

THE MODERN CRUSADE: UNDERSTANDING CHRISTIAN VIEWS OF HOMOSEXUAL MARRIAGE

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WOE TO YOU, SCRIBES AND PHARISEES, HYPOCRITES! FOR YOU ARE LIKE WHITEWASHED TOMBS, WHICH ON THE OUTSIDE LOOK BEAUTIFUL, BUT INSIDE THEY ARE FULL OF THE BONES OF THE DEAD AND OF ALL KINDS OF FILTH. SO YOU ALSO ON THE OUTSIDE LOOK RIGHTEOUS TO OTHERS, BUT INSIDE YOU ARE FULL OF HYPOCRISY AND LAWLESSNESS.

-THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, CHAPTER 23, VERSES 27 & 28; THE NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION OF THE HOLY BIBLE

WESTBORO BAPTIST CHURCH



ASSOCIATION OF WELCOMING AND AFFIRMING BAPTISTS

Welcome
Willkommen!
ようこそ
Bienvenido
Welkom
Bem-vindo
歓迎
Välkommen
Benvenuti
환영



ASSOCIATION OF WELCOMING & AFFIRMING BAPTISTS



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Parents, Family, & Friends of
Lesbians & Gays in the
Washington Metropolitan Area



awaab
Association of Welcoming & Affirming Baptists

DAVID P. GUSHEE
WITH BRIAN D. MCLAREN, PHYLLIS TICKLE AND MATTHEW VINES

**CHANGING
OUR MIND**



HYPOTHESIS

- THESE INTERPRETATIONS ARE PRIMARILY FOUNDED ON THE IDEOLOGICAL BIAS OF THOSE CHRISTIANS WHO INTERPRET THE BIBLE CONCERNING HOMOSEXUAL MARRIAGE
- THIS “MODERN CRUSADE” IS DRIVEN BY POLITICS, NOT THE BIBLE

WHAT IS THIS “MODERN CRUSADE”?

- “PRIVATE LIVES, PUBLIC CONFLICTS: BATTLES OVER GAY RIGHTS IN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES” BY JAMES W. BUTTON, BARBARA A. RIENZO, AND KENNETH D. WALD
 - CONDUCTED A STUDY OF 126 DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY IN ORDER TO DETERMINE THEIR “LEVEL(S) OF COMMUNITY CONFLICT,” OR THE DEGREE TO WHICH VARYING COMMUNITIES DISAPPROVED OF HOMOSEXUALITY
 - RESULTS: 35 OF THE COMMUNITIES – OR ABOUT ONE OUT OF EVERY FOUR – DISAPPROVED OF PROTECTION OF HOMOSEXUAL MARRIAGE UNDER LAW
 - THE LEVEL OF CONFLICT WAS LOWER IN COMMUNITIES WITH HIGHER CONCENTRATIONS OF HIGHER-EDUCATED CITIZENS AND CONFLICT WAS HIGHER IN AREAS WITH HIGHER CONCENTRATIONS OF RELIGIOUS TRADITIONALISTS
 - ALSO SURVEYED 56 PEOPLE AND FOUND THAT MORE THAN HALF (66%) OF THE GROUPS KNOWN TO OPPOSE HOMOSEXUAL RIGHTS UNDER LAW WERE CHRISTIAN-AFFILIATED

SO WHY ARE CHRISTIANS SO ACTIVE CONCERNING HOMOSEXUAL MARRIAGE?

- THEORY: IDENTITY POLITICS

- “CONCERNED WITH THE POLITICAL MEANINGS OF EVERYDAY LIFE AND INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS, SEXUALITY AND SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE, LIFESTYLE AND POPULAR CULTURE” (DARNOVSKY, EPSTEIN AND FLACKS 1995)
- PEOPLE MAY BAND TOGETHER ON SOMETHING NORMALLY PERSONAL OR PRIVATE WHEN THAT QUALITY BECOMES THE BASIS FOR HOW THEY ARE TREATED IN LARGER SOCIETY BECAUSE BELONGING TO GROUPS DEFINED BY QUALITIES SUCH AS GENDER OR RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION MAY HAVE VARYING POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE EFFECTS ON ONE’S LIFE (BUTTON, RIENZO AND WALD 1997)

FURTHERMORE, POLITICAL BIAS MAY DRIVE BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

- “IS EXEGESIS WITHOUT PRESUPPOSITIONS POSSIBLE?” BY RUDOLPH BULTMAN (1960)
 - “... *THERE CANNOT BE ANY SUCH THING AS A PRESUPPOSITIONLESS EXEGESIS...* [THERE] IS NO SUCH EXEGESIS IN FACT, BECAUSE EVERY EXEGETE IS DETERMINED BY [THEIR] OWN INDIVIDUALITY”
 - “SINCE THE EXEGETE EXISTS HISTORICALLY AND MUST HEAR THE WORD OF SCRIPTURE AS SPOKEN IN [THEIR] SPECIAL HISTORICAL SITUATION, [THEY] WILL ALWAYS UNDERSTAND THE OLD WORD ANEW. ALWAYS ANEW IT WILL TELL [THEM] WHO [THEY], MAN, [ARE] AND WHO GOD IS, AND [THEY] WILL ALWAYS HAVE TO EXPRESS THIS WORD IN A NEW CONCEPTUALITY. THUS IT IS TRUE ALSO OF SCRIPTURE THAT IT ONLY IS WHAT IT IS WITH ITS HISTORY AND ITS FUTURE.”

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1) WHAT ARE THE DEFINING QUALITIES OF CHRISTIANS WHO HAVE OPINIONS CONCERNING HOMOSEXUAL MARRIAGE? ARE THEY ASSOCIATED WITH SPECIFIC BIASES WHICH WOULD INFLUENCE INTERPRETATIONS OF THE BIBLE CONCERNING THIS SUBJECT?
- 2) IF SOMEONE DOES NOT COME TO THEIR OWN INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE ON THE SUBJECT OF HOMOSEXUAL MARRIAGE, HAS THE INTERPRETATION THEY RELY ON BEEN INFLUENCED BY IDEOLOGICAL BIAS WITHOUT THEIR KNOWLEDGE? SPECIFICALLY, IF A CHURCH CONGREGANT HOLDS AN INTERPRETIVE STANCE ON THIS SUBJECT BECAUSE THAT IS WHAT THEIR PASTOR TOLD THEM TO BELIEVE, CAN THAT INTERPRETATION STILL HAVE BEEN INFLUENCED BY IDEOLOGICAL BIAS?

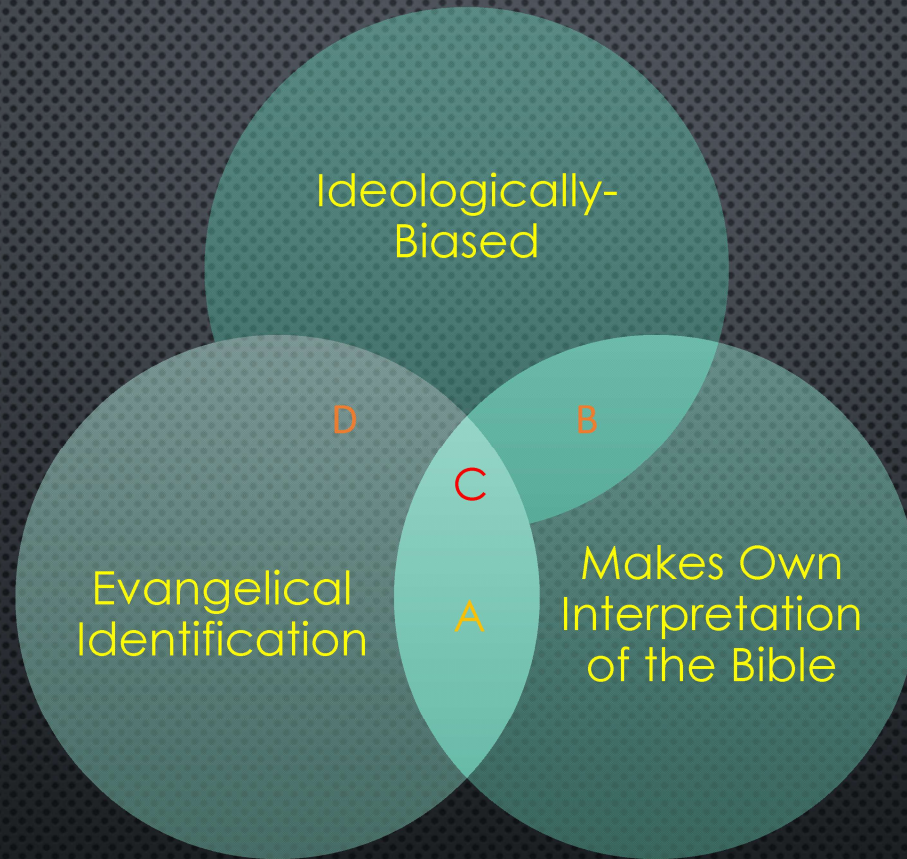
THE EVIDENCE

SURVEY DATA ANALYSIS

- RELIED ON ANES SURVEY DATA FROM THE 2016 ELECTION CYCLE
- RAN A LOGISTIC REGRESSION ON ALL VARIABLES WHICH HAVE BEEN INDICATED BY ESTABLISHED LITERATURE THAT MAY INFLUENCE VIEWS OF HOMOSEXUAL MARRIAGE
 - APPROVAL OF HOMOSEXUAL MARRIAGE (DEPENDENT VARIABLE); RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION; BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION; CHURCH ATTENDANCE; GENDER; SEXUAL ORIENTATION; EDUCATION; MARRIAGE; MORAL TRADITIONALISM; IDEOLOGY; AND POLITICAL PARTY AFFILIATION
 - ADDITIONAL CONTROL VARIABLES: AGE AND RACE/ETHNICITY
 - [THIS IS WHERE I PULL UP THE REGRESSION RESULTS]

SURVEY DATA ANALYSIS TAKEAWAYS

- IDEOLOGICAL BIAS DOES INFLUENCE THE WAY THAT PEOPLE THINK ABOUT HOMOSEXUAL MARRIAGE
- MOST CHRISTIANS DON'T CARE ABOUT HOMOSEXUAL MARRIAGE BY VIRTUE OF THEIR FAITH
 - THERE IS SOMETHING UNIQUE ABOUT EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS – SEPARATE FROM THE GREATER CHRISTIAN CANON AND SEPARATE FROM THEIR HALLMARK METHOD OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION – WHICH MOTIVATES THEIR STANCE ON HOMOSEXUAL MARRIAGE
- FROM HERE, WE CAN UNDERSTAND THESE CHRISTIANS BY LOOKING AT THE INTERSECTIONS OF KEY DEFINING TRAITS PERTAINING TO OPINIONS OF HOMOSEXUAL MARRIAGE



Ideological Motivations Diagram

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS: CHURCH SERMONS

- MUNFORD BAPTIST CHURCH (MBC) AND NEW MILLENIUM BAPTIST CHURCH (NMBC)
 - BOTH CHURCHES TAKE PUBLIC AND OPPOSITE STANCES ON HOMOSEXUAL MARRIAGE (MBC = ANTI; NMBC = PRO)
 - BOTH OF THESE CHURCHES RECORD ALL OF THEIR SERMONS ONLINE WITH WRITTEN SUMMARIES BY THE DELIVERING PASTORS ON THEIR WEBSITES (*MUNFORDBAPTISTCHURCH.ORG*; *NEWMILLENIUMCHURCH.US*)
 - FROM WHEN THEY BEGAN RECORDING TO THE END OF 2017, THEY RECORDED OVER 600 SERMONS IN TOTAL; 312 SERMONS FROM THE MBC WITH AN AVERAGE OF 592.4 WORDS PER SUMMARY, AND 337 SERMONS FROM THE NMBC WITH AN AVERAGE OF 2086.8 WORDS PER SUMMARY

DO THEY TALK ABOUT HOMOSEXUAL MARRIAGE?

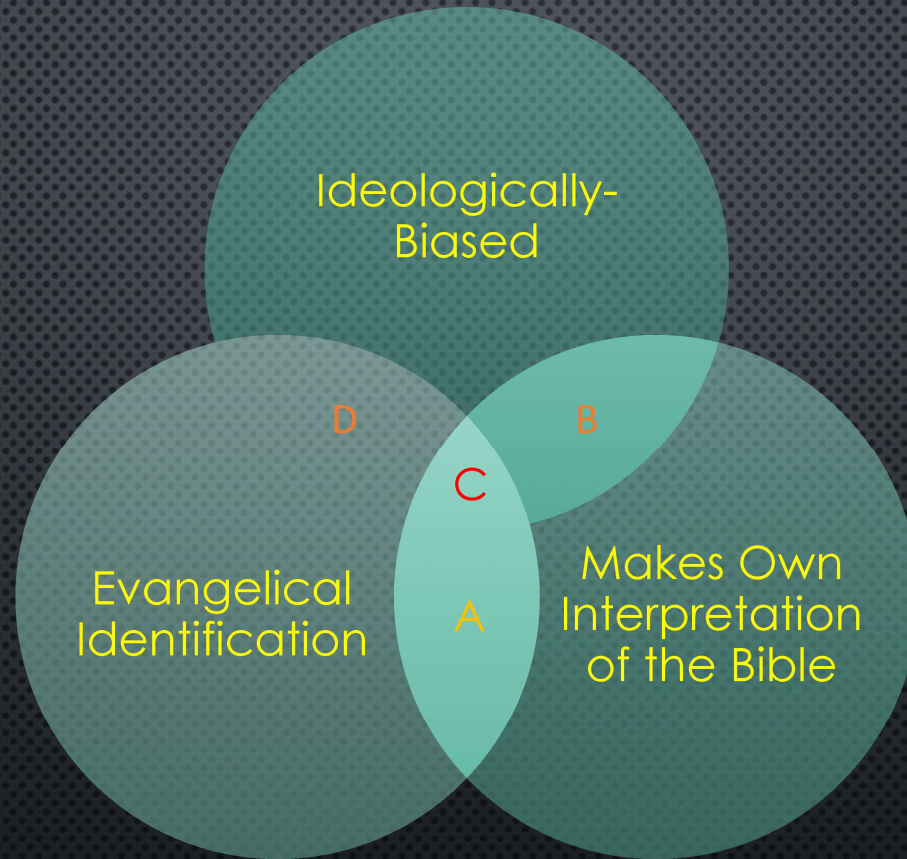
- YES, THEY DO.
 - CODED FOR WORDS WHICH WOULD INDICATE A REFERENCE TO HOMOSEXUAL MARRIAGE IN A SERMON
 - "HOMOSEXUAL", "SAME-SEX", "SAME SEX", "GAY", "LESBIAN"
 - I READ SERMONS WITH THESE WORDS AND CODED FOR HOMOSEXUAL MARRIAGE REFERENCE
 - RESULTS: HOMOSEXUAL MARRIAGE WAS DISCUSSED IN 5 OUT OF 312 SERMONS BY THE MBC (1.61%), AND IN 41 OUT OF 336 SERMONS BY THE NMBC (12.20%)

HOW DO WE DETERMINE IF THESE PASTORS ARE IDEOLOGICALLY-BIASED?

- “THE MIND VERSUS THE BODY IN POLITICAL (AND NONPOLITICAL) DISCOURSE: LINGUISTIC EVIDENCE FOR AN IDEOLOGICAL SIGNATURE IN U.S. POLITICS” BY MICHAEL D. ROBINSON, RYAN L. BOYD, ADAM K. FETTERMAN, AND MICHELLE R. PERSICH (2017)
 - FOUND A WAY TO EMPIRICALLY MEASURE THE IDEOLOGICAL BIAS OF AUTHORS OF TEXTS
 - BASED THEIR METHOD ON THE DIFFERENT WAYS THAT CONSERVATIVES AND LIBERALS THINK COMPARED TO EACH OTHER

LINGUISTIC INQUIRY AND WORD COUNT (LIWC)

- GIVEN THE DIFFERENT WAYS THAT LIBERALS AND CONSERVATIVES THINK, ROBINSON ET AL. TESTED THE “COGNITIVE PROCESS” AND “BIOLOGICAL PROCESS” CATEGORIES OF WORDS FROM THE LIWC DICTIONARY TO SEE IF THEY COULD MEASURE IDEOLOGICAL BIAS
 - THE ANSWER: YES, THEY CAN
 - HOW: 1) ANALYZE A SERIES OF TESTS FOR THE PERCENTAGE OF “COGNITIVE PROCESS” AND “BIOLOGICAL PROCESS” WORDS IN EACH DOCUMENT, 2) Z-SCORE THEM TO MAKE THEM COMPARABLE, 3) SUBTRACT THE Z-SCORED “BIOLOGICAL PROCESS” VALUES FROM THE Z-SCORED “COGNITIVE PROCESS” VALUES, 4) TAKE THE MEAN OF ALL THE SCORES, 5) RUN AN ANOVA FOR STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE
 - A POSITIVE SCORE REFLECTS A LIBERAL BIAS; A NEGATIVE SCORE REFLECTS A CONSERVATIVE BIAS
 - [SHOW THE DATA NOW]



Ideological Motivations Diagram