

## FOR THE LOVE OF GOD

*Sunday July 10, 2007*

Spirituality and religious beliefs and practices sustain most Americans. The nationwide 2005 *Baylor Religion Survey* of 1,791 Americans (Baylor University, Waco, Texas: Baylor Institute for Studies of Religion), funded by the John Templeton Foundation, revealed that 87.9% of those questioned identified with some type of religion. About one quarter (25.7%) identified themselves as “Born Again”, almost a fifth (19.1%) self-identified as “Theologically Conservative,” 15.4% as “Evangelical” and 7.4% as “Fundamentalist.” The *Association of Religion Data Archives* reported that in 2003 there were over 67 million Roman Catholics in the United States, and almost 6 million Jews. Almost a quarter of the *Baylor Religion Survey* respondents (23.1%) reported attending worship service on a weekly basis. Unfortunately, Americans appear to be as hateful as they are religious. The more than 1.4 million violent crimes reported by the FBI in 2000 suggest a significant degree of alienation, dissatisfaction, and hatred among Americans. Sometimes people are crime victims precisely because of their religion or their perceived religion. Hate crime incidents—incidents that lead to one or more hate crimes being filed by law enforcement agencies—due to anti-religion hatred are not uncommon. In 2005, for example, 1,227 hate crime incidents due to the victim’s religion or perceived religion were reported to the FBI, which accounted for about 17% of all hate crime incidents reported nationwide that year. Far from rare, almost one hate crime per day actually occurred at a church, synagogue, or temple in 2005, according to the FBI’s data.

We wondered about possible associations between hate crimes, hate groups, rates of membership of various religions, and other sociometric measures that might exist which could help explain the apparent disconnect between our religious selves and our hateful selves. After all, we know of no major religion in the United States or elsewhere whose tenet is to hate; quite the contrary, the Golden Rule of Christianity to love one’s neighbor is known to Christians and non-Christians alike. So, for the year 2000 we examined data released by the *Southern Poverty Law Center* (SPLC) about the locations and numbers of active hate groups, the *FBI’s* data on crime, including hate crimes, the *U.S. Census Bureau’s* population and related data from the 2000 census, data about state-directed executions from the *Bureau of Justice Statistics*, and data about religious affiliation from the *Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies* (ASARB). Except for the ASARB project—the data from which were taken online from the *Association of Religion Data Archives*, at [www.TheARDA.com](http://www.TheARDA.com)—all data collection projects were funded by the non-profit organizations and government agencies just mentioned. The ASARB project, called “Religious Congregations and Membership in the United States 2000” was funded by: Lilly Endowment Inc.; the *Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies*; the Glenmary Home Missioners; the Church of the Nazarene; the American Baptist Churches in the USA; the National Association of Free Will Baptists; the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); the United Church of Christ; and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Trendsinhate.com—which has no affiliation with any of the non-profit organizations or government agencies whose data were examined and no affiliation with any of their funding sources—calculated the rates of active hate groups per million

persons per state using SPLC and U.S. Census Bureau data (see our *Trends*); and, we also correlated the variables reported and discussed in this commentary based on data from the aforementioned sources.

Before turning our attention to our data analyses, it is helpful to know what religious groups we examined from the rather comprehensive ASARB project, and how many Americans were tallied in their study. The ASARB project collected information about the number of religious congregations, religious members, and religious adherents of seven different groups of religions encompassing 159 religions. Table One shows over a hundred and seventy million Americans were counted in the census-like study. In this commentary, we used the state rates of adherents of four well-delineated religions of the ASARB project: Evangelical Protestants; Mainline Protestants; Catholics; and Jews. Together, these groups totaled more than 130 million Americans. We reasoned that religions that constitute a very small percentage of the United States’ population (namely, Christian Orthodox faiths and Islam) are not likely to play a role in significantly affecting the sociometric measures we examined. Likewise, we excluded from analyses the religious group the ASARB labeled “Other Religions”, because even though their totals are not small, they represent such a wide array of religious faiths—from non-denominational and inter-denominational Christian congregations to Hindu congregations—that it would be virtually impossible to know what to make of any data analyses that included them.

Table One

**Numbers of Various Religious Adherents nationwide in 2000<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Type of Religious Adherent</b>	<b>Number of Adherents</b>
<b>Evangelical Protestant</b>	<b>39,874,548</b>
<b>Mainline Protestant</b>	<b>26,220,205</b>
<b>Catholic</b>	<b>61,874,994</b>
<b>Christian Orthodox</b>	<b>817,233</b>
<b>Jewish</b>	<b>6,115,825</b>
<b>Muslim</b>	<b>1,498,815</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>12,166,440</b>
<b>Adjusted Total</b>	<b>171,806,029</b>

<sup>1</sup> Source: the *Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies* (ASARB). Because the ASARB did not collect data on religious membership and adherence of persons living in the District of Columbia, only the 50 states are included in the data analyses presented in this commentary’s tables. “Adherents” were defined by the ASARB as “all members, including full members [of a place of worship], their children and the estimated number of other participants who are not considered members; for example, the ‘baptized,’ ‘those not confirmed,’ ‘those not eligible for communion,’ ‘those regularly attending services,’ and the like.” The participants in the ASARB study included 159 religions: 149 Christian denominations, associations, or communions (including Latter-day Saints and Unitarian/Universalist groups); two specially defined groups of independent Christian churches (so-called “non-denominational” and “interdenominational” churches); Jewish; Islamic; and, six Eastern religions (Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, Sikh, Tao, & Zoroastrian). Jewish and Muslim totals are estimates; and, the total number of Adherents (“Adjusted Total”) includes an adjustment by the study’s authors to take into account traditionally African-American churches that were not included in the data collection.

We examined nine sociometric variables and calculated 36 tests of association between each variable and rates of religious adherence. We first set out to examine a possible association between the incidence of active hate groups in 2000 (as identified by the SPLC’s 2001 *Intelligence Report*) and rates of religious adherence in all 50 states of Evangelical Protestants, Mainline Protestants, Catholics, and Jews. We expected that the state rates of adherence to any religion would be *unrelated* to state rates of hate group activity. Our reasoning was this: although high rates of membership or adherence to a religion ought to *protect* an area—such as a state—from hate groups forming, it only takes a few hateful people to create a hate group. Table Two shows, as expected, no statistically significant association between rates of religious adherence and rates of known hate group activity for two of the four different religious groups. However, higher state rates of adherence to an Evangelical Protestant religion were significantly associated with higher rates of hate group activity (Table Two, row one). Conversely, there was a statistically significant negative association between hate group activity rates and Catholicism. In other words, the *higher* percentage of Catholics in a given state, the *lower* the state’s number of active hate groups (Table Two, row three).

Table Two

**Correlations between the Rates of Active Hate Groups per Million Persons per state and the Rates of Various Religious Adherents per Thousand persons per state in 2000<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Evangelical Protestant</b>	<b>.615<sup>††</sup></b>
<b>Mainline Protestant</b>	<b>- .090</b>
<b>Catholic</b>	<b>- .505<sup>††</sup></b>
<b>Jewish</b>	<b>- .253</b>

<sup>††</sup>p < .01

<sup>1</sup> State rates of Active Hate Groups per Million Persons were calculated using 2000 census data from the U.S. Census Bureau and from the SPLC. All correlations in this commentary are two-tailed Pearson Product Moment Correlations.

We next examined rates of religious adherence and rates of reported hate crimes; and, we expected that where there were large concentrations of Jews in 2000 there would be higher rates of hate crimes, not because we think Jews often commit hate crimes, but because they have historically been the victims of prejudice, discrimination and violence. We also know that in at least one area of the country where there are significant numbers of Jews there are also significant numbers of active Neo-Nazi hate groups (see the *Hot Spots of Hate* commentary). However, we expected no such correlations between hate crimes and adherence to other religions. In other words, we thought that part of the disconnection between Americans’ hateful behavior and religious identities is explained by anti-Semitism. Table Three shows that, indeed, there was a strong positive correlation between rates of reported hates crimes by state and a state’s concentration of Jews, as expected. Also, there was a similar, non-statistically significant trend for Catholics.

Table Three

**Correlations between the Rates of Reported Hate Crimes in 2000  
per state<sup>1</sup> and the Rates of Various Religious Adherents  
per Thousand persons per state in 2000**

<b>Evangelical Protestant</b>	<b>- .213</b>
<b>Mainline Protestant</b>	<b>- .256</b>
<b>Catholic</b>	<b>.269</b>
<b>Jewish</b>	<b>.467<sup>††</sup></b>

<sup>††</sup>p < .01

<sup>1</sup> Crime rate data come from the FBI's Uniform Crime Report for the year 2000. Note: in 2000, Alabama and Hawaii did not participate in reporting hate crimes, but they were included in this analysis with values of zero hate crimes assigned to each of these states.

We wanted also to examine crime in general, not just hate crimes, so we correlated rates of religious adherence with the FBI's reported rates of violent and property crime for the year 2000. Our hypothesis was that there should be a negative relationship between crime and religious adherence in the United States, because religion provides rules, commandments, and guidelines about lawful behavior. Prohibitions against killing and stealing, for example, form part of the Christian and Jewish faiths. Non-violence is a central tenet of many Eastern religions as well. So, if states have high rates of religious adherence (to any religious group), we reasoned these states should have low rates of violent crime and property crime. As shown in Table Four there were no significant negative correlations between violent crime and religious adherence, contrary to what we had predicted. However, there were non-significant trends for violent crime to be associated with rates of Evangelical Protestant adherence and Jewish adherence. In addition, when examining property crime we found a significant negative association between it and rates of mainstream Protestant adherence as expected; Catholics trended in this direction as well. Conversely, Evangelical Protestants trended in the opposite direction than we expected. That is, there was a non-statistically significant trend toward higher property crime with higher rates of Evangelical Protestant adherence.

Given the Judeo-Christian composition of the United States (see Table One), and given the Judeo-Christian belief that it is morally wrong in most circumstances to murder someone—a prohibition dating back to God's commandments to Moses—trends in hate examined next a possible association between state-authorized executions and religious adherence, keeping in mind that not every state in America has a so-called death penalty. We expected that there would be a small, negative correlation (although not a statistically significant one) between the number of prisoners executed by state governments and rates of religious adherents, state by state. We reasoned that the myriad of social and political forces affecting the multi-step processes in any given criminal justice system and in any given criminal case that leads a person to not only find himself or herself on death row, but to actually be executed by the state, would be offset by the influence of a religion-based prohibition against killing, even if it is a state-sponsored killing. As shown in Table Five there were no significant correlations between the number of executed

Table Four

**Correlations between the Rates of Violent Crime per Hundred thousand persons per state<sup>1</sup> and the Rates of Various Religious Adherents per Thousand persons per state in 2000**

	<b><u>Violent Crime</u></b>	<b><u>Property Crime</u></b>
<b>Evangelical Protestant</b>	<b>.268</b>	<b>.326</b>
<b>Mainline Protestant</b>	<b>- .354</b>	<b>- .428<sup>†</sup></b>
<b>Catholic</b>	<b>- .090</b>	<b>- .373</b>
<b>Jewish</b>	<b>.325</b>	<b>- .150</b>

<sup>†</sup> p < .05

<sup>1</sup> Crime rate data come from the FBI's Uniform Crime Report for the year 2000.

prisoners and rates of religious adherence. However, there were small, non-statistically significant negative correlations between the number of executed prisoners in 2000 and the rates of mainstream Protestants, Catholics and Jews, as predicted. An opposite finding emerged when examining Evangelical Protestants; there was a non-statistically significant positive trend between state rates of Evangelicals and the number of executed prisoners in the United States.

Table Five

**Correlations between the Number of Prisoners Executed by Governmental Authority in 2000<sup>1</sup> and the Rates of Various Religious Adherents per Thousand persons in 2000**

<b>Evangelical Protestant</b>	<b>.282</b>
<b>Mainline Protestant</b>	<b>- .071</b>
<b>Catholic</b>	<b>- .100</b>
<b>Jewish</b>	<b>- .072</b>

<sup>1</sup> In 2000, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the following 14 states executed at least one prisoner (the number executed is in parentheses): Texas (40); Oklahoma (11); Virginia (8); Florida (6); Missouri (5); Alabama (4); Arizona (3); Arkansas (2); California (1); Delaware (1); Louisiana (1); North Carolina (1); South Carolina (1); and Tennessee (1). In our analyses, all states were included.

The results shown in Table Five suggest a possible punitive, violent retaliation toward some convicted criminals, but only in states that have a significant percentage of its citizens who are Evangelical Protestants. However, as previously stated, only some states have the death penalty and in 2000 a small percentage of states actually executed someone (Table Five footnote). Thus, it may be that examining correlations between rates of incarceration and religious adherence are better markers of punitive retaliation than examining the number of executed prisoners, since all states have incarcerated convicts. To do this we correlated the 2000 census data on incarcerated populations as a percent of a state's population with state rates of religious adherence. Given the results

shown in Table Five (namely, that Evangelical Christians trended in the opposite direction than expected), we weren't confident what we would find. Still, we hypothesized that there ought to be no significant correlation between religious adherence and rates of incarceration reasoning that there are too many variables more likely to affect incarceration rates than the rates of adherence to particular religions within each state. We were only partially correct.

Table Six shows that, contrary to our prediction, there was a strong positive correlation between incarceration rates and rates of Evangelical Protestantism. The other three religious groups showed no such correlation, as expected. In fact, Catholics trended in the opposite direction from the Evangelical Protestants. Taken together, these correlations are strikingly similar to those of state-sponsored executions and religious adherence.

Table Six

**Correlation between the Percent of those Living in Correctional Institutions in 2000<sup>1</sup> and the Rates of Various Religious Adherents per Thousand persons per state in 2000**

<b>Evangelical Protestant</b>	<b>.555<sup>††</sup></b>
<b>Mainline Protestant</b>	<b>- .248</b>
<b>Catholic</b>	<b>- .369</b>
<b>Jewish</b>	<b>.001</b>

<sup>††</sup>p < .001

<sup>1</sup>The 2000 state rates of living in correctional institutions come from the U.S. Census Bureau.

We next correlated state rates of religious adherence with two sociometric variables we believe are likely to be associated with levels of personal dissatisfaction and/or alienation—poverty and divorce—noting that alienation and dissatisfaction are likely to make a person more vulnerable to committing an act of hate than those who are not alienated or dissatisfied. We expected no significant association between religious adherence and poverty rates, because we assumed that there are numerous variables more likely than religious adherence to affect whether a person lives in poverty. However, we expected to find an inverse relationship between religious adherence and divorce.

Table Seven shows that, contrary to our expectations regarding poverty, there was one statistically significant correlation. Specifically, state rates of Evangelical Protestantism were significantly positively associated with those living in poverty. This robust correlation was surprising to us.

In addition, as shown in Table Eight, rates of divorce were significantly inversely related to rates of mainline Protestantism and Catholicism, as expected. Jews trended in this

direction as well. Rates of Evangelical Protestantism were unrelated, however, to rates of divorce, but they trended in the direction *not* predicted by us.

Table Seven

**Correlation between the Percent of those 15 and Older Living Below the Poverty Level in 2000<sup>1</sup> and the Rates of Various Religious Adherents per Thousand persons per state in 2000**

<b>Evangelical Protestant</b>	<b>.597<sup>††</sup></b>
<b>Mainline Protestant</b>	<b>-.098</b>
<b>Catholic</b>	<b>-.302</b>
<b>Jewish</b>	<b>-.231</b>

<sup>††</sup>p < .001

<sup>1</sup>From the 2000 U.S. Census.

Table Eight

**Correlation between the Percent in 2000 of those 15 and Older who were Divorced<sup>1</sup> and the Rates of Various Religious Adherents per Thousand persons per state in 2000**

<b>Evangelical Protestant</b>	<b>.228</b>
<b>Mainline Protestant</b>	<b>-.405<sup>†</sup></b>
<b>Catholic</b>	<b>-.401<sup>†</sup></b>
<b>Jewish</b>	<b>-.278</b>

<sup>†</sup>p < .05

<sup>1</sup>From the 2000 U.S. Census.

Finally, for the year 2000 we correlated religious adherence data and rates of high school dropouts who were at least 25 years of age. Why dropout rates? We reasoned that a lack of typically completed formal education likely decreases diversity tolerance, and we know tolerance steers people away from hateful attitudes and actions. We expected to find no significant correlation between high school drop out rates and rates of religious adherence for any of the four major religions we examined. While this was generally the case, as seen in Table Nine on the following page, there was one significant finding, and one we weren't expecting. Namely, there was a strong positive correlation between state rates of Evangelical Protestant adherence and state rates of high school dropouts.

What sense, if any, can we make of these data analyses? To help answer this question it is first necessary to summarize our findings, to weave the threads together to better see what the fabric looks like. Here is that summary of hypotheses and findings.

Table Nine

**Correlation between the Percent of those 25 years of age and older who have not completed high school in 2000 per state<sup>1</sup> and the Rates of Various Religious Adherents per Thousand persons per state in 2000**

<b>Evangelical Protestant</b>	<b>.598<sup>††</sup></b>
<b>Mainline Protestant</b>	<b>- .182</b>
<b>Catholic</b>	<b>- .168</b>
<b>Jewish</b>	<b>.032</b>

<sup>††</sup>p < .001

<sup>1</sup>The 2000 state rates of those not completing high school who are at least 25 years of age come from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Using previously released databases from the year 2000 from various, reliable sources, we calculated 36 correlations to possibly shed some light on the apparent disconnection between ourselves as religious Americans and ourselves as hateful Americans. Twenty-three of these correlations involving state rates of religious adherence were expected to be statistically non-significant, and twelve were expected to show a significant negative correlation. No positive correlations were expected, except in the case of state rates of Jewish adherence and the prevalence of FBI-reported hate crimes. We correctly predicted the direction and strength of association of 21 of the 36 correlations.

We expected that the disconnection between our hateful selves and our religious identities would show itself as a positive association between rates of Jewish adherence and hate crimes (that is, the expression of anti-Semitism via criminal behavior). This was the case, and we believe that the positive correlation between these two variables points to an undercurrent of actual (and not merely perceived) anti-Semitism in the United States. Additional evidence for our belief is found by examining the relative risk of being a hate crime victim. As shown in Graph One on the following page, from 1996 through 2005 Jews in the United States were between four and six times more likely to be a victim of a reported hate crime than expected given their proportion of the total U.S. population.

We're guessing that the undercurrent of anti-Semitism we found in our analyses is at least partially due to commonly held Christian beliefs that ancient Jews were responsible for the death of Jesus Christ, and that today's Jews (a) somehow ought to remain responsible for his death and (b) are inferior to Christians.

This latter belief—the inferiority of Jews—was crucial to Adolph Hitler's systematic dehumanization and extermination of millions of Jews in the mid-twentieth century in Europe, largely by self-identified Christians. That we are today a nation dominated by Christians, and that Jews are more likely than any other type of person to be the target of a hate crime when that hate crime is based on anti-religious hatred (see our *Trends*), we unwaveringly believe Christians ought to take an active, leading role in reducing anti-

Semitic perceptions and beliefs found in America. Perhaps that activism should begin in Christian churches by church leaders. More broadly, attitudes that any group of people

Graph One

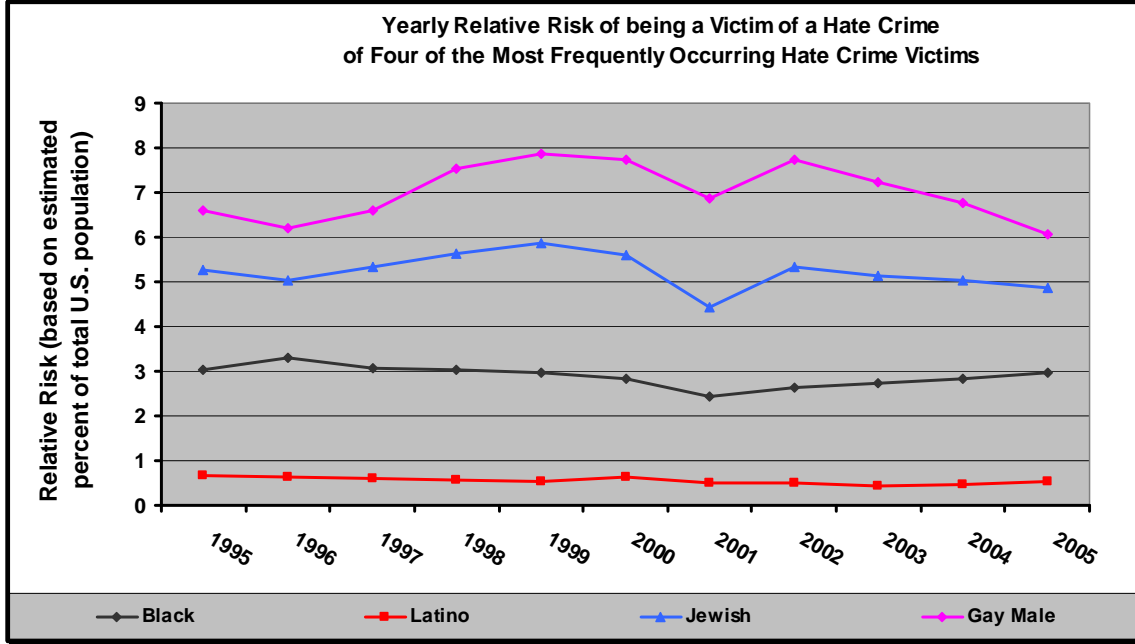


Table Ten

Summary of Correlations between Rates of Various Religious Adherents per Thousand persons per state in 2000 and Nine Sociometric Variables<sup>1</sup>

<u>Sociometric Variable</u>	<u>Type of Religion</u>			
	Evangelical Protestant	Mainline Protestant	Catholic	Jewish
Rates of active hate groups	+	O	-	O
Rates of reported hate crimes	O	O	O	+
Rates of reported violent crime	O	O	O	O
Rates of reported property crime	O	-	O	O
Number of prisoner executions	O	O	O	O
Rates of incarceration	+	O	O	O
Rates of Poverty	+	O	O	O
Rates of Divorce	O	-	-	O
Rates of high school dropouts at 25	+	O	O	O

<sup>1</sup> Statistically significant correlations are designated by their direction: (+) denotes a positive correlation and (-) denotes a negative correlation. A (O) denotes no statistically significant correlation. Red symbols designate associations between variables in a society-damaging direction (i.e., including non-significant trends with  $p > +/- .260$  when predictions were in a specific direction; otherwise with  $p > +/- .225$ ). Blue symbols designate associations in a society-enhancing direction.

are inferior to us if they don't share our religious beliefs very likely promotes intolerance and, we believe, intolerance makes people vulnerable to committing hateful acts irrespective of their specific religious adherence.

Our data analyses also point to forces other than anti-Semitism at work in making us a nation of both religious adherents and vigorous haters. An examination of the summary of our data analyses (Table Ten) reveal a startling similarity between Jews, mainline Protestants, and Catholics when examining a host of disparate sociometric measures. Moreover, our findings lend support to the notion that religion has a positive effect on society, although we were disappointed that religious adherences were overall unrelated to crime rates. Divorce, for example, was significantly inversely related to rates of adherence to mainline Protestantism, Catholicism, and to a lesser degree, Judaism. Our finding about divorce and religious adherence is important, because in a study by University of Connecticut's James DeFronzo, Ph.D., published in the February, 2007 issue of *Homicide Studies*, divorce rates—believed to be a marker of social isolation among potential perpetrators and a marker of vulnerability of potential crime victims—were associated with one type of violent criminal. Thus, a connection between crime rates and religious adherence may be an indirect connection with divorce playing an important, intervening role.

Unlike our findings regarding mainline Protestants, Catholics and Jews, our data analyses revealed high state percentages of Evangelical Protestantism significantly associated with higher rates of dropping out of high school, poverty, incarceration, and hate group activity, and none of these findings were expected. In addition, there were trends in a disheartening and unpredicted direction between Evangelical Protestants and divorce, property crime, violent crime, and the execution of prisoners (Table Ten, second column). Taken together—and keeping in mind that correlations do not equate to causation—our findings point to one very large group of religious persons, Evangelical Protestants, who were associated with a number of society-damaging phenomena in 2000. Under-education and hate group activity—both associated with adherence to Evangelical Protestantism—undoubtedly serve to reduce the quality of life in every community in the country. Most ironic—particularly given the Golden Rule of Christianity—was the relationship between rates of hate group activity and rates of adherence to an Evangelical Protestant faith. It is shocking that hate group activity was significantly associated with state rates of *any* religion. Just as shocking is the sometimes shamelessly unvarnished Evangelical hatred such as when on February 3, 2007, the *Portland (Maine) Press Herald's* Religion and Values section included a First Baptist Church of South Portland advertisement that included its sermon's title "The Only Way to Destroy the Jewish Race." As another example, on October 13, 2006, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that in Sacramento, California, the city's Russian-immigrant community which is overwhelmingly evangelical (viz., Baptist and Pentecostal, and having about 70 Russian fundamentalist congregations) have demonized homosexuals in a number of horrific ways (for example, promoting books suggesting the extermination of Jews by Hitler was the work of homosexuals, and equating homosexuality with pedophilia). With a hateful local backdrop, perhaps it is not surprising to learn that in Sacramento on July 5, 2007, a 25-year-old openly gay man, Satendar Singh, died of injuries sustained in an

attack that was accompanied by anti-gay slurs by the Russian-speaking young men said to have attacked him as he picnicked with friends. Although our data is only associative, we cannot think of another co-variable that could account for our findings and this begs the question: has Jesus Christ's message to love *all people* fallen on deaf ears among Evangelicals as a whole?

Disquieting and shameful as the findings about Evangelical Protestants seem to be, our data analyses revealed some unexpected, pleasant surprises. Specifically, our findings point to one group of Christians—Catholics—that was associated with several society-enhancing phenomena in 2000. There were significantly fewer active hate groups and lower divorce rates found in areas with relatively high rates of Catholics. Rates of incarceration, poverty, and property crime also trended in an inverse direction with rates of Catholicism, and while any of these non-significant trends could be due to chance, we believe that the cluster of findings trending in the same direction reflects some phenomenon other than chance. Although we can't be sure, we surmise that the Christian tenet of *forgiveness*, coupled with relatively fewer dissolved marriages, probably accounts for the negative relationship between incarceration and Catholicism at least to some degree. Moreover, while we don't know why Catholicism trended toward lower poverty rates, perhaps it is partly due to an emphasis by Catholics on *good works* and *social justice*. Why was there such a strong inverse relationship between active hate groups in 2000 and state rates of adherence to Catholicism? Although we aren't sure, we wonder if the Christian concept of *grace* is better practiced by Catholics than by other Christians. Perhaps Catholics believe that Jesus Christ was a Prince of Peace whose message of love is worth emulating in their day-to-day lives more deeply than do other Christians. With enough love in a person's heart, there is simply no room for hate. That said, in the United States the Roman Catholic church has repeatedly and strenuously worked to prevent one group of marginalized citizens at-risk for being victims of hate crimes—gay and lesbian people—from being seen as socially on par with all other citizens. This is disturbing to us because marginalized people are vulnerable to attacks of violence. The human rights organization, Human Rights First, said in its *2007 Hate Crime Survey* that anti-homosexual bias is “vigorously promoted by both extremist and mainstream political and religious leaders,” and we at trendsinhate include some Catholic leaders among those promoting homophobia-based laws and governmental policies (such as anti-gay adoption and anti-gay marriage laws and policies). Moreover, although not associated with the Roman Catholic church, there are hate groups of self-identified Catholics who are vehemently anti-Semitic. As just two examples, the Southern Poverty Law Center in 2006 has identified The Fatima Crusader/International Fatima Rosary Crusade in New York state, and the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in New Hampshire as Catholic-identified hate groups. While anti-gay rhetoric is nothing new for the Catholic church, our preliminary data analyses showing that there is no relationship between rates of Catholic adherence and hate crimes suggest that as a group self-identified Catholic adherents in the United States may have turned a deaf ear to its church leaders' anti-gay rhetoric (or at least to not have put their anti-gay beliefs into illegal actions against gay people).

Finally, it is quite reasonable to wonder if our findings were unique to the year 2000, and therefore, irrelevant when thinking about broad, lasting social effects that adherence to a specific religion can have. Although we don't know if the relationships between religious adherence and specific sociometric measures found using 2000 databases represent relatively static phenomena or whether we clicked a snapshot in time of a more quickly changing society, we can tell you that when there is an updated nationwide, state-by-state study of religious adherence conducted by a respected group—such as the *Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies*, who conducted the extensive 2000 survey of religious adherence used in our data analyses—we will correlate those findings with important sociometric measures and share them with you, our readers and supporters. By examining sociometric data over time we should be able to better understand how simultaneously we can be a nation of religious adherents and a nation so full of hate. So stay tuned.

