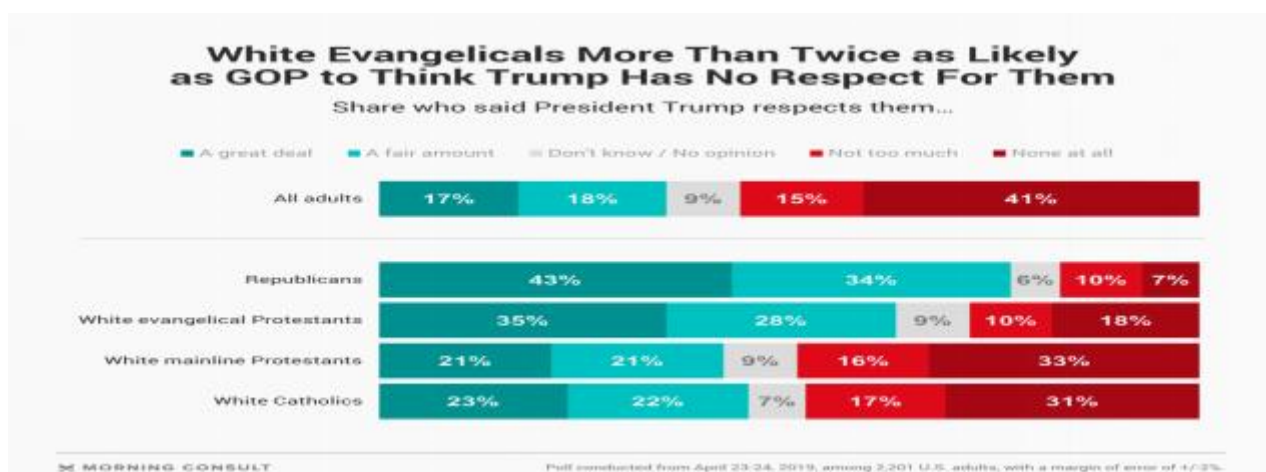
3.5.2. Not All Evangelicals Supported Trump during 2020 Presidential Elections

It is crucial to remember that evangelical Christians are not a homogeneous community, and their beliefs and deeds can differ greatly. However, during the 2020 elections, some evangelicals spoke out against then-President Donald Trump. These are some reasons that led evangelicals to not vote for the Republican candidate Donald Trump. Some evangelical Christians have moral concerns about Donald Trump's personality and prior deeds. They found his history of dishonesty, coarse language, and contentious utterances to be incompatible with their beliefs and Christian teachings. They thought a leader's character and integrity were important, and Trump's actions fell short of their expectations (Bruenig).

Additionally, while Trump's administration performed some acts that fit with conservative Christian ideals, such as nominating conservative justices and backing pro-life policies, several evangelicals disagreed with portions of his policy agenda. They highlighted their concerns about his attitude on topics like as immigration, racial justice, climate change, and healthcare, saying that his policies did not reflect the compassion and fairness that they

considered were essential to their faith (Mitchel). Furthermore, prioritizing other reasons was a significant factor in the evangelical rejection of Trump's presidential electoral candidacy. While some evangelicals supported Trump's ideas, they considered that other issues, such as racial justice, poverty reduction, and refugee care, were also important Christian priorities. They thought that the Trump administration's measures did not appropriately address or perhaps aggravated their worries. As a result, they elected to prioritize these issues and support different candidates, or they chose not to vote at all (Green). Figure 6 gives further details.

Fig. 6. White Evangelicals More Than Twice as Likely as GOP to Think Trump Has No Respect For Them.



Source: Piacenza, Joanna. "White Evangelical's Support for Trump Has A Soft Underbelly."

Morning Consult, May, 2019. <https://morningconsult.com/2019/05/01/white-evangelicals-support-for-trump-has-a-soft-underbelly/>

As it is represented in the figure above, a satisfying percentage for about 35% of white evangelical Protestants saw that Trump has no respect for them, and also nearly the half of republican's agreed. Furthermore, almost two-tenths (18%) of white evangelical Protestants

said Trump had no respect for them – more than double the number who said the same of the Republican Party (9%). Seven percent of Republicans believe the president has no regard for them. What Trump may not comprehend is that his overall unkindness may have already cost him the election.

In 2016, many Evangelical and Catholic supporters seemed willing to look past his campaign bombast and crudeness to give him a chance, supporting him over his Democratic opponent, Hillary Clinton. They have, however, endured four years of continuous savagery since then. And it appears that some people have had enough. In fact, behavioral scientists examined voter defections from the president and determined which perceived crimes and virtues were the best predictors of their changes of heart. Overall, the findings suggest that disaffected Trump voters are willing to forgive the president's perceived sins but not his perceived lack of basic kindness. Among 2016 Trump voters, viewing Trump as lacking in virtues had a stronger correlation with voting against him in 2020 than viewing him as sinful. Indeed, 44% of all respondents believe Biden was kinder than Trump, while 30% believe Trump was. Perceiving Trump as unkind was the single largest predictor of swinging away from him among 2016 Trump voters, with 2016 Trump voters who perceived president as "not at all" nice having around an 80% likelihood of indicating they did not expect to vote for him again in 2020 (Doug).

Evangelicals who support Trump in politics endanger this Christian harmony. Though Americans separate church and state, but they do not separate church and culture. Religion have typically downplayed their uniqueness in exchange for general acceptance: God is in the pledge but not Jesus Christ. Evangelicals who support Trump in politics endanger this Christian tranquility. Trump's vulgarity provided them with an opportunity to abandon the city of man in favor of glories of believing. They have taken ownership of Trump's prejudice, lack of generosity, and even narcissism, ignoring religious voices even among fellow

Evangelicals. They are the furthest thing from martyrdom that any religious person can be: They would not only refuse to give up their lives. What direction will Evangelicalism will take? That is the essential question behind the Trump campaign's challenge. To traditional evangelicals, Trump is just another flawed politician whose words and behavior are less important than his ambitions for the United States Supreme Court. Trump, according to the younger and more spiritual, is not "good" man, at least in their opinion and hence would not be a "good" president (Wolfe).

To sum up, religion played an important impact in the 2016 and 2020 US presidential elections. The first section of this chapter covers the role of Evangelicals during the 2016 elections, demonstrating Evangelicals' strong support for Republican nominee Donald Trump over the other candidates. Then it looks again at Evangelicals' support for Trump during the 2020 elections. Despite this, Donald Trump displayed unacceptable behavior that contradicted Evangelical traditions and values. Furthermore, Evangelicals have traditionally been an important vote group for the Republican Party.

Conclusion

The current research highly discusses and investigates the Evangelical role at the political level in the United States alongside the reciprocal relationship of religion and politics. Religion has been the core of scholars' writings due to its significant influence on American politics in the last three decades. These dynamic disciplines can be intertwined in a symbiotic relationship in all states since both pursue values and exercise power in human life. Evangelicalism is a unified voice for Protestant Christians in the US, so it is essential to clarify their fundamental attitudes, beliefs, and perspectives on concerns similar to abortion and homosexuality in the American mainstream. This dissertation also attempted to explore the Evangelical historical growth, progression, and roots throughout history, as their revolutionary awakenings and movements. In addition, it examines the development of Evangelical political activism in the US and how they emerged as a dominant force in the political process. Furthermore, the study seeks to analyze the evangelical electoral behavior in the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections, discussing their leaning toward the Republican candidate Donald Trump in spite of his contradictory perspectives and ideologies.

The Evangelical Church has played an important role in American society and politics, most notably in the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections, particularly in shaping its members' political opinions and influencing their behaviors. Evangelicals have historically been a politically important group due to their strong religious views and devotion to promoting the Christian faith. Many Evangelicals supported Donald Trump in 2016, drawn by his promises to support conservative ideals such as opposing abortion and supporting religious freedom. Their assistance was critical to Trump securing the Republican nomination and ultimately winning the presidency. Similarly, Evangelicals remained a prominent voting bloc in the 2020 elections, with a majority once again supporting Trump's re-election quest.

Their impact could be seen in the Republican Party's platform and programs, which reflected their ideals and concerns. The role of Evangelicals in these elections emphasizes the connection between religion and politics in American society as well as their influence on the electoral landscape.

The hyperlink between religion and politics in the United States will probably remain prominent in the future, although with some changes. Despite the continued influence of religion on political debates and individual values, religious communities might emphasize social justice as well as inclusivity. Evangelicals, a significant religious community in the United States, may experience some changes in their political participation. While some Evangelicals may hold conservative views on social issues, others may place a higher priority on topics including poverty, climate change, and racial equality. This shifting terrain suggests that religion's impact on politics will be varied and subjected to more studies and discussions.

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