

A STUDY OF RELIGIOUS ATTITUDES
ON CONTEMPORARY MORAL
AND POLITICAL ISSUES

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGES</u>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
Background	
Objectives	
Key Results/Conclusions	
Tables	
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE	15
STUDY OVERVIEW	42
Background	
Objectives	
Methodology	
RESULTS	
Chapter I-Demographics & Activity Predispositions of Respondents by Religious Sect	49
Demographics	
Action Predispositions	
Strategic Considerations	
Tables	
Chapter II-Critical Issues Concerning Family Life	65
Overview	
Tables	
Chapter III-Critical Issues Concerning Education	102
Overview	
Tables	
Chapter IV-Critical Issues Concerning Abortion & Homosexuality	121
Overview	
Tables	
Chapter V-Critical Issues Concerning United States Moral Decline	133
Overview	
Tables	
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	155

METHODOLOGY

SAMPLE

The sampling goal for the Moral Majority Study was to obtain information from religious conservatives representing the various religious sects across the nation. The sample, therefore, is not representative of the United States public, or even of church attending, religious citizens. It is representative of the conservative elements in each major religious sect.

The sampling strategy followed two goals:

- 1) Sample religious conservative respondents;
- 2) Obtain large enough samples of most religious sects to allow meaningful statements about their positions on moral issues.

In order to meet both goals, the Moral Majority Study sample of eight hundred (800) respondents was selected in the following manner:

- 1) A series of screening questions attempted to eliminate any religious liberal elements from the sample:
 - a. Catholics included in the sample believed that Vatican II had gone "too far" in modernizing the Church.
 - b. Jews included in the sample were of the Orthodox branch of Judaism.
 - c. Certain Protestant Sects were excluded from the sample.

In addition, all respondents had to indicate that their religious and spiritual beliefs were very or fairly important in guiding their everyday life.

- 2) A national probability sample of 400 respondents was pulled to obtain an element of national generalization for the data.
- 3) Four special sub-groups of one hundred (100) respondents each was pulled to assure representation of various religious sects:
 - a. Southwest Boston - inner city Catholic population/ Orthodox Jewish population
 - b. Rockford, Illinois - standard metropolitan statistical area - midwest Protestant/Fundamentalist population.
 - c. Snake River Valley, Idaho - western Mormon population
 - d. Southern Georgia - southern Protestant/Fundamentalist population

SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

The respondent demographics of the obtained sample are reported in the Interview Schedule attached to the Executive Summary section of this report.

QUESTIONNAIRE AND ADMINISTRATION

The questionnaire is included in the Interview Schedule attached to the Executive Summary section of this report.

The questionnaire was administered by telephone to 800 respondents. The interviews lasted 25-30 minutes, and were obtained during the period of August 10 to August 13, 1979. All gathering and processing of data was performed centrally at V. Lance Tarrance & Associates' headquarters in Houston, Texas.

The project director for the Moral Majority Study was Dr. Richard E. Ryan; J. Kingwell was internal project manager.

Moral Majority

The **Moral Majority** was a prominent American political organization associated with the **Christian right** and **Republican Party**. It was founded in 1979 by Baptist minister **Jerry Falwell** and associates, and **dissolved in the late 1980s**. It played a key role in the mobilization of conservative Christians as a political force and particularly in **Republican presidential victories** throughout the 1980s.

Contents

History

- Before establishment
- Establishment and organizational activity
- Dissolution

Organizational goals and composition

Organizational structure

Political involvement

- Presidential elections
 - 1980
 - 1984
 - 1988

Challenges to the Moral Majority

Moral Majority Coalition

Notable people within the movement

See also

References

External links



Jerry Falwell, whose founding of the Moral Majority was a key step in the formation of the New Christian Right

History

Before establishment

The origins of the Moral Majority can be traced to 1976 when Baptist minister **Jerry Falwell** embarked on a series of "I Love America" rallies across the country to **raise awareness of social issues important to him**.^[1] These rallies were an extension of Falwell's decision to go against the traditional Baptist principle of separating religion and politics, a change of heart Falwell says he had when he perceived what he described as **the decay of the nation's morality**.^[2] Through hosting these rallies, Falwell was able to gauge national support for a formal organization and also raise his profile as a leader. Having already been a part of a well-established network of ministers and ministries, within a few years Falwell was favorably positioned to launch the Moral Majority.