2012-04-27

The Election of a Lesbian Mayor in a Religiously Conservative City: The Case of Houston, Texas

Nancy S. Morris
University of Miami, nancypsmorris@aol.com

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarlyrepository.miami.edu/oa_theses

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

THE ELECTION OF A LESBIAN MAYOR
IN A RELIGIOUSLY CONSERVATIVE CITY: THE CASE OF HOUSTON, TEXAS

By

Nancy Stockwell Morris

A THESIS

Submitted to the Faculty
of the University of Miami
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

Coral Gables, Florida

May 2012

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

THE ELECTION OF A LESBIAN MAYOR
IN A RELIGIOUSLY CONSERVATIVE CITY:
THE CASE OF HOUSTON, TEXAS

Nancy Stockwell Morris

Approved:

_____   _____
Ira Sheskin, Ph.D.   Terri A. Scandura, Ph.D.
Professor of Geography   Dean of the Graduate School

_____   _____
Shouraseni Sen Roy, Ph.D.   David Kling, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Geography   Professor of Religious Studies

MORRIS, NANCY STOCKWELL   (M.A., Geography)
                                                                    (May 2012)

<u>The Election of a Lesbian Mayor in a Religiously
Conservative City: The Case of Houston, Texas</u>

Abstract of a thesis at the University of Miami.

Thesis supervised by Professor Ira Sheskin.
No. of pages in text. (170)

The American South in general remains a pocket of predominantly conservative, Baptist and Evangelical Christian hegemony; however, metropolitan areas of the South display more diversity and pluralism as a result of foreign and domestic migration into the region, changes in religious affiliation, an increasing population choosing no religious affiliation, and the growing influence of popular culture on religious participation. These forces act within a paradigm of neosecularization in which personal conscience exerts more influence than religious authority. Houston, Texas, within the context of the South, serves as the case study that demonstrates the temporal and spatial changes to Houston's religious and political landscape and the manner in which these changes influence voter behavior. In 2009, Houston, home to a large, active Christian community, became the first major U.S. city to elect an openly homosexual mayor. The changes in Houston's religious landscape, changes in attitudes toward gays and lesbians, and the varying degrees of voter participation among religious groups across the city, illustrate the unpredictability of religion as an influence on voter behavior in local elections.

DEDICATION

My journey to this place began eight years ago when Michael Morris came into my life. His continued love, encouragement, and emotional and financial support, sometimes laced with occasional nagging and prodding, helped me maintain the courage and determination to complete my undergraduate degree and continue on to the completion of my master's degree. If it were not for him, I never would have been in Miami in the first place, and because of him I stayed to see this through. Thank you, Mike. I love you.

This work is also dedicated to my daughter, Amanda Block. The momentous decision she made in 2008 set me on this course of rediscovery. Amanda, I love you too, and I know that soon you will find the path your life's journey is meant to take.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I Corinthians 13: Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And

---

[1] I Cor. 13:1-13, New King James Version

though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

LIST OF TABLES

Chapter 1 – Introduction

The United States is the most religiously diverse nation in the world, an anomaly among industrialized nations. Despite this diversity, geographers have identified pockets of religious homogeneity in which a dominant religion reinforces social capital, influences political ideology, and may serve as a predictor of voting behavior among its adherents. The American South remains a pocket of predominantly conservative, Baptist and Evangelical Christian hegemony; however, metropolitan areas of the South display more diversity and pluralism as a result of foreign and domestic migration into the region, changes in religious affiliation, an increasing population choosing no religious affiliation, and the growing influence of popular culture on religious participation. These forces act within a paradigm of neosecularization in which personal conscience exerts more influence than religious authority.

Houston, Texas, within the context of the South, serves as the case study for this research that will demonstrate the temporal and spatial changes to Houston's religious and political landscape and the manner in which these changes influence, or do not influence, voter behavior. It has become almost cliché to equate conservative fundamentalist Christians with the Republican Party and liberal Black Protestant and mainline Protestants with the Democratic Party. These stereotypes may hold true at the national level. This stereotype may apply in Houston in a national or statewide election, but a more complex voter profile appears in city elections in which the candidate slate includes a lesbian accountant, a Black attorney, a Hispanic firefighter, and a white anti-gay activist. In 2009, Houston became the first major American city to elect an openly homosexual mayor. The election of Democrat Annise Parker garnered national coverage

not only because of her sexual orientation but also because Houston is home to a large, active Christian community. Official statements issued by some of these Christian groups express disapproval of homosexuality.

Research Hypotheses

The following four questions form the basis of this research:

- How has Houston's religious landscape changed over the past three decades?

- Is Houston following the national trend that shows an increasing number of people professing no religious affiliation?

- Are Houstonians exhibiting an increased tolerance for diversity and acceptance of gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgenders (GLBT)?

- Does religion in Houston serve as a reliable predictor of voting behavior in local mayoral elections?

The overriding hypothesis in this study is that Houston's religious landscape has changed amid a climate of increasing diversity and tolerance, thus creating the environment for Annise Parker's political success. In general, this study seeks to examine if changes have occurred in Houston's religious landscape and in attitudes toward gays and lesbians by analyzing data at the zip code level from the Houston Area Survey (Klineberg 2010). Selected survey variables pertaining to religion, political preference, attitudes toward gays, and demographic characteristics will be used as independent variables to analyze voting results in the 2009 and 2011 mayoral elections. This research will demonstrate the process of neosecularization, also termed detraditionalization, by which people of faith rely more upon their personal wisdom than upon the guidance of

religious authorities when making decisions about secular matters. As will be shown, the high level of religious affiliation, primarily Protestant, among Houstonians does not serve as a reliable predictor of voting behavior, and in the case of the 2009 and 2011 elections, the minority secularist population and the "creative class" as defined by Richard Florida (2002) determined the outcomes.

Religion in the United States and the South

The complex religious landscape of the United States has intrigued and perplexed geographers and other social scientists for decades, Halvorson and Newman (1994), Stump (2008) and Zelinsky (1961) among others. From its inception when colonists of many different faiths sought a space within which they could worship without fear of persecution, Protestant Christianity exerted hegemonic power in the United States (Kosmin and Lachman 1993). Through a process Kosmin and Lachman call Protestantization,

> the collective religion became America's civil religion, incorporating secular as well as religious values and emphasizing a national purpose…Eventually, the collective Americanized Protestant religion made its peace with other religions, such as Catholicism and Judaism, as long as they recognized the United States as being 'different' from other lands and the spiritual descendent of biblical Israel (Kosmin and Lachman 1993, p. 22).

The process of secularization that has significantly reduced the impact of religion in most of the industrialized Western nations has facilitated religious diversity in the United States, where choosing a religious affiliation becomes a response to market competition (Kosmin and Lachman 1993; Lindsay 2008; Warf 2006). This paradigm of secularization describes at the societal, organizational and local scales the transformation and persistence of religion rather than its decline and eventual disappearance (Kosmin

and Lachman 1993; Kosmin, et al. 2009; Lindsay 2008; Smith 2007; Warf 2006; Warf and Winsberg 2008; Yip 2002); however, emphasis has shifted from religious authority to individual spirituality described by the new paradigm of neosecularization facilitating analysis at the individual scale (Yip 2002).

In his seminal study, Zelinsky (1961) mapped religious distribution in the United States in a "first approximation of the nation's religious regions" (p. 139) in the hopes of providing insight into America's cultural regions. Overcoming variations among religious bodies in methods of counting membership, lack of data for some religious bodies, and variations in denominational definitions, Zelinsky identified three primary classifications within which the major Christian denominations fall. The British Colonial Groups include Protestant Episcopal, Presbyterian bodies, Methodist bodies, Congregational Christian, Baptist bodies and Friends (Quakers). The Immigrant European Groups include Roman Catholic, Jewish congregations, Lutheran bodies, Evangelical and Reformed, Reformed bodies, Brethren churches, Mennonite bodies and Moravian bodies. The Native American Groups[2] include Disciples of Christ, Unitarian and Universalist churches, Latter-Day Saints (Mormons), Adventist bodies, Church of the Nazarene, Assemblies of God, Churches of God and Evangelical United Brethren. Within these classifications, Zelinsky mapped the membership of each group and the "latitudinal zonation in the western movement" (Zelinsky 1961, p. 159) of most groups across the American continent. Three major pockets of religious homogeneity persisted through the migration: a concentration of Roman Catholics in the Northeast, a concentration of Mormons in Utah and Idaho, and a high concentration of Baptists in the South (Zelinsky

---

[2] In Zelinsky's terminology "Native American" refers to Christian denominations originating in the United States, not the religious beliefs of indigenous peoples.

1961). Lindsay (2008) posits that the secularized, pluralist environment of the U.S. nourishes a higher level of religious commitment in the South where social capital is reinforced through strong adherence to the Evangelical Christian, primarily Baptist, worldview. This homogeneity is in part a reflection of the South's historically less advanced economic condition and weaker migration into the area (Lindsay 2008; Zelinsky 1961). Following the Civil War, the evangelical church was the only civic institution left intact to which Southerners could turn (Webster 1997). Two decades before the outbreak of combat, the Baptist Church split over the issue of slavery, and the Southern Baptist Convention was formed in 1845 and remains the largest Protestant denomination in the country (Warf and Winsberg 2008; Webster 1997; Winter 2000). Before the Civil War, Blacks in the South "generally worshipped in white churches, balcony sections being reserved for their presence" (Webster 1997, p. 159). During Reconstruction, Blacks were discouraged or barred from attending their former Southern Baptist Churches, thus leading to the development of exclusively Black churches with Black clergy who became the religious and political leaders of their communities (Webster 1997). Baptists were not the only denomination to fracture over the issue of slavery. Presbyterians divided in 1857 and Methodist Episcopals in 1844 (Goen 1983). The divide remained deep well into the twentieth century. Not until 1983 did the Presbyterian Church in the United States, based in the South, join the northern-based United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. to form the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Many Southern conservatives opposed the reunion and broke away to form the Presbyterian Church in America and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (Winter 2000). Beginning in the late twentieth century and continuing into the twenty-first century, the

debate over the role of gays, lesbians, bisexual and transgender individuals within the religious community has ignited heated debate and denominational division (D'Emilio 2012; ECO: Evangelical Covenant Order of Presbyterians 2012; Jenkins 2011), leading to renewed deterritorialization and reterritorialization of religious space. Unlike divisions over the issue of slavery with its definite North-South geography, congregations across the country are realigning themselves according to acceptability or disapproval of the active participation in leadership roles by homosexuals. As these religious bodies recreate their worship space, Houston finds itself at the vanguard of change on both sides of the debate.

Demographics and Diversity: Counterforces against Protestant Hegemony

Current census data reveal economic improvement and demographic changes in the South (Macken, et al. 2011), prompting changes in the South's religious landscape. Increased demographic diversity, as shown by Richard Florida's "diversity index," in metropolitan areas across the South has attracted highly-educated individuals seeking "low barriers to entry for human capital" (Florida 2002, p. 743). Florida terms this group the "creative class." According to Florida, the presence of a large gay community, such as the one established in Houston (Gates and Ost 2004), indicates that an area is open and accepting of a wide range of nationalities, races, ethnicities, sexual orientation and gender identities, thus increasing the area's diversity index (Florida 2002). This study will demonstrate how this segment of Houston's population may have influenced the outcome of the 2009 and 2011 elections and will contribute to the body of knowledge established by geographers and social scientists who have analyzed voting patterns on the national and regional scales in elections involving gays and gay rights referenda (Chapman, Leib,

and Webster 2007; O'Reilly and Webster, 1998; Quinton and Webster 2011; Webster, Chapman, and Leib 2010). Despite the demographic changes, more recent studies of religion in America (Kosmin and Lachman 1993; Kosmin, et al. 2009; Putnam and Campbell 2010; Warf 2006; Warf and Winsberg 2008) indicate that these homogeneous regions persist when data are analyzed on a national level. However, these studies also shed light on the forces countering the Protestant Christian hegemony: domestic migration and foreign immigration, religious "switching" in a competitive market, increase in the number of people claiming no religious affiliation, and the influence of popular culture. To this list, Smith (2007) adds the exposure to other religions through people or services and certain religious doctrines that are more tolerant. Bellah (2005) and Kong (2001) describe civil religion, moral geographies and social movements that may have a religious basis but may be influenced by other secular agents of morality, i.e. the state.

Religion and Politics: National Trends, Local Exceptions

Religion, though, by its very nature is more than data to be analyzed and mapped on a national or regional scale. Religion is personal. Religion is "intimately related to human identity, serving to cement political, cultural, and social mores in ways that at times appear to defy logical argument or rational action" (Buttimer 2006, p. 200). Religion and belief systems form the basis for humans to form bonds with each other, their lived space, and the natural world in ways that build moral convictions shaping the believer's everyday life (Buttimer 2006). Observed at the local scale using the Houston Area Survey (Klineberg 2010), this study will examine the lived expression of religious beliefs and whether it impacts the political climate of the city.

Even though the Baptist Church, "the state church of the ex-Confederacy" (Warf and Winsberg 2008, p. 420) remains strong in the South, recent data compiled by The Association for Religion Data Archives (ARDA) (InfoGroup, Social Explorer 2011) show a broader range of religious affiliation in Southern metropolitan areas. Figure 1 illustrates Zelinsky's 1952 data showing that Houston ranked second only to Atlanta in its concentration of Baptists (Zelinsky 1961).

Figure 1: Distribution of Baptists, 1952 (Zelinsky 1961, p. 172)

The 2009 ARDA data for Harris County, Texas, which encompasses Houston, indicates a drop in the percentage of religious adherents declaring Baptist affiliation, reflecting a smaller percentage of the total population (InfoGroup, Social Explorer 2011). Although Zelinsky (1961) hesitated to make a connection between religion and socio-political attitudes and behaviors of adherents because of inadequate data, current researchers have sought to fill this void (Klineberg 2010; Kosmin and Lachman 1993; Kosmin, et al. 2009;

Putnam and Campbell 2010; Webster 1997). Putnam's and Campbell's (2010) analysis of data collected in their *Faith Matters Survey 2006* show that Evangelicals and individuals with a high level of religious participation tend to be conservative and Republican. Mainline Protestant and Black Protestant tend to be Independent or more liberal (Putnam and Campbell 2010).

Studies of religion at the national and regional scale indicating a high level of religious participation leading to conservative Republican dominance appear contraindicated in Houston, where a shift toward a more liberal political atmosphere has occurred over the past ten years. Houston is the "archetype laissez-faire city in the U.S.A." (Vojnovic 2003, p. 19), entrepreneurial and individualistic, with a flourishing religious market. The phenomenon of megachurches appearing on the religious landscape in the 1990's (Putnam and Campbell 2010) manifests in Houston with the presence of Lakewood Church, the largest Christian church in the country, and Second Baptist Church, the largest Baptist congregation and fifth largest Christian church (Stetzer, 2009). Lakewood's pastor, Joel Osteen, influences a large congregation of approximately 40,000 who attend weekly services in the building that formerly housed the National Basketball Association Houston Rockets. Osteen's influence extends beyond Houston through his nationally syndicated broadcasts that reach over 200 million U.S. households (Lakewood Church 2011). Second Baptist Church pioneered the multi-site church in Houston with five locations around the Greater Houston Area and a combined membership of approximately 54,000 (Marks 2011). A vibrant Black Protestant presence is exemplified by Windsor Village United Methodist Church (WVUMC), the largest United Methodist congregation in the country (Windsor Village United Methodist Church

2004). Membership is derived from 16,000 households drawn from a ten- to twelve-mile radius around the church; weekly attendance averages 6,500 (Haynes 2011). Houston is home to the largest Catholic diocese in Texas and the twelfth largest in the United States (Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston 2010). The head of the Archdiocese, Daniel Cardinal DiNardo, is a member of the College of Cardinals and the first to be appointed from an archdiocese in the South (Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston 2010). There is also a small but stable Jewish population of 45,000 (Sheskin and Dashefsky 2011; Jewish Federation of Greater Houston 2002). Virtually all population growth over the past 20 years can be attributed to immigration from Latin America, Asia, Africa and the Caribbean (Macken, et al.2011). The results of this study will show that it is within this religious and ethnic milieu that Houston's religious and moral geography has been constructed in an environment of neosecularization on the micro scale. A phenomenon appearing in Houston is the clustering of gay-affirming churches (Sundby 2011) in neighborhoods found to have a concentration of gay and lesbian residents (Gates and Ost 2004). Rodriguez and Ouellette (2000) distinguish between gay-friendly churches that welcome participation of gays and lesbians, and gay-positive churches that "enable(s) gays and lesbians to alleviate the conflict between their religious beliefs and their homosexuality while increasingly enjoying identity integration" (p. 335). Studies have illuminated the desire of many gays and lesbians to openly participate in Christian worship (Gross and Yip 2010; Yip 2002) regardless of dogmatic teachings in some denominations on the sinfulness of homosexuality (Dudley 2006; Fellows of the Research Institute 2005; Piers Morgan Tonight 2011; United States Conference of Catholic Bishops 2006; Van Geest 2008) and the opposition of special interest groups (Dowland 2009; Van Geest 2008).

At the urging of Kong (2001), this study seeks to explore how "different religions may inform the constructions of different moral geographies…and how these constructed moral geographies contradict or are negotiated or reinforced by other secular agents of morality (for example, the state)" and how these constructions are "played out in space" (p. 228). In Houston, these constructions appear to be played out in the changing voting patterns in presidential elections and, more significantly, in the election of the openly lesbian Parker as mayor in 2009. Houston, the fourth largest city in the nation, is the first major city to elect an openly homosexual mayor (Olson 2009). The homosexuality of the new mayor was "certainly not a positive in the campaign, but we can make it not a negative" (Parker 2011). There was an outcry from a small segment of the Christian community just before the run-off election, but it had no effect on the outcome (Sappenfield 2009). According to Sherrill (1996), although there have been minor victories in local elections, gays, lesbians and bisexuals (GLB)[3] lack political clout as a voting bloc on a national level because of gays' wide and random dispersal throughout the population,[4] anti-gay attitudes leading to a lack of safety, and the lack of cohesion and collective identity. For these reasons, GLB voters must depend on support of heterosexuals to win elections. Parker served twelve years on Houston's City Council and as City Comptroller before becoming mayor, thus establishing a record of service. Following a national trend toward increased tolerance of homosexuality detected by Putnam and Campbell (2010), Houstonians are becoming more accepting of homosexuality (Klineberg 2010) amid a neosecular religious environment in which "the

---

[3] At the time of Sherrill's writing, the term "transgender" was not commonly used. The term has since become part of the lexicon used when describing people of non-heterosexual orientation, and therefore, is used throughout most of this thesis.

[4] Refer to *The Gay and Lesbian Atlas*, compiled by Gary J. Gates and Jason Ost in 2004 for updated information on the dispersal of gays in the United States.

self of the believers, rather than authority structures, primarily steers the course" (Yip 2002).

Houston's 2009 election for mayor highlighted the interplay between religion, race, and sexual orientation in local politics. Protestants still dominate Houston's religious landscape and shape the spiritual community; however, they had minimum influence on the outcome of the election even after factoring in the Black Protestants who voted for Gene Locke, the Black candidate. People claiming no religious affiliation, the "Nones," comprise the smallest percentage of the religious landscape but had the strongest impact on the election results due to their support of Annise Parker. The geographic distribution of votes for Parker and votes for Locke closely followed the distribution of Blacks in the city and the distribution of "Nones." These data will be more closely examined and mapped in subsequent chapters. One-on-one interviews by this researcher with Mayor Parker and representatives of Houston's religious community further enhance this study by adding personal insight to the data.

Structure of Thesis

This thesis is presented in five chapters. This first chapter introduces the theoretical basis for the study of America's religious diversity with a general description of America's religious landscape. Chapter 2 presents a more thorough examination of literature addressing the study of religion in the United States and its cultural and political impact. This is followed by a brief history of Houston and a more detailed description of Houston's religious community in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 outlines the methodology and data used in the study. A discussion of Houston's election process, the candidates for mayor in 2009 and 2011, and the results are presented in Chapter 5. Finally Chapter 6

summarizes the results and concepts which support the hypothesis that Houston's religious landscape has changed amid a climate of increasing diversity and tolerance, thus creating the environment for Annise Parker's political success.

Chapter 2 – The Study of Religion and Its Political and Cultural Impact in the United States, the South and Houston

Theory and Definitions

Researchers across disciplines have approached the study of religion using various theoretical constructs. Ontological and epistemological approaches challenge whether knowing and being conflict, struggling between cognitive certainty and moral conviction (Buttimer 2006). Ferber (2006) reminds the reader of the ontological aspects of religion; whether one believes in the Biblical story of creation or the big bang theory does not change the fact that the universe somehow came into existence. Critical realism allows for the existence of something independently of the knowledge of it (naïve realism) thus taking realism beyond epistemological knowledge to ontological. The objectivity of the researcher studying religion as one who believes (insider) may come into question, while the displaced position of someone studying religion from a reductionist approach (outsider) may degrade the sacred to "political, economic or social explanations" (Ferber 2006, p. 178). Ferber's critical realism as a method of studying religion that does not require the "schizophrenia of partitioning into separate persons" (p. 178) by laying aside one's deeply-held beliefs or the "disembodied, unsituated objectivity of the 'god-trick'" (p. 178) acts as the guiding principle for this research.

Religion connected to human identity acts as agent, however elusive and changing, for shaping cultural, political, and social norms (Buttimer 2006; Ivakhiv 2006). By studying religion geographically, the interaction of religious groups within their spatial settings leads to an understanding of religion within a broader cultural context (Ivakhiv 2006; Stump 2008).

Religion, interpreted as ideas, values and beliefs of a culture, defies simple definition. Stump (2008) offers, as a basic definition, the system of behaviors, meanings and symbols shared by a community of adherents and then expands the definition to encompass "a compelling set of beliefs and practices whose truth is presupposed by faith and that ultimately is related to superhuman entities postulated by adherents to possess transcendent attributes or powers superior to those of ordinary mortals" (p. 7). Entities may be deities, ancestors, nature spirits or humans believed to have achieved spiritual perfection. Regardless of form, the entities are seen as sources of power over good and evil, the universe and the lives of the adherents. The aspect of spirituality, that of the superhuman deity and of the adherent, distinguishes religion from other ideological systems, such as Marxism, nationalism or environmentalism (Stump 2008). Chidester (1996) cites historical definitions of religion. He quotes E. B. Tylor's definition from the 1870's, "beliefs and practices relating to spiritual, supernatural, or superhuman beings" and Emile Durkheim's definition from 1912, "beliefs and practices that revolve around a sacred focus…that serves to unify a community," distinguishing between the sacred and the profane (p. 758).

By these definitions, then, religion serves as a unifying force, certainly during the modern period with its desire for absolutes (Kong 2001). Transitioning into the postmodern period, no single tradition is deemed ultimately valid. Kong (2001) and Ivakhiv (2006) note a postmodern delinking of religion from spaces and territories, leaving a fluid and mutable space open to struggle for power and authority leading to "politics of identity and community" (Kong 2001, p. 222) in competition for power and

authority. Ivakhiv (2006), Kosmin and Lachman (1993), Putnam and Campbell (2010), Roof (1999), Stump (2008), Warf and Winsberg (2008), and Webster (1997) all note a backlash from religious adherents who decry the delinking. A clash exists between institutional expressions of faith in public arenas and postmodern deconstruction into individual spirituality (Ivakhiv 2006). Postmodernist reinterpretation of the Bible by liberal Protestants as allegory rather than the literal word of God triggered a cascade of modifications of other elements of the religious system, sometimes resulting in conflict and increasing diversity within a culture (Stump 2008).

Secularization, Post-secularization, Neosecularization

Secularization theory has been offered as an explanation for what some thought was the decline of religion as a hegemonic social force, but empirical evidence seems to indicate otherwise (Kosmin and Lachman, 1993; Lindsay 2008; Putnam and Campbell 2010; Roof 1999; Warf and Winsberg 2008; Webster 1997). Religion has remained a major force, but likely "highly place-dependent, given country-specific and regional differences concerning institutional religion and other salient factors" (Proctor 2006a, p. 167). Amendment I of the U.S. Constitution fosters an environment conducive to religious diversity both across the nation and within local communities where different denominations and faiths mingle (Lindsay 2008; Warf and Winsberg 2008; Yip 2002).

Operating within the postmodern, secularized environment, **detraditionalization** shifts authority from "without" to "within" (Proctor 2006b, p. 189). Detraditionalization has been countered by equally strong resurgent movements toward reinforcing the moral authority of religion. Proctor's (2006b) survey identified four domains of authority: science, religion, nature, and state. Religion provoked the strongest feelings of trust and

the strongest feelings of distrust among respondents. Proctor grouped the four domains into two categories: theocracy (God and state) and ecology (science and nature). The South showed the greatest support for the theocracy model and greatest opposition to the ecology model. The need to aggregate survey results into four regions of the country to obtain statistically significant results suggests underlying diversity within regions (Proctor 2006b).

Drawing on the idea of detraditionalization, Yip (2002) focused on the qualitative transformation of individual religious beliefs guided by the self rather than religious authority structures in a process termed **neosecularization**. The theoretical structure of neosecularization opens the doors of religious participation to alternative populations such as gays and lesbians (Yip 2002).

Scale in the Study of Religion

Religion operates at multiple geographic scales. Religious groups with global reach are mediated by local context, rendering religion contextual, not *a priori* (Kong 2001). When viewed on a global scale, religious traditions appear to be concentrated in particular parts of the world, for example Christians in Europe and the Americas, Buddhists in Southeast Asia, Hindus in India, and Muslims in southwest Asia and northern Africa. However, religion and its adherents operate on a variety of scales. Christianity in America was influenced by the formation of Western Christianity, the Protestant Reformation, and the extensive diffusion of Christianity throughout the world.

> The formation of new Protestant denominations in the United States…has emerged through interactions among innovations within local communities, the essential voluntarism of American religious life, the broader transformation of the institutional organization of Western Christianity resulting from the Protestant Reformation, and the even broader effects of the extensive diffusion of Christianity itself. Local

religious expressions, in other words, reflect the interaction within a particular place of processes operating across a range of scales (Stump 2008, pp. 17-18).

Spatial mobility of adherents also leads to change. As religious traditions spread from hearth areas, many experienced repeated schisms, leading to distinct branches within the different traditions in continuing processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization (Stump 2008). In the United States, Zelinsky (1961) mapped migration patterns of religious denominations occurring in three stages: 1) consolidation along the eastern seaboard; 2) trans-Appalachian settlement; and 3) "redistribution after the close of settlement frontiers" (p. 159). These all moved westward along parallels from east coast to west coast (Zelinsky 1961).

The individual experiences within a religious community may vary according to the degree of the individual's devotion, individual interpretation, and mandated roles assigned by age and/or gender; however, as a cultural system, religion is expressed as a community "rooted in shared understandings and reproduced through social interaction" (Stump 2008, p. 9). Religious systems are passed down through generations by cultural reproduction. Regular communal worship, rituals, rites, institutions and social practices strive to maintain religious authenticity and facilitate cultural reproduction; however, interaction with other cultural groups or new surroundings increases the mutability of religious systems over time. While some beliefs remain constant, i.e., Jesus Christ as the Savior in Christianity, Mohammed as the last prophet in Islam, adherents may adapt their beliefs to conform to local cultural practices (Portes, et al. 2006; Roof 1999; Stump 2008).

Various religious traditions seek to exert influence over their adherents at the scale of the human body. Body and home become entangled in attempts to legislate

abortion, access to birth control, and in protests against gay and lesbian advocacy. In the United States, this is manifested in the opposition of many conservative and moderate Christians to extending marriage rights to gay and lesbian couples, partly based on the conception of marriage between a man and a woman and partly based on general opposition to homosexuality (Chapman, Leib, and Webster 2007; Dowland 2009; Stump 2008; Webster, Chapman, and Leib 2010).

Moral Geographies

Kong (2001) encourages research into the manner in which religion constructs moral geography and how the constructed moral geographies are negotiated or reinforced by other secular agents. Domestic religious space becomes significant in living out everyday faith for individual adherents thus mediating the built environment of moral geography. Technology, especially the Internet, and religious broadcasting may be expanding the definition of sacred "space," which is no longer tied to the gravity model, and the spatial definition of "community" by simultaneously acting on a global scale, yet reaching individuals in their private space, thus contributing to the revitalization of religion rather than to its decline (Kong 2001; Zelinsky 2001). Houston's moral geography is constructed within a city of Evangelical megachurches, myriad Protestant denominations, Catholic parishes, Jewish synagogues, Buddhist and Hindu temples, and Islamic mosques. That secular morality impacts Houston's moral geography is evidenced in part by Houstonians' evolving attitude toward homosexuality, as explained more completely in Chapter 5.

Religious Authority – Protestant Hegemony

Stump (2008) describes generically the hegemonic influence of the dominant religious group that influences secular communal space and secular activities either through law or through "habitual acceptance of customs" (p. 230). The hegemony also may be reinforced by incorporation into public institutions and events such as schools, civic events (invocations) and courts (swearing an oath to God). The adherents to the hegemonic religious group follow the customs and teachings of the group, which then extend to the rest of the community, thus giving the hegemonic group an external dimension (Stump 2008) in which the "political, cultural, and economic survival and growth becomes more important than the cultivation of the original idea" (Buttimer 2006, p. 200). Kosmin and Lachman (1993) refer to this process as the "Protestantization" (p. 47) of America by which residents, regardless of original nationality or religious affiliation, conform to the ideals, customs and, to some degree, beliefs that arose from America's early Protestant heritage. The early Protestant heritage became institutionalized as a "civil religion" explained in great detail by Bellah (2005) and more fully explored below. The tacit agreement to comply with this Protestantized social structure facilitated the implementation of a legal system based on Christian principles of behavior without establishing a state religion precluded by constitutional law; however, adherents of this civil religion may contest dominance over social space (Stump 2008).

Religion in the United States – a Western Anomaly

As a country in which the vast majority of residents (over 90%) profess a belief in God or some form of higher power and declare religious affiliation (over 80%) (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2008), the United States stands as an anomaly among

secularized Western nations. For example, Great Britain closely parallels the U.S. in many socioeconomic and political characteristics; however, belief in God and religious affiliation has declined significantly in Great Britain in the decades since World War II (Lindsay 2008). Secularization theory alone does not explain this phenomenon. The rational choice game theory approach describes a religious marketplace in which followers shop for their faith homes between and within denominations and religions that fulfill their spiritual needs within the confines of limited time and resources to devote to religious activities (Warf 2006). Warf views this approach as "a sterile, ahistorical, and under-socialized view of religion reliant on that desolate character, *homo economicus*" …that contrasts with the "deeply social and psychological dimensions of religious faith" (p. 550). The social ecology approach focuses on the social and psychological dimensions of religious participation as influenced by the social context and spatial location of denominations that leads to an externally defined religious identity (Warf 2006). Warf contends that the resulting religious identity is less fleeting than marketplace loyalty as posited by Roof (1999).

The traditional view of secularization holds that religious pluralism decreases religious participation by eroding the credibility of any single religion in the mind of the participant. From a different perspective, pluralism stimulated competition leading to more choices and higher participation (Kosmin and Lachman, 1993; Lindsay 2008; Putnam and Campbell 2010; Smith 2007; Warf 2006; Warf and Winsberg 2008; Webster 1997; Yip 2002; Zelinsky 1961). "In this view, the religious vitality of the United States reflects the multiplicity of faiths there, in contrast to the comparatively less diverse religious choices prevalent in Europe, in which hegemonic faiths foster complacency and

relative secularization" (Warf 2006, p. 551). Warf's analysis of religious diversity across North American urban areas shows that religious diversity increases as city size increases; in larger cities no single denomination holds a majority of followers. While remaining a predominantly Christian country, non-Christian faiths are growing rapidly in the United States (Cadge and Bender 2004; Kosmin, et al. 2009; Portes, et al. 2006; Putnam and Campbell 2010; Warf and Winsberg 2008; Warf 2006).

Within the secularized context, religious groups seek to achieve conformity to their beliefs within their social space. At the local community scale, adherents focus efforts on controlling behavior seen as inconsistent with their religious beliefs; for example protests against abortion, gays, or adult book stores. A less controversial method of expressing external territoriality and emphasizing religious ethos is through social activism in local spaces by participating in charitable work. The rise of the Social Gospel Movement (SGM) in American Protestantism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries called adherents to work toward "improvement of society in anticipation of the coming of God's kingdom on earth" (Stump 2008, p. 275). The SGM attempted to put in place the ethos of the New Testament by advocating for the poor and working classes. Black Protestant churches strongly associated with the SGM through their efforts during the civil rights movement of the 1950's and 1960's (Kosmin and Lachman, 1993; Stump 2008).

Pluralism, Multiculturalism, Immigration

World religions rose in pluralism. Differences come from different truth claims that are not easily reconciled with other religion truth claims, both within and between religions. The peaceful pluralism existing in Western nations is relatively new in world

history, and religion as a personal choice is a Western method of perceiving pluralism and not universal around the world (Smith 2007). Smith's analysis focusing on Americans' individual attitudes and reactions to the presence of pluralism found that older people and people who are less educated are more likely to say Christianity is the one true religion but also more likely to think all religions have some value than younger, more educated people. Time spent practicing a religion tends to make the practitioner more protective of the truth and salvation promised by that religion. People who are more educated, diversely tolerant, and believe religion is unimportant, reject religion as true (Smith 2007). In the United States, immigration is the primary cause of pluralism (Humes, Jones, and Ramirez 2011; Portes, et al. 2006; Smith 2007). Factors also influencing pluralistic attitudes are media, religion courses in colleges, and working with and/or living near someone of another faith (Cadge and Bender 2004; Chidester 1996; Roof 1999; Smith 2007).

Portes' and Rumbaut's (2006) extensive study of immigrants in America refers to trends first detected in the General Social Survey (GSS), 1972-2002 of the "vanishing Protestant majority" (p. 308) in the U.S. By 2005, according to Portes et al., the Protestant population had fallen below 50% of the U.S. population. This number is contradicted by the Pew Forum's 2007 survey which shows Protestants holding to a slight majority at 51.3% (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2008).

Catholics have remained stable as a proportion of the total population; immigrant Catholics from Latin American, the Philippines and Vietnam offset the increase in secular, non-practicing Catholics (Portes, et al. 2006; Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2008). The Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (Portes, et al. 2006) found

that second generation Latin American immigrant groups profess to be Catholic by a strong majority. The exception to this trend is the Mexican immigrants in the Southwest; many second-generation Mexican immigrants have converted to Evangelical Protestant. Portes and Rumbaut posit that the Mexican experience is different from European Catholic immigrants in two important ways. First, Mexican migration is reversible, and secondly, Mexican migration has never ended. Mexican Catholics have not received the benefits of the "mobility escalator" (p. 334) of parochial schools and acculturation afforded to European Catholic immigrants.

Islam remains a very small proportion of the U.S. population; noteworthy, however, "The Islamic Society of Greater Houston, founded in 1968, developed the first U.S. zonal service system for Arabs and non-Arabs alike in this metropolitan area" (Portes, et al. 2006, pp. 337-338) The concept of a mosque providing a range of services through a zonal service system to the surrounding Muslim community is borrowed from American church structure (Portes, et al. 2006).

America's Civil Religion

Early Puritan communities were established as limited theocracies based on religious principles of Calvinist theology but with limited involvement of religious leaders in government matters and limited involvement of government officials in religious matters (Stump 2008). The Puritans' limited theocracy evolved into a state and national identity that is not only political authority but structure for trust and moral authority (Proctor 2006b). In America, this national identity has assumed the role of a civil religion described by Bellah in his seminal 1967 work, reprinted in 2005, and summarized below (Bellah 2005). Except where noted, the concepts are Bellah's.

A set of beliefs, symbols and rituals became institutionalized as the "American Way of Life." While acknowledging that almost all Americans can accept the concept of God, the separation of church and state "guarantees the freedom of religious belief and association but at the same time clearly segregates the religious sphere, which is considered to be essentially private, from the political one" (p. 42). That said, the separation of church and state has "not denied the political realm a religious dimension" (p. 42), as evidenced as recently as the presidential Republican primaries in 2012. In American politics, the sovereignty of the people is highly regarded; however, our leaders have attributed a higher sovereignty to God as the foundation for the rights of man with a corresponding "transcendent goal for the political process" (p. 43).

Bellah draws on Jean Jacque Rousseau's definition of civil religion from Chapter 8 of Book 4 of *The Social Contract* published in 1762. Rousseau's four dogmas of civil religion are: "the existence of God, the life to come, the reward of virtue and the punishment of vice, and the exclusion of religious intolerance." Bellah contends that these ideals influenced the American founding fathers in the eighteenth century. Mitchell (1992) presents the argument that Martin Luther's interpretation of Christian equality of all under the one sovereign Jesus Christ corresponds with Rousseau's concept of the social contract of citizens who join together as individuals to unify under one sovereign. The individual gives up certain rights and powers to become part of the whole, while paradoxically gaining freedom within the whole. All are intertwined, developing lateral relationships between the whole and the individual and between individuals within the whole, facilitated by the vertical relationship of the whole to the sovereign. Mitchell

contends Luther's concept of equality provides the Christian basis for Rousseau's social contract, thus becoming the base for democracy (Mitchell 1992).

While much of our civil religion derives from Christianity, it is not itself Christianity nor a substitute for Christianity. The God of civil religion is more related to law, order and right than to salvation and love; however He is not the deist conception of God who set the universe in motion and then removed himself from its workings. The God of the American civil religion is actively involved in history, particularly American history (witness manifest destiny), in much the same way as in ancient Israel, according to our early presidents and their contemporaries. America, then, became a metaphor for the Promised Land, in which a new social order would be established.

The civil religion was general enough to encompass Christians and non-Christians alike but specific enough in its mission as to avoid "empty formalism and served as a genuine vehicle of national religious self-understanding" (p. 46). The Civil War severely tested this self-understanding. President Abraham Lincoln viewed his task as the preservation of the Union "not for America alone but for the meaning of America to the whole world" (p. 47). With the life and death of Lincoln, the themes of sacrifice, death and rebirth became incorporated into the civil religion. At its best, civil religion has evolved into "a genuine apprehension of universal and transcendent religious reality as seen in or, one could almost say, as revealed through, the experience of the American people" (p. 49). Religious critics have expressed concern over the dominating influence of civil religion over church religion, prompting an activist and moralistic tone in church religion rather than a contemplative, spiritual one. At its worst, civil religion has been used to justify questionable causes ranging from slavery to manifest destiny and

sometimes becomes caught up in what Bellah, in 1967 when this article first appeared, termed "an American Legion type of ideology that fuses God, country and flag [that] has been used to attack nonconformist and liberal ideas and groups of all kinds" (p. 51). Bellah cautions that without the understanding that our country stands under higher judgment, our civil religion would be dangerous; however, he sees continuity in civil religion not as the worship of the American nation but as the "understanding of the American experience in the light of ultimate and universal reality" (Bellah 2005, p. 54).

Influence of Popular Culture

The current religious climate in the United States reflects not so much a loss of faith as a shift to highly individualistic quests for meaning in a post-structural response to grassroots movements (Roof 1999). Taking an inward turn, many Americans moved from unquestioning acceptance of inherited beliefs to open searching. Baby boomers (Americans born between 1946 and 1964) are at the epicenter of this shift, giving rise to an expanded spiritual market place subject to forces of supply and demand (Roof 1999). Polarizing religious identities arose during the 1970's and 1980's over conflicts between groups and ideologies, popularly known as the "culture wars" (Kosmin and Lachman 1993; Putnam and Campbell 2010; Roof 1999) pitting liberals, progressives and secularists on one side and conservatives, moralists and steadfast religious believers on the other, with a very large group of moderates positioned between the extremes (Roof 1999). Roof disagrees with the idea that America has entered a post-Christian era because of the simultaneous increased momentum of spiritual quest among large segments of the American population in a late modern period of "pluralism, relativism, and ontological uncertainties" (p. 9). In drawing his conclusions, Roof relied on survey data he collected

in a longitudinal study spanning 1988 through 1997. However, Marler and Hadaway (2002) contend that a flaw exists in the Roof surveys as well as Gallup surveys concerning religion in America. The response choices in these surveys seem to imply that being religious and being spiritual are mutually exclusive; however, religious and spiritual are "distinct but interdependent concepts" (Marler and Hadaway 2002, p. 297). According to Marler and Hadaway, other surveys that include the response option "both religious and spiritual" present a different picture of religion in America. Most Americans see themselves as religious and spiritual. Baby boomers are more likely than the older generation to say they are "spiritual only" and are less likely to say they are "religious only." Baby busters (Americans born between the mid-1960's and early 1980's), less spiritual than any other age cohort, are much less likely to say "religious and spiritual" and are more likely to say "spiritual only" or "neither." These surveys all indicate that the "American way of being religious" reflects diversity, social fragmentation, and a reflex focus on the self in the late modern period (Marler and Hadaway 2002; Roof 1999).

Chidester (1996) compares defining religion in American popular culture to the discovery by Europeans of peoples with no apparent religion. The Europeans found a way to adapt familiar religious metaphors to local traditions, beliefs and practices.

Chidester's three examples explore ways of studying religion's place in popular culture:

1. By using a functional definition of religion. Baseball, with its rules, traditions and rituals, "operates like a church, meeting personal needs and reinforcing social integration" (p. 748);

2. By examining the religion of the fetish. Coca-Cola is a "made" object that has been elevated to the level of sacred, inspiring "religious moods and motivations" (p. 752). Despite the instability of a fetishized religion, there is a "genuine enthusiasm" and "real effect in the world" (p. 752);

3. By studying the workings of potlatch[5], the religion of ritualized giving and receiving of gifts. The ritual of rock 'n roll is the anti-structure to corporate America. The gift it offers is solidarity against the "establishment" (Chidester 1996).

Many people view yoga as merely a form of exercise; however, yoga is a religion with its roots in Hindu spiritual tradition. Americans' participation in yoga practice has increased dramatically as spiritual seekers, particularly among baby boomers, engage in interfaith dialogue with Asian communities. Following the Immigration Reform Act of 1965, immigration from Asian countries increased dramatically. Unlike earlier Asian immigrants, these twentieth-century migrants were better educated, middle-class people with more influence in schools and communities where mainline Protestant dominance was eroding. Buddhist and Hindu temples now dot the landscape in many U.S. cities, including Houston (Cadge and Bender 2004). The enormous popularity of the Beatles and the continuing efforts of former Beatles Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr inspired spiritually-searching baby boomers and subsequent generations to delve into Eastern spirituality, bringing it into mainstream American culture (Begley 2007; Boston 2009).

---

[5] According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary, potlatch is a ceremonial feast of the American Indians of the northwest coast marked by the host's lavish distribution of gifts or sometimes destruction of property to demonstrate wealth and generosity with the expectation of eventual reciprocation.

"Nones"

Current researchers report an upward trend in the number of Americans claiming no religious affiliation as part of the secular boom in the 1990's that leveled off after 2001 (Kosmin, et al. 2009; Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2008; Putnam and Campbell 2010). "Nones" are defined as people who do not identify with any religious group or organization. This definition includes atheists, agnostics, deists (belief in a higher power, known only through rational thought, that created the universe and is uninvolved in human affairs) and theists (belief in a personal God who is involved in human affairs and can be known supernaturally) (Kosmin, et al. 2009). Kosmin et al. base the following conclusions on their analysis of the American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS) 2008.

- Nones are no more likely than the general population to believe in New Age or Spiritualist beliefs but are more likely to accept the concept of human evolution.

- Nones are dispersed geographically throughout the country with the highest concentration in New England, the Pacific Northwest, and the Mountain Region. The East South Central and West South Central regions have the lowest concentrations.

- The transition from a largely religious population may be too subtle to be noticed.

As will be seen in Chapter 5, evidence suggests this transition is occurring in Houston. As shown in the Houston Area Survey used in this study, only a small segment of respondents self-identify as Nones. This percentage increases when evaluating the

computed variable called "True Religion," which assigns respondents to the categories of "Fundamentalist," "Progressive," or "Secularist" based on the respondents' belief concerning the inerrancy of the Bible and the level of importance religion holds for the respondent. This variable indicates that Secularists comprise 24.5% of the Houston Area Survey respondents. As will be demonstrated in Chapter 5, Secularists disproportionately influenced Houston's mayoral election outcome in 2009.

Gays and Christianity

Much has been written about Christians' responses on both sides of social justice issues such as civil rights, abortion, controversial medical research, euthanasia and sexual orientation, with particular emphasis on the viewpoints of Christian fundamentalists (Chapman, Leib, and Webster 2007; Dowland 2009; Fleischmann and Hardman 2004; Kosmin and Lachman 1993; Putnam and Campbell 2010; Stump 2008; Van Geest 2008; Warf 2011; Webster 1997; Webster, Chapman, and Leib 2010). Since Kong's (2001) assertion that little study exists on the tension created when one "belongs" (p. 22) to a parish or church but does not necessarily feel integrated into the community of believers and how this tension is resolved, researchers have broached the subject of identity and acceptance of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) Christians.

Secular GLBTs consider religious space antithetical to their identities while non-heterosexual Christians harmonize their personal identities and sexuality with the Christian faith, contradictory to official church teachings. GLBTs who want to retain their Christian identity while being openly homosexual feel very strongly about religious beliefs and their homosexuality and continue attending church seeking spiritual nourishment (Rodriguez and Ouellette 2000; Yip 2002). "Gay-positive churches"

minister specifically to GLBTs within a positive, affirming environment. "Gay-friendly churches" welcome participation of GLBTs but do not meet spiritual needs specific to GLBTs (Rodriguez and Ouellette 2000; Yip 2002).

GLBTs and their advocates may remain in church to engage in a dialogue of reinterpretation of doctrines, practices and Bible scripture through the emergence of gay theology using gender-neutral language to effect change from within (Gross and Yip 2010; Rodriguez and Ouellette 2000). For GLBTs who say their sexual orientation was established at a young age, not by choice but by divine creation, the interpretation of divine creation provides a theological base from which to challenge the "heteronormativity" (p. 45) promulgated by religious authority (Gross and Yip 2010). Christian GLBTs see God as loving and approachable, accepting and inclusive. This concept of "God is love" as the faith structure empowers GLBTs to withstand human censure. The same concept of love extends to Jesus Christ. However, GLBTs, while not denying Christ's divinity, are more likely to emphasize Christ's humanity. Christ's suffering elicits empathy for humans under oppression, and He was unafraid to challenge doctrines and practices He found unjust. This view of Jesus Christ empowers GLBTs to advocate for change and inclusion within the religious community (Gross and Yip 2010). The important point is the self of the believers rather than religious authority. Being Christian as part of their identity keeps many faithful GLBTs in church. They contend that their sexuality should not be segregated from their identity as a whole person in Christ. Personal experience, personal interpretation of the Bible, and personal Christian faith are viewed as more important than religious authority in shaping GLBT religious identity and leads to an emphasis on "social justice, human rights, personal responsibility,

liberty and diversity" (Gross and Yip 2010, p. 56). The elevation of individual spirituality above religious authority does not mean an "anything goes" mentality in ethics and morality. Non-heterosexual morality remains based in a Christian framework and reinforced in gay-positive churches ministering specifically to GLBTs within a positive, affirming environment (Rodriguez and Ouellette 2000; Yip 2002).

Religion in the South, a Homogeneous Region

Geographers and sociologists have identified clusters of religious homogeneity around the country, including the South as predominantly Baptist (Kosmin and Lachman 1993; Lindsay 2008; Putnam and Campbell 2010; Warf 2006; Warf and Winsberg 2008; Webster 1997; Zelinsky 1961). Zelinsky (1961) contends that a weak argument exists for using religion to identify the South as a unique geographic region because Southerners generally do not see religion as setting them apart from non-Southerners. He bases this statement on the relatively inconspicuous presence of churches in the built environment in the South at the time of his writing. Perhaps this was a result of the lower economic conditions in the South (Lindsay 2008; Webster 1997) that inhibited construction of grander houses of worship before the rise of megachurches.

The Mason-Dixon Line separating the North from the South during the time of the Civil War is still evident in the distinction of religious composition of counties bordering the line. Counties in Ohio, Indiana and Illinois are markedly different from counties in Kentucky and Tennessee. The boundary demarcates the relatively homogenous region of the South dominated by Baptists and indicates the lingering cultural geography of the region despite migration and demographic and social changes over the past several decades (Warf and Winsberg 2008). Silk and Walsh term the states

on the western periphery of the former Confederacy the "Southern Crossroads." These states, Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri and Louisiana, form a "flashpoint region where the intersection of frontier ideals and Old South realities has historically produced political and religious clashes of pronounced intensity" (Silk and Walsh 2008, p. 86). The combined populations of White Baptists and Black Baptists in the Southern Crossroads make the Baptists the most populous tradition by far; however, Catholics in the Crossroads comprise almost the same percentage of the population as the rest of the country, so "it looks like the South plus Roman Catholics" (Silk and Walsh 2008, p. 6).

"Over-churching," Zelinsky's term for the wide diversity of denominations in the United States, does not apply to the South where there is a striking dominance of Protestant denominations (Zelinsky 1961). At the time of his study in 1952, Zelinsky attributed the smaller number of denominations in the South in part to the South's less advanced economy, defects in the data collected by the National Council of Churches (NCC), and weakness of migration into the region. Lindsay (2008) and Warf (2006) also refer to the South's relative isolation and lower economic condition following the Civil War. Lindsay (2008) refers to the defeated Confederates as a marginalized people who retreated inward to their one remaining social institution, the Baptist Church (Webster 1997). Nineteenth and twentieth century European immigrants avoided the South, as well as Catholics and other immigrant groups, except for pockets in Central and South Texas. French Catholics in Louisiana predate the Louisiana Purchase (Zelinsky 1961).

As in other parts of the country, the South and the Southern Crossroads have seen growth in gay-affirming churches, despite evidence indicating the Crossroads as the most anti-gay rights region in the country in every religious category (Silk and Walsh 2008).

Since the 1980's, an increase in "spiritual resources" (Fleischmann and Hardman 2004, p. 420) for GLBTs has occurred. Some Protestant denominations are welcoming GLBT members into congregations seeking to reconcile their heterosexual and GLBT members while some denominations adopt a "don't ask, don't tell" approach. These same denominations may also include churches that take an exclusionary position toward GLBTs or seek to transform them to a heterosexual orientation (Bagby-Grose 2012; Haynes 2011; Silk and Walsh 2008). Texas is the "culture war in microcosm" (Silk and Walsh 2008, p. 104). Conflicts within Baptist organizations showing support for both extremes of the GLBT argument have led to splits in the Southern Baptist Convention. Some congregations have been expelled for accepting GLBT members (Fleischmann and Hardman 2004; Silk and Walsh 2008). In spite of the turmoil, Houston's GLBT community has grown (Gates and Ost 2004), and Houston's GLBT spiritual resources also have increased over the past five years (Bagby-Grose 2012).

Religious Landscape of Houston

As described in greater detail in Chapter 3, Houston displays a multi-denominational, multi-faith religious landscape that is dominated by Protestants. Following the example of Zelinsky's most recent study (2001) of the physical landscape of religion, houses of worship in Houston range from the elaborate co-cathedral of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston; the enormous megachurches, Lakewood Church, Second Baptist Church, and Windsor Village United Methodist Church; historic nineteenth-century churches; storefront churches and small one-room sanctuaries among hundreds of churches of various sizes, synagogues, mosques and temples. Corresponding with Zelinsky's findings in Chicago (2001), older church buildings near Houston's

central business district often have been repurposed as the Anglo population has shifted outward and inner city neighborhoods have become more diverse by race, ethnicity and sexual orientation. Analysis of the Houston Area Survey by this researcher show that geographic clustering of Protestants is highest in predominantly Black neighborhoods; Catholics show clustering in predominantly Hispanic neighborhoods. Jews are concentrated in an area of southwest Houston around the Jewish Community Center. The relatively small percentage of Houstonians claiming no religious affiliation are clustered in a near-downtown area west of the central business district, generally aligning with the predominantly GLBT neighborhood identified by Gates and Ost (2004). The implications of this religious distribution on the mayor election of 2009 and 2011 will be more fully explored in Chapter 5.

Houston as Multicultural City

Recent census data illustrates Houston's diversity. Over the past two decades, Houston has become a minority majority city – the minority populations comprise a majority of the population (Humes, Jones, and Ramirez 2011; Macken, et al. 2011). Blacks and Hispanics comprise the largest minority groups. The Hispanic population is the fastest growing segment, fueled by immigration primarily from Mexico and Central America (Humes, Jones, and Ramirez 2011). Immigrants from China, Southeast Asia, India, southwest Asia and Africa call Houston home (Macken, et al. 2011). A more complete presentation of Houston's diversity appears in Chapter 3.

Politics, Religion, and Race in the Culture Wars

America does not recognize or allow a state church; however, the predominance of Christian hegemony has defined cultural norms in our society, for example

establishing Sunday as the weekly holiday. Religious groups have sought to exert influence over society by forming political parties, such as the Christian Coalition in the U.S., the Shas Party in Israel or the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. This politicization of religious ideologies often leads to conflict between religious groups and between the religious group and the secular community (Stump 2008), popularly known as the culture wars.

Culture wars are deeply rooted in moral value judgments that on the national and regional scale inspire religious organizations and church leaders to mobilize against issues perceived as threatening to the moral fabric of the region. Kosmin and Lachman (1993) described in detail the rise of the Moral Majority in the late 1970's and the continued growth and influence of Christian conservatives in presidential politics. Many others have followed suit, among them Putnam and Campbell (2010), Stump (2008), Kong (2001), Smith (2007), Warf (2011), and Webster (1997) to name but a few. The question of the proper place of gays and lesbians within society is a central divide in American politics (Brown, Knopp, and Morrill 2005) and a key battleground in the culture wars. During World War II, gay identity began to take hold in large American cities that had major military installations on both coasts. A subculture of social networks of bars, clubs, and gay-themed publications and literature increased throughout the 1950's and early 1960's. Fears of ostracism and police harassment reinforced the clandestine nature of these activities. In the mid-1960's the homophile movement mobilized in several major cities, and in 1965 gay men and lesbians demonstrated at the White House and the United Nations urging an end to discrimination against gays.

Following the 1969 riot in the Stonewall area of New York City, a gay power movement developed in the 1970's that grew into national organizations such as the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, the Human Rights Campaign and the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation. By the 1990's the movement became institutionalized through funding, campaign activities, and strengthened political ties, primarily within the Democratic Party. These groups have worked toward achieving policy changes dealing with discrimination, hate crimes, domestic partnerships, sodomy repeal and related issues (Fleischmann and Hardman 2004). Proponents on both sides of the battle over gay rights and sexual identity come to the field of engagement equipped with religious armor. Places with high rates of church adherence, particularly evangelical Protestant, are less likely to adopt gay rights ordinances. A high concentration of evangelical Protestants exists in the South, where gay rights ordinances have faced steep opposition at the state level.

Local church leaders and religious organizations usually are not involved directly in politics but play a prominent role in culture war controversies that create divided moral landscapes (Chapman, Leib, and Webster 2007; Fleischmann and Hardman 2004; O'Reilly and Webster 1998; Stump 2008; Warf and Winsberg 2008; Webster, Chapman, and Leib 2010). Van Geest (2008) illustrates moral geographies formed by the link between Christian denominations and special purpose groups working with religious leaders. His analysis is presented in the following discussion. In short, the official denominational positions can be summarized as follows: Roman Catholic and Evangelical churches are against gay rights; a majority of mainline Protestant denominations support gay rights except for the United Methodist Church's position on

same-sex marriage; and Black Protestants favor the definition of traditional marriage and are mainly silent on other issues of gay rights. Unlike other Evangelical denominations, Black Protestants tend to be theologically conservative and politically progressive. Despite these official positions, lay members often hold different views, as is the case in the Catholic Church which shows a gap between the hierarchical position on gay rights and marriage and the opinions of its lay members (Van Geest 2008). When grouped by church governance, there is a strong correlation between having a "centralized authority structure and the likelihood of the denomination taking political action" (Van Geest 2008, p. 343) on a national scale.

Conservative special purpose groups with a religious base are more active and vocal than groups connected to more liberal denominations. Christians in more liberal denominations show a higher tendency to be politically active in secular organizations. Religiously-based, special-purpose groups exist on both sides of the gay rights/gay marriage issue. Conservative denominations are more active and more effective in mobilizing church-goers than are the liberal groups (Van Geest 2008). Religiosity as a predictor of conservative attitudes remains valid; however, the current trend toward increased tolerance of homosexual rights among the religious follows the pattern of acceptance of women's rights, and as acceptance rises, opposition to homosexuality will no longer be politically viable (Putnam and Campbell 2010). Special purpose groups, often with a single-issue focus, are more politically active than denominations; these groups can provide "exclusive identity representation" (Van Geest 2008, p. 346) that churches cannot, can employ legal strategies to affect public policy, and can serve as think tanks. There exists a synergy between denominations and special purpose groups in

which the groups recruit members from the denominations and interact with denominational leadership in an exchange of information and influence (Van Geest 2008).

Electoral Geography of Religion, Race and Sexual Identity

Voting patterns in elections involving same-sex marriage and gay rights referenda have been analyzed on the regional and national scale (Chapman, Leib, and Webster 2007; O'Reilly and Webster 1998; Quinton and Webster 2011; Webster, Chapman, and Leib 2010), but with the exception of studies of voting on gay rights issues in Tacoma, Washington (Brown, Knopp, and Morrill 2005) and Atlanta, Georgia (Fleischmann and Hardman 2004), little work has been done at the local scale (Chapman, Leib, and Webster 2007). This study contributes to the body of literature at the local level by analyzing the election of a lesbian mayor within the context of Houston's moral, racial and economic geographies.

Gay politics with a "deep agenda" (Fleischmann and Hardman 2004, p. 409) is applicable across the nation with differing local agendas. Houston, located in the Southern Crossroads (Silk and Walsh 2008), adopted a policy of non-discrimination based on sexual identity in 1998. Several studies cited elsewhere in this thesis show empirical evidence of region and religion as predictors of opposition to gay rights, but variance exists across the South (Fleischmann and Hardman 2004). The wide and random dispersal of GLBTs throughout populations, anti-gay attitudes leading to a lack of safety, and the lack of cohesion and collective identity render the political power of GLBTs small on a national level. Victories in local elections are miniscule compared to relative powerlessness on a larger scale. GLBT candidates must depend on support from

heterosexuals to win elections (Sherrill 1996). Sherrill's article was published one year before Annise Parker, who is openly lesbian, was first elected to Houston's city council with the endorsement of the Houston Police Officers Union and the *Houston Chronicle*, among others. The support Parker receives from the national GLBT community expands the scale of her influence (Parker 2011), and her election as mayor of Houston garnered national attention (Olson 2009; Sappenfield 2009).

Voting in the American South, a region dominated by "traditionalistic" (p. 47) culture, is still highly correlated with race (Chapman, Leib, and Webster 2007). Race and religion are the most significant demographic variables in understanding the electoral geography of the vote on a same-sex marriage constitutional amendment in Alabama (Webster, Chapman, and Leib 2010). These two variables figured prominently in Houston's 2009 mayor election and will be explained more fully in Chapter 5. The issue of gay rights often presents a dilemma for the Black community. Some Blacks support gay rights as a civil rights issue; others oppose gay rights on religious grounds. In Alabama's election, Black clergy were the most outspoken in support of the referendum to add a prohibition of same-sex marriage to Alabama's constitution (Webster, Chapman, and Leib 2010). In Houston's 2009 mayor election, Black pastors spoke publicly in the local media against Parker's election based on her sexual identity. The vote in 2009 was sharply divided along racial and religious lines, but this was also related to the fact that Parker's opponent was Black.

The concentration of the creative class in urban areas around the country, including the South, creates an "economic geography of diversity that is closely intertwined with multi-scalar social, political and cultural implications" (Chapman, Leib,

and Webster 2007, p. 29). The creative class consists of highly-educated individuals, typically employed in technical occupations, and often found in urban areas which rank high on Richard Florida's diversity index[6] (2002). An increase in individual and regional socioeconomic status appears positively correlated geographically with support for gay rights. For Blacks, race often trumps sexuality in voting behavior. For Hispanics, faith (Catholicism) often determines support for anti-gay rights referenda. The debate over gay rights ordinances reduces to equality versus morality (Brown, Knopp, and Morrill 2005). The influence of socioeconomic status, race and religion on voting behavior appears evident in the distribution of voter turnout in Houston's mayor elections in 2009 and 2011.

Geographic Analysis of Voting

Zelinsky (1961) claimed that the existing data on religious affiliation is inadequate to use to predict political, social or economic behavior. Later researchers, as noted elsewhere in this thesis, have incorporated religious data in political and social analysis, particularly in response to the rise of the Christian conservative movement.

Three major theoretical approaches post-1970 dominate electoral geography: the spatial-analytic tradition, the political economy model, and the post-structural model, described by Leib and Quinton (2011) and summarized below:

1. The spatial-analytic tradition comprises predominantly quantitative applications. Examples are analysis of channels of information, factor analysis, discussion of the problems of ecological fallacy, evaluation of temporal and spatial data, and the use of Local Indicator of Spatial Autocorrelation (LISA) statistic.

[6] Refer to page 51 for a more complete explanation of the diversity index.

2. The political economy model has become less popular over the past twenty years and will not be explored further in this study.

3. The post-structuralist model has grown in popularity. Examples include studies from a feminist perspective and the politics of identity.

In the geographic post-structuralist approach "space and place is (*sic*) produced" and "power relations are central to its production," and the channels through which power travels lead to "changing epistemologies" (Leib and Quinton 2011, p. 19). Race, gender and sexuality become enmeshed in conflicting spatialized identities as played out within electoral processes. Post-structural ideas are coupled with quantitative methods of the spatial analytic tradition in recent electoral geography works (Leib and Quinton 2011). This work continues in this avenue of research.

Following examples set by Webster (Chapman, Leib, and Webster 2007; Quinton and Webster 2011; Sui and Hugill 2002; Webster, Chapman, and Leib 2010), this study will employ geographically weighted regressions, the local indicator of spatial autocorrelations statistic, and cluster and outlier analysis (Anselin Local Moran's I) to detect areas of voter alignment.

Conclusion

This study will add to the body of research on the influence of religion on voting behavior by focusing on the local scale, and as will be demonstrated in Chapter 5, the presence of a plurality of Evangelical Christians does not guarantee victory for the Republican candidate and that just like "beauty," "conservative" is in the eye of the beholder.

Chapter 3 - Houston: A Space-Age City Born on the Bayou

"Houston" was the first word spoken from the moon. The name begins the classic cliché of understatement, "Houston, we have a problem," spoken from the heavily-damaged capsule of Apollo 13. Astronauts depended on flight control operators at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston. Long before the twentieth-century space race, in 1836 two brothers hoping to make their fortunes in land development selected a location at the convergence of Buffalo Bayou and White Oak Bayou to establish the new town they named Houston. Many of the early settlers migrated from other states in the American South bringing their religion and culture, blending their antebellum mentality with Houston's frontier cowboy mystique. As in most of the South, Houston maintains a strong Protestant tradition tempered by increasing diversity and evolving religious attitudes. This chapter more fully explores the history, religious roots, and current religious landscape of Houston, America's fourth largest city (population 2,099,451) (Macken, et al. 2011).

This chapter is presented in seven sections. A description of the regional religious landscape of the South is followed by a brief history of Houston and its place in the South. The next section presents data on the religious landscape of Houston and Harris County. A description of Houston's religious marketplace and Houston's megachurches precede an examination of varying attitudes toward GLBTs in Houston's churches. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Defining the American South and Its Religious Landscape

This study focuses on Houston, Texas within the context of the American South. For this study, the South is defined historically as the states that seceded from the Union

to form the Confederate States of America during the Civil War of 1861-1865. One possible regional definition of the South excludes the western two-thirds of Texas and the southern Florida peninsula (Reed 2001). After its independence from Mexico, the Republic of Texas existed from 1836 to 1845 when it joined the U.S. The Republic generally covered an area bordered by the Red River on the north, the borders with Arkansas and Louisiana in the east, and the Gulf of Mexico in the south. The western boundary ran south from the Red River near the area that would later become Dallas-Fort Worth and separated Texas from the Comanche region. The western boundary turned eastward near San Antonio ending in Corpus Christi Bay (Williams 1993). Texas joined other southern states and seceded from the Union in 1861. Although the heaviest fighting of the Civil War took place in other states, the last land battle of the Civil War occurred in Texas (Cartwright 2009). The Civil War and the period immediately following, known as the Reconstruction era, left the South, including Texas, scarred. Much of the South's cultural geography retains vestiges of Civil War and Reconstruction era characteristics, creating in essence a marginalized segment of the American population (Lindsay 2008; Warf and Winsberg 2008; Webster 1997).

One of the founding principles of the U.S. is the constitutional protection of our right to worship as we choose. In what perhaps seems counterintuitive, the secularization of Western society encourages religious diversity, particularly in the U.S. (Lindsay 2008). Choosing religious affiliation becomes a response to market competition (Lindsay 2008; Warf 2006) reinforced by social capital gained through affiliation (Lindsay 2008; Webster 1997). Mapping religious adherents in the most diverse nation in the industrialized world visually highlights regions of great diversity and relatively small

pockets of homogeneity (Warf 2006; Warf and Winsberg 2008; Zelinsky 1961). Zelinsky's seminal study of the religious landscape of 1952 America provides a base from which to study changes over the past fifty years. Zelinsky identified three regions dominated by one denomination: the Northeast, primarily Roman Catholic; the Great Basin, primarily Mormon; and the South, primarily Baptist. Throughout the decades since the Civil War, the church has served as a bonding force, an expression of solidarity against the larger dominant culture (Lindsay 2008; Webster 1997). Seeking strength and identity, Southerners turned to their faith, primarily Baptist, in force, leading Warf and Winsberg (2008) to declare the Baptist Church "the state church of the Ex-Confederacy (p. 420). It is against this backdrop of almost impenetrable Baptist dominance in the South that the forces of immigration, secularization, religious "switching," and popular culture are realigning the religious landscape in Houston.

A Brief History of Houston and Its Place in the South

Houston is the "archetype laissez-faire city in the U.S.A." (Vojnovic 2003) with a long history of entrepreneurial innovation and creative marketing. Houston traces its origins to the earliest days of Anglo settlement in the Mexican-controlled territory. Towns along and south of the El Camino Real running from Natchitoches, Louisiana through San Antonio into Mexico attracted Anglo settlers (Williams 1993), mostly from states in the South (Figure 2) (University of Texas 1976).

Red denotes leading state of birth of the immigrant old stock American population, 1835-1880.

Blue denotes leading state of residence prior to migration to Texas of the old stock American population, 1835-1880.

LEADING STATES OF ORIGIN OF THE OLD STOCK ANGLO-AMERICAN POPULATION*

East Texas became an extension of the deep South settled by old stock Americans from Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia and Louisiana. Central and northern Texas, by contrast, were peopled mainly by upper southerners, especially Tennesseans, Missourians, and Arkansans. West Texas was apparently settled largely by migrants from the eastern half of the state, but census materials are not adequate to permit a detailed analysis of population origins there.

STATE	ABBREVIATION
Alabama	ALA
Arkansas	ARK
Georgia	GA
Louisiana	LA
Mississippi	MISS
Missouri	MO
Tennessee	TENN
Virginia	VA

*Those Americans, both black and white, whose ancestry dates from Colonial America.

Copyright 1976, Board of Regents, The University of Texas System. All rights reserved.

Figure 2: Origins of Early Texas Anglo-American Settlers (Perry-Castaneda Library Map Collection, University of Texas Libraries 1976)

In 1836, the Texans rebelled against the ruling Mexican government. A small band of Texans and volunteers from Tennessee defended the Alamo during a 13-day siege which ended in the devastating defeat of the Texan defenders at the hands of Mexican General Santa Ana in March, 1836. The siege allowed time for General Sam Houston to retreat and reinforce his Texas army. General Santa Ana advanced eastward from San Antonio, confident in his quest to crush the rebellion. Santa Ana's army moved easily across the territory and reached an area along Buffalo Bayou southeast of what is

now Houston. In the early morning hours of April 21, 1836, General Houston surprised the Mexican army, and in a battle lasting only 18 minutes forced the surrender of Santa Ana and won independence for Texas (Williams 1993). Sam Houston served as the first President of the Republic of Texas and later served as governor of the State of Texas and as a Congressman until his opposition to secession from the Union forced him from public life (Williams 1993).

From 1836 when the Allen brothers selected a spot at the convergence of White Oak Bayou and Buffalo Bayou for their land development scheme (Gray 2008), Houstonians have dreamed big. The Allen brothers named their development Houston in honor of the general and statesman and successfully lobbied the Congress of the new Republic to designate Houston as the provisional capital of the Republic of Texas (Gray 2008). Early settlers in Houston responded to advertisements promoting the Allens' new settlement as a lush, beautiful, idyllic place to start a new life. Instead, the early residents found mosquitoes, heat and humidity on this coastal plain too far inland to be cooled by gulf breezes (Gray 2008).

Houston continued to develop but was not as important to the state economy as Galveston, one of the largest ports in the South. Galveston had endured pirates and yellow fever epidemics, but the Storm of 1900 proved disastrous. Six thousand residents were killed and most of the city flattened (National Hurricane Center 2008). Business leaders in Houston saw opportunity in this adversity and dredged Buffalo Bayou to create an inland port capable of handling the shipping once destined for Galveston (Vojnovic 2003). The Ship Channel officially opened in 1914, and the Port of Houston now is

ranked first in foreign waterborne tonnage, first in U.S. imports, second in U.S. export tonnage and second in U.S. total tonnage (Port of Houston 2009).

Houston's rise in prosperity was further bolstered by the booming oil industry in the early twentieth century. The Houston area sits on top of what was one of the largest oil reserves in the world. Speculators and "wildcatters" flocked to the region, buying up mineral rights and drilling for oil in every likely spot (Vojnovic 2003). Many of Houston's wealthiest people struck it rich in the oil patch, and some of the world's largest oil companies have roots in the Houston area. Humble Oil Company, named for the town in northeast Harris County where one of the most productive early oilfields is located, was acquired by Standard Oil of New Jersey. Standard Oil changed its name to Exxon in 1972 and later merged with Mobil to become ExxonMobil (Thompson n.d.).

With this "wildcatter," man-versus-nature mentality Houston grew with abandon. There are no zoning laws in Houston, and Houston's extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) protected by state law allows the city to expand into unincorporated areas whenever it sees fit to bring these areas within the city limits (Texas State Legislature, as amended 1987).

Houston: a Multicultural City

Although Houston admittedly is not the most scenic city in the U.S., it continues to develop and attract new inhabitants. According to the 2010 Census (Macken, et al. 2011), Houston was the fastest growing metropolitan area between 2000 and 2010 with a 26.1% population increase. Houston remained the fourth most populated incorporated place in the U.S., surpassing 2 million in population in the decade. Harris County, which contains Houston, is the third most populous county behind only Los Angeles County,

California and Cook County, Illinois. Virtually all the population growth is from Asian, Latin American, Caribbean, and African immigrants (Humes, Jones, and Ramirez 2011; Macken, et al. 2011). Newly released 2010 census data show that the minority population (persons who self-identified as anything other than White Non-Hispanic Alone) in Harris County now exceeds 50% of the total population, with an increase in the various minority populations of 28.8% - 57.5% over the 2000 census (Humes, Jones, and Ramirez 2011). Population distributions by census tract of the three largest racial and ethnic groups in Harris County are shown on the following three figures.
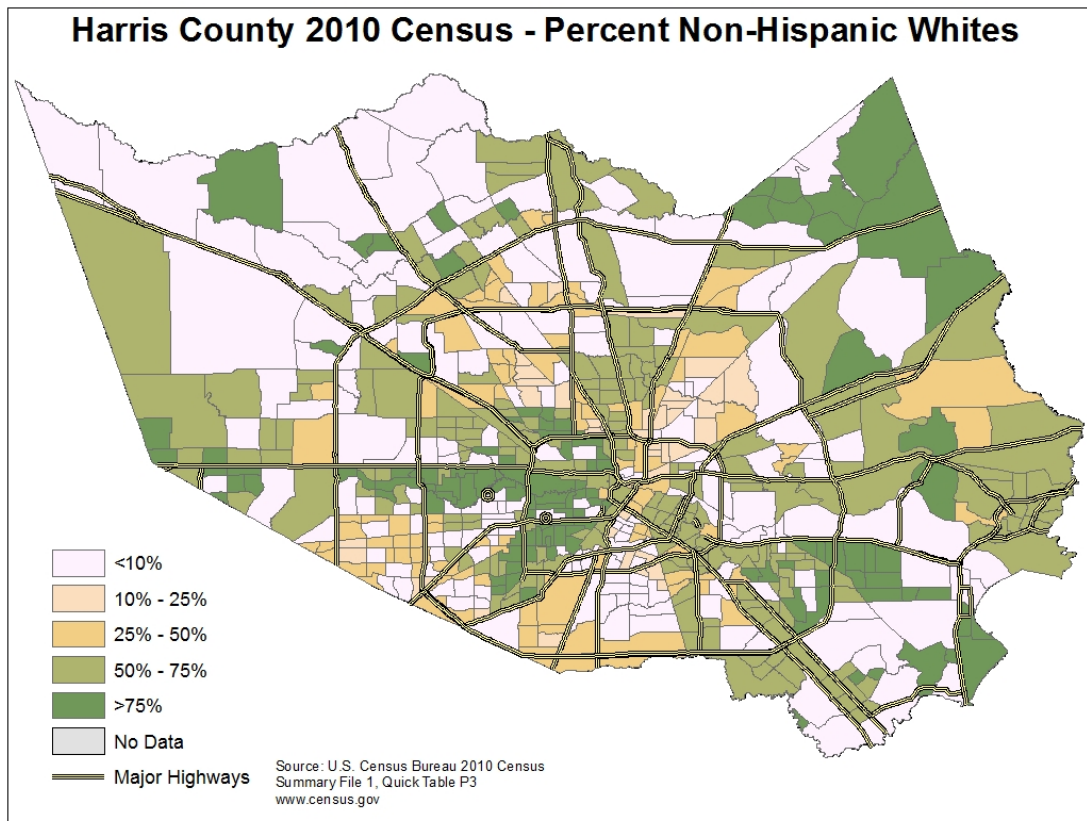
Figure 3: 2010 Census: Non-Hispanic Whites by Census Tract
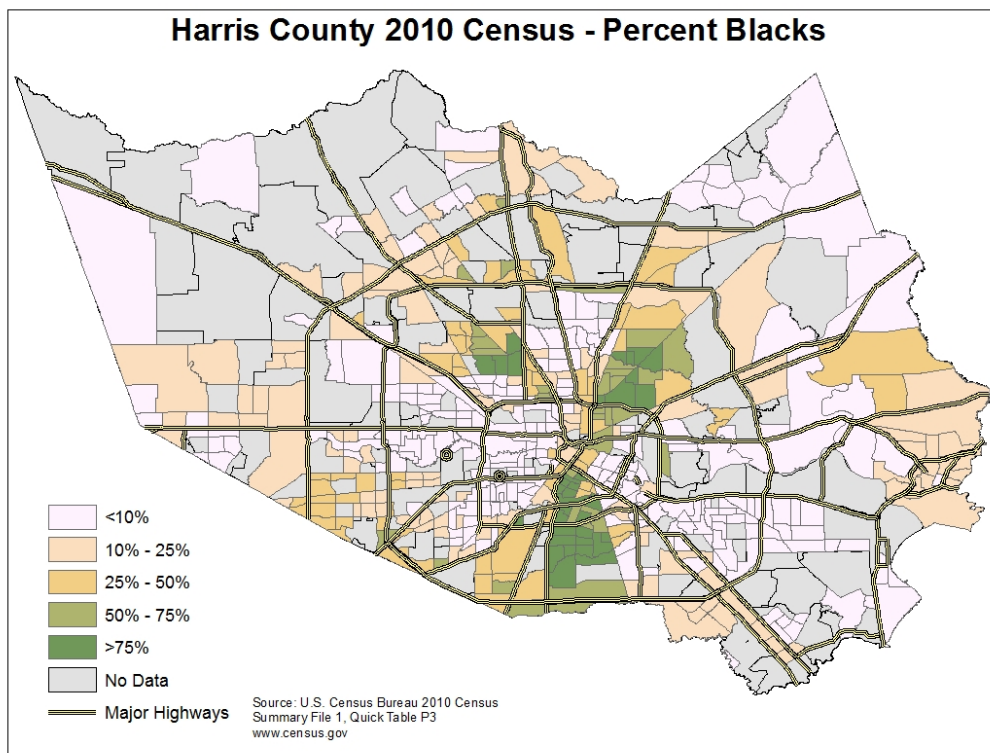
Figure 4: 2010 Census: Blacks by Census Tract
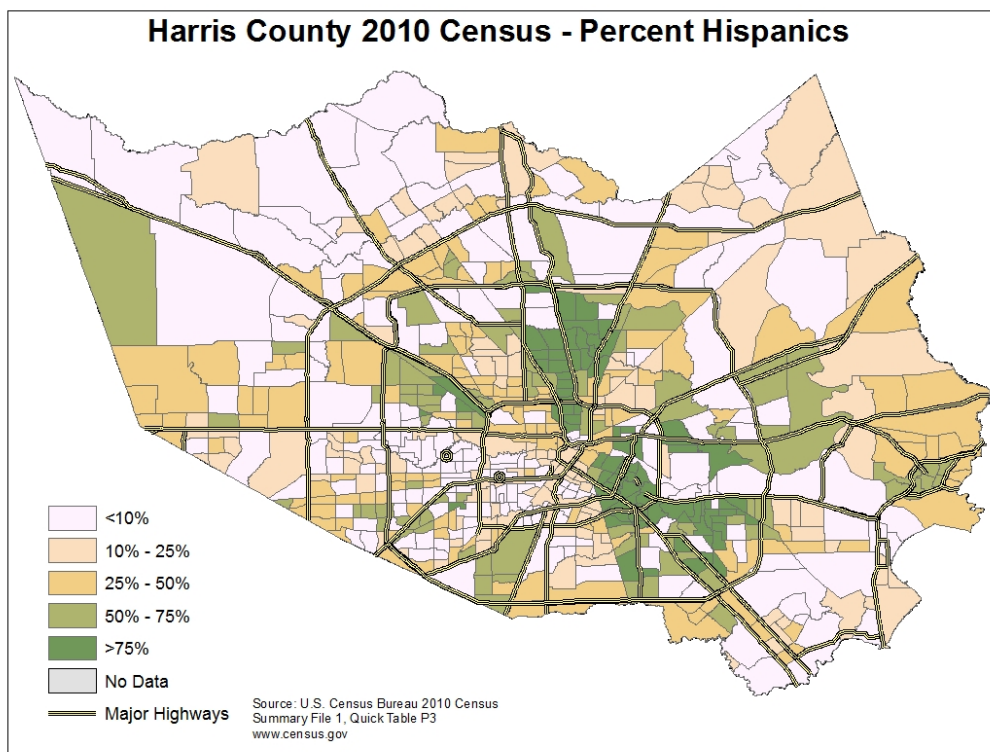
Figure 5: 2010 Census: Hispanics by Census Tracts

With an economy largely built on energy, space technology, and cutting-edge medicine, Houston attracts highly-skilled workers seeking "low barriers to entry for human capital" (Florida 2002, p. 743). A key component of Richard Florida's analysis of the geography of the economic talent he terms the "creative class" is a variable he labels the "diversity index." The diversity index measures the number of same-sex couple households in proportion to a city's population. Florida reasons that communities accepting of gay couples are open to racial and ethnic diversity as well, thus lowering the barrier for entry into the local economy. In addition to the diversity index, Florida analyzed several variables of talent, local cultural and recreational amenities, climate, median house value, regional income and output of high-technology industries. He found that the diversity index is the strongest indicator of how successful a region is at attracting highly-skilled talent. Houston's Montrose area, recognized as one of the nation's gayest neighborhoods (Gates and Ost 2004), places Houston high on Florida's diversity index (Florida 2002). Florida's creative class concept has been used in analysis of voting on same-sex marriage and gay rights referenda on a state level (Chapman, Leib, and Webster 2007; Webster, Chapman, and Leib 2010).

Describing the Religious Landscape of Houston, Harris County

Categorizing and defining religious bodies presents challenges. Two methods of classification, the biological taxonomic system and the origins system, have been employed by researchers. The first method useful in grouping the myriad Protestant denominations follows the biological taxonomic system in which religious traditions are grouped by genus and individual denominations are species (Putnam and Campbell 2010). The three primary genera are Evangelical, Mainline and Black Protestant (Putnam

and Campbell 2010). **Evangelicals** a) emphasize a personal relationship with Christ gained through a conversion "born-again" experience leading to salvation through the redeeming crucifixion and resurrection of Christ; b) believe in the divine inspiration of the Bible and its ultimate religious authority; and c) encourage followers to share their faith with non-believers (Noll 2001). **Evangelical Protestants** uphold a traditional, conservative interpretation of scripture, and the term as used today "encompasses all theologically conservative Protestants (except Black Protestantism…)" (Putnam and Campbell 2010, p. 13). **Mainline Protestants** generally are more liberal in their interpretation of scripture and emphasize social justice as a Christian's priority rather than "personal piety" (Putnam and Campbell 2010, p. 14). Mainline Protestants, which historically represented dominant Christian tradition in America, value scholarly Biblical criticism and deemphasize supernaturalism (Putnam and Campbell 2010). Black Protestantism incorporates racial identity into its "theology, iconography, and worship" and blends "an evangelical focus on personal piety with a strong dose of Social Gospel" (Putnam and Campbell 2010, p. 15).

The second method of categorizing religious groups is Zelinsky's (1961) approach, which classifies religious groups according to their origins. He defined three distinct origins and the religious traditions emanating from them. The British Colonial Groups include Episcopal, Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregational, Baptist and Friends. The Immigrant European Groups include Roman Catholic, Jewish, Lutheran, Evangelical and Reformed, Reformed, Brethren, Mennonite and Moravian. The third group identifies religious bodies formed in America. This group includes Disciples of Christ, Unitarian

and Universalist, Latter-Day Saints, Adventists, Church of the Nazarene, Assemblies of God, Churches of God and Evangelical United Brethren.

A group that does not fall in either of the above classifications is one of the fastest growing groups in the country, the "Nones," also referred to as "unaffiliated" (Kosmin, et al. 2009; Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2008; Putnam and Campbell 2010). Kosmin describes "Nones" as people who do not identify with any religious group or organization. Although by definition atheists are included in this group, they comprise a very small proportion (7%) of respondents who self-identified as "Nones" in the 2008 American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS 2008). Deists (people who believe in a higher power, but not a personal God) and theists (people who believe in a personal God) comprise 24% and 27% respectively in ARIS 2008. Agnostics comprised 35% of the "Nones" in ARIS 2008 (Kosmin, et al. 2009). The Pew Foundation uses the term "Unaffiliated" (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2008) for this group. The Houston Area Survey categorizes these respondents by use of a computed variable described in Chapter 5 in which respondents who consider religion unimportant and believe the Bible is a book of myths and legends are termed "Secular."

This study employs data which follow the biological taxonomic method. Data showing numbers of churches and adherents categorized by denomination at the county level for 1980, 1990, 2000 and 2009 are archived and available from the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA) (Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies n.d.). The 1980 data were collected by Glenmary Research Center, a Catholic group, and include statistics for 111 Judeo-Christian church bodies; however most historically Black denominations are not included. The 1990 and 2000 data were

collected by the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies. The 1990 data include statistics for 132 religious groups; the 2000 data, for 149 religious groups. Again in 2000, the congregation and membership numbers are the unadjusted totals that do not include historically Black denominations. ARDA adjusted the total number of all adherents in the 2000 data to include an estimate of adherents in the Black denominations according to a formula presented by Finke and Scheitle (2005). However, the adjustment does not apply to individual denominations or theology groups within the general category of "Black denominations." The 2009 data were collected by the InfoGroup, organized by ARDA following the procedures described above, and tabulated and processed by Social Explorer, a web-based research tool designed to provide access to demographic information and historical census data. The InfoGroup does not include data on the unaffiliated (InfoGroup, Social Explorer 2011).
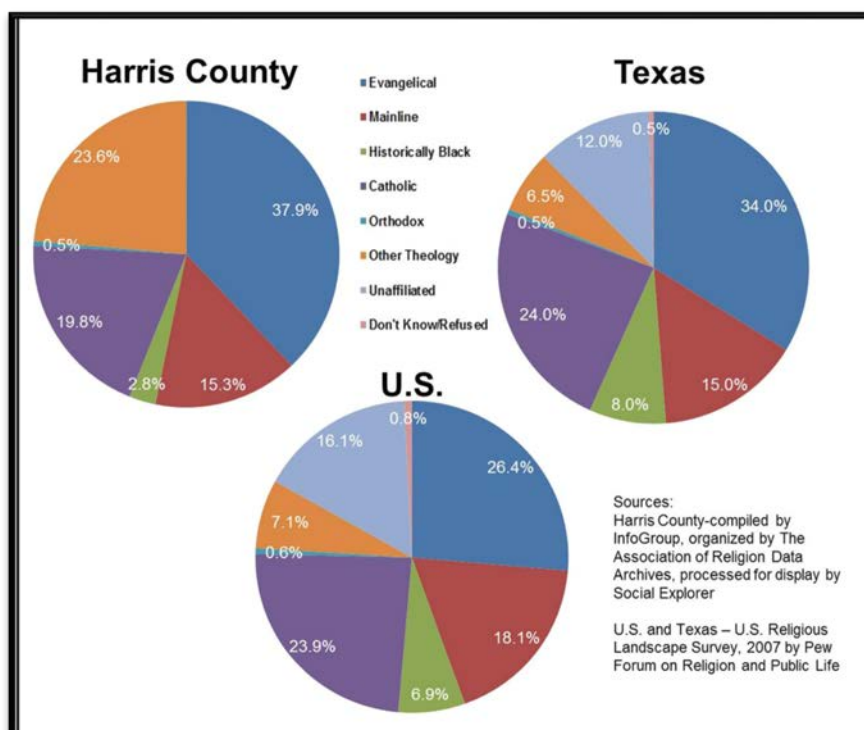
Figure 6: Major Religious Traditions in the U.S., Texas and Harris County

The U.S. Religious Landscape Survey (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2008) was used for comparison of the 2009 Harris County data to the state and national rates of adherence (Figure 6). Christianity is the dominant religion, with Houston and Harris County showing a slightly higher percentage of Evangelical Christians (38%) than the state (34%) and more than ten percentage points higher than the national rate (26%). Mainline Protestants, Historically Black Protestants, and Catholics bring the total Christian population in Harris County to 76% of the general population, compared to 81% in the state and 75% in the country (Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies 2009; InfoGroup, Social Explorer 2011; Pew Forum of Religion and Public Life 2008).

The ARDA data were used to track changes in Harris County between 1980 and 2000 in religious adherents to Evangelical Protestant, Mainline Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox, and Other Theology categories. These categories are defined following the classifications in *Religious Congregations and Membership in the United States, 2000* (Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies 2009). Evangelical Protestant includes Independent Charismatic and Independent Non-Charismatic congregations (InfoGroup, Social Explorer 2011). These Independent congregations were not included in the 1980 data. The rise and growth of independent congregations began in the 1980's, accelerated in the 1990's and continues into the twenty-first century (Kosmin and Lachman 1993; Putnam and Campbell 2010). Again following the classifications in *Religious Congregations and Membership in the United States, 2000* (Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies 2009), the "Other Theology" category includes Baha'is; Buddhists; Church of Christ, Scientist; Church of Jesus Christ of

Latter-Day Saints; Hindus; Jains; Jews; Muslims Estimate; Sikhs; Taoists; Unitarian Universalist Association; and Zoroastrians. This differs from the Houston Area Survey, described more fully in Chapter 4 (Data and Methodology), in which "Other" represents respondents' self-identification with a non-Christian, non-Jewish religion. The changes between 1980 and 2000 were calculated as changes in the rates of adherents in each category per 1000 population in Harris County. The unadjusted totals for the 2000 data as described above – that is, without adjusting for Black denominations – were used in the calculations. These changes (Figure 7) in Harris County follow the national trend of increases in the Catholic population (reflecting the increase in the Hispanic population), increases in the Evangelical Protestant population, numeric and percentage decreases in Mainline Protestant denominations, and a sharp growth in non-Christian, non-Jewish faiths (Kale 2004; Kosmin, et al. 2009; Putnam and Campbell 2010; Warf 2006; Warf and Winsberg 2008).
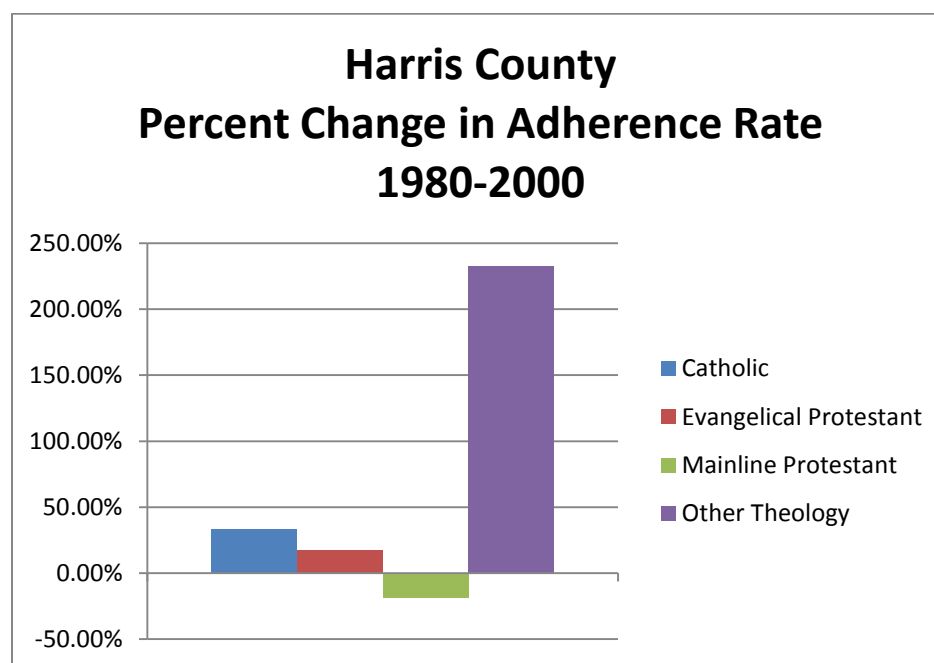
Figure 7: Harris County Percent Change in Adherence Rates 1980-2000

Houston Area Survey data were used to track trends in changing percentages of religious groups in the City of Houston (Figure 8) between 1982 when the survey began and 2010. An explanation of the Houston Area Survey and the data used in this research appears in Chapter 4. Notable in this temporal change is the increase in "Nones" from 5% in 1982 to approximately 11% in 2010, following the national trend in the increase in "Nones" (Kosmin, et al. 2009).
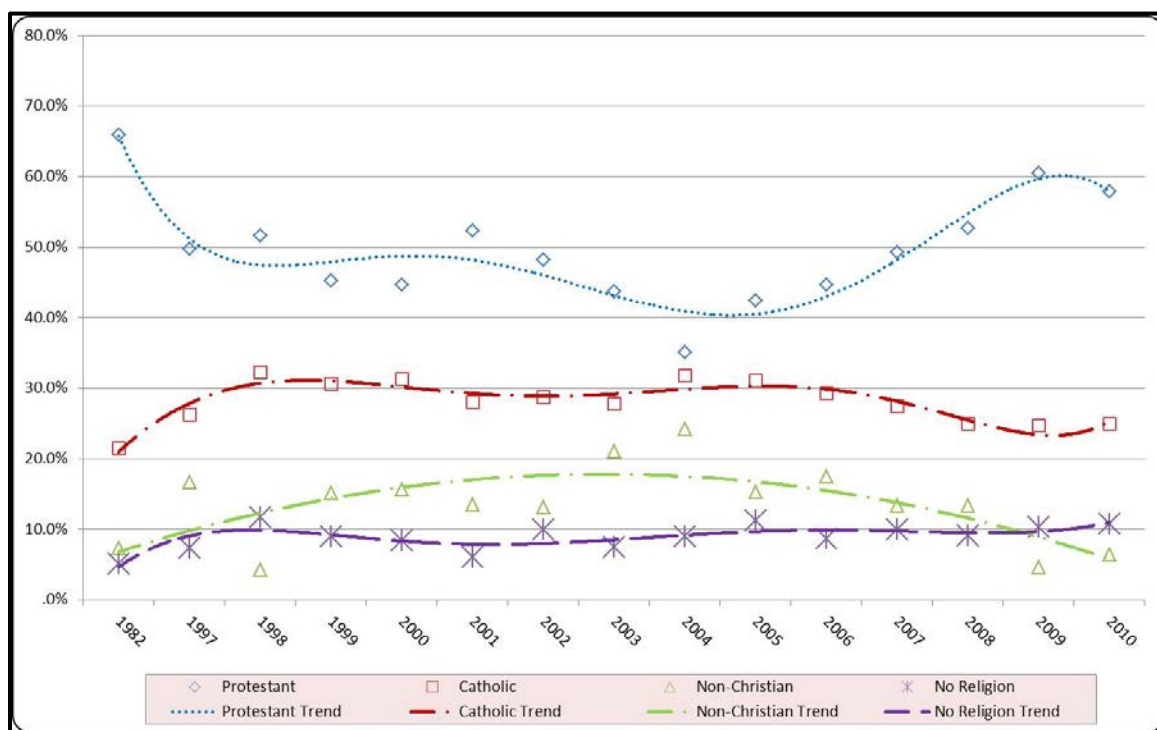
Figure 8: Temporal Changes in Houston's Religious Landscape

Houston's Religious Marketplace

In 1952, the Baptist Church dominated the religious landscape of the South (Figure 1). Houston ranked second only behind Atlanta in the concentration of Baptist bodies (Zelinsky 1961). By 2009 (Figure 9) (InfoGroup, Social Explorer 2011) very little had changed in most of the South; however, the concentration around Houston is less dense than in 1952. The "less advanced condition of the Southern economy…and the

general weakness of migratory movement into the region" (Zelinsky 1961, p. 151) contributed to the homogeneity of the region in earlier decades. Lindsay (2008) posits that the secularized, pluralist environment of the U.S. not only allows but nourishes the higher level of religious commitment within the American South.
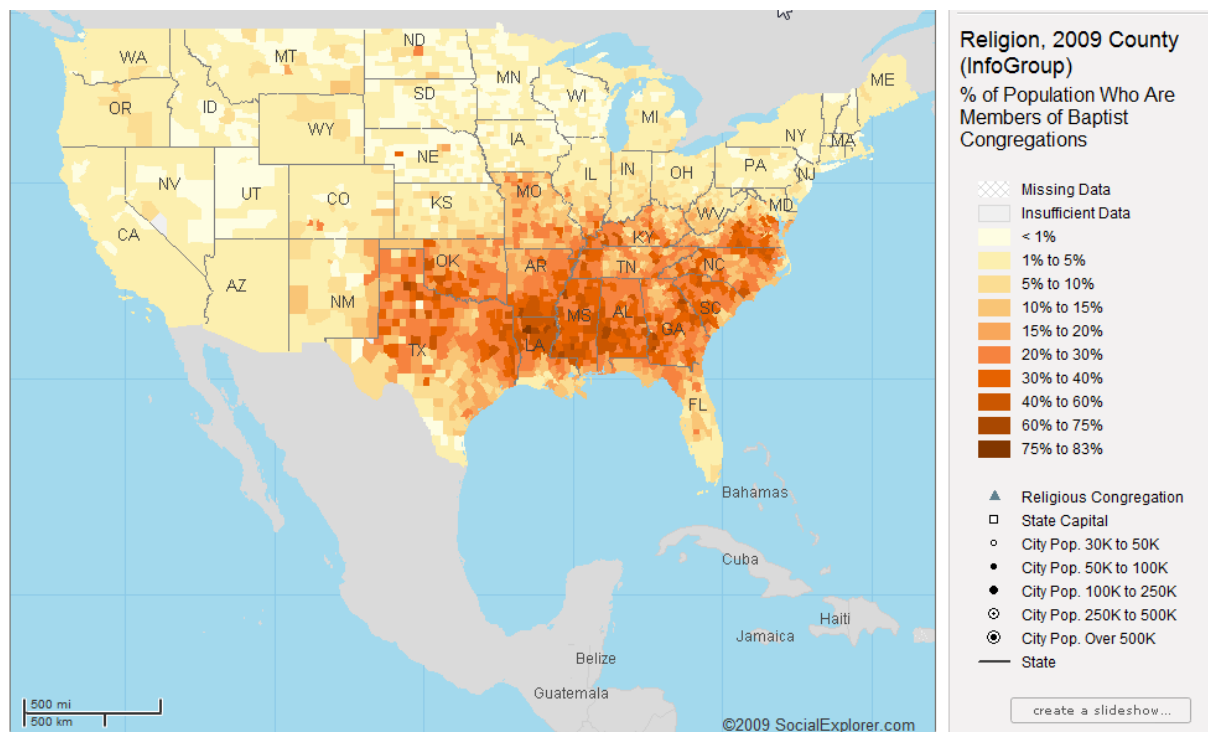
Figure 9: Distribution of Baptists, 2009

In 2000, the last year for which complete data are available (Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies n.d.), there were 1,587 Christian congregations in Harris County. Evangelical Protestant remains dominant with 953 congregations. Of these, 365 are members of the Southern Baptist Convention; the remainder is split between forty other Evangelical denominations and independent non-denominational churches. These non-denominational churches increased significantly in size and number during the 1990's, contributing to the American phenomenon of megachurches (Putnam and Campbell 2010). Mainline Protestant denominations with

339 congregations in Houston showed a decrease in adherents between 1980 and 2000, following a trend noted by many observers and the denominations themselves (Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies n.d.; Kosmin, et al. 2009; ECO: Evangelical Covenant Order of Presbyterians 2012; Lindsay 2008; Putnam and Campbell 2010; Warf 2006; Warf and Winsberg 2008). The Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston is the largest Catholic diocese in Texas and the twelfth largest in the U.S. with 106 parishes in Harris County in 2000. The Jewish community remains small but stable at approximately 45,000 (2.1% of the population) and has more than 35 congregations (Jewish Federation of Greater Houston 2002; Sheskin and Dashefsky 2011). There were 190 "Other Theology" congregations throughout the area in 2000. Islam, Hindu and Buddhist faiths all have a presence in the Houston area, but at very small percentages (InfoGroup, Social Explorer 2011). Muslims are 1% to 2% of the population in Harris County; Hindus and Buddhists, are less than 1%.

Houston's Megachurches

Evidence of the social capital gained through religious affiliation manifests itself in the phenomenon of the expansion of megachurches since 1990. Of the top ten largest churches (weekly attendance of 13,000 plus), six are in the South. Two of these six are in the City of Houston[7]. Lakewood Church is the largest Christian church in the country. Not far away, the main campus of Second Baptist Church, the largest Baptist congregation in the country, is located in the City of Houston; however, two of its five locations are in surrounding counties in Greater Houston.

Technology and media allow these megachurches to reach beyond the confines of their geographical locations and to strengthen their local, national and international reach

---

[7] Rankings of church sizes are from http://churchrelevance.com/100-largest-churches-in-america-for-2009

(Kale 2004; Kong 2001). Both churches use media in different ways to reach out to followers.

Lakewood Church

Lakewood Church broadcasts Pastor Joel Osteen's messages on 51 television stations at 73 different times in 45 cities throughout the U.S. (Osteen 2011).

> Since 1999, under the leadership of Pastor Joel Osteen, Lakewood has grown in a variety of ways. Lakewood's commitment to community outreach continues to increase, and its international media broadcast has expanded into over 20 million households in the United States (Lakewood Church 2011).

Expanding his influence even further, Osteen has announced an agreement to partner with Mark Burnett, producer of several popular reality television series. The Lakewood reality show will highlight church members going on mission trips to help needy communities (Hensel 2011).

Lakewood, as an independent, non-denominational church, experienced this growth without the backing of a national denominational organization. The church was founded by John Osteen, Joel's father, in 1959. The first location was an abandoned feed store in northeast Houston. In the 1970's, the church moved to larger facilities in the same area, expanding these facilities over the years. By 2005, Lakewood's growth allowed the church to convert the Compaq Center, former home of the NBA Houston Rockets, into the largest continuously used worship facility in the country with seating for 16,000 (Lakewood Church 2011). During a recent visit to the church, a Lakewood staff member who wished to remain anonymous confirmed weekly attendance of approximately 15,000 at its current location in Greenway Plaza, one of Houston's major business and commercial hubs outside the central business district.

Joel Osteen took over as pastor of Lakewood Church after his father's death in 1999. Prior to becoming pastor, he attended Oral Roberts University where he majored in Radio and Television. He returned to Houston before completing his college work to help his father start Lakewood's television ministry (Osteen 2011). Osteen's message of prosperity and positive attitude has been dubbed by some as "Christianity lite," but even skeptics and critics acknowledge the broad reach of Osteen's ecumenical, apolitical style (Blumenthal 2006). Reverend Burton Bagby-Grose, chaplain of the Houston GLBT Community Center, says,

> If we really care about people of God, which is everybody, all of humanity, then we need to look at the things that large groups do, the things that people are drawn to. And obviously I ask my clergy friends all the time who are kind of bad-mouthing Joel Osteen, you can imagine the conversations... 'Shallow theology. It would take him 15 minutes for him to tell you everything he knows about the Bible, blah, blah, blah.' Which is all true actually. Quite frankly. I mean the guy has no seminary training. When he gets on CNN and wants to tell the rest of the world what the scriptures say, you know, those of us who know Greek and Hebrew just shudder to hear things that he says and go, 'wait a minute. All you know is what you've read, what you've been told. You can't sit down and just look at this stuff' (Bagby-Grose 2012).

Acknowledging Osteen's impact on Houston's religious landscape, Bagby-Grose continues, "I say to people when they're poo-pooing him, bad-mouthing him, I understand all that. I get all that. But are 15,000 people showing up in person to listen to what you have to say on Sunday?"

Second Baptist Church

Unlike independent Lakewood Church, Second Baptist Church is a member of the Southern Baptist Convention. Each church in the Southern Baptist Convention is autonomous but cooperative with the national organization. Second Baptist's website describes it best:

> We believe church should be fun and exciting, yet without compromising the truth of God's Word, the Bible. We are a Christian, evangelical church—a church whose primary purpose is to share the good news of Jesus Christ. We are also a Baptist church...We believe in the local autonomy of the church. Each church has the right to manage its affairs with no central authority except that of Christ Himself. Freedom does not rule out cooperation. We are a cooperating church with the Southern Baptist Convention. This means that we cooperate with other Baptist churches in pooling and sharing money for the support of missionaries and ministries at home and around the world. This plan is called the Cooperative Program (Second Baptist Church 2011).

This author visited Second Baptist Church several times and found evidence of the "fun and exciting" approach to worship and Christian community. The Woodway campus not only consists of a large sanctuary with seating for several thousand, it houses a members-only fitness center, a bookstore, and a café/coffee shop open to the public. There is also a kindergarten through twelfth grade school offering a wide array of extracurricular activity in addition to the academic curriculum.

Second Baptist is on the leading edge of the multi-site church revolution (Surratt, Ligon, and Bird 2006). When the church ran out of space at its home site on Woodway Drive, the decision was made to add an additional location west of Houston along Interstate 10. Pastor Ed Young, Sr., who has been pastor at Second Baptist since 1978, shuttled between the two locations. Shortly after, a struggling Baptist congregation on the north side of Houston voted to merge with Second Baptist, and a pastor from Second Baptist was sent to the new location. Ed Young and Second Baptist have become a "brand" in Houston, and building on the branding appeal, Second Baptist has found new opportunities to open two more Houston locations. Young and his son, Ben, along with a team of pastors mentored by Young, share teaching duties at the five locations with a combination of onsite pastors and videocasts. As quoted by Surratt, Ligon and Bird (2006, p. 79), Young says, "To go multi-site, a church's leader must be able to reproduce

the passion, systems, and culture of the current site in the lives of others – others who in turn will lead at the new campuses."

Minister-on-Call Jonathan Marks confirmed during a recent visit that the combined membership of all five campuses exceeds 54,000. The original location on Woodway Drive attracts members from the entire Greater Houston Area; the other four locations serve members of their surrounding communities (Marks 2011).

Second Baptist serves its own community and beyond. Training for the 30,000 people of all faiths who volunteered to aid Hurricane Katrina refugees evacuated to Houston from New Orleans in 2005 occurred at Second Baptist Church (Ledbetter 2005). Ironically, three years later, the same building that housed the training was heavily damaged by Hurricane Ike. Repairs were made and services resumed in a 6,000-seat sanctuary with award-winning sound (WFX Worship Facilities 2011).

In addition to its videocasts, Second Baptist's worship services are broadcast on Houston television stations to local audiences. However, Second Baptist emphasizes its radio ministry called "Winning Walk" which broadcasts Ed Young's sermons on local radio stations in all but five states. The "Winning Walk" is available on satellite and Internet stations everywhere.

Windsor Village United Methodist Church

Windsor Village United Methodist Church (WVUMC), led by Reverend Kirbyjon Caldwell, is the largest United Methodist congregation in the country (Windsor Village United Methodist Church 2004). Rev. Caldwell gained national attention when he delivered the benediction at George W. Bush's presidential inaugurations in 2001 and 2005 and officiated at Jenna Bush's wedding. The former president and Rev. Caldwell

are close friends despite their political differences (Haynes 2011). Director of Ministries, Millicent Haynes, explained that membership is comprised of 16,000 households drawn from a ten- to twelve-mile radius in a predominantly Black neighborhood that has recently become more mixed Black and Hispanic (Figure 10); weekly attendance averages 6,500 (Haynes 2011).
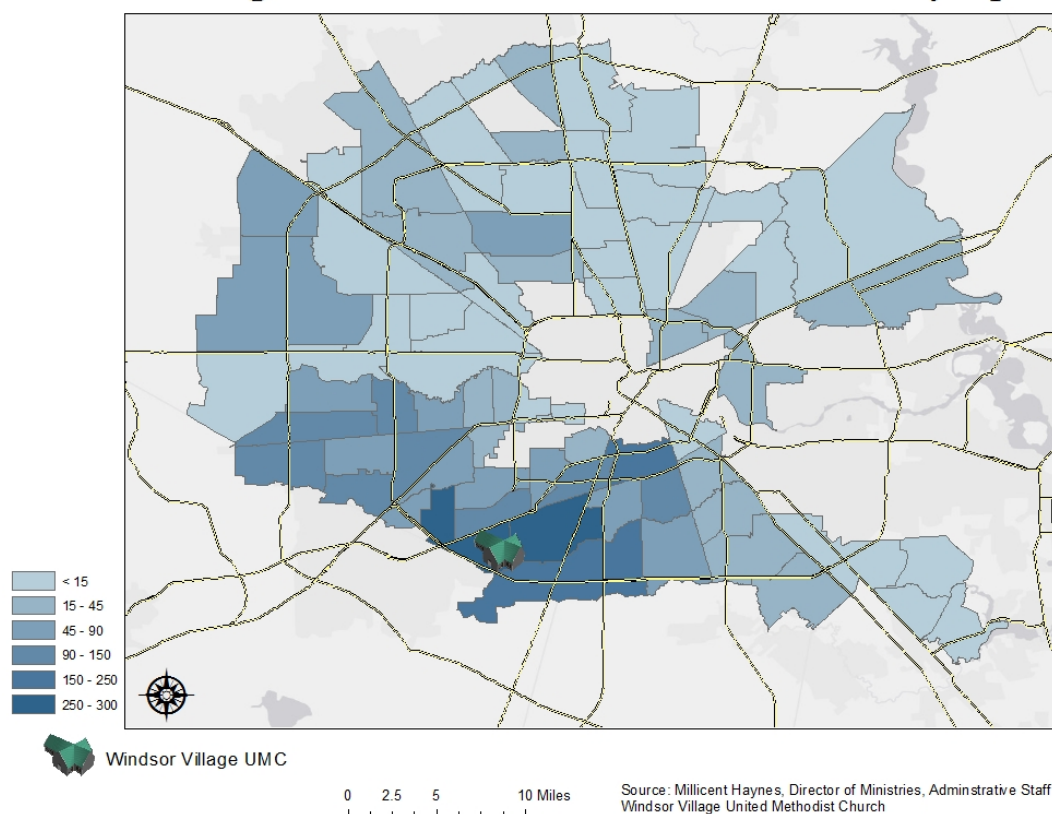
Figure 10: WVUMC Membership by Zip Code

Haynes said that the church offers a ministry of holistic salvation for people struggling with demonic strongholds, and through this approach the church provides methods to maintain and improve the lives of its members. If the church detects a need among its members then the staff addresses it (Haynes 2011). Through its "234-acre

vision" WVUMC has developed programs for the community and the church by establishing partnerships with public and private entities. Examples include a day care partnered with Neighborhood Centers that uses the church facilities to provide day care to area working parents; a partnership with Texas Children's Hospital Health Care to provide pediatric care in the neighborhood that previously had no pediatrician; a new YMCA located near the church that is the first one built in a predominantly Black community in Houston. The focus of Rev. Caldwell's entrepreneurial efforts has been "Christ Over Culture" so that members can rely on the church to be a safe haven and place of fellowship (Caldwell 2004).

Varying Attitudes toward Homosexuality among Houston Churches

Using data from the 2000 U.S. Census, Gates and Ost (2004) identified the Montrose neighborhood of Houston as one of the top ten "gayest" (p. 8) neighborhoods in the country. Gates and Ost rank the city 44 among 331 metropolitan areas nationwide in the concentration of gays and lesbians. To meet the spiritual needs of this segment of the population, Houston has seen a growth in gay-affirming and gay-welcoming churches (Figure 11) (Bagby-Grose 2012; Sundby 2011) in response to the desire of gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgenders to embrace their faith in a more tolerant environment (Rodriguez and Ouellette 2000; Van Geest 2008; Yip 2002).

Bagby-Grose sees a "sea change" in the attitude toward gays in Houston's Christian faith community. He cites as evidence the fourfold increase in open, affirming United Church of Christ congregations in the past five years.

> Open and affirming means that the congregation has gone through a very intentional process of conversation and dialogue over a period of time, and they have voted as a congregation to fully welcome and affirm gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender people into all levels of church life. That

means you can get married at that church as a same gender couple; they certainly profess that they would call a gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender pastor" (Bagby-Grose 2012).

As chaplain of the Houston GLBT Community Center, Bagby-Grose hosts a quarterly clergy gathering open to all Houston-area clergy members of Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu and Buddhists faiths, thus facilitating an ongoing dialogue. Admittedly most of the attendees are affirming clergy; however, all are welcome (Bagby-Grose 2012).
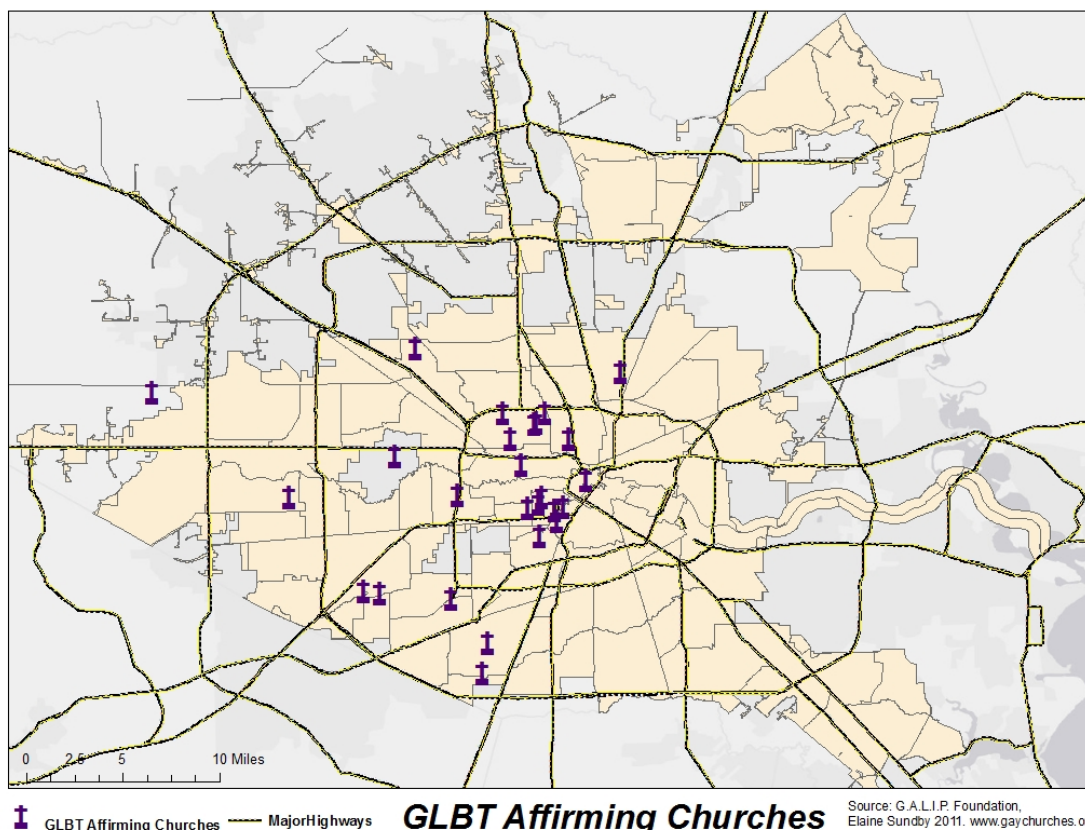
Figure 11: GLBT Affirming Churches in Houston

Despite the growing acceptance of gays and lesbians into the ranks of leadership and clergy positions in several mainline denominations, schisms are developing based on scriptural interpretation of homosexuality. The Southern Baptist Convention and the Catholic Church have issued official statements reiterating Biblical references to the

sinfulness of homosexuality and remain steadfast in their belief that homosexuality is outside God's best plan (Fryrear 2005; U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops 2006). At Second Baptist, "What is spoken from the pulpit is grounded in the Word and explains how the world relates to God. It's all about speaking the truth in love and showing that the mercy and grace of God is for everybody" (Marks 2011). The Catholic Church announced in January 2012 the creation of the Personal Ordinate of the Chair of St. Peter, based in Houston. The ordinate, the equivalent of a diocese that will operate nationally, creates a structure for clergy and members of the Anglican Community disaffected by the Episcopalian ordination of an openly gay bishop to become Catholic in groups or as parishes (D'Emilio 2012). The Episcopal Church is the Anglican body in the U.S. Lakewood's Osteen openly expressed his belief that the Bible clearly states that homosexuality is a sin, couching his remarks in the idea that homosexuality is only one type of sin, and no single type of sin separates a person from God any more than another (Piers Morgan Tonight 2011). The Methodists in Houston fall on both sides of the issue. One of the largest Methodist churches in Houston hosts a Parent and Friends of Lesbians and Gays chapter (Bagby-Grose 2012). WVUMC aligns on the opposite side. The church offers a ministry called "Metanoia" that "provides Christ-centered instructions for those seeking freedom from habitual sins including prostitution, homosexuality, lesbianism, and sex addiction" (Windsor Village United Methodist Church 2004). The ministry is offered to people who contact the church asking for help with these issues. The sessions are held in confidence off-campus in a confidential location with the guiding principle of "love the sinner, hate the sin" (Haynes 2011). The church offers a ministry of holistic

salvation for people struggling with demonic strongholds and through this approach, the church provides tools to maintain and improve the life of its members (Haynes 2011).

Recently the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. approved the ordination of gays after years of debate (Jenkins 2011). In an expression of opposition, the Fellowship of Presbyterians, a coalition of Presbyterian congregations around the country adhering to the belief in the Biblical admonition against homosexuality and opposed to the ordination of gays (Dudley 2006) convened in Orlando, Florida in January 2012 and voted to form a separate body of Presbyterians (ECO: Evangelical Covenant Order of Presbyterians 2012). Reverend David Peterson, pastor of Houston's Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church, is a member of the interim board of directors of the newly formed denomination (The Fellowship of Presbyterians 2012). As Peterson explains, he and other like-minded Presbyterian clergy decided to develop a plan in response to the Presbyterian Church U.S.A's change in policy. "Foundation number one of the plan: we're not mad anymore. We're tired of being mad. What good does that get us? We are of the mind that the culture is going the way it's going, and there's probably not much that can be done to stop it using the old tactics" (Peterson 2012). Instead, the group plans to continue in the traditional Christian orthodox lifestyle that is "faithful to scripture in a historical sense" and to be a source of healing and hope when "the world realizes that the way they followed really doesn't work" (Peterson 2012).

Conclusion

Houston is a vibrant, entrepreneurial city in which a highly competitive religious marketplace thrives. The megachurches attract thousands of members locally by offering encouraging messages delivered by charismatic leaders and entertaining programs that

appeal to younger audiences. These churches expand their influence nationally and internationally through the use of media and technology. As popular as the megachurches are, they do not appeal to everyone. With over 2,000 congregations from which to choose, religious consumers in Houston can shop for the faith home that best suits them. In Houston's laissez-faire environment, choosing to be religiously unaffiliated is a viable choice for many Houstonians. Increasingly, homosexuality simultaneously has become both the lightning rod for denominational devolution and the rallying cry for clerical tolerance.

Chapter 4 - Data and Methodology

Datasets

This study employs both quantitative data sets and qualitative "key informant" interviews. The primary quantitative datasets employed are the Houston Area Survey (HAS) and the City of Houston election results. HAS is conducted by Principal Investigator Professor Stephen L. Klineberg of the Department of Sociology at Rice University in Houston and is accessible on the website of The Association of Religion Data Archives (Klineberg 2010). These data are collected annually during February and March through random digit dialing telephone surveys to Houston-area households. At each household reached through random digit dialing, the respondent is randomly selected from all household members age 18 or older. HAS began in 1982, and from 1994-2010 (except for 1996) the surveys have oversampled ethnic communities (Klineberg 2010). There are 17,898 cases collected throughout the Greater Houston Area with a total of 770 variables designed to measure the

> perspectives on the local and national economies, on poverty programs, interethnic relationships, and the new immigration; beliefs about discrimination and affirmative action, about education, crime, health care, taxation, and community service; assessments of downtown development, mobility and transit, land-use controls, and environmental concerns; attitudes toward abortion, homosexuality, and other aspects of the 'social agenda.' They [surveys] record religious and political orientations, as well as a rich array of demographic and immigration characteristics, socioeconomic indicators, and family structures (Klineberg 2010).

Since 1990, the sample sizes have ranged between 650 and 700. Response rates (the ratio of completed interviews to all potentially eligible phone numbers) in the 1980's averaged 75%; in recent years, response rates have fallen to approximately 30%.

71

Cooperation rates (the ratio of completions to interviews plus refusals) have declined from 80% to approximately 45%. For the purposes of this research, data prior to 1997 were excluded from analysis, leaving 8,670 cases. From this number, cases from zip codes outside the city limits of Houston, post office box-only zip codes and non-residential zip codes were removed, leaving 8,439 cases for analyses.

Through 2010, a group of foundations, corporations, community organizations, and individuals sponsored the survey. In November 2010, Houston philanthropists Rich and Nancy Kinder donated $15 million to build endowment support for Rice University's Institute for Urban Research. The entity has been renamed the Kinder Institute for Urban Research at Rice University, and it is through this organization that the Houston Area Survey continues (Klineberg and Emerson 2011).

Results of the 2009 City of Houston general and run-off elections (Harris County Clerk's Office, Elections Division 2009) and the 2011 general election (Harris County Clerk's Office, Elections Division 2011) were retrieved from the Harris County Clerk's Office Election Division website http://www.harrisvotes.com.

For comparison purposes, data on religious affiliation on the national and state level were retrieved from the Pew Research Center (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2008) and on the county level from the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies (2009). Houston demographic data from the 2010 census at the census tract level were retrieved from the American FactFinder of the U.S. Census Bureau in Summary File 1, Quick Table P3. The City of Houston Planning and Development Department created ArcGIS shapefiles accessible through their website (GIS Technology Division 2009), and in response to a Freedom of Information Act request from this

researcher, the Harris County Tax Office provided shapefiles of voting precincts. These shapefiles were used in creating maps for spatial analysis.

Information gleaned from the data was augmented through five personal interviews with Mayor Annise Parker; Reverend Burton Bagby-Grose, chaplain of the Houston GLBT Community Center; Pastor Jonathan Marks, Minister-on-call at Second Baptist Church; Millicent Haynes, Director of Ministries, administrative staff at Windsor Village United Methodist Church; and Reverend David Peterson, senior pastor at Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church and interim director of the Fellowship of Presbyterians and the New Reformed Body.

Houston Area Survey (HAS) Structure

Respondents to HAS were asked their home zip codes providing spatial context to the data. Responses were collected throughout the Greater Houston Area, which includes Harris and the surrounding counties of Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Montgomery, and Waller. The City of Houston is primarily contained within Harris County (Figure 12).

Because the goal of this research is to analyze the religious landscape of Houston and the attitudes of Houstonians toward homosexuality and whether these variables impacted the election results of the 2009 and 2011 mayoral elections, analysis was limited to the 110 residential zip codes that contain Harris County voting precincts within Houston city limits. Since Harris County provided the highest number of survey respondents, this had little impact on the number of responses; however, it did concentrate the results geographically. For the purposes of this study, data from surveys in 1997 through 2010 were used. This time period was selected for four reasons:

a) HAS first included a question asking respondents' attitudes toward homosexuals in 1997;

b) Annise Parker was first elected to the City Council in 1997;

c) Houston adopted a policy of non-discrimination based on sexual identity in 1998 (Fleischmann and Hardman 2004);

d) Houston's city government was relatively unchanged throughout the 1980's with the same mayor for the entire decade (Whitmire 2006).

Houston Area Survey Study Area
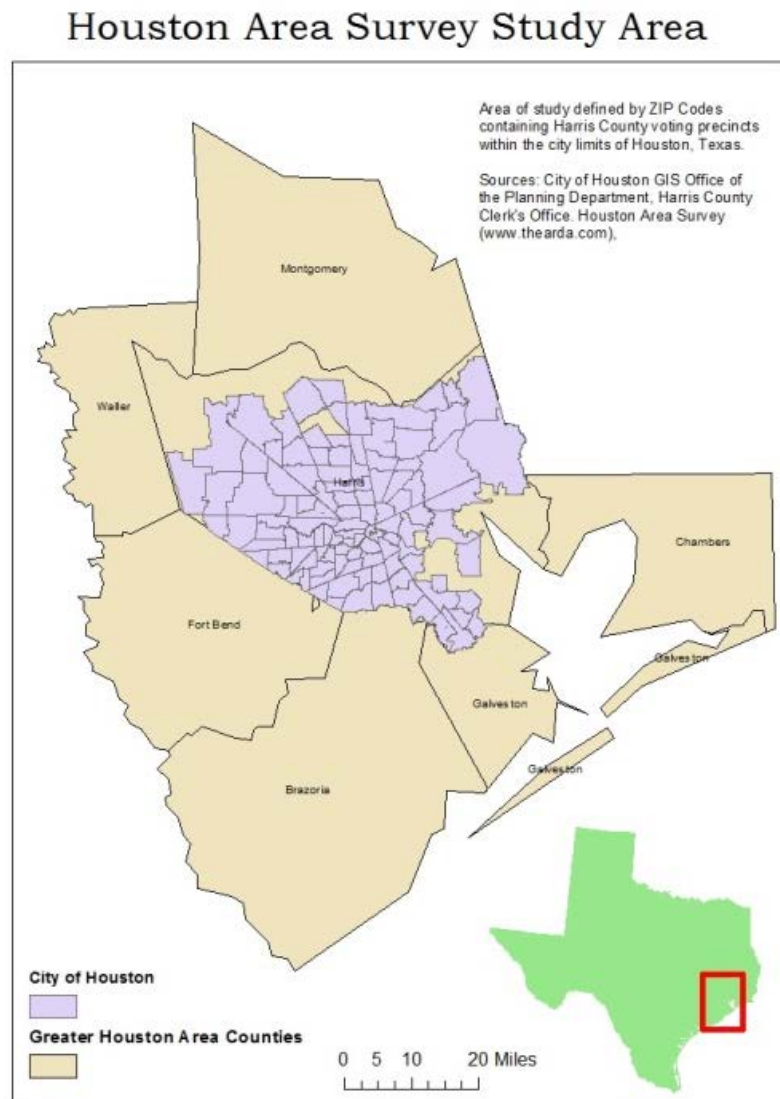
Figure 12: Study Area

The City of Houston 2009 Election Results

Houston holds elections for mayor and other elected city officials every other odd-numbered year, and no person may hold the same office for more than three consecutive terms (Houston, Texas Code of Ordinances). For this reason, Annise Parker's predecessor, Mayor Bill White (D), was ineligible to run for reelection in 2009, creating an opportunity for Parker, also ineligible to run again for City Controller, to run for mayor. The general election was held November 3, 2009 with seven candidates vying for the office of mayor. No single candidate won a majority of the vote, thus forcing a run-off election between Parker and the next highest vote-getter, Gene Locke (Harris County Clerk's Office, Elections Division 2009). Gene Locke, a Black, worked as a civil rights activist in several Houston communities, served as Chief of Staff to U.S. Congressman Mickey Leland, and was appointed Houston's City Attorney by former mayor Bob Lanier (Locke for Mayor: Experience & Achievements 2009). Both Parker and Locke ran as Democrats (Table 1). The run-off election was held December 12, 2009, with Parker winning 53.4% of the vote. Voter turnout was 16.5% of registered voters eligible to vote in city elections (Harris County Clerk's Office, Elections Division 2009).

The City of Houston 2011 Election Results

Parker was elected to her second term as mayor in the general election on November 8, 2011. She avoided a runoff by winning 50.8% of the vote against a slate of five other candidates (Table 1) in an election in which only 12.6% of the city's registered voters cast ballots (Harris County Clerk's Office, Elections Division 2011). Two candidates received an insignificant percentage of votes and are not included in this analysis. The remaining three candidates ran as Republicans. Jack O'Connor, an

entrepreneur in the oilfield services industry, received the second highest number of votes. Native Houstonian Fernando Herrera, a Deputy Chief in the Houston Fire Department, placed third. Both O'Connor and Herrera ran on platforms of fiscally conservative proposals to cut spending, reduce taxes and fees, and improve safety (Jack O'Connor Campaign 2011; About Fernando Herrera 2011). Dave Wilson, fourth in the election, ran solely on an anti-gay platform and plans to do so again in 2013 (Dave Wilson Campaign 2011). Parker and her campaign staff work to minimize the negative impact of her sexual orientation, and she has successfully parlayed the negative impressions voters have of lobbyists into campaign fodder against Locke and other opponents (Parker 2011).

Table 1

Biographical Information About Candidates for Houston Mayor				
2009 Run-off Election				
Name	**Age**	**Race/ethnicity**	**Religion**	**Party**
Annise Parker	53	Anglo	None	Democrat
Gene Locke	62	Black	Christian (Protestant)	Democrat
2011 General Election				
Annise Parker	55	Anglo	None	Democrat
Jack O'Connor	60's	Anglo	Christian (Catholic)	Republican
Fernando Herrera	50	Hispanic	Christian (Baptist)	Republican
Dave Wilson	60's	Anglo	Christian (not specified)	Republican
Sources: campaign websites, personal interview (Parker), Chronicle news reports				

Methodology for Statistical Analysis

This study focuses on the influence of religious beliefs on Houston voters in the mayoral elections of 2009 and 2011. The dependent variables are the percentage of the vote for each candidate by zip code. The independent variables include religious affiliation, race, political philosophy, party affiliation, attitudes toward GLBTs, and age.

The first step was to assign voting precincts to zip codes, as voting data are only available for voting precincts, and the HAS and U.S. Census data are only available by zip code. The Harris County Tax Office supplied shapefiles of Harris County voting precincts. Each precinct is assigned a unique number, and election results from the Harris County Clerk's Office are reported by precinct number (Harris County Clerk's Office, Elections Division 2009; Harris County Clerk's Office, Elections Division 2011). The results from the December 2009 run-off election were joined to the attribute table of the precinct shapefiles in ArcGIS 10.0. Only precincts within the city limits of Houston reported ballots cast. Using the "Feature-to-Point" tool in the ArcGIS Data Management toolbox, a centroid was calculated for each precinct. By performing a spatial join to a Houston zip codes shapefile, the precinct centroids were included within appropriate zip code boundaries, thus allowing aggregation of voting results within zip codes corresponding to selected HAS data. This shapefile containing 89 selected HAS variables and voting results for the 110 zip codes within Houston city limits is the basis for further geographic analysis. Prior to performing the geographic analysis in ArcGIS, the attribute table from the created shapefile was uploaded to SPSS to facilitate analysis. Using the percentage of votes for Parker in 2009 (Parker 2009 votes) and percentage of votes for Parker in 2011 (Parker 2011 votes) and the percentage of votes for Locke (Locke 2009 votes) as dependent variables, Pearson's Correlation Coefficients (Rs) were calculated for each independent variable to determine which variables showed the strongest correlations.

The variables showing strong correlations were then used in a stepwise multiple regression performed in SPSS with Parker votes as the dependent variable. To visualize

the stepwise regression findings and to determine the geographic distribution of Parker votes against the independent variables, ArcGIS was used to map clusters and to perform geographically weighted regressions. In the Spatial Statistics Tool for Mapping Clusters, the Anselin Local Moran's I was selected with Parker votes as the input field and the inverse distance squared as the conceptualization of the spatial relationship using Euclidean distance. Anselin's method measures local indicators of spatial autocorrelation for each areal unit within a larger study area as a way to highlight clusters of localized areas where values of variables are significantly greater or less than average (Burt, Barber, and Rigby 2009). A positive value for I indicates that a feature is surrounded by features with similar values and is part of a cluster. A negative value for I indicates that a feature is surrounded by features with dissimilar values and is considered an outlier. The same method was used to map clusters of Locke votes. The Anselin Local Moran's I tool also was useful in mapping clusters of significant independent variables and voter turnout in the 2009 and 2011 elections.

The geographically weighted regressions map the goodness of fit of the stepwise regression models previously described. These regressions illustrate the spatial variability of the independent variables explaining votes for Parker by mapping standardized residuals and local R^2 values at the zip code level. By mapping the Local R^2, one can see where the geographically weighted regression best fits the observed values. Geographically weighted regressions were also used to analyze voter turnout as explained by the significantly correlated independent variables and also by religious affiliation. Given the low voter turnout in both elections (16.5% in 2009 and 12.6% in 2011) the spatial distribution of voter turnout highlights significant patterns in voter characteristics.

A more thorough examination of the findings from the stepwise regressions, the cluster mapping, and geographically weighted regressions follows in the next chapter.

Chapter 5 - Results

As discussed in Chapter 3, although a high level of religious affiliation remains, Houston's religious landscape has changed over the past three decades. Evangelical Protestants remain the plurality among Christians while affiliation to mainline Protestant denominations declined. The percentages of Catholics and Jews remained relatively stable. The religious segments showing significant growth are the percentage of adherents to non-Christian, non-Jewish faiths and the percentage of religiously unaffiliated ("Nones"). Perhaps the most noteworthy and controversial change within the Christian community is the increased acceptance of GLBTs at all levels of participation in church life. The religiously unaffiliated comprise a small segment of the population but appear to influence voter behavior disproportionately. The results explained in detail in this chapter support the hypothesis that the high level of religious affiliation and the sizable Evangelical presence in Houston are not reliable predictors of voter behavior in mayoral elections.

This thesis uses quantitative and qualitative analysis. An explanation of the quantitative analysis of Houston Area Survey (HAS) data and 2009 and 2011 election results follows. Simple Pearson correlations were used to select variables to employ in stepwise multiple regressions for each candidate in each election. The models explaining Parker 2009 votes were then used to perform geographically weighted regressions. The results of the geographically weighted regressions were mapped, illustrating the spatial variations in voting patterns in both elections.

The 2009 voter turnout by religious affiliation was mapped in geographically weighted regressions, showing the higher level of voting among the religiously unaffiliated.

The quantitative analysis was augmented with qualitative analysis of personal one-on-one interviews completed by the author with Mayor Parker and four religious leaders in Houston. The chapter closes with summaries of these interviews.

Quantitative Analysis of the Houston Area Survey

2009 Election

Figure 13 displays the Parker 2009 votes by zip code. It is the spatial distribution on this map that the author wishes to explain.
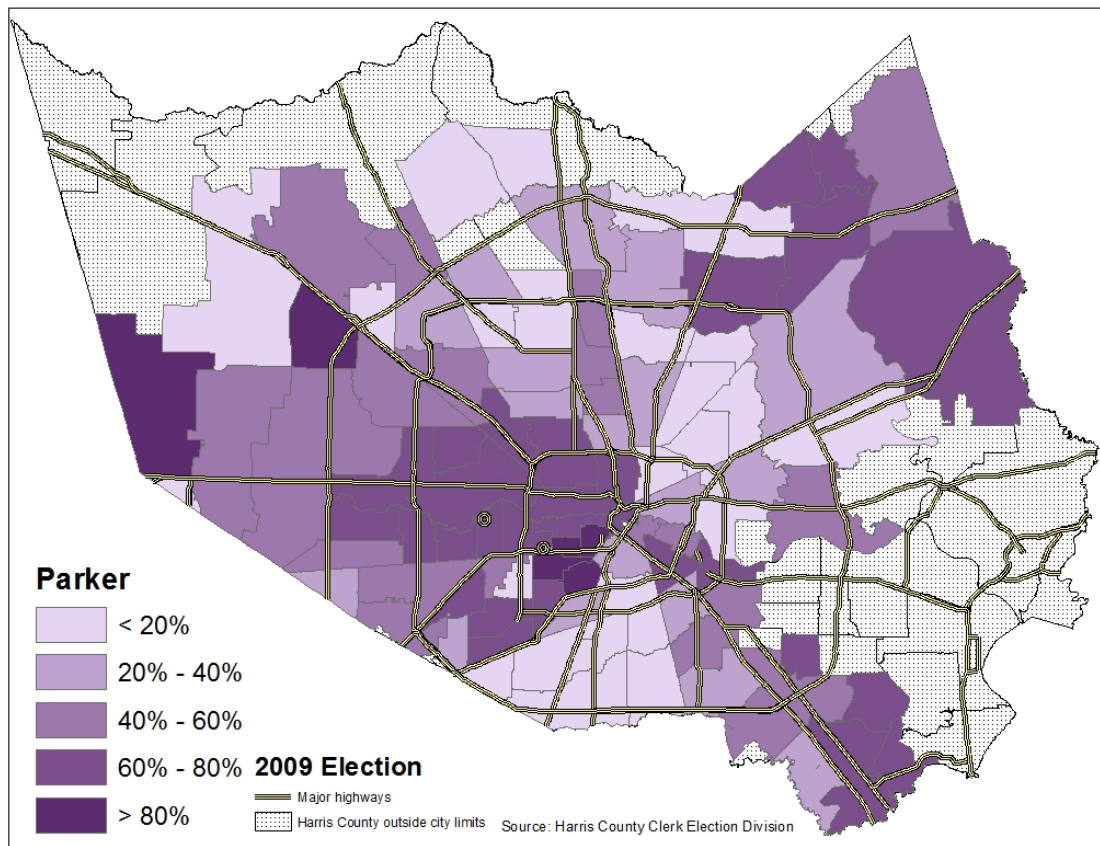
Figure 13: Percentage of Parker 2009 Votes by Zip Code

The 8,439 cases selected from the Houston Area Survey (HAS) and the election results were aggregated into 110 zip codes within the city limits of Houston following the procedure described in the previous chapter. Harris County reports election results by precinct. Spatial aggregation of the precinct results into zip code areas allowed analysis of votes at a geographic scale comparable to the HAS data. Appendix A shows the exact wording of the HAS questions and the response options for each question used in this study. The response options then became the independent variables that were candidates for inclusion in the stepwise multiple regressions used in analysis.

One-tailed tests at the .01 and .05 significance levels with a sample size of 110, showed the variables in Tables 2 and 3 to have significant correlations with votes for Parker in the 2009 election. The variables showing strong correlations in Tables 2 and 3 were then used in a stepwise multiple regression performed in SPSS with the percentage who voted for Parker (Parker 2009 votes) as the dependent variable.

Results of the stepwise multiple regression indicate that the model in which the independent variables "Religion is not very important" (Question 27 in Appendix A) and "Blacks" (Question 32) best explain geographic variations in the dependent variable (Model 1). The first variable is very strongly positively correlated (R= 0.626) with Parker 2009 votes; the second very strongly negatively correlated (R= -0.590) with Parker 2009 votes. The adjusted R^2 for Model 1 is 47.7% with an F-value of 50.7.

Because Black voters strongly supported Locke, who is Black, a second stepwise multiple regression excluding the "Black" variable resulted in Model 2 in which independent variables "Religion is not very important" (Question 27), "The Bible is the

inspired word of God written by humans" (Question 2), "Protestant" (Question 26), and "Gays are discriminated against very often" (Question 8) explained Parker 2009 votes. The adjusted R^2 for Model 2 is 47.8% with an F-value of 26.0. Of the three models, Model 2 is the only one that included a variable related to attitudes toward gays.

Table 2: Positive Pearson's Correlations to Parker 2009 Votes

	Pearson's Correlations to Annise Parker Votes in 2009 Run-off Election		
Q#*	Strongest Positive Correlations	r	Sig
27	Religion is not very important	0.626	0.000
20	Secularist	0.619	0.000
26	No Religion	0.540	0.000
32	Anglo	0.498	0.000
2	Bible is inspired word of God; written by men, contains human errors	0.464	0.000
2	Bible is ancient book of history, legends; God had nothing to do with it	0.430	0.000
27	Religion is somewhat important	0.422	0.000
35	Post-graduate degree	0.420	0.000
35	Bachelor's degree	0.396	0.000
31	True party is Republican	0.391	0.000
3	Had not attended a religious service in past 30 days	0.387	0.000
7	Homosexuality is an inborn trait	0.373	0.000
21	Political preference is Republican	0.364	0.000
6	Homosexuals should be legally permitted to adopt children	0.361	0.000
16	Homosexuality is morally acceptable	0.352	0.000
21	Political preference is Independent or Other	0.334	0.000
12	Homosexuality is something people cannot change	0.325	0.000
14	Marriages between homosexuals should be given equal legal status	0.296	0.001
18	Leans toward the Republican Party	0.289	0.001
9	Has close personal friend who is gay or lesbian	0.273	0.002
15	For allowing homosexuals to teach in public schools	0.264	0.003
8	Gays and lesbians are rarely discriminated against in Houston	0.219	0.011
28	Rate gays and lesbians somewhat favorable	0.215	0.012
13	For guaranteeing civil rights for homosexual men and women	0.214	0.013
23	Moderate in politics	0.210	0.014
26	Jewish	0.194	0.021
22	Thinks of self as more liberal	0.194	0.021
17	Immigration mostly strengthens American culture	0.182	0.028
22	Thinks of self as more conservative	0.175	0.034
*See Appendix A for wording of questions.			

Table 3: Negative Pearson's Correlations to Parker 2009 Votes

Q#*	Pearson's Correlations to Annise Parker Votes in 2009 Run-off Election		
	Strongest Negative Correlations	**r**	**Sig**
20	Fundamentalist	-0.606	0.000
27	Religion is very important	-0.606	0.000
32	Blacks	-0.596	0.000
2	The Bible is the actual word of God; should be taken literally	-0.591	0.000
21	Political preference is Democrat	-0.474	0.000
35	High School diploma	-0.435	0.000
31	True party is Democrat	-0.405	0.000
7	Homosexuality is a personal choice	-0.399	0.000
3	Had attended a religious service in the past 30 days	-0.392	0.000
26	Religious preference is Protestant	-0.359	0.000
16	Homosexuality is morally wrong, or "it depends"	-0.352	0.000
8	GLBTs are discriminated against very often in Houston	-0.334	0.000
12	Homosexuality is something people choose	-0.329	0.000
6	GLBTs should not be legally permitted to adopt children	-0.310	0.000
35	Some high school education	-0.290	0.001
14	Same-sex marriages should not be given equal legal status	-0.271	0.002
18	Leans toward neither Republican nor Democrat	-0.265	0.003
17	Immigration mostly threatens American culture	-0.259	0.003
9	Has no close personal friend who is gay or lesbian	-0.250	0.004
15	Against allowing homosexuals to teach in public schools	-0.242	0.005
23	Conservative in politics	-0.202	0.000
35	Some College	-0.198	0.019
22	Thinks of self as somewhat conservative	-0.164	0.043
13	Against guaranteeing civil rights for homosexuals	-0.162	0.046
*See Appendix A for wording of questions.			

Performing a third stepwise multiple regression excluding both variables in Model 1 results in Model 3 in which independent variables "Secularist" (Question 20), "Protestant" (Question 26), "Anglos" (Question 32), and "No religious affiliation" (Question 26) explained Parker 2009 votes. The Model 3 adjusted R^2 is 45.5% and the value for F is 23.8. These findings appear to validate Parker's assertion in my interview with her when asked what role religion played in her election that "religion had nothing

to do with it" (Parker 2011). It is recognized that the ecological fallacy is in play in this study. For example, a correlation is found between "Black" and votes for Locke at the zip code level. This does not necessarily prove that Blacks were more likely to vote for Locke. That is, the correlations at the zip code level may not transfer to the voting behavior of individuals, although in this case, it would seem to be highly likely.

Table 4: Results of Stepwise Multiple Regressions, Parker 2009 Votes

EXPLANATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL VARIATIONS IN THE PERCENTAGE OF PARKER 2009 VOTES RESULTS OF STEPWISE MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS		
Variables Entering the Equation	**Adjusted r^2**	**F (Significance)**
Model 1		
Religion is not very important	0.386	69.5 (.000)
Black	0.477	50.7 (.000)
Standardized regression equation (regression coefficients significant at alpha = .01:		
Parker 2009 Votes = .429(Religion is not very important) - .365(Black)		
Model 2 (Excludes Black)		
Religion is not very important	0.386	69.5 (.000)
The Bible is the inspired word of God written by humans	0.444	44.6 (.000)
Protestant	0.463	32.3 (.000)
Gays are discriminated against very often	0.478	26.0 (.000)
Standardized regression equation (regression coefficients significant at alpha = .01:		
Parker 2009 Votes = .441(Religion is not very important) + .207(The Bible is the inspired word of God written by humans - .202(Protestant) - .159(Gays are discriminated against very often)		
Model 3 (Excludes Black and Religion is Not Very Important)		
Secularist	0.377	67.0 (.000)
Protestant	0.409	38.6 (.000)
Anglos	0.437	29.2 (.000)
No religious affiliation	0.455	23.8 (.000)
Standardized regression equation (regression coefficients significant at alpha = .01:		
Parker 2009 Votes = .248(Secularist) - .238(Protestant) + .260(Anglos) + .199(No religious affiliation)		

Geographically weighted regressions for the three models highlight the spatial variation in fit of each model by mapping the local R^2 values. The geographically weighted regression of Model 1 produces an overall adjusted R^2 of 58.6% with local R^2 values ranging from less than 20% to over 75% (Figure 14). When comparing Figure 14 to the distribution of the Black population shown in Figure 4, the goodness of fit of Model 1 appears strongest in areas with higher percentages of Black population. Model 2 produces an overall adjusted R^2 of 48.7% with local R^2 values ranging from 34% to 70% (Figure 15). Model 3 produces an adjusted R^2 of 51.9% with local R^2 values ranging from 15% to 80% (Figure 16). Although all three models show a strong fit across the study area for the independent variables explaining Annise Parker's votes, the geographically weighted regression confirms Model 1 as the best fit.
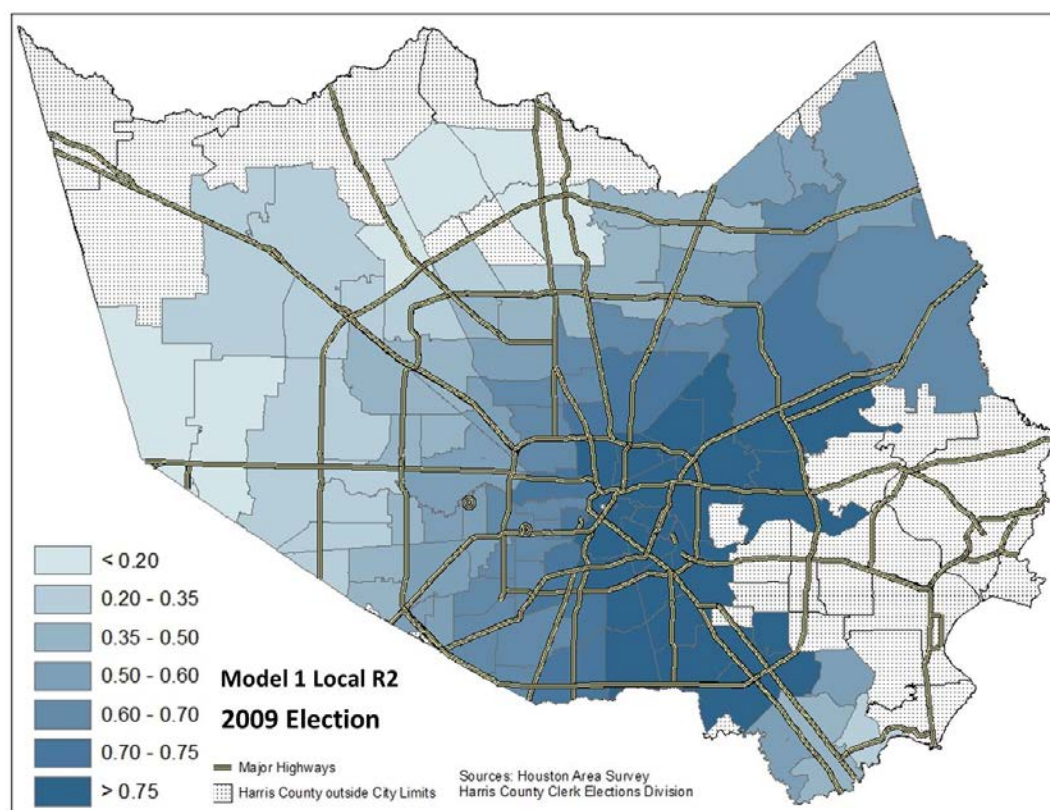
Figure 14: Geographically Weighted Regression of Model 1, Local R-squared
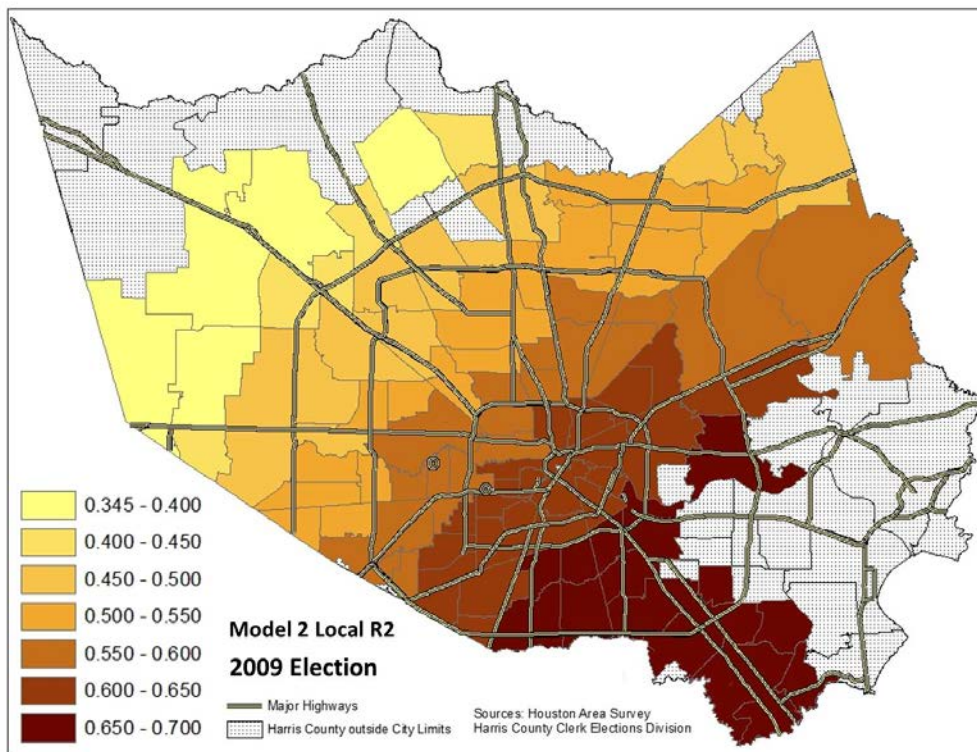
Figure 15: Geographically Weighted Regression of Model 2, Local R-squared
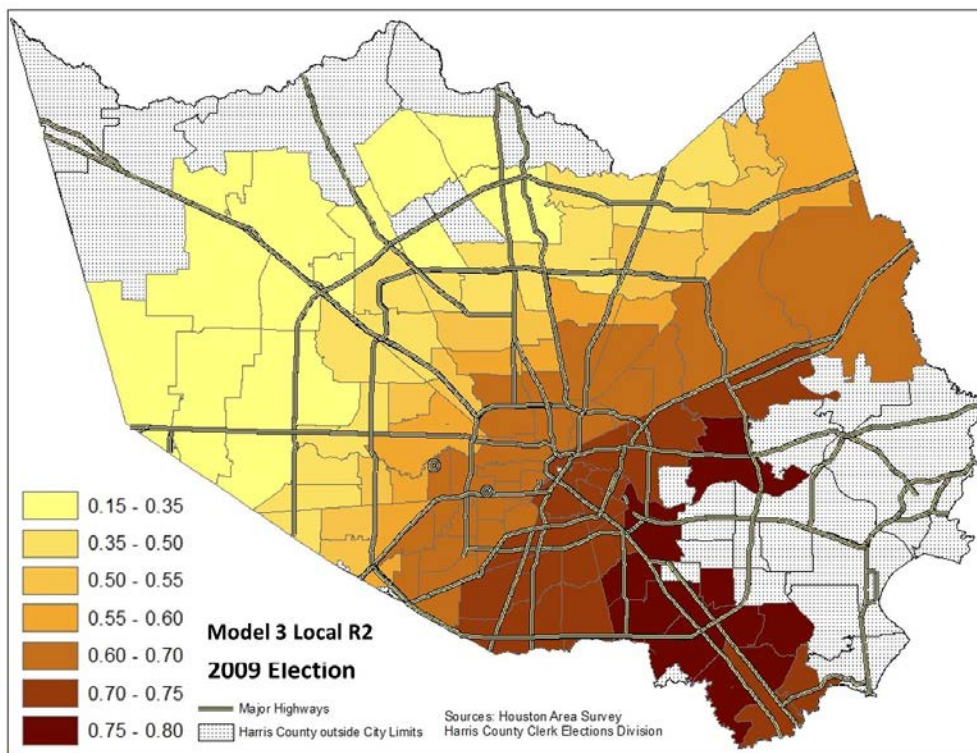
Figure 16: Geographically Weighted Regression of Model 3, Local R-squared

2011 Election

The same procedures used for the 2009 election were used to analyze the results of the 2011 general election in which Parker was reelected to a second term as mayor after winning 50.8% of the vote in a six candidate field. Analyzing votes received by a larger field of candidates with different backgrounds and political platforms resulted in a different set of survey variables displaying strong correlations to the percentage who voted for Parker by zip code (Parker 2011 votes). These correlations are shown in Tables 5 and 6.

The stepwise multiple regression performed with Parker 2011 votes as the dependent variable and the significantly correlated variables listed in Tables 5 and 6 as independent variables produced a model in which questions pertaining to gays played a more important role in explaining Parker 2011 votes than Parker 2009 votes. Independent variables in this model are "Against civil rights laws for gays" (Question 13 in Appendix A), "Has a close personal friend who is gay" (Question 11), "Somewhat conservative in politics" (Question 22), "Being gay is something a person cannot change" (Question 12), and "the Bible is a book of legends and myths" (Question 2). The adjusted R^2 is 36.5% and the value of F is 13.515. Parker 2011 votes are negatively correlated with "Against civil rights for gays" (R= -0.455) and "Somewhat conservative in politics" (R= -0.358) and positively correlated with "Has a close personal friend who is gay" (R= 0.297) and "the Bible is a book of legends and myths" (R= 0.170). The geographically weighted regression for this model produces a higher adjusted R^2 of 52.3%; however, other indicators in the procedure suggest the model may not explain Parker 2011 votes as strongly as the models explaining her 2009 votes. The higher effective number of 25.64

and higher corrected Akaike Information Criterion (AICc) bandwidth calculated as -107.17, may expose bias in the coefficient estimates. This model produces local R^2 values ranging from 24% to 60%.

Table 5: Positive Pearson's Correlations to Parker 2011 Votes

	Pearson's Correlations to Annise Parker Votes in 2011 General Election		
Q#*	Strongest Positive Correlations	r	Sig
35	Completed some or all post-graduate college education	0.307	0.001
26	No religious affiliation	0.305	0.001
11	Has a close personal friend who is gay	0.297	0.001
13	For civil rights for gays	0.280	0.002
16	Homosexuality is morally acceptable	0.275	0.002
12	Being gay is something a person cannot change	0.265	0.003
23	Liberal in politics	0.265	0.003
22	Somewhat liberal in politics	0.265	0.003
14	Gays should be allowed to marry	0.237	0.006
6	For allowing gays to adopt children	0.232	0.007
15	Gays should be allowed to teach in public schools	0.216	0.012
27	Religion is not very important	0.211	0.013
22	More liberal than conservative in politics	0.209	0.014
26	Jewish	0.202	0.017
2	Believe the Bible is a book of myths and legends	0.170	0.038

Jack O'Connor (R) received the second highest number of votes and, not surprisingly, O'Connor votes are positively correlated with variables indicating the moderate to conservative political leaning of Republicans. A stepwise multiple regression with O'Connor votes as the dependent variable produces a model in which "Computed variable-True Republican," [8] "Completed bachelor's degree," "More liberal than conservative in politics," and "Believe the Bible is the inspired word of God written by humans and contains errors" explain his votes with an adjusted R^2 of 27.5% and an F-value of 11.350.

Fernando Herrera (R) finished third in the election. His votes are strongly correlated with the Hispanic population. The stepwise multiple regression with Herrera

---

[8] Refer to Appendix A Question Bank Question Number 31 for explanation of the computed variable.

votes as the dependent variable produced a model in which "Hispanics" and "Computed variable-Unsure of true party" [9] explain his votes with an adjusted R^2 of 35.9% and an F-value of 31.578. Herrera's votes highlight a racial/ethnic component in voting similar to Locke's in 2009; however, as will be discussed more fully below, the number of Hispanic votes is not indicative of the Hispanic population.

Table 6: Negative Pearson's Correlations to Parker 2011 Votes

	Pearson's Correlations to Annise Parker Votes in 2011 General Election		
Q#*	Strongest Negative Correlations	R	Sig
13	Against civil rights for gays	-0.455	0.000
23	Conservative in politics	-0.376	0.000
12	Being gay is a choice	-0.359	0.000
22	Somewhat conservative in politics	-0.358	0.000
11	Does not have a personal friend who is gay	-0.357	0.000
14	Gays should not be allowed to marry	-0.343	0.000
16	Homosexuality is morally wrong or "it depends"	-0.334	0.000
15	Gays should not be allowed to teach in public schools	-0.305	0.001
6	Against allowing gays to adopt children	-0.302	0.001
35	Completed high school	-0.254	0.004
22	Very conservative in politics	-0.244	0.005
12	Being gay is a personal choice	-0.232	0.007
17	Immigration threatens the city	-0.226	0.009
5	Diversity is a problem for the city	-0.212	0.013
27	Religion is very important	-0.209	0.014
2	Believe the Bible is the actual word of God	-0.207	0.015
26	Catholic	-0.171	0.037
3	Attended a religious service in the past 30 days	-0.170	0.038
20	Fundamentalist	-0.166	0.041
21	Republican	-0.158	0.049

The candidate who ran solely on an anti-gay platform, Dave Wilson (R), finished fourth. As expected, Wilson votes are correlated with variables indicating anti-gay and anti-immigrant attitudes. The stepwise multiple regression with Wilson's votes as the dependent variable produced a model with "Gays should not be allowed to marry" and "Unsure or refused to answer whether immigration threatens or strengthens the city"

---

[9] Refer to Appendix A Question Bank Question Number 31 for explanation of the computed variable.

explaining his votes. The adjusted R2 is 13.8% with F-value of 9.739, thus suggesting a

weak model for explaining Wilson's votes.

Table 7: Results of Stepwise Multiple Regressions, 2011 Election

EXPLANATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL VARIATIONS IN THE PERCENTAGE OF 2011 VOTES RESULTS OF STEPWISE MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS		
Variables Entering the Equation	**Adjusted r^2**	**F (Significance)**
Parker Votes		
Against civil rights laws for gays	0.199	28.1 (.000)
Has a close personal friend who is gay	0.239	20.1 (.000)
Somewhat conservative in politics	0.321	18.1 (.000)
Being gay is something a person cannot change	0.344	15.3 (.000)
The Bible is a book of legends and myths	0.365	13.5 (.000)
Standardized regression equation (regression coefficients significant at alpha = .01:		
Parker Votes = -.297(Against civil rights laws for gays) + .328(Has a close personal friend who is gay) - .366(Somewhat conservative in politics) - .205(Believe the Bible is a book of legends and myths)		
O'Connor Votes		
Computed variable - True Republican	0.189	26.3 (.000)
Completed bachelor's degree	0.218	16.2 (.000)
More liberal than conservative in politics	0.251	13.2 (.000)
The Bible is the inspired word of God written by humans	0.275	11.4 (.000)
Standardized regression equation (regression coefficients significant at alpha = .01:		
O'Connor Votes = .370(Computed variable-True Republican) + .360(Completed bachelor's degree) - .206(More liberal than conservative in politics) - .231(The Bible is the inspired word of God written by humans)		
Herrera Votes		
Hispanics	0.308	49.4 (.000)
Computed variable - unsure of true party	0.359	31.6 (.000)
Standardized regression equation (regression coefficients significant at alpha = .01:		
Herrera Votes = .423(Hispanics) + .276(Computed variable-unsure of true party)		
Wilson Votes		
Gays should not be allowed to marry	0.089	11.7 (.000)
Unsure or refused to answer - immigration threatens or strengthens the city	0.138	9.7 (.000)
Standardized regression equation (regression coefficients significant at alpha = .01:		
Wilson Votes = .355(Gays should not be allowed to marry) - .241(Unsure or refused to answer - immigration threatens or strengthens the city)		

Analysis of Voter Turnout

Both the 2009 and 2011 mayoral elections in Houston had very small voter turnouts: 16.5% in 2009 and 12.6% in 2011. Thus, a very small percentage of all registered voters determined the outcome of both elections. Parker's two immediate predecessors, Bill White (2004-2010) and Lee Brown (1998-2004) were elected to three consecutive terms each. Voter turnout in elections to their first terms exceeded 30%. Brown was reelected with over 20% voter turnout in 1999 and in 2001. White was elected to his second term in November 2005. Voter turnout was lower at slightly less than 20% in this election held just two months after Houston received the influx of Hurricane Katrina refugees from New Orleans in August and endured its own evacuation from Hurricane Rita a few weeks later. White's election to his third term in 2007 saw voter turnout of 14% in which he won 90% of the vote. By studying the patterns of voter turnout and the distribution of precincts won by each candidate in 2009 and 2011, one can see areas of clustering, thus indicating that votes are not evenly distributed across the city. By further analyzing voter turnout compared to selected voter characteristics, in this case religion, one can gain a better understanding of the politically active segment of Houston's electorate. Figure 17 demonstrates the variation in percentage of voter turnout by zip code in 2009. It also highlights the geographic divide between precincts Parker won and precincts Locke won.
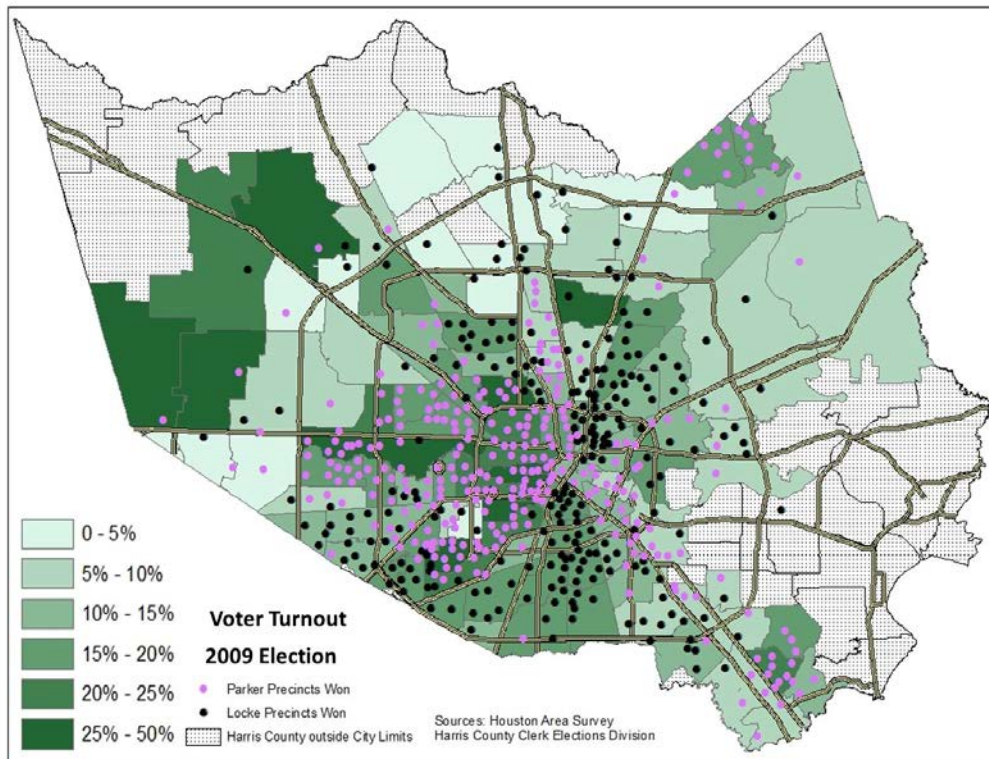
Figure 17: 2009 Percentage of Voter Turnout by Zip Code; Precincts Won by Parker and Locke
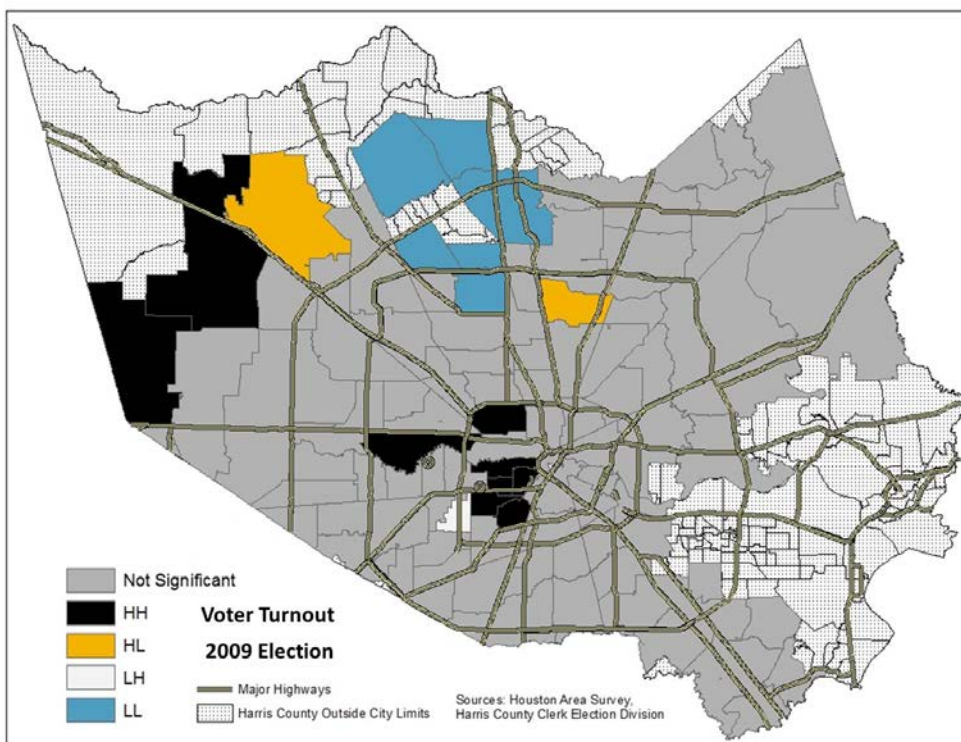
Figure 18: Anselin Local Moran's I Showing Clustering of 2009 Voter Turnout

While the map in Figure 17 is useful, Figure 18 highlights the areas of statistically significant clustering of voter turnout. As indicated in Figure 17, the precincts Parker won are located predominantly in the same area. Clustering is calculated using Anselin's local Moran's I value, testing for significance at the 0.05 level. The null hypothesis in cluster analysis is that features are randomly distributed across the study area. Interpreting the values for local Moran's I in context with the computed z-scores or p-values indicate whether to reject the null hypothesis. The local Moran's I values and the associated z-scores and p-values for each zip code in this study indicate rejection of the null hypothesis. Mapping the values of I creates an output showing significant clusters of high values (HH), significant clusters of low values (LL), outliers in which high values are surrounded by low values (HL) and outliers in which low values are surrounded by high values (LH).

By contrast, the smaller voter turnout in 2011 shows a different pattern. Parker won reelection with only 50.8% of the votes cast by 12.6% of Houston's registered voters. Many of the precincts won by Locke in 2009 went to Parker in 2011, as shown in Figure 19. The precincts Parker won in 2011 are more widely dispersed across the city, with O'Connor winning precincts located primarily in the outer reaches of the city. The precincts Herrera won follow a geographic pattern in neighborhoods with higher percentages of Hispanic voters. The few precincts Wilson won are randomly scattered across the city. With the lower voter turnout, the area of statistically significantly clustering contracted in 2011 (Figure 20); however, the cluster of voter turnout remains in an area of core strength for Parker.
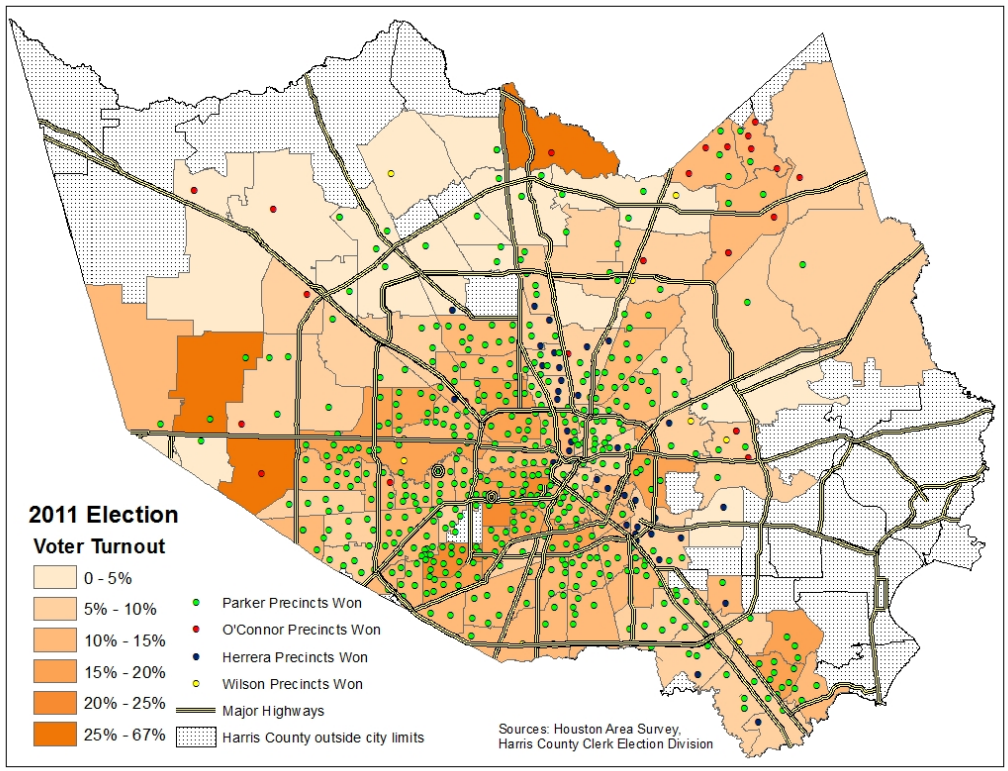
Figure 19: 2011 Percentage of Voter Turnout by Zip Code; Precincts Won by Parker, O'Connor, Herrera, and Wilson
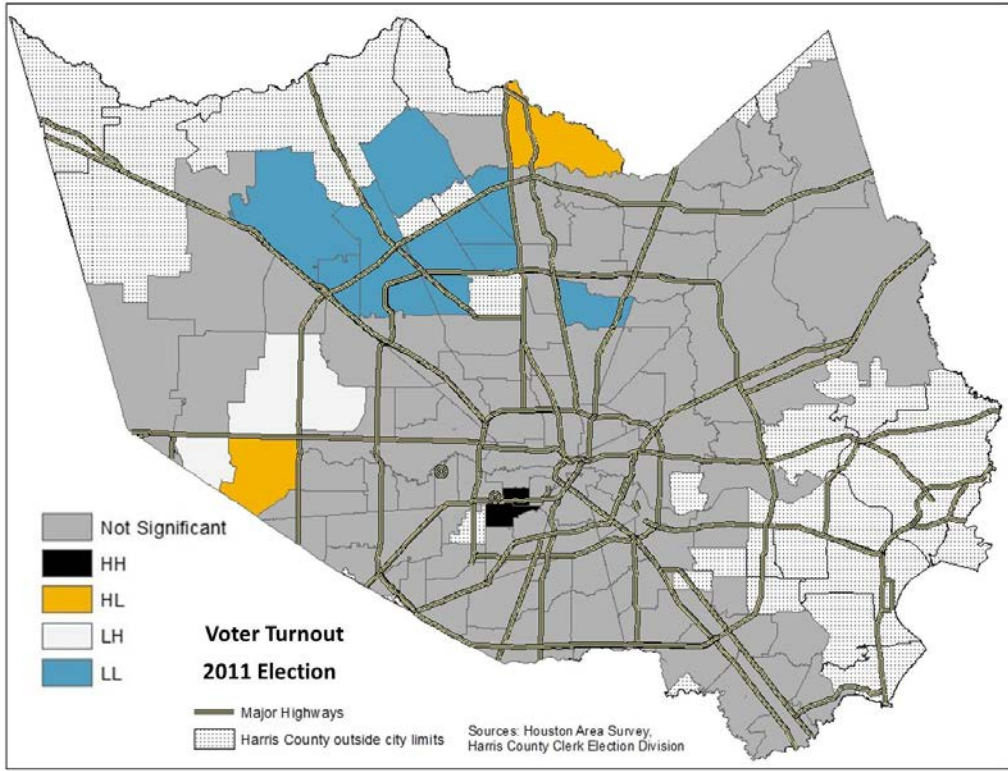
Figure 20: Anselin Local Moran's I Showing Clustering of 2011 Voter Turnout

Influence of Religion on 2009 Election

Because the goal of this research was to determine the influence of religion on Annise Parker's election as mayor in 2009, a more detailed examination of the religion variable was performed with voter turnout as the dependent variable in geographically weighted regressions with each religious group as independent variables. One aspect of religion in Houston is highlighted in Figure 21. Houston remains a city in which its citizens consider religion to be very important in their lives. Very few areas of the city show less than 50% of respondents indicating that religion is very important. However, as shown in the geographically weighted analyses for each category of religion, faith does not necessarily translate into voter action. Table 8 lists the results of the statistical analysis for each variable. The adjusted R^2 shows the goodness of fit, with a higher number being more desirable. Lower numbers for the Residuals Squared and Sigma improve the fit of the regression model. In a geographically weighted regression, the adjusted R^2 varies across the study area to show the spatial variation in fit of the regression model. In the cases illustrated below, voter turnout is partially explained by religious affiliation. The relatively low adjusted R^2 values for each religious group reinforce the hypothesis that religious affiliation is an unreliable predictor in mayoral elections; however, the spatial analysis of feature-level regression coefficients for each religious group reveals geographic areas where voter activity is more strongly correlated with religious affiliation. Feature-level regression coefficients express the magnitude of influence on the dependent variable, either positive or negative according to the sign of the coefficient. A positive sign indicates that as the independent variable increases, the

dependent variable also increases on the level of magnitude of the coefficient. A negative sign indicates that as the independent variable increases, the dependent variable decreases on the level of magnitude of the coefficient. The local regression coefficients for each model listed in Table 8 are mapped in Figures 22 – 28.

Table 8: Geographically Weighted Regressions, 2009 Voter Turnout

Results of Geographically Weighted Regressions. Dependent variable: Voter Turnout 2009			
Independent Variable	**Adjusted R^2**	**Residuals Squared**	**Sigma**
Protestant	.274	0.574	0.080
Catholic	.227	0.617	0.083
Other religions	.247	0.586	0.082
No religion ("Nones")	.270	0.583	0.081
Secularist	.287	0.572	0.079
Progressive	.277	0.570	0.080
Fundamentalist	.313	0.558	0.078
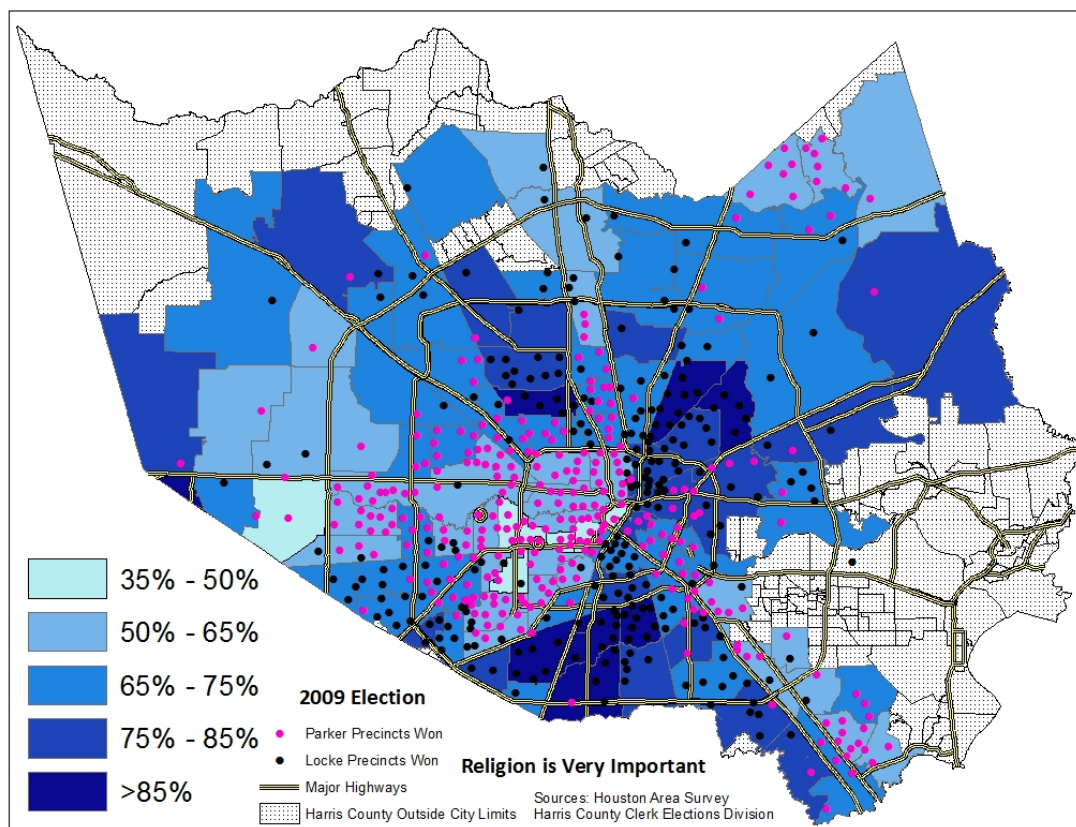
Figure 21: Percentage "Religion is Very Important" by Zip Code; Precincts Won by Parker and Locke

Mapping the local regression coefficients in each geographically weighted regression shows where voter participation was strongest among the different religious groups. Several findings bear further explanation.

Participation of Protestant voters varied greatly across the city (Figure 22), with the highest correlation with voter turnout in the outskirts of the city. Catholics, on the other hand, display a negative correlation with voter turnout in most of the city (Figure 23). Hispanics constitute a growing proportion of the population in Houston (Humes, Jones, and Ramirez 2011; Macken, et al. 2011), many of whom are Catholic (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2008), and experience has shown that Hispanics do not vote in proportion to their numbers (Parker 2011).

Figure 22: Geographically Weighted Regression Map of Local Regression Coefficients-Protestants

Figure 23: Geographically Weighted Regression Map of Local Regression Coefficients-Catholics

Figure 24: Geographically Weighted Regression Map of Local Regression Coefficients-Other Religions

People of other, non-Christian, religions (Figure 24) and people who profess no religious affiliation (Figure 25) comprise small percentages of the population but display a greater level of voter participation than the Christian groups, primarily in areas inside the inner loop freeway.
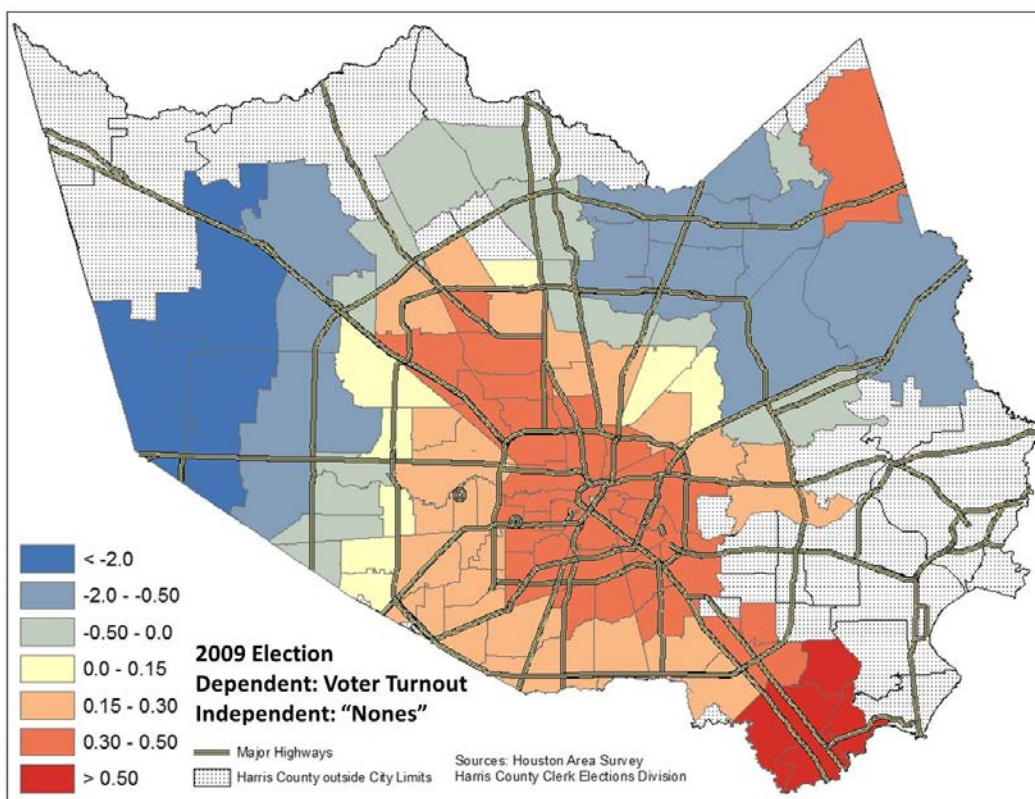
Figure 25: Geographically Weighted Regression Map of Local Regression Coefficients-"Nones"

The picture changes somewhat when mapping voter turnout among Fundamentalists, Progressives and Secularists. These are computed variables (Question 20 in Appendix A) combining responses to the importance of religion question (Question 27) and the accuracy of the Bible question (Question 2). Fundamentalists respond that religion is very important and that the Bible is the actual word of God. Progressives respond that religion is important and that the Bible is the inspired word of God written

by humans and containing some errors. Secularists respond that religion is not important and that the Bible is merely a book of history, legends and myths (Klineberg 2010). The following matrix (Table 9) illustrates the computation.

Table 9: Computed Variable Matrix Using Responses to Question 2 and Question 27 in Appendix A

Houston Area Survey – Computed Variable			
	Religion is very important	Religion is somewhat important	Religion is not very important
The Bible is the actual word of God and contains no errors.	FUNDAMENTALIST		
The Bible is the inspired word of God written by humans and contains errors.		PROGRESSIVE	
The Bible is merely a book of myths and legends.			SECULARIST

The geographically weighted regression with Fundamentalists as the independent variable produced the best fit to voter turnout; however when mapping the local regression coefficients, it becomes evident that the correlation is mostly negative (Figure 26). The low voter turnout among Fundamentalists may have hampered Locke's chances of winning the election because a high percentage of Fundamentalists are Black (Putnam and Campbell 2010), and Locke's 2009 votes are highly correlated to percentage Black. White Fundamentalists tend to vote Republican in national elections (Putnam and Campbell 2010; Warf 2011); however, Houston appears to go against the trend in mayoral elections. The 2009 Republican mayoral candidates did not receive adequate votes in the general election to proceed to the runoff election.

Progressives displayed a wide variance in voter participation across the city with the highest participation in the areas to the northwest of the city center and slightly lower participation in an area circling the center. Negative correlation with Progressives is evident in far western, eastern, and southeastern areas of the city (Figure 27). Secularists show a high level of turnout in and around the city center with pockets of high participation in the northeast and southeast sections (Figure 28). This provides further evidence that Parker's core group of supporters as mapped in Figure 30 is "committed to the campaign above how most people are engaged in politics" (Parker 2011).
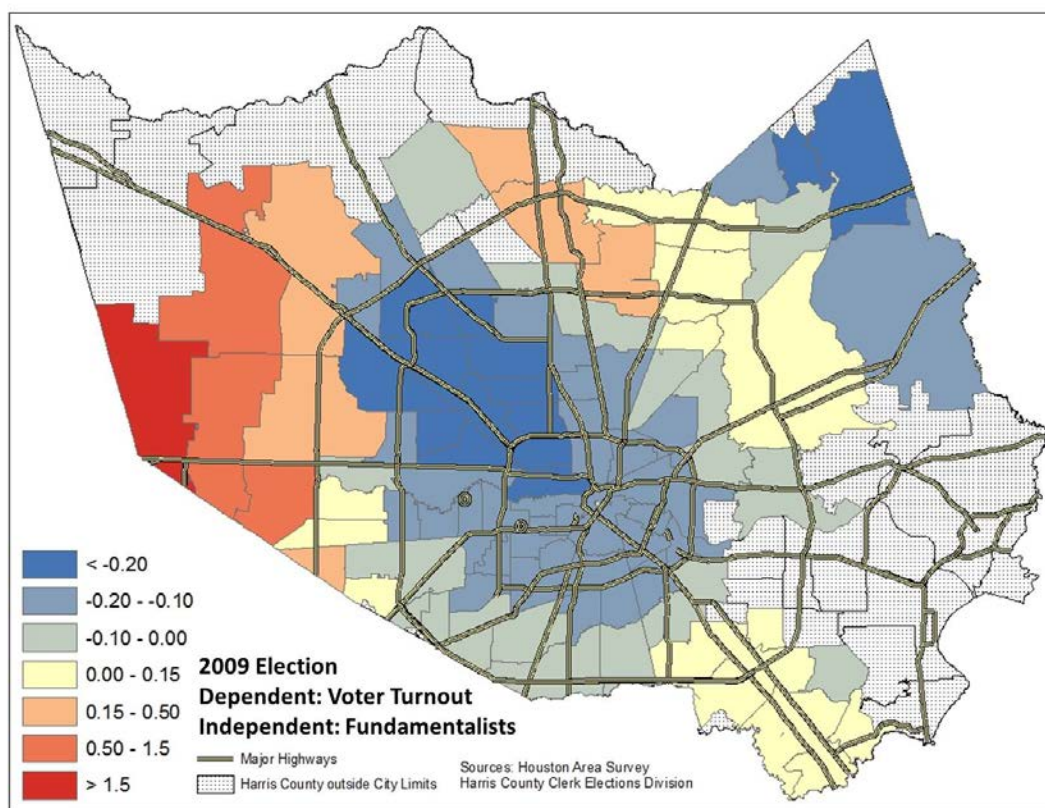
Figure 26: Geographically Weighted Regression Map of Local Regression Coefficients-Fundamentalists
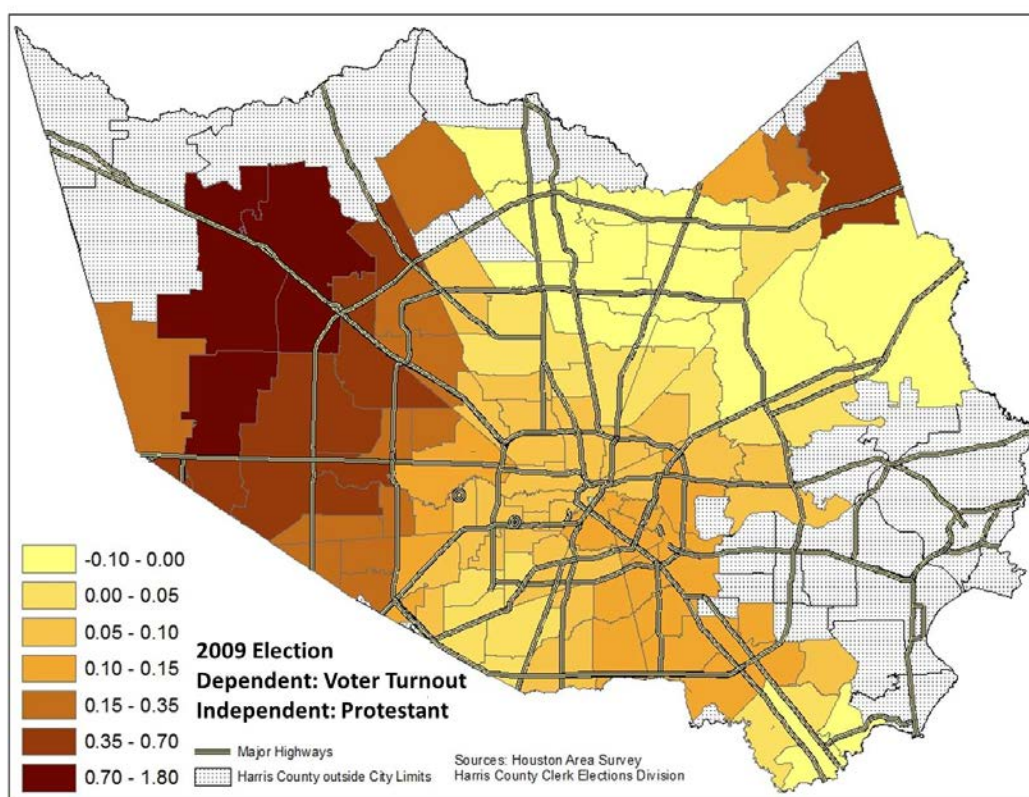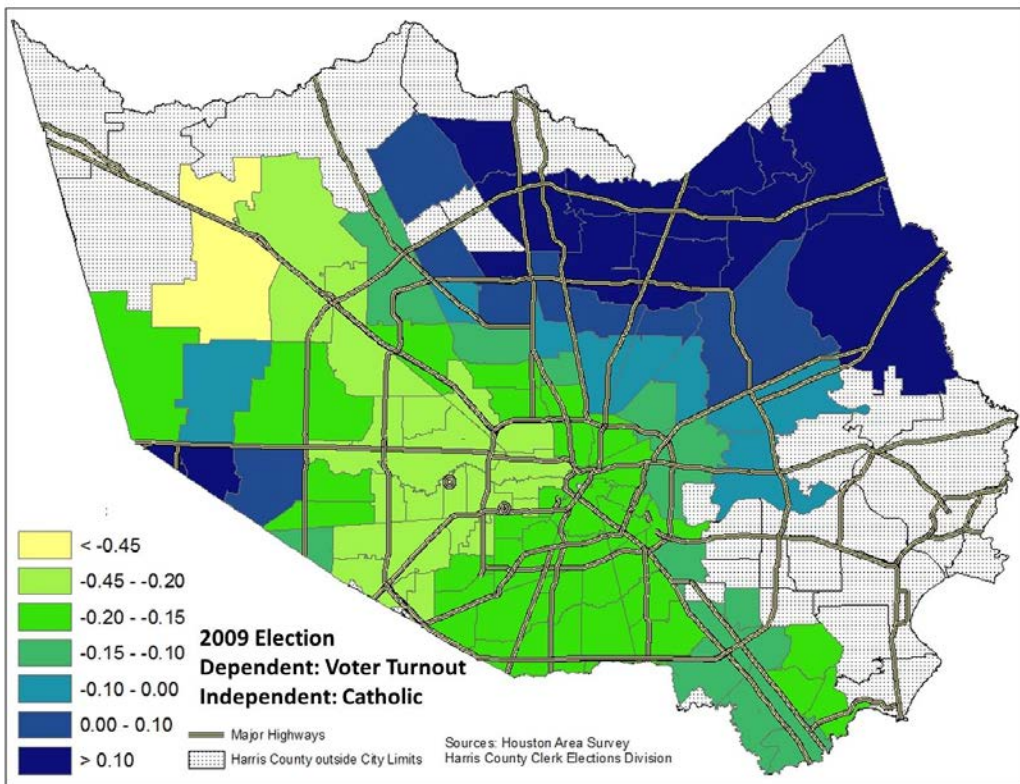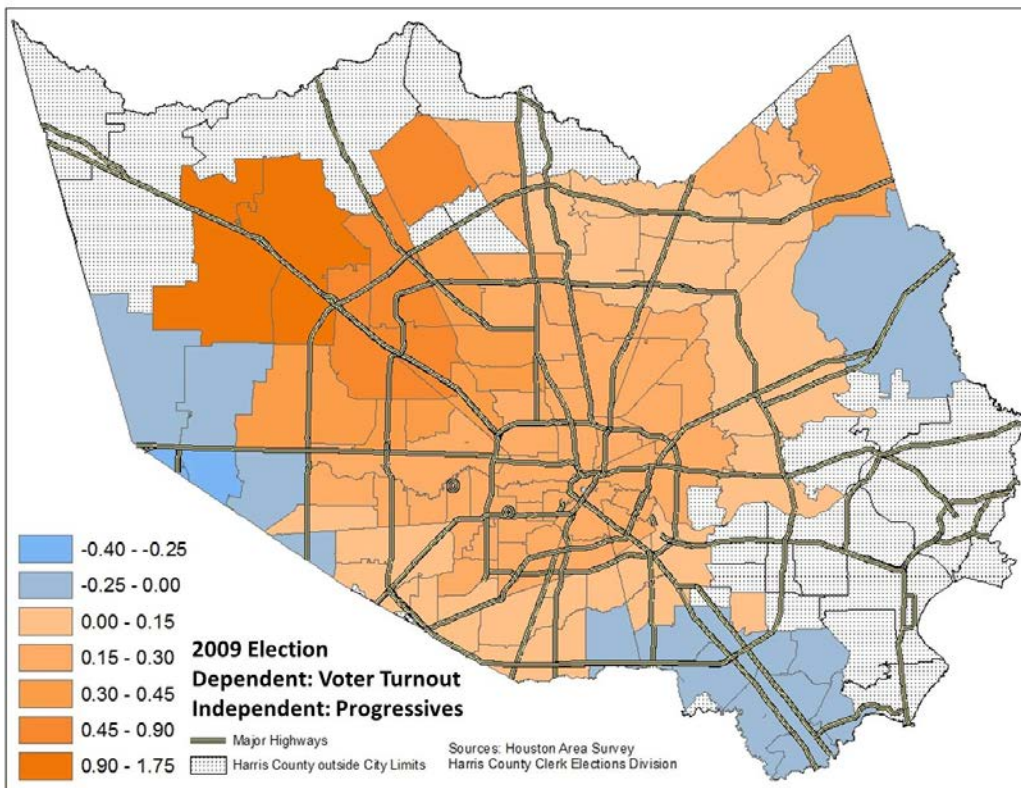
Figure 27: Geographically Weighted Regression Map of Local Regression Coefficients-Progressives

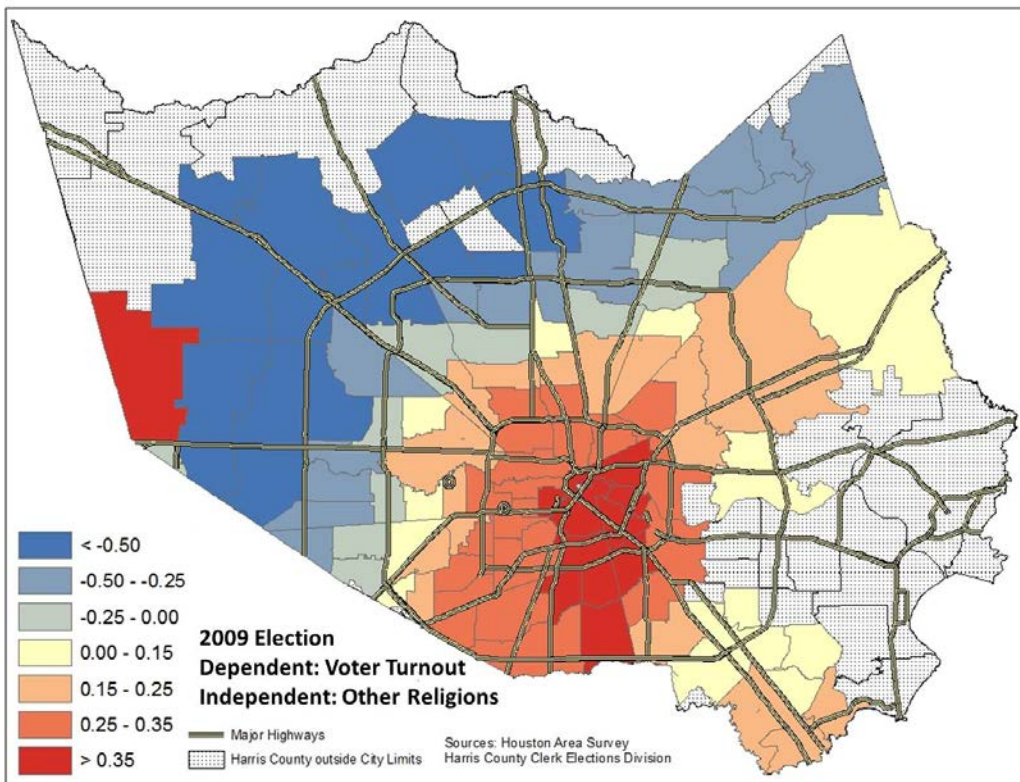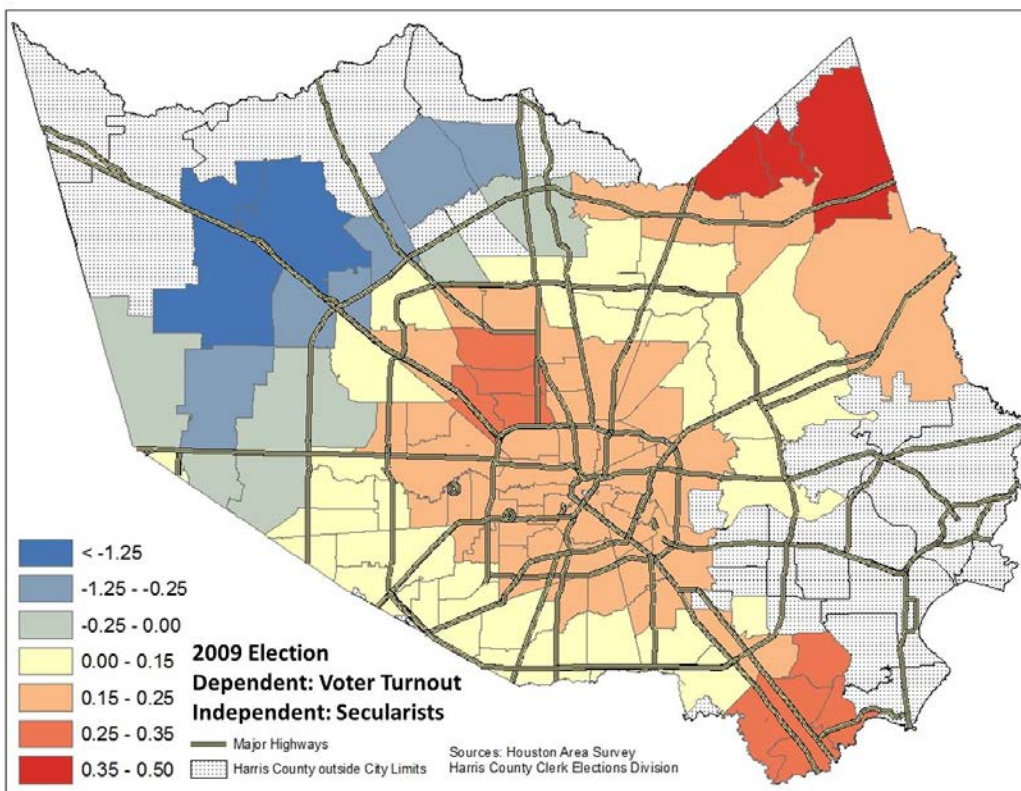**Figure 28: Geographically Weighted Regression Map of Local Regression Coefficients-Secularists**

One more interesting item of note is the clustering of Secularists in Houston (Figure 29). Lakewood Church, Second Baptist Church, Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church and many other large Christian congregations are all located within this area. It is also the area of Parker's strongest support (Figure 30). The local Moran's I evaluates a geographically weighted set of features and identifies spatial clusters of high values (HH) or low values (LL) and outliers of high values surrounded by low values (HL) or low values surrounded by high values (LH). These maps again reinforce the hypothesis that Secularists played a significant role in Parker's 2009 election, despite the presence of large, active Christian churches in the same area.
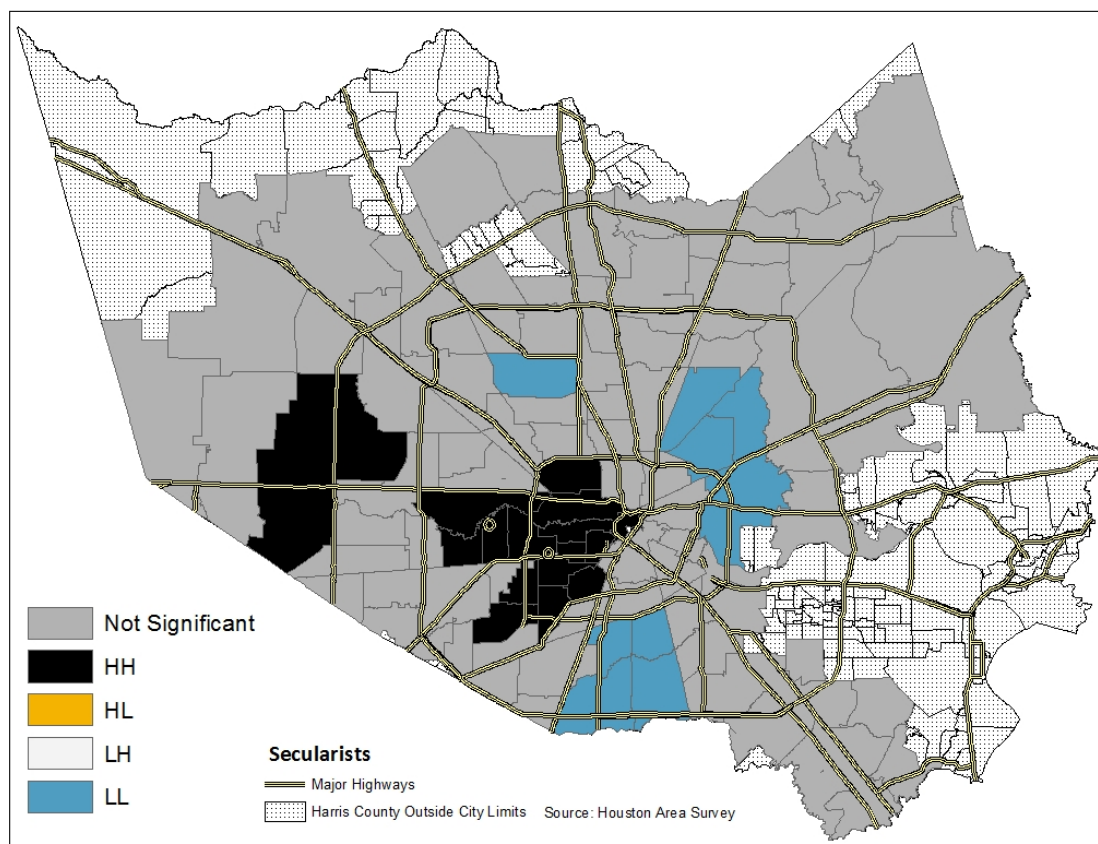
Figure 29: Anselin Local Moran's I Showing Clustering of Secularists
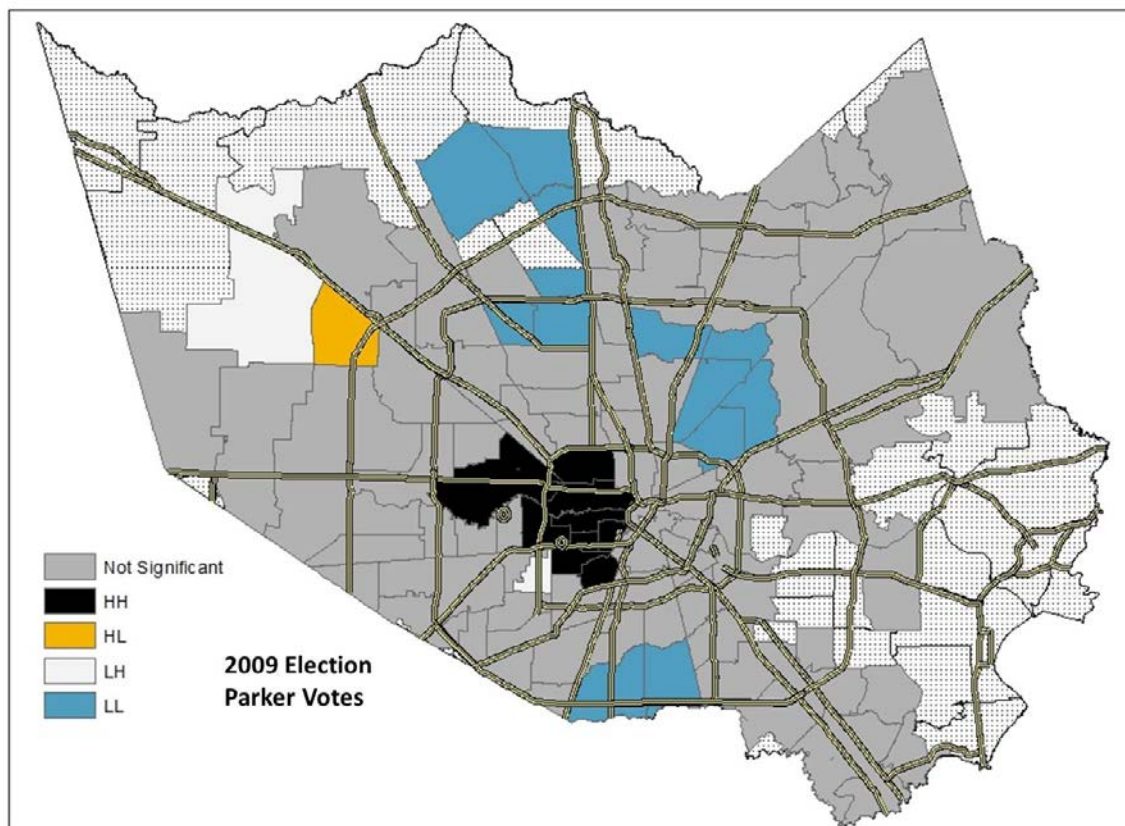
Figure 30: Anselin Local Moran's I Showing Clustering of Parker Votes in 2009

Qualitative Analysis: Interviews with the Mayor and Selected Religious Leaders in Houston

As illustrated above, information gleaned from the Houston Area Survey provides insight into the religious, social and political landscape of Houston, but we can also shed light on the issue by listening to the people about whom this study is written. Thus, five one-on-one interviews were conducted by this researcher with the mayor and religious leaders.

In December 2011, Mayor Annise Parker shared her thoughts on how she succeeded in being elected to city office in eight consecutive campaigns despite the admittedly negative aspect her sexual orientation carries. Minister-on-Call Jonathan Marks of Second Baptist Church spoke about his church's role in spreading the Gospel

throughout the city to all who wish to hear it. Ms. Millicent Haynes, Director of Ministries at Windsor Village United Methodist Church (WVUMC), explained how this predominantly Black church provides spiritual guidance and practical assistance to its surrounding community. Reverend Burton Bagby-Grose, chaplain of the Houston GLBT Community Center explained his goal of assisting visitors to the Center find a gay-affirming or gay-welcoming church home and of opening a dialogue with other clergy around the city about addressing the needs of their GLBT members. Reverend David Peterson, senior pastor at Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church explained how he envisions his role in maintaining a traditional, orthodox Christian view of human sexuality. Transcripts of the interviews with Mayor Parker, Rev. Bagby-Grose, and Rev. Peterson are attached as Appendices B - D. Field notes from visits to Second Baptist Church and WVUMC are attached as Appendix E. The staff at Lakewood Church declined the request for an interview; however, notes on the researcher's observation during a visit in July 2011 are included in the field notes in Appendix E. Below is a synthesis of the viewpoints expressed by the interviewees.

Mayor Annise Parker

Mayor Parker acknowledges that her sexual orientation is a negative in any campaign in which she is involved, but she and her staff "work hard to neutralize it" by emphasizing her experience in city office and her civic involvement in the GLBT community before her first term on City Council. She earned the endorsement of the conservative Houston Police Officers Union based on her "decades-long track record of working with them on policing issues" as the police liaison from the GLBT community. She also received the endorsement of the *Houston Chronicle*, which at the time of her

first election in 1997, was a more conservative publication than it is today. In her words, those endorsements confused people and framed the election in 1997 in a way that begged the question, "do you want the good government lesbian who is endorsed by the cops, or do you want the lobbyist for the solid waste industry?" Parker fired back with the "lobbyist" label again in 2009 after Locke used a negative campaign piece about her sexual orientation. Apparently to the voters of Houston "somehow lobbyist is not a good thing." By combining her non-lobbyist position with her financial background working for an oil and gas company, her endorsements from two strong conservative organizations, and her experience in city government and civic organizations, she finds herself in the "odd dynamic that I end up being the conservative choice." She is the familiar candidate able to "pull votes from everywhere, even communities that might not have been expected to vote for me." Parker builds her campaigns with Houston's demographics in mind, and she states that there is "clearly ethnic and racial voting. Although the Hispanics voting for Hispanics is much less of an impact." According to Parker, Hispanics vote at "probably a quarter of what their demographics would indicate." She said there is a "very strong African-American shift always to the Black candidate." Parker feels strongly that religion does not influence votes for or against her, and the data seem to support this assertion. "At each level there was at least an appeal to voters who might be motivated to vote against me because of my sexual orientation. But I don't know that I would call that necessarily a religious factor, because I think that it transcends race; it transcends ethnicity." The GLBT community is a small portion of the electorate, which requires Parker to rely on coalition politics. However, her core of supporters locally and nationally is "committed to the campaign above how most people

are engaged in politics." This reinforces the evidence mapped in the section above showing the concentration of Parker support and voter turnout in a low turnout election. As she says, "if people are generally satisfied…I mean if people are truly unhappy I think there would have been more of a turnout." Although she hopes to recreate a sense of urgency and drive to vote in her 2013 campaign, she knows that, as the incumbent, the odds of reelection are in her favor.

Pastor Jonathan Marks and Ms. Millicent Haynes

Pastor Marks of Second Baptist Church and Ms. Haynes of WVUMC expressed their churches' positions that homosexuality is outside God's best plan for human sexuality, and they reiterated their churches' goals of "speaking the truth in love and showing that the mercy and grace of God is for everybody" (Marks) and getting "past all the labels and get back to the Word" (Haynes). Haynes described a program run by the church for "those seeking freedom from habitual sins including prostitution, homosexuality, lesbianism, and sex addiction" under the guiding principle of "love the sinner, hate the sin." WVUMC appears to follow the trend of other Black churches in that it is theologically fundamentalist with a strong social justice focus on making the church a "safe haven and place of fellowship" for its surrounding community. Neither church offers guidance in elections beyond encouraging their members to pray for wisdom and vote according to the scriptures and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Marks acknowledged that pastors at Second Baptist do not promote one candidate over another because doing so could jeopardize the church's tax status.

Rev. Burton Bagby-Grose and Rev. David Peterson: Opposing Viewpoints

Among Houston's clergy, Rev. Bagby-Grose and Rev. Peterson are representative examples of Christian leaders on the opposite ends of the GLBT discussion. Bagby-Grose considers himself married to his male partner; Peterson says that Bagby-Grose has co-opted the term "married." Bagby-Grose claims his knowledge of Hebrew and Greek learned in seminary leads him to the accurate translation of the Genesis story that the Hebrew word *ish* has been incorrectly translated as Adam instead of "living being" and that Paul's letter to the Romans in the New Testament was referring to temple prostitution as a form of idol worship, not an admonition against homosexuality; Peterson describes Bagby-Grose's interpretation as "proof-texting" in which the reader begins with a prior position and finds a way to angle the material to conform with the position while ignoring "an awful lot of substantive Biblical material." Bagby-Grose is a seminary-trained clergyman who believes that church leadership should be open to all who feel called, regardless of sexual orientation; Peterson, also seminary-trained, holds to the traditional position that church leadership – pastors, elders and deacons – should comply with the principle of "fidelity in marriage; chastity in singleness," meaning that homosexuals are not automatically barred from leadership unless they are "avowed, practicing" homosexuals. Neither spoke very highly of the other. However, on two things they do agree: there has been a major shift in American Christianity with respect to homosexuals, and neither of them is totally thrilled with Annise Parker.

Bagby-Grose speaks enthusiastically about what he describes as a "sea change in Christian communities of faith in the United States." He cited the United Church of Christ's growth in Texas and Louisiana over the past six years, going from four gay-

affirming churches to fifteen. Bagby-Grose describes "gay-affirming" as churches that have "gone through a very intentional process of conversation and dialogue over a period of time, and they have voted as a congregation to fully welcome and affirm gay, lesbian, bisexual, [and] transgender people into all levels of church life." Peterson is dismayed by the change. He asserts that the Presbyterian Church has always been open to gay members; the question has been about avowed, practicing gays in leadership positions, which until last year was not possible in the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., the largest Presbyterian body in the country. Peterson, who says he has been debating this issue for forty years, feels that the church is being manipulated by a small group of gay activists to go against what he describes as "2000 years of history and the vast percentage of global Christianity continuing to hold an orthodox position." He adds that, "it's possible that this is a God-driven change in the human mind, but I'm just saying compared to where we've been this is a dramatic change in position."

Bagby-Grose believes that faith influences voting decisions in the GLBT community and that "there are folks that their faith tells them to be pro-union and pro-employee rights, and that has put them at cross ways with Mayor Parker because she's not perceived as being a strong advocate for city employees and the unions." He says that she gets the "lion's share" of GLBT support, but as people become more aware that she is not a person of faith, "folks have found that troubling." Bagby-Grose, who was on Parker's "kitchen cabinet," expressed concern that Parker refused to take her oath of office on the Bible until her first inauguration as mayor, and then he surmises she did it only on the advice of a consultant who told her it would make for negative news headlines if she did not. Peterson did not vote for Parker and says he is not opposed to her

solely based on her sexual orientation. When asked how he would explain Parker's election in a city with high religious affiliation, he theorized that people compartmentalize their faith and were able to see the mayor as something other than an extension of what they believe when they go to church on Sunday and saw her as "an experienced insider in Houston politics" that gave her an advantage over a field of weak opponents, and in his opinion "she won as much by default as by passion." Both men have found ways to support Parker's efforts as mayor, Bagby-Grose through his personal friendship with her and Peterson through his involvement in her charity tea to benefit Houston children, a cause in which he has been involved for several years.

Both men see purpose in their roles as Christian leaders. Bagby-Grose embodies the neosecular vision of spirituality gained through a journey toward personal theology. In his view, this involves ongoing dialogues with visitors to the center seeking a church home and with clergy from the five major world religions. Bagby-Grose embraces the challenge of educating people and leading them down a road toward understanding, acceptance and nurture of GLBT people. Peterson sees his role as one who will maintain the traditional orthodox Christian "lifestyle that is faithful to scripture in a historical sense until the world realizes that the way they followed really doesn't work. It does a lot of damage, and [the world] starts looking around for alternatives, and all of a sudden Christianity gets rediscovered again." He believes that traditional Christianity has become marginalized, and the church needs to "reestablish itself as the place you go for healing. Not the place you go to get judged. Not the place that's throwing hand grenades into the sinful, terrible world out there."

One word elicits a strong negative response in both pastors – evangelical. As Bagby-Grose explains it, the word means that "you want to share your faith with other people in a kind and loving way," to which Peterson would agree. However, in the current political climate, the word has become a loaded expression associated more with politics than with faith, and neither pastor feels comfortable using it.

Summary of Interviews

These five individuals, each in their own way, represent Houston's vibrant diversity in religion, social life and politics. In her second term as mayor, Parker has become more outspoken in her support of gay marriage, in response to which one of Houston's clergy has called for her resignation (Moran 2012). Parker, of course, has no intention of resigning and is optimistic that she will be elected to a third term. This highlights that tension exists between some factions of the Christian community and members of the GLBT community and their advocates in Houston. However, the people of faith who shared their time with this researcher each seek in his or her own way to live according to what they perceive to be the Christian life.

Conclusion

Analyses of the quantitative and qualitative data presented above indicate that Christian religious groups exerted little influence on the outcomes of the 2009 and 2011 mayoral elections. Fundamentalist Evangelical Protestants represent a significant percentage of Houston's population; however, the smaller percentage of Secularist "Nones" proved more politically active in the mayoral elections under study. This supports the overriding hypothesis of this thesis that the diversity of Houston's religious landscape created an environment for Annise Parker's political success. This study

contributes to geographic literature by using religion as an explanatory variable of voting behavior in local elections and showing that the national trend of Fundamentalist Christians voting Republican is contraindicated in Houston.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

Houston's 2009 election of Annise Parker as the first openly homosexual mayor of a major U.S. city garnered national attention. Houston is the fourth largest city in the U.S. and home to the largest Christian church in the country, the largest Southern Baptist congregation in the country and many other large Christian churches. A majority of Houstonians give religion high importance in their lives, and a plurality of the Christians are Evangelical Protestants. This interesting juxtaposition of a homosexual mayor of a city with high religious affiliation prompted this research. The following four statements form the basis of the hypotheses for this research:

- How has Houston's religious landscape changed over the past three decades?

- Is Houston following the national trend that shows an increasing number of people professing no religious affiliation?

- Are Houstonians exhibiting an increased tolerance for diversity and acceptance of gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgenders (GLBT)?

- Does religion in Houston serve as a reliable predictor of voting behavior in mayoral elections?

Houston is a city with a high degree of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity as shown by the U.S. Census and Houston Area Survey data presented in the preceding chapters. Houston is also a city with a high level of religious affiliation and, as mentioned above, a majority of the population indicating that religion is very important in their lives. Christianity is the dominant religion, with Houston and Harris County showing a slightly higher percentage of Evangelical Christians (38%) than the state (34%) and more than ten

percentage points higher than the national rate (26%). Mainline Protestants, Historically Black Protestants, and Catholics bring the total Christian population in Harris County to 76% of the general population, compared to 81% in the state and 75% in the country (Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies 2009; InfoGroup, Social Explorer 2011; Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2008). Between 1980 and 2000, Harris County witnessed an increase in Catholics and Evangelical Protestants and a numerical and percentage decline in Mainline Protestants; however, the most dramatic change during that time was the explosive growth of adherents to Other Theology, as defined in Chapter 3. Houston Area Survey (HAS) data indicate that Houston has an increase in the number of people declaring no religious affiliation. The HAS categorizes these respondents by use of a computed variable described in Chapter 5 in which respondents who consider religion unimportant and believe that the Bible is a book of myths and legends are termed "Secular." The Pew Foundation uses the term "Unaffiliated" (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2008); other researchers refer to them as "Nones" (Kosmin and Lachman 1993; Putnam and Campbell 2010). These data demonstrate the validity of the first two research questions of this thesis. First, although Christianity remains dominant, Houston's religious landscape has changed from 1980 to the present, and, second, Houston is following the national trend in the growing number of "Nones."

One way this change in religious landscape manifests itself is in Houstonians' increased tolerance for diversity and acceptance of the GLBT population, both within the city as a whole and within the Christian community, which is the third hypothesis of this thesis. Houston ranks highly in Richard Florida's diversity index, a key indicator of

which is the acceptance of same-sex couples in a community (Florida 2002). Gates and Ost (2004) rank Houston 44 among 331 metropolitan areas nationwide in the concentration of gays and lesbians. Despite the majority presence of Christian groups holding to the doctrine of the sinfulness of homosexuality, at least at the level of denominational authority, Houston has seen a fourfold increase in the number of gay-affirming churches that involve GLBTs in all levels of membership and leadership (Bagby-Grose 2012). Not all churches welcome this change, and even within denominations the role of GLBTs may vary from church to church. As discussed in Chapters 3 and 5, the Catholics, Episcopalians, Anglicans, Southern Baptists and Presbyterians have all experienced significant deterritorialization and reterritorialization in reaction to the participation of GLBTs in lay leadership and clergy positions.

Houston's evolving religious landscape with the growing number of "Nones" and the increased acceptance of GLBTs created an opportunity for Annise Parker, an openly practicing lesbian, to enter public office and eventually be elected as mayor of Houston in 2009. The results presented in Chapter 5 and summarized below support the final hypothesis of this thesis that the high level of religious affiliation in Houston does not serve as a reliable predictor of voting behavior in mayoral elections.

Geographers and social scientists have studied the patterns of religious distribution in the U.S. and have identified regions of religious homogeneity. The American South, with its high concentration of Southern Baptists, is one such region. The eastern one-third of Texas, including Houston, falls within one possible regional definition of the South (Reed 2001). Most of the early Anglo settlers came to Texas and the Houston area from other states in the South (University of Texas 1976). The Southern

Baptist Church rose to dominance in the years leading up to the Civil War (Goen 1983) and provided solace and structure as the sole surviving social institution after the Civil War (Webster 1997). The Southern Baptist hegemony began to erode in the twentieth century, particularly in urban areas such as Houston, with increased domestic and foreign migration into the South, improved economic conditions, the growing presence of non-Christian faiths and the influence of popular culture. Despite these counter-hegemonic pressures, Evangelical Christianity remains a significant component of Houston's religious landscape. Lakewood Church, the largest in the country, and Second Baptist Church, the third largest, extend their reach beyond the thousands of Houstonians who attend their services locally to millions who listen to television and radio broadcasts presented by pastors Joel Osteen and Ed Young. Black Protestants generally are included in the Evangelical category.

As presented more fully in Chapter 2, many researchers have studied the voting behavior of America's different religious groups. Beginning with the rise of the Moral Majority in the 1970s, Evangelical Protestants, especially in the South, have been associated with Republican politics and have engaged in the "culture wars" on the conservative, and in their view, the biblically-correct side of the debates over abortion, women's rights, sexual orientation, and same-sex marriage. Silk and Walsh (2008) place Texas, and therefore Houston, in what they call the Southern Crossroads, a region they posit is more conservative than the rest of the South. Evidence presented by researchers and more fully explored in Chapter 2, suggest a strong link between Evangelicals and votes for conservative, usually Republican, candidates in national and state elections. While this may hold true in national and state elections, the link between Evangelicals

and Republicans appears to be contraindicated in Houston's 2009 and 2011 local elections. There are three possible explanations for this. First, as shown in the regression analysis with voter turnout, Fundamentalists, who fall into the category of Evangelical, were negatively correlated to voter turnout in areas of the city in which voter turnout was highest. Progressives voted at a higher rate; however, the highest voter turnout was among Secularists, who are located primarily in areas of Annise Parker's core support. Therefore, the Secularists and "Nones," the smallest segment of Houston's population, determined the outcome of the elections. Second, in an odd dynamic acknowledged by Parker herself, she is often considered the conservative candidate based on the endorsements she receives from the Houston Police Officers Association and other moderate and conservative organizations in Houston. Third, in a low voter turnout election, the known candidate usually wins. Parker is an experienced insider in Houston politics, having held public office since 1997. Her run-off opponent in 2009, Gene Locke, was relatively unknown. Both candidates ran as Democrats with similar policy platforms; Locke's race was the distinguishing feature setting him apart from Parker. He captured the Black vote, but it was not enough to overcome Parker's support from a coalition of Secular voters and others who, according to Peterson (2012), are able to "compartmentalize their faith and other elements of their lives, so they were able to see the mayor's office as something other than an extension of what they happen to believe when they go to church on Sunday."

The ability to compartmentalize may be considered a manifestation of the concept of neosecularization, also termed detraditionalization by some, in which personal wisdom guides an individual's spirituality from within rather than religious authority from

without. It is within this construct that individuals reinterpret traditional orthodox views while maintaining their belief in the sacred and divine. In the "culture wars," generational differences highlight a growing acceptance of homosexuality among young people born in the post-baby boomer years. There remains opposition to homosexuality among young people of faith; however, the level of opposition is lower relative to baby boomers and pre-baby boomers. Putnam and Campbell (2010) predict that the issue of gay rights will follow the pattern of women's rights and eventually become less viable as a political issue.

For some who hold to the traditional Christian orthodox view of human sexuality, Christianity appears to have become marginalized in the process of neosecularization. In Houston, some have continued to openly express opposition to gay rights issues and same-sex marriage. Recently, a Houston pastor called for Parker's resignation in opposition to her outspoken support for legalizing same-sex marriage. Others have resigned themselves to the cultural tide and have taken the position of holding on to the traditional orthodox Christian lifestyle as an alternative to the cultural mainstream until the time they predict the world will rediscover Christianity. Until that time, they plan to remain friendly and work within Houston's diversity.

Parker acknowledges her advantage as the incumbent and expects to be reelected in the 2013 election, barring anything that would anger Houston's voters enough to come to the polls. As she says, "If people were truly unhappy I think there would have been more of a turnout." If Peterson is correct in his assessment of Houstonians, then Parker's chances of a third term are good. As he says, there is an attitude in Houston that keeps people from igniting around issues while managing to live creatively with enormous

diversity. "You can't get people mad at each other. We don't want to be mad at each other…This city likes being a diverse plurality, and with that being the case and with a vibrant economy, then I just don't know that there's a heart in most cases for people to begin arguing, fighting with each other and giving an impression to the wider world that Houston's just an angry Southern city."

This thesis contributes to the body of geographic knowledge by introducing religion as a variable in local elections through the utilization of spatial analysis tools by which precincts were assigned to zip codes. By aligning the election results with Houston Area Survey data on religion, race, political preference and social justice issues, statistical analysis reveals a more complete picture of Houston's religious landscape and the influence of religion in mayoral elections. By focusing on the zip code scale, this study fills the apparent gap in literature on religion and voting between analyses at the county, state or national scale and the local scale. Future research will include factor analysis of the myriad independent variables to identify thematic variables for use in multiple regression analysis. This study creates a basis for studies of changing religious landscapes in other communities, which could lead to test studies between metropolitan areas and rural areas.

Appendix A - Houston Area Survey Questions for Analysis

1. BLKFRS2 (Question #74 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

Thinking about the people you consider to be your close personal friends, not just someone you know, do you have a close personal friend who is Black? (02, 04, 09)

-1) RF/DK
0) No
1) Yes

2. BIBLE (Question #51 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

Which one of these three statements comes closest to describing your feelings about the Bible? (83-10)

-1) RF/DK
1) The Bible is the actual word of God, and it should be taken literally, word for word
2) The Bible is the inspired word of God, but it was written by men and contains some human errors
3) The Bible is an ancient book of history and legends; God had nothing to do with it

3. CHURCH1 (Question #101 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

In the past thirty days, did you attend a religious service, other than a wedding or funeral? (82, 86, 90, 91, 96-10)

-1) RF/DK
0) No
1) Yes

4. EDUC (Question #156 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

What is the highest grade of school or year of college that you've completed? (82-10)

-1) RF/DK
1) 9th grade or less
2) 10th or 11th grade
3) 12th grade
4) 1 year of college
5) 2 or 3 years of college
6) Bachelor's degree (BA, BS)
7) Some graduate level work
8) Master's degree (MA, MS, MBA, MEd, MSW)
9) Professional degree (PhD, JD, MD, DDS)

5. ETHSOK (Question #178 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

Do you think that the increasing ethnic diversity in Houston will eventually become [rotate]: A source of great strength for the city; or: A growing problem for the city? (96, 98, 00, 02, 03, 06, 08, 10)
-1) RF/DK
1) A growing problem
2) A source of great strength

6. GAYADOPT (Question #201 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

For/Against: What about homosexuals being legally permitted to adopt children? (91, 96, 98, 00, 02, 04, 06, 08, 10)
-1) RF/DK
0) Against
1) For

7. GAYCAUSE (Question #203 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

In your opinion, is homosexuality primarily a matter of personal choice; an in-born trait, or something caused by environmental factors? (93, 99, 04, 06, 08, 10)
-1) RF/DK
1) Personal choice
2) Inborn trait
3) Environmental factors

8. GAYDISC (Question #204 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

How often, in general, are gays and lesbians discriminated against in Houston? Would you say: very often, fairly often, rarely, or never? (00, 02, 04, 06, 09, 10)
-1) RF/DK
1) Never
2) Rarely
3) Fairly often
4) Very often

9. GAYFRND (Question #205 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

Do you have a friend who is gay or lesbian? (05, 07)
-1) RF/DK
0) No
1) Yes

10. GAYFRS1 (Question #206 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

Thinking about everyone that you would count as a personal friend, not just your closest friends, do you have a personal friend who is gay or lesbian? (01)
-1) RF/DK
0) No
1) Yes

11. GAYFRS2 (Question #207 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

Thinking about the people you consider to be your close personal friends, not just someone you know, do you have a close personal friend who is gay or lesbian? (04, 09)
-1) RF/DK
0) No
1) Yes

12. GAYGIVEN (Question #208 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

Do you believe that homosexuality is something people choose or something they cannot change? (00, 03, 05, 07, 09)

-1) RF
1) Cannot change
2) It depends/Unsure (Vol.)
3) Choose

13. GAYLIB (Question #209 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

For/Against: What about the efforts to guarantee equal civil rights for homosexual men and women? (84-90, 94, 97, 99, 01, 03, 05)

-1) RF/DK
0) Against
1) For

14. GAYMARRY (Question #210 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

Agree/Disagree: Marriages between homosexuals should be given the same legal status as heterosexual marriages. (93, 97, 99, 01, 03, 04, 07, 09)

-1) RF/DK
0) Disagree
1) Agree

15. GAYTEACH (Question #215 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

For/Against: What about allowing homosexuals to teach in the public schools? (92, 96, 01, 06, 09)

-1) RF/DK
0) Against
1) For

16. GAYWRONG (Question #216 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

Do you believe that homosexuality is morally wrong or is it morally acceptable? (97, 99, 01, 03, 05, 07, 09)

-1) RF/DK
1) Morally wrong
2) It depends (Vol.)
3) Morally acceptable

17. IMMEFFS (Question #271 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

Does the increasing immigration into this country today [rotate]: Mostly strengthen American culture; or: Mostly threaten American culture? (97, 01, 03, 05, 07, 09)

-1) RF/DK
1) Mostly threatens
2) Mostly strengthens

18. LEANING (Question #306 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

IF R DOES NOT NAME EITHER MAJOR PARTY (PARTY): Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or to the Democratic Party? (84-10)

-1) RF/DK
0) Neither
1) Republican

2) Both equally
3) Democrat

19. MARRIAGE (Question #334 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

Are you married, in a domestic partnership, separated, divorced, widowed, or have you never been married? (82-10)
-1) RF/DK
1) Married
2) Domestic partnership
3) Separated
4) Divorced
5) Widowed
6) Never married

20. NEWRELIG (Question #384 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

Computed variable combining BIBLE and RELIMP into three categories of religiosity: "fundamentalist," "religious progressive," and "secularist" (83-10)
-1) RF/DK
1) Fundamentalist
2) Religious progressive
3) Secularist

21. PARTY (Question #439 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

What is your political preference? Would you call yourself a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else? (82-10)
-1) RF/DK
1) Republican
2) Independent
3) Democrat
4) Other

22. POLITIC7 (Question #447 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

Do you think of yourself as conservative, moderate, or liberal in your politics? IF "CONSERVATIVE" OR "LIBERAL": Do you consider yourself to be very (conservative/liberal) or only somewhat (conservative/liberal)? IF "MODERATE": Do you think of yourself as more like a conservative or more like a liberal? (01-10)
-1) RF/DK
1) Very conservative
2) Somewhat conservative
3) More like a conservative
4) Neither conservative nor liberal
5) More like a liberal
6) Somewhat liberal
7) Very liberal

23. POLITICS (Question #448 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

Do you think of yourself as conservative, moderate, or liberal in your politics? (82-10)
-1) RF/DK
1) Conservative

2) Moderate

3) Liberal

24. PREFSBAD (Question #464 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

Agree/Disagree: Affirmative action policies give unfair advantages to minorities and women. (96, 98, 01, 06)

-1) RF/DK

0) Disagree

1) Agree

25. READNEWS (Question #482 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

How often do you read a newspaper carefully? Would you say: every day, a few times a week, about once a week, or less than that? (92, 01, 02, 04)

-1) RF/DK

1) Less than once a week

2) About once a week

3) A few times a week

4) Every day

26. RELIG1 (Question #489 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

What is your religious preference, if any? (82-10)

-1) RF/DK

1) Protestant

2) Catholic

3) Jewish

4) Other religion

5) No religion

27. RELIMP (Question #492 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

How important would you say religion is in your life? Would you say: very important, somewhat important, or not very important? (83-10)

-1) RF/DK

1) Not very important

2) Somewhat important

3) Very important

28. RATEGAYS (Question #712 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

What about gays and lesbians? Where would you put them on the 10-point scale (where "1" means "very unfavorable feelings" and "10" means "very favorable feelings")? (08, 10)

-1) RF/DK

1) Very unfavorable

2) 2

3) 3

4) 4

5) 5

6) 6

7) 7

8) 8

9) 9

10) Very favorable

29. INCOME9 (Question #732 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

Please stop me when I reach the category that includes your total household income in 2007; that is, the income for all members of the household during the past year. Coded into nine categories (from "less than $12,500" to "more than $100,000"). (06, 08-10)

-2) Don't know
-1) Refused
1) Less than $12,500
2) $12,501 to $25,000
3) $25,001 to $37,500
4) $37,501 to $50,000
5) $50,001 to $62,500
6) $62,501 to $75,000
7) $75,001 to $100,000
8) $100,001 to $150,000
9) More than $150,000

30. OCCUP7 (Question #733 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

IF R IS WORKING FULL- OR PART-TIME (WORKING): What type of work do you do? [If more than one job:] Please describe the one at which you work the most hours. (84, 89, 92, 94-09)

-1) Refused/Don't know/Uncodable
1) Professionals
2) Mangers
3) Technicians
4) Sales workers
5) Services
6) Production
7) Laborers

31. TRUPARTY (Question #757 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

Computed variable combining PARTY and LEANING into declared or closer to Republicans or Democrats (82-10)

-1) Refused/Don't know
1) Republican
2) Democrat

32. I-RACE (Question #772 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

Are you Anglo, Black, Hispanic, Asian, or of some other ethnic background (specify)? [If R names more than one ethnicity:] Which ethnic group do you generally identify with? (82-10) (Recoded for use with online analysis)

1) Anglos
2) Blacks
3) Hispanics
4) Asians
5) Other

33. I-RELIGION (Question #773 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

What is your religious preference, if any? (82-10) (Recoded for use with online analysis)

1) Protestant
2) Catholic
3) Jewish
4) Other religion
5) No religion

34. I-POLITICS (Question #775 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

Do you think of yourself as conservative, moderate, or liberal in your politics? (82-10) (Recoded for use with online analysis)

1) Conservative
2) Moderate
3) Liberal

35. I-EDUC (Question #776 from Houston Area Survey, 1982-2010)

What is the highest grade of school or year of college that you've completed? (82-10) (Recoded for use with online analysis)

2) Less than 12th grade
3) 12th grade
4) 1-3 years of college
6) Bachelor's degree (BA, BS)
7) Some graduate level work
8) Graduate degree (MA, MS, MBA, Med, MSW, PhD, JD, MD, DDS)

MORRIS: I'm going to dive right in. I'm doing my master's thesis on your election in 2009. Do you think your sexuality was a factor in that election or any other election you've been involved in? Either way, good way or bad way?

PARKER: Yes, I think it's always been a factor but that we work hard to neutralize it. The factor… that it's certainly not a positive in the campaign, but we can make it not a negative.

MORRIS: To what extent do you think the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender (GLBT) community impacted the election, and do you think their support pushed you over the limit to win, or do you think it was a factor?

PARKER: It's clearly a factor, but it's a small portion of the electorate, so it would never be enough to get anyone elected just from that community. The politics in Houston, the demographics in Houston, demand coalition politics. Clearly having support from the GLBT community nationwide provided me with access to a community of potential funding support. But even that is not the majority, or anything even approaching a majority, of my fundraising base. But it's a strong core of supporters locally and nationally who are committed to the campaign above how most people are engaged in politics. So it's a hard core group of volunteers and a hard core group of my funders, and even though it's not the majority of my volunteers and not the majority of my funders, it was certainly a significant factor.

MORRIS: What do you think the role of race, ethnicity, or religion played in any of the elections you've been involved in?

PARKER: Race and ethnicity is an issue in all the races. I think less so religion. I've now won, I guess, eight citywide races, and they're all different. But I'm assuming if you look at winning council for the first time, winning controller for the first time, winning Mayor for the first time, I have always had multiple opponents, and I've had Black and Hispanic opponents each time. And at each level there was at least an appeal to voters who might be motivated to vote against me because of my sexual orientation. But I don't know that I would call that necessarily a religious factor, because I think that the… it transcends race, it transcends ethnicity. You can't say that any one group or another, other than... If you divide up Houston, there is maybe 20% that is hardcore conservative voters. I don't know if those are values voters or economics voters or just the Republican label. In my race for city council in '97, I had six opponents and ended up in the runoff with a white male Republican. The city of Houston is a majority Democratic city. And the electorate is well divided among the Anglo, African-American and Hispanic voting communities. Although the Hispanics vote at much lower levels, probably a quarter of what their demographics would indicate. In that race, I had a white male Republican business opponent who had the majority of the traditional business endorsements. But I had the endorsement of the Houston Police Officers Union, the realtors. The police union endorsement being probably the most significant because it surprised folks because law enforcement, conservative, and yet they came with me because I had a decades long track record of working with them on policing issues. I was a police liaison from the GLBT community and had worked and had been a volunteer on the police advisory committee,

the citizen review committee, jail standards issues, so they knew me. And worked with me. And so I also got the [Houston] Chronicle endorsement, which at that time was considered a much more conservative newspaper than it is considered today. And so that confused people. And in a way the election came down to "do you want the good government lesbian who is endorsed by the cops, or do you want the lobbyist for the solid waste industry?"

MORRIS: And that seat was the one that was vacated by Sheila Jackson-Lee, is that correct?

PARKER: No, I ran in '95 in a special election. There were 19 candidates. I finished third and lost. But I won in 1997, and this was a seat that had been held by Gracie Saenz who was term-limited out.

So that race it was...he's Republican, I'm a democrat. A married family man. I and my spouse - we didn't have any kids at the time. [He was] much older; [I was] a good bit younger than he. Yet I had this big conservative credential with the cops' endorsement, and yet he had all the business groups. In 2003 when I ran for city controller, again multiple opponents - different Black, Hispanic, and Anglo opponents. I was the candidate with experience, and the rest just didn't have the experience. And I really think it came down to that. Even though there was an anti-gay attack that came out during the runoff, but it was ineffective. In the race for mayor, the acknowledgment that the city is largely Democratic, you had three strong Democratic candidates, a second-tier Republican candidate, and then everybody else. So the Republican candidate and the three Democratic candidates in all the debates. When we went to the runoff, I'm in a runoff with Gene Locke. As expected, he racked up the majority of the African-American vote. But I was the conservative candidate in the runoff, and I racked up the majority of the …I got the white liberal vote; he got the Black liberal vote, and I got the white conservative vote, the bulk of the white conservative vote.

MORRIS: I lived in Conroe at the time and I watched all the coverage and I tracked that quite a bit. Couldn't vote, but I would have voted for you.

PARKER: Thank you. But each race was different and you have to be considered in relationship with your opponents. But there's clearly ethnic and racial voting. Although the Hispanics voting for Hispanics is much less of an impact. Very strong African-American shift always to the Black candidate.

MORRIS: That showed in the spatial distribution of the precincts that were won. And while I'm talking about that I have to compliment the City of Houston GIS department and Harris County. I know you don't govern Harris County, but both entities have been very helpful in supplying computer software files that I could use. Everybody's been wonderful, including thank you for your time this afternoon.

So going back to your elections, particularly in 2009 and even your recent election, so you feel like the conservative component of the electorate is what pushed you on to win the elections? Based on your performance and track record then.

PARKER: Which is kind of an odd dynamic that I end up being the conservative choice. In the mayor's race I had the financial background. I spent 20 years working in the oil and gas industry. Lot of folks identified with that. Worked with a Republican oilman. That was a good credential. But I was the familiar candidate. And in time of turmoil you turn to what's familiar.

MORRIS: And 2009 was right in the middle of…

PARKER: Gene Locke was a complete unknown. And identified, I think, too much with [former Houston mayor and police chief] Lee Brown. And Peter Brown, while he had been a council member, didn't have a solid base across the community.

MORRIS: What instances would you comment on about people who have campaigned against you because of your sexual orientation?

PARKER: (Long pause) I hesitate to... In this last race, Dave Wilson got into the race, and he stated very clearly that the only reason he was running was because I was in there and I was a lesbian. I wouldn't say that any of my previous… and I was unopposed as controller, in my reelections to city council I had opponents both times who ran stating that they were running because I was lesbian. It was interesting that in the initial race there were people who were running because they wanted to be mayor or council member. But in my reelection campaigns each time I ran for city council and was reelected to council, and then in this reelection for mayor, there was someone in the race that it was their entire focus, and they stated it upfront that it was the only reason they were running. Maybe because they think you're not motivated to come out and put yourself through that if they think I'm gonna, lose but then once I won…

MORRIS: You probably already know this but Dave Wilson has already started up his 2013 campaign.

PARKER: I hope he runs it as well as he did the last one.

MORRIS: How do you think the different geographic areas around the city affect your elections? I guess that would be the demographics of the different areas.

PARKER: Well you can clearly get the demographic data to see which communities voted for me or not. I would say that when I won my council seat back in '97... I made the point of having a big conservative credential in the runoff and in hitting my opponent pretty hard. We went negative. He did a negative piece on me about being a lesbian, and I did a negative piece on him about being a lobbyist. The same thing about my race with Gene Locke. I did a negative piece on him about being a lobbyist. Somehow lobbyist is not a good thing. But in that first campaign, I had again a strong base of volunteers and support from the GLBT community. But I was a civic club president at the time, and I knew every civic club, was head of one of the largest civic associations, knew every civic club leader in Houston and again, was for most voters, all things being equal, I was the known and familiar candidate. So it enabled me to pull votes everywhere, even communities that might not have been expected to vote for me.

MORRIS: So is there anything else that you would like for me or anybody else who happens to read my thesis to learn about your position?

PARKER: The demographics of the city matter, but the execution of the campaign matters. There were any number times in any of those campaigns that could have gone the other way had we made different decisions, had they made different decisions, had we executed less well. I believe that each of these three positions that my campaign teams outperformed the other campaign teams also.

MORRIS: Is there anything you would do differently for the next campaign?

PARKER: Two years from now?

MORRIS: Yes

PARKER: I don't know. You know, I had a lot of folks, my supporters, who were complaining "why are going up on TV?" Because I was doing polling. In a very, very low turnout election, only people who are angry show up. (Laughs) So we knew that my

numbers were going down. So, but I don't want to give a... do the "hair-on-fire" thing and try to convince people "oh if you don't show up I'm not going to be elected." Trying to strike a balance to be realistic with supporters. Yes the odds are as incumbent I'm going to be reelected, but to work harder to create a sense of urgency in them that it makes a difference if they show up. And that it's not just the mayor's race that counts; those council races have an impact as well. And to sort of try to… I can't go back and recreate that sense of drive and urgency that happened in 2009 but to get a little more of that sharp edge to the campaign and make people feel that it matters.

MORRIS: I guess it's not surprising in a local election with a low turnout. I know in 2009 there was a 16% voter turnout, and then last month I think it was 13%; it was even lower. And I know you mention you don't want to do the "hair-on-fire" thing, but is there anything you would try to encourage people to come out and vote in the election?

PARKER: Well, no, no. I was actually referring to my supporters, the people who actually funded the campaign, the volunteers, to help create more of that sense of urgency to get people committed. No you can't turn the tide. There were things we could have done to boost the margins here or there. Like I said, in a very low turnout election... If people are generally satisfied… I mean if people were truly unhappy I think there would have been more of a turnout. I think if they were afraid of the city going off a cliff I think there would have been more of a turnout. So what ends up happening, is the people, even if they are not thrilled with things going on, things are okay, I'm going to stay home, there's no great urgency. The people who show up are the people who are like followers of Dave Wilson and the true believers and are angry and want someone to come out and vote against.

MORRIS: I was surprised when I read the precinct by precinct results that how many precincts had maybe one vote cast or two. That surprised me.

PARKER: It's frustrating if you believe in participatory democracy that so few people bothered to come out.

MORRIS: It is. Whether or not it would sway the outcome, it's just the idea of participatory democracy, like you say. Why give up that right that we hold dear? That is all the prepared questions I have. Again I really appreciate your time you've spent with me. I have something I can leave with you to show you a little bit about what I'm doing. Part of this research is based on the Houston Area Survey that Professor Stephen Klineberg at Rice has been doing since 1982. And that's a front and back little thing. On the back is one aspect of the survey comparing that distribution to the precincts you won in 2009. That side that you're looking at is the clustering of your votes in both elections, and it shows where your strongest support was. Which you may have already known. But I have to tell you it's been really fun for me to do this in Miami because people such have a preconceived notion of Houston, and I'm all about bursting all those stereotypes. That answers my questions. I'm going to use the transcript of the recording as an appendix to my thesis, and if I use any direct quotes in the body of the thesis, I'll be glad to let you look at them ahead of time. If you'd like to take a look at it before I submit it I'll be glad to do that.

PARKER: That wouldn't be necessary. Good luck on your thesis.

MORRIS: Thank you. I'm looking forward to finishing in May and getting back here to Texas.

MORRIS: Just in general, give an idea of the size of the spiritual community among the GLBTs there in Houston and if it's growing.

BAGBY-GROSE: I think it is. What we're seeing in America and, at the risk of sounding self-impressed cause I'm not, I know that we all have work to do, but having … God blessed me with an opportunity to go to one of the best seminaries in America, one of the oldest seminaries, Andover-Newton, actually the first graduate school of theology in America. And their emphasis is really on pastoring and being a pastor. Certainly there are preaching classes and theology classes but it's really for them pastoral theology because they figure preaching is 30 minutes a week. Are we going to teach you how to do the other stuff for the other 40 hours? The reason I say that is because there's a lot of teaching, conversation and discussion about where we are in America, and I'm really interested in anthropology and sociology. I read a lot about it. What we're seeing is just a sea change in certainly Christian communities of faith in the United States. And really all of them. Anybody that tells you there's no homophobia in Buddhism, for example, doesn't know anything about Buddhism. Lots of gender-phobia, all kinds sexism in all aspects of humanity, religious or not. What we're seeing is just a huge change. For instance, United Church of Christ in Texas is not nearly the dominant Christian presence in Texas that it is certainly in New England, but there's still a big presence here. The United Church of Christ six years ago, I think, had four open, affirming congregations in Texas and Louisiana, and open and affirming means that the congregation has gone through a very intentional process of conversation and dialogue over a period of time, and they have voted as a congregation to fully welcome and affirm gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender people into all levels of church life. That means you can get married at that church as a same gender couple; they certainly profess that they would call a gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender pastor. Really the all-inclusive moniker, if you will, for the congregation. Now there's three times that many. No, actually there's almost four times that many. It went from four to fifteen in about 5 ½ years.

MORRIS: That's pretty quick growth.

BAGBY-GROSE: I think this is typical of when we talk about Methodism. As a Methodist Christian in Texas several years ago, there were no welcoming Methodist churches in Dallas or Houston outside of the gay ghetto. Oaklawn area in Dallas and Montrose area in Houston. And now that's not the case. One of the largest Methodist churches in Houston has a PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) Houston chapter meeting at the church. We're just seeing a huge change in the level of acceptance and the level of conversation about human sexuality and sexual orientation and gender identity.

MORRIS: Ok. What steps do you take in helping someone find a church home? Do you actively help them, or give them a list of what churches are friendly to them?

BAGBY-GROSE: Being a chaplain is different from being a pastor. If someone asks you a theology question you're going to answer in a very different way as a chaplain than you would as a pastor. A pastor is much more about recruiting and sharing their faith

tradition, values, use of scripture. A chaplain is much more about meeting people on their own turf. Kind of guiding them toward a greater understanding of themselves, of leading them to explore their own theology. And I say that as a chaplain, when somebody asks me what church… it's a… I would never just give them a list. I have a conversation. I say, "Tell me a little bit." You want to learn about their own faith tradition. For instance, people will say, "I'm a Pentecostal." I have GLBT people all the time say they're Pentecostal, speak in tongues, tend to be a little livelier in their worship than some of us from the mainline traditions.

MORRIS: I grew up Presbyterian so I know…

BAGBY-GROSE: Yeah, the "frozen chosen"

MORRIS: Right.

BAGBY-GROSE: That's what we call them. No offense intended.

MORRIS: I know. It's a Presbyterian joke too.

BAGBY-GROSE: If you can't laugh at yourself… So we have a fairly in-depth conversation with them about their own faith tradition and whether they were still drawn to that. Because in the United Church of Christ, for instance, we have a huge percentage of new members that come from outside the United Church of Christ that are Roman Catholic. You don't get any more Protestant than the United Church of Christ. It's the church of the Pilgrims, people who came over on the Mayflower, the people who were fleeing that rigid rigidity that so many people find comforting. They like it. They like the rigidity, the formality, the "I know what's going to happen every time I go to church. We're going to do this, and we're going to do that." There are people who don't. So you have to explore; ask what's your tradition, what are you drawn to now? Sometimes those two don't intersect necessarily. And then I sit down and look at a list with them and talk about it. There's some wonderful, actually proudly GLBT gospel congregations, and so we sit down and talk about that and decide if that's where they want to go. Or they say they're interested in something a little more mainline, you know Baptist or Methodist. There are several welcoming and affirming (that's the term the Baptists use. You know how it is everybody has their own lingo). So that's the key - just having that conversation with them. But yes I do sit down with a list eventually.

MORRIS: So how do you interact with the rest of the community and other church leaders who maybe aren't so welcoming?

BAGBY-GROSE: Well one of the things the center has done for years is host a clergy gathering, a quarterly clergy gathering. And, you know, we've gone back and forth on what that's going to involve, but what I as facilitator of that, what I have decided it's going to be, in consultation with folks, is that it's going to be an open place. The United Church of Christ has a wonderful saying "no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you're welcome here." A lot of times that's what you'll hear on Sunday morning from the pulpit in the welcome. They'll say "no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you're welcome here." And that's the way I feel about this clergy group. Because I think, "How are we ever going to educate folks and take them down the road toward understanding and acceptance and nurture of GLBT people in their congregations if we call it the affirming clergy group?" You can't predicate it on "this is what you have to believe to be here." You have to predicate it on wherever you are, we're here to have conversation, and yes, it just so happens, understandably, that most of the clergy are pretty welcoming and affirming to GLBT people in their congregational life.

But then you have the folks who aren't sure and want to be in conversation and dialogue about "what do you do with scripture. How do you talk about this scripture, or how do you deal with this issue."

MORRIS: So there is an ongoing dialogue then on a regular basis?

BAGBY-GROSE: There is. And then there are also events we sponsor. There's an interfaith Pride service in June every year. Houston unfortunately celebrates Pride in June, worst time of year. It's inside somewhere. It's an interfaith service that involves mainly Christian and Jewish clergy and lay people. Occasionally we've had a Muslim. We also have a couple of Buddhist priests, and every once in a while we'll get a Hindu involved. It's really focused on the mainline religions. This is offensive to the politically correct, but I'm not always very politically correct. Mainly, the five great world religions. We're not getting into all the Native American true spirit blah, blah, blah… That's fine if that's your thing, but we really focus on drawing in what they would call the five great world religions. Then we also do an interfaith service that's part of World AIDS Day, and that's September 1 every year.

MORRIS: So a lot has been written about how the religious right and faith intersect and how it influences voting for that particular group. Do you think that faith influences voting decisions in the GLBT community?

BAGBY-GROSE: I think it does, I think it really does. There are folks that their faith tells them to be pro-union and pro-employee rights, and that has put them at cross ways with Mayor Parker because she's not perceived as being a strong advocate for city employees and the unions. And you know we could have a long discussion about "well, but in this economic climate, we've got to balance the budget, blah, blah, blah, blah." The why and wherefore, I'm just telling you. So there are folks that really struggle with that. They have just slashed benefits and cut employees…

MORRIS: So is it kind of, this is off a little on a tangent now. When Gene Locke ran against Annise Parker in 2009, and I have the voting results and demographic results to back it up, he got the Black vote because he's Black mainly. It's so strongly correlated that there's just not another conclusion to draw from that. So what you're saying, if I understand you correctly, just because Annise Parker is gay, she's not necessarily getting the full support of the all the gay, lesbian, transgender community. Is that right?

BAGBY-GROSE: I think that's true. I think that she certainly gets the lion's share and certainly her first term when she first ran. They were really able, and I have to give full disclosure. I was on the "kitchen cabinet" [Parker's circle of advisors]. I've known her for years; we've been in each other's homes.

MORRIS: Well, I interviewed her in December so that's my full disclosure too.

BAGBY-GROSE: But it was when you don't have a record as mayor, it's a little easier to run. And she's not a person of faith. And as people become more aware of that, folks have found that troubling. You don't want to be exclusionary, and you think, "well, we're not calling her to be the pastor of Houston." But you can imagine that all people of faith, certainly GLBT people of faith, find that a little troubling. To the point where she would not take her oath of office as an at-large council… three terms as an at-large council member and three terms as at-large elected city controller, she wouldn't take the oath of office on a Bible.

MORRIS: I did not know that.

BAGBY-GROSE: It was only as mayor, when I think probably her advisors sat her down and said, "Really you don't want this to be the headline tomorrow, 'Parker refuses to take oath of office on Bible.'" It wasn't really noticed before. Those of us on the inside knew and were, "like, ok, whatever" you know. I mean, I wouldn't want her to take an oath on the Bible if she didn't mean it.

MORRIS: Yeah, there's something in the Bible about that.

BAGBY-GROSE: There is! There's a lot about that.

MORRIS: And she was pretty emphatic when I interviewed her that religion had nothing to do with it, which doesn't exactly go along with the data. Houston Area Survey is what I'm pulling from, by a professor at Rice University who's been compiling this data for decades. She was very negatively correlated with people of faith, and she didn't think religion had anything to do with her elections. And it may not have.

BAGBY-GROSE: Well I think certainly in Texas… it's different in New England, harking back to seminary days. I think certainly in Texas, to a large extent observant Christians tend to be more politically conservative than other groups that are not observant Christians. I'm probably not as impressed as you are with the Rice data and the way they collect it. I've looked at some of that, and I think that all data are biased, all surveys are biased. You can do better with some than with others. We have so many people in the United States who are under 40 who, and I know you've heard people say this, you may have said it yourself, "Oh I'm spiritual but not religious." And some of those people go to church with me on Sunday. And so if you ask them in a survey, members of First Congregational United Church of Christ of Houston, which is where we go to church, if you ask them on Sunday, "Do you consider yourself a religious person?" A lot of those folks, especially the under-40 crowd, will say no. Because they don't like that word. It's kind of like evangelical. Evangelical to me means that you want to share your faith with other people. In a kind and loving way, but that word…talk about…

MORRIS: it's become a fire starter almost.

BAGBY-GROSE: Right, it's a loaded expression. And so consequently you almost can't use it because people stop. It's kind of like saying "whore" in church. You know "whore" is in the Bible, but they taught us in preaching class in seminary it may be in the Bible, but you're not going to stand up in the pulpit and use the word "whore" because if you do, nobody is going to hear the next four paragraphs. They are all going to be hung up on the fact that the preacher just said "whore!"

MORRIS: And then you'll get letters.

BAGBY-GROSE: It's not even that you'll get letters. If your goal is to share something important in the sermon, you're not going to use words that cause people to stop and not hear the rest of what you have to say. Consequently, I think that some of that survey data, I really, I'm amazed. There's a congregation in Montrose with a fairly traditional theology. It was started by a fairly moderate Baptist church that is no longer affiliated with this congregation. A lot of big Baptist churches in Houston, by the way, have withdrawn from the Southern Baptist Convention. People don't realize that when they drive by. It doesn't say, "we withdrew." Unfortunately the image for Baptists in America is the one put forth by Southern Baptists. So when you go to the individual churches, and they say, "Oh no. We haven't been a Southern Baptist church since 1992, and, you know, we have a woman pastor, and women deacons and we have gay deacons." And you're like "What? What did he say?" So you have to kind of... What one pastor said to me was,

"I feel like the Southern Baptists have stolen our brand." But so now I've kind of given you a long answer. I hope it's okay. I figured you wanted expansive. So I think it's really important to remember that here's this church with a 1000 people and three services, the aggregate is 1000, so It's about 300 and something in each service, three services every Sunday. And when I walk in the door I'm like the oldest person there, everybody is like 25, 28. It's amazing. You don't see that a lot in church. And it's called Ecclesia, and it's actually affiliated with one of the Baptist denominations.

MORRIS: I have a good friend who goes there.

BAGBY-GROSE: The funny thing is, you need to ask you friend, if you go to their website and do a Google search on the word Baptist, you won't find it. They give like $15,000 a year to the Baptist General Convention of Texas, but the rank-and-file members don't even realize that's their association because it's just not a church that emphasizes that denominational tie. So my point is, that a lot of those people would identify as Christian, but they wouldn't… they don't like the term religious. So I think it's a real problem when surveys ask "do you consider yourself religious?'

MORRIS: It's becoming more that way like you say. People have a bad connotation of religion sort of like the time of Jesus with the Pharisees. Religion is a set of rules and regulations and a code of behavior you have to follow or else, whereas faith is a little more, has more meaning, I guess. I don't know exactly how to describe that, but I know what you're talking about.

BAGBY-GROSE: Well you know I agree with you, and there was a wonderful documentary that was done called "Lord save us from your followers". Google it. It's this wonderful documentary, and this guy went around the country for a year basically going to Main Street U.S.A. He went to the mall and wherever he could find big crowds, NASCAR, wherever he could find big crowds of people. And he'd ask two questions. He said, "What do you think when somebody uses the word Christian? What do you think of when people mention Christians?" And people say, "Oh, you know, people who follow Jesus. People who go to church on Sunday. Hypocrites. People who are judgmental, mean." And largely the responses were negative. But then [he] said the second question. [He] asked everybody the same two questions. It's a two-hour documentary I watched. It was fascinating. Then the second question [he] asked was "What do you think of when people mention Jesus Christ? What images come to mind?" Jesus Christ – "Oh helping the poor. Healing the sick. Helping the downtrodden marginalized in society." It was all super, super positive. And of course, the point of this survey, the documentary, was, Christians have an image problem. People like the guy that everything's based on. They think he's really cool and helps people and does all kind of… has this great way of Jesus to follow this path of justice. But they don't like the people who are trying to do it.

MORRIS: We don't help ourselves out very often.

BAGBY-GROSE: I know what you're saying. When you look around and you probably went through Montrose, you would not believe Ecclesia. Have you ever been?

MORRIS: I have never been. I've heard a lot of about it, and I know that Jennifer talks about it. I lived in Conroe before I moved to Miami, and I met her at our church in Conroe. And then she moved into town and wanted to find a church home closer there, and she's really, she's talked about it quite a bit. And what she likes about it is their outreach and their sense of mission and acceptance of the community they're in and how they relate to the people in that community. So she's very happy with it.

BAGBY-GROSE: At that church, when it's 15 minutes before a service it's amazing how many people you'll see walking there.

MORRIS: Yes

BAGBY-GROSE: Of course, what that means, it's not hard to figure that one out, is they live in that community. And I've been there several times just checking it out. I'm a believer in going and seeing what Joel Osteen is up to.

MORRIS: Yes, I was going to ask you about him next.

BAGBY-GROSE: Because you know if we really care about people of God, which is everybody, all of humanity, then we need to look at the things that large groups do, the things that people are drawn to. And obviously I ask my clergy friends all the time who are kind of bad-mouthing Joel Osteen, you can imagine the conversations they're all... "Shallow theology. It would take him 15 minutes for him to tell you everything he knows about the Bible, blah, blah, blah." Which is all true actually. Quite frankly. I mean the guy has no seminary training. When he gets on CNN and wants to tell the rest of the world what the scriptures say, you know, those of us who know Greek and Hebrew just shudder to hear things that he says and go, "wait a minute. All you know is what you've read, what you've been told. You can't sit down and just look at this stuff."

MORRIS: And you can't really talk about the religious landscape in Houston without addressing his presence there because it's so big.

BAGBY-GROSE: That's exactly what I say to people when they're poo-pooing him, bad-mouthing him. I understand all that, I get all that, but are 15,000 people showing up in person to listen to what you have to say on Sunday?

MORRIS: I can tell you that I go to a church here, I go to a Vineyard, I don't know if you're familiar with Vineyard…

BAGBY-GROSE: Yes, I'm familiar with Vineyard.

MORRIS: I go to a Vineyard Church, and it's the most diverse church I've ever been in. I'm in Miami so that's the way Miami is; it's very diverse. But when people hear that I am from Houston, I've been asked several times, "Oh, did you go to Lakewood?" And I have never gone to a church service at Lakewood. I did try to interview somebody at Lakewood, and they declined. But he's so well-known everywhere that just because I'm from Houston it's automatically [assumed that] I must have gone to Lakewood. So you can't ignore his reach. It's big. So that was part of what I was going to ask you, what you thought of his comments when was interviewed by Piers Morgan and Oprah about his interpretation that the Bible says homosexuality is sinful. But then, on the other hand, he told Oprah he thinks Christians focus too much on homosexuality.

BAGBY-GROSE: Right, well. He wouldn't have even answered [before]. I didn't see the Oprah interview, but I saw the Piers Morgan interview, and it was fascinating because he'd been asked the same question by Larry King, but Larry King was such a pushover. That's why everybody liked him because he didn't ask any tough questions. But Piers Morgan was not going to let him go. Absolutely was not going to let him go. I don't know if you saw the interview, but he was absolutely not going to let him go.

MORRIS: I saw a video of it after it happened.

BAGBY-GROSE: It was fantastic. It was what you say the [unintelligible] because he made it very real and human instead of just this abstract, which tends to happen. Well, certainly after a dozen years of school and being an openly gay man and married for years and now with a child, that's certainly an issue I've thought about a lot,

understandably, and studied and had lots of conversations about, and I could take you through a long conversation from Genesis forward of, for instance, just real quickly in Genesis. Genesis is talking about *ish* the term, the Hebrew term. In Genesis, it's "human being", the "living being." It's incorrectly translated as Adam. It really should be the "living being." and God created this living being who was found to be lonely. This intelligent living being. So we could have a long conversation about that. Because the hardline people will take back Genesis and try to say Genesis is anti-gay, and I just don't think so. As far as what Mr. Osteen says, you know he's looking at Romans 1. The entire book of Romans is a letter written by the Apostle Paul to the church of Rome which, at the time, was experiencing this really significant division between the Jewish and the Gentile elements within the congregation. And don't worry this won't be too long. They were divided in that the Jewish Christians wanted the Gentile Christians that convert to accept the rules and regulations of Judaism as well as professing faith in Jesus Christ. Of course, as we know from those passages, the Gentile Christians refused to submit to those rules so then the Jewish Christians began to condemn them as pagans. So Paul's entire letter is spent kind of, if you will, leveling the playing field in the Roman church by pointing out that both Jew and Gentile have quote "sinned and fallen short of God's glory. So the entire first chapter, which is called the "clobber passages" as we call it, in scripture because it's used to clobber gay people and allies over the head like it's a club. It's a really beautiful piece of writing that builds from a statement of praise that God is revealed in all of creation with an admonition that we have no excuse for not recognizing and worshipping God as a result of God's revelation of God's self. So Paul uses it within the Roman church. Those that have worshiped idols, creation rather than the creator, having engaged in unnatural sexual intercourse. And it should be clearly noted that there's no reference to women having sex with women, only men having sex with men. Again that part is very, very clear. So the unnatural intercourse was clearly temple prostitution, that is, engaging in sexual intercourse with male sex slaves in order to honor and adore these gods of Rome which were the outer images of male perfection. The Adonis, the pecs, the abs, which come from Roman mythology and Zeus, Jupiter, the strong tough male. Paul was arguing that this idolatry leads to the collapse of the entire society, and personally I would argue that our society's obsession with being thin and having the perfect body, we're falling into kind of that same trap. I'm actually very healthy. I'm gonna put myself out there. I'm pretty buff. You can see my abs. I go to the gym. I think the body is the temple. So I'm not an overweight guy just whining about picking on overweight people. But I think that we are obsessed.

MORRIS: Yes we've gone beyond just taking care of ourselves as a way to honor our creation to not being satisfied with what we're given.

BAGBY-GROSE: Right, and what I would say a society based on good looks has no depth, and without depth it will collapse. So unless we think that Paul is simply condemning the good Gentile Christians in Rome for their pagan ways, we could do well to remember to continue reading the letter, and discover Paul condemns Jewish Christians for their almost idolatry of the Torah, the law and the teaching. His point is basically we're all sinners, let's stop judging each other, and get about the task of loving and service in the way of Jesus.

So I would say that's not what the scripture says, and certainly when Paul's writing this, he did not have [in mind] Burton and Ron and Rosalee who own a little house in

Westbury in southwest Houston and go to church every Sunday, and Rosalee goes to church school, preschool and Sunday School on Sunday. Her papa teaches Sunday School. I don't think that's Paul's image. Paul's image was the guy, and I'm very blunt in my language and I hope it doesn't offend you, again the real sexually aroused guy who shows up at the pagan temple, and on Monday that girl looks pretty good to him so he pays his little tribute and goes in the room with the girl. Then on Wednesday says that 18-year-old boy looks interesting. That's what Paul is talking about. And that wasn't okay then, and it's not okay now. I'm sorry I hope that didn't offend you.

MORRIS: No, that's okay. I have to say that this whole study has been a learning process for me, and I knew that it would be when I took it on. So I appreciate what you're saying. It's to me you know I'm learning. It's a continuous process. I think when we stop learning is when we get dangerous.

BAGBY-GROSE: Well the United Church of Christ has a wonderful slogan that's on most of our shirts. I have about a dozen polo shirts that have this embroidered slogan for our denomination that says, "God is still speaking." It's the idea from the when John Robinson, the pastor of the Pilgrims, as they boarded the Mayflower gave the famous sermon, and he said "God has yet still more light and truth to reveal from His holy word." And the idea is that on Monday, Nancy's going to read this passage of scripture, and it will say one thing to her, and then she has all these experiences throughout week, and on Thursday maybe she picks up her Bible again and reads the very same passage, and it says something completely different.

MORRIS: I've had that experience.

BAGBY-GROSE: Right, and I think most observant Christians have. Where God has used that scripture, and it was there wanting you to read it on Monday, and then you pick up the very same thing on Thursday, and it's there, what you need. That's what I would say to Mr. Osteen. He doesn't know. I mean he didn't even finish college. And I'm not again being arrogant. I'm not an education snob, but he came home when he was halfway through his radio-television degree at Oral Roberts University. And never went a day to seminary, and I think seminary, for a long list of reasons, one of which is the academic preparation, one part of which is the academic preparation, but, for a long list of reasons, ministers need to go to seminary. I have a cousin who is a Baptist pastor in Paris, Texas with a bachelor's degree in religion, and you know [he] and I have conversations, and I'm real careful with him because it would be real easy to talk right over his head. And you know he's 45 years old; he's pastored a church for 20 years, so certainly he's a veteran pastor, but I can talk right over his head because he never studied this stuff. His never sat before a guy with a PhD in systematic theology for two semesters.

MORRIS: That just sounds intimidating.

BAGBY-GROSE: Yeah it is! Especially at Andover-Newton because that's like the last stop for people. It's like the pinnacle of their careers. So the folks you get there are hard core. You see what I'm saying. It makes me sad because I realize that Joel Osteen, when he opens his mouth because of the following he has, people are going to listen regardless of his lack of credentials. The fascinating thing here was to me, absolutely fascinating. You could do a whole thesis on just this issue I'm going to give you. Ok, he says this stuff on the Piers Morgan show, right? He says this stuff to Oprah. And locally, one of the local stations goes out and finds some gay people in Houston that go to his church. And the crux of what they told the interviewer was, "yeah we know that, and he never

talks about that from the pulpit and we're going to stay there. We love that church. That's where we're going to church." For many of us, of course, it's mind boggling. I couldn't stay at a church five seconds after my pastor did that kind of interview. I'd be at the computer so fast writing my letter of resignation from that congregation. You got to slow down and think about moral issues.

MORRIS: It is like sort of, I guess the only thing I know to compare it to... I am divorced. I'm remarried, but there are a lot of churches who don't approve of that, and speak openly about that from the pulpit. So I had to find a new church home because I wasn't welcome. You don't want to be at a place of worship where the people around you are shooting daggers.

BAGBY-GROSE: You want to go every Sunday and hear about those evil divorced people?

MORRIS: No, I didn't and I don't.

BAGBY-GROSE: it's the same thing. Talk about self-abuse.

MORRIS: That's the closest comparison I can think of in my mind.

BAGBY-GROSE: I think it's a great comparison.

MORRIS: I just have a couple of more questions. And this brings up the added question that's not on the list that I sent you, but I've read some about what churches at a denomination level say about members who are gay, lesbian, transgender or bisexual, and I've read about a program the Catholic Church has called Dignity that, from what I've read, seems to be for that group of members. But at the same time, a couple of weeks ago I read about the Catholic Church creating the new ordinate in Houston. It's going to be for the entire country, but it's located there in Houston, and the reason it was in the news a couple of weeks ago is that they had accepted and ordained a man who had been an Episcopal bishop. He's now a Catholic priest within this ordinate that's been created mainly for Episcopalians and Anglicans who are dissatisfied with the direction the Episcopal Church has gone. Particularly after the ordination of the man in New Hampshire, I forgot his name…

BAGBY-GROSE: Gene Robinson

MORRIS: Yes. So you've got, it appears, two different dynamics going on in the Catholic Church and then also within the Presbyterian Church. Memorial Drive Presbyterian, where I went when I lived in Houston, I was a member there for a while. That pastor was in the news just a few days ago because him and several other pastors from other churches around the country are convening in Orlando this week to discuss maybe forming a new body of Presbyterians breaking away from the Presbyterian Church U.S.A and aligning more maybe with the Evangelical Presbyterian or forming a completely separate body, but most of it is in response to the fact that the Presbyterian Church U.S.A has started allowing the ordination of gay clergy. There's all that kind of dynamic going on too, and apparently Houston's in the thick of that kind of movement. I just wanted to get your response to that.

BAGBY-GROSE: It's sad. The guy at Memorial Drive is a sad, sad caricature of what a pastor should be. And I'm sorry if that offends you, I know you went there to church but he's a sad, sad caricature of what a pastor should be. I have very little kind to say about him. I have friends that went there. A lesbian couple that had adopted their drug-addicted sister's child as their own and then actually had another child together. This wonderful, committed couple went there for years and were active and really loved the church. And

then like the first month that guy was there after he'd been called as pastor, he gave this vitriolic anti-gay sermon, and one of the members of the couple tells me the story about how she just left. She had to just walk out crying and got one child out of the nursery and the other child out of Sunday School and left and never went back. And there's nothing Christian about that. I think you can espouse your beliefs in a way that isn't mean and hateful. And that's the sad thing, that he doesn't seem to know how to do that a lot of time. And I actually know a lot of Presbyterian ministers, and when you mention his name they just roll their eyes. He's not a nice person, and again I apologize if you think he's great or you always enjoyed his preaching.

MORRIS: Actually there were a couple of other pastors on staff that I enjoyed. I mean I did enjoy his sermons, but I got to know the other pastors more than I did him. I just didn't have that much contact with him. It's a large church.

BAGBY-GROSE: Well it's just so hurtful what he did and the way he did it. You know, I mean I think we're going to have that. There's a small Baptist group called the Alliance of Baptists that was formed during the fundamentalist takeover of the Southern Baptist convention in the '80's, and that group has never grown beyond about 200 congregations because they moved so quickly to the left. They embraced marriage equality several years ago. They are really on the left of evangelical Christianity and in other ways too. These Baptists are practicing what they call "alien immersion" which is accepting infant baptism. No offense to the Presbyterians or the Episcopalians, but if you're calling yourself Baptist, and one of the ideas about that is that believers make their own decision about baptism, and then suddenly you say, "oh no we're not going to do that anymore. Yeah you were baptized when you were eight months old sure, no problem." When you've made this baptism ritual a central part of your tradition and then just throw it out the window, but they moved so quickly to the left they left people behind. And the more moderate Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, which has about a $17.5 annual budget, bigger than most of the long time mainline denominations. They haven't moved so quickly and they're kinder, gentler and more inclusive. They actually have churches with gay pastors. A few, it's just a handful, but they actually have some. And those people obviously are still welcome in that denomination. I worry about the Presbyterians because they push so hard. I understand. I've been one of those internal people within a denomination pushing for change, but I think there's a way that you do it, and this was just so portrayed as a winner-takes-all situation with the Presbyterians. I don't think it is. It would be different if the Presbyterian model was the Catholic model in terms of hierarchy. Where they say, you know, what this means, now this means that the bishop of Texas decides [for] worldwide Presbyterians. That next year we're going to send Burton Bagby-Grose as your pastor, and you're going to have to deal with it. It doesn't work that way. It's saying the congregation, with full consideration and conversation, decide to call an openly gay pastor, then that's okay. So I think they really did try to take the "big tent" mentality with the folks like the borderline fundamentalists. I would say the pastor of Memorial Drive. And I know fundamentalists on the liberal side. I have Unitarian friends who I would call fundamentalists.

MORRIS: So you're distinguishing fundamentalists theologically from say fundamentalists socially or politically?

BAGBY-GROSE: I think there are often intersections, but fundamentalists theologically is what I'm talking about.

MORRIS: So you mention United Church of Christ and a couple of other denominations that are accepting of the GLBT community. Are there any others that we haven't mentioned yet that are open and welcoming?

BAGBY-GROSE: Certainly the Methodists have a core group of what they call reconciling congregations.

MORRIS: Yes, I've read about that.

BAGBY-GROSE: Right, they're here in Houston and in Dallas. Those are the cities that I know the most about. The Methodists kind of struggled with this as other denominations have, but you know they're trying to do, and I think they're doing a better job of it than the Presbyterians because they're trying to really go with that "big tent" mentality where they're not saying you have to do it this way. But they're trying to make some room for it to happen. Certainly even like the Church of the Brethren and the Mennonites you know. I don't know if you're familiar with those. They're kind of like Baptists, really, I would say theologically. And let's see I was trying to think. The United Church of Christ and there's certainly the Baptist group. And I could name lots of Baptist churches that have openly gay ministers. Andover-Newton actually is a United Church of Christ and American Baptist covenanted seminary. We have covenantal ties with United Church of Christ and American Baptist. Andover was the United Church of Christ and Newton was American Baptist, and they merged. Obviously that version of Baptist, the American Baptist U.S.A. The regional denomination is very different from Southern Baptist. And Dignity, the thing is about Dignity, they're more about… they're different. Because they have their own services, and they'll try to talk a priest in that city, and sometimes they do, they get a priest to come and officiate services and consecrate communion and all that stuff. Whereas most of these other denominations have people working from within. I'm not saying that Dignity is not trying to work from within, but I think these other groups are offering their own worship services. They're trying to advocate for greater inclusion with the existing denominational structure. Dignity is just kind of saying we're proud, gay Catholics, and we'll march in the Pride parade, and we'll have services of our own, whereas like Integrity, which is the Episcopalian group, always works from within. Then there's one Reconciling in Christ Lutheran congregation in Houston with a lesbian pastor down in Montrose. There are several welcoming Presbyterian churches, St. Philip Presbyterian, which is over in the Galleria area on San Felipe. That's a large congregation. There are a couple of smaller ones. I have a friend from college, great guy, married to a woman, he's pastor of what they call a More Light Presbyterian. That's the name of the group, More Light Presbyterian. It's an advocacy group. It's MLP.org. He pastors a congregation that has a statement of welcome and affirmation for GLBT people.

MORRIS: What about other non-Christian faiths. I know you mentioned early on you encountered Buddhists and Muslims and Jewish people who are homophobic, but are there any welcoming and affirming groups of worshippers within those religions that accept gay lesbian members?

BAGBY-GROSE: It varies by temple for the Buddhists and by tradition. You may know there are different strands of Buddhism. For instance the Sangha Nicheren strand. They have a big temple here. Their chief priest is actually a member of our group at the center that meets quarterly. But then there are others, a real mixture. I don't know of specific advocacy organizations that exist within Buddhism, but it basically varies by the strand of

Buddhism. Hinduism is generally, from a theological standpoint, very accepting, and the Hindu people in America, by and large, tend to be very, very welcoming and affirming of gay people, but it's more of a cultural thing. Where you see a shift there depending on where you are and what the broader culture is and whatever country, but in the United States it's very welcoming. And Buddhism, there's actually, oh what's it called? Let's see if I can remember; I should be able to remember. I have a friend who's the director. There's a Muslim group Al-Fatiha. They're an advocacy group for inclusion of gay people. Usually you find that the Muslims in America are very accepting. When I was in seminary, the American Baptists hosted a fascinating dialogue at Andover-Newton that was the Muslim-Baptist national dialogue. I think it was actually called the Baptist-Muslim national dialogue. And it's fascinating that these were the leaders of the Islamic Society of North America, and this is one of the leading progressive Christian seminaries in America. And for them to come there, I think, says a lot that there's such a misunderstanding about Islam, about what their theology is. They're very welcoming. It's kind of like in the Bible. I read recently the anti-religion religion section of the New York Times. They call it the religion section, but they generally use it to bash religion. One of the columnists wrote a column about how horrible most world religions are, and for Christianity, ironically for Christianity, the passage of scripture he pulls out is from Isaiah. I mean it's part of our Bible, but really, if you're going to pull representative passages for Christians, maybe go to one of the Gospels. That's just my own bias. The one he pulled out it has, as you may know if you've studied the Book of Isaiah, it's about the foretelling of the Babylonian captivity, about the Babylonian captivity and how miserable it was. And if you understand what happened there, they left all the poor people in Israel. They weren't dumb; they wanted the farms farmed, and the people they took as slaves were the doctors and lawyers. See it happened, you're a doctor in your little town, and suddenly you're cleaning out horse stalls. It was just a miserable, miserable enslavement. Not that any kind of slavery isn't miserable. And so part of that context, they felt like taking their children out to the edge of town and bashing their heads on the rocks. Well that's a metaphor for their anguish. That was not saying go [and] do that.

MORRIS: And that's what the man pulled out to talk about Christians?

BAGBY-GROSE: Right, yeah. See look at Christians. They're telling people to go bash their babies' heads against rocks.

MORRIS: Oh my.

BAGBY-GROSE: So I think the same is true for Islam. You can pull five words out of any book and make it sound pretty great or pretty horrible. You have to contextualize things. Now I've taken world religion classes and just gotten a little flavor. Obviously a whole degree could be earned just studying Islam, just like you can Christianity or Buddhism, but I have a little bit of an understanding. I just think they've been given a bad rap. I know that's not politically correct. By and large people in the United States are anti-Islam because I think they don't know about it. And unfortunately most of the Islamic world is so uneducated and is led by fundamentalist clerics. Many of those countries have less than a 20% literacy rate. Anyway I'm looking at what the Koran says. I have a copy sitting here on my shelf. So when I talk about it, I'm looking at what it says, not what some crazy ayatollah in Iran says it says. Just like I wouldn't listen to what

a crazy minister at Lakewood Church says about Christianity. Read it yourself, contextualize it, study it, [and] understand it.

MORRIS: I sure appreciate all the time you spent with me, and it's been a very enlightening conversation. It will take me a little while to transcribe this one, but that's okay.

BAGBY-GROSE: You bet. Let us know if there's anything we can do. It was great chatting with you. I wish you all the best on your journey.

Morris: I have some prepared questions that I wanted to share with you and see what your thoughts are. First one I'm going to show you. I think I mentioned to you that I have already interviewed the chaplain at the GLBT community center, and this was one of the points that he made in that conversation. A lot of this topic is just tracking the changes in religion here in Houston, and that's definitely a change…this growth in churches that are gay-affirming and gay-friendly and this chaplain's position. That [printout of Bagby-Grose's remarks] was his explanation of the Genesis story, and I wanted you to look at that and tell me your reaction to it. I can tell you mine and see if I'm on the right track, but it sounded to me like a lot of personal interpretation.

Peterson: Ok. [pause while he reads]. So he's an openly gay man and married for years. Is he currently married?

Morris: Yes

Peterson: To a woman?

Morris: No.

Peterson: Ok. Married to a man so it's his... he's co-opting the term married?

Morris: Yes, and they have adopted a child.

[pause while he reads]

It sounded kind of odd to me.

Peterson: It's a little random actually. It seems to me to be what we would describe as "proof-texting." In other words, it's beginning with a prior position and then finding a way to angle the material to come to that conclusion while ignoring an awful lot of, in my opinion, substantive biblical material. I think I've come to entirely different conclusions. It's not dissimilar to so much of what I've heard. I've been in this conversation for forty years. I've been debating this in the Presbyterian Church for forty years, and it would be very consistent with the thought process you have to go through to come to that outcome.

Morris: So I have my questions here; I've tried to organize them in such a way, I think logically. First would be to talk about the religious part of it, and then transition into some of the political aspect of it. Jumping from this chaplain's interview and his information and what I've seen on websites around the city, there is an increased number of churches who are labeled either gay-affirming or gay-welcoming at least. A pretty big growth in that. What is your position about those churches or churches in particular as far as being open to members who are gay and lesbian?

Peterson: Well, I'm not trying to be deceptive here at all, but Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church is completely open to gays and lesbians. I can't imagine us not being. We have gay and lesbian members in this congregation. You could be a member of the church. In the Presbyterian environment, it's all about leadership, it's not about membership. And even in leadership, it's important for me to stress this, even in leadership, the issue of being gay or lesbian; it's a matter of practice, not about orientation. You could be gay or lesbian and be a leader. And when I say leader I mean an elder, a deacon or a pastor. You can be a leader in the Presbyterian Church and be gay

or lesbian; you just can't be practicing. Now you can, but until about a year ago you could not. There was a prohibition against avowed, practicing gays and lesbians. So without wanting to nitpick too much, the doors are wide open.

Morris: So that answered the next question, it is open, and you are open to people with family members who have gay relatives?

Peterson: Yes, absolutely.

Morris: The Catholic Church has a program called Dignity. Does the Presbyterian Church have anything similar to that? I haven't run across anything.

Peterson: No, not that I'm aware of. There are programs that are operated, run by either Presbyterians that have constituencies from within the Presbyterian Church that do. I don't know what that Catholic program does.

Morris: I think it just sort of like a support group from what I've read about for Catholics who are gay and lesbian, the whole gamut of different sexual orientation population. Support group kind of thing.

Peterson: Yeah, I mean, I think you'll find those. I'm drawing a blank on the names of some of those things. But there are support groups within the Presbyterian Church for family members of gays and lesbians. I just can't remember the name of it. It might come to me before we are done. Then there are other entities with roots in the Presbyterian Church that try to… that offer theological and spiritual counsel to live faithfully within your sexuality or even to seek transformation of your sexual orientation.

Morris: That sounds like it might be similar to what the staff member at Windsor Village United Methodist Church described to me that they have over there. It's a totally confidential program, supernatural healing, I think is where they put it in their ministry.

Peterson: This wouldn't be to endorse gay behavior but really to help people wrestle faithfully with that as we understand faithful. A faithful witness to it. Our way of saying it for a long time as Presbyterians is "fidelity in marriage and chastity in singleness."

Morris: Applies to all of us, I think.

You've touched on it, and I know. I grew up Presbyterian. I've been close to it for a long time, but I know that it's been debated for a long time as far as ordaining gay clergy. How many gay clergy members are there? Was there a big call for this decision, or was it something that the General Assembly saw coming and opened doors to it? How did this come about?

Peterson: There have been, I would say, a half a dozen, maybe a dozen, that I've been aware of anyway, of what I would describe as activists who have been prodding the church to move in this direction for some time. These would be typically gay/lesbian people who have sought ordination. And they've tended to just bring the issue back to the denomination, and they've developed obviously a very widespread support network that eventually turned the tide of the church in the direction of saying that we are now open to ordaining avowed practicing homosexuals. But it's not as though there was a huge body of gays and lesbians from the PCUSA [Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.] who were clamoring for acceptance. It's mostly been driven by a few active gays and lesbians who then spoke to the larger crowd of heterosexuals and kind of won them over in the social debate.

Morris: That seems to be the pattern I think in a lot of the…

Peterson: I think most of the studies, you'll know this a lot more than I do, but I've heard said that it sounds as though less than 10% of the population would be in the category of gay or lesbian, so no matter where you go, it's going to be a small percentage.

Morris: I think some of the data I've read it's even a smaller percentage than that.

Peterson: Yes, I know. I'm trying to be generous. I've heard that it's closer to one or two percent. Not that you could tell that from what happens in the media these days because there's always a representative of the gay and lesbian community in virtually everything that's in the media. You would think that they were 50% of the population. It's amazing. It is an amazing social agenda. It's surprising to me that the church doesn't get that. That we're being manipulated by…

Morris: I think I mentioned to you that I've had a difficult time finding someone who would speak out on that side. I didn't have a hard time finding Burton Bagby-Grose, who is the chaplain at the center. The few that I did get to discuss it a little bit kind of tiptoed around it.

Peterson: I've got very little to lose. I'm old. And I've been in the big debate for so long, and I've been pretty open about this. I'd like to think of myself as a …people on the other side might not characterize me this way, but I've tried to be a compassionate voice of some moderation. But with the clear conviction that we've got 2000 years of history and the vast percentage of global Christianity continuing to hold to an orthodox position. The position that Americans are taking right now, at almost any moment in history, would be considered outlandishly bizarre. For some reason we're not able ever to say that, but this may be where we're supposed to go. It's possible that this is a God-driven change in the human mind, but I'm just saying compared to where we've been this is a dramatic change in position.

Morris: When I picked this topic I thought about it then I set it aside, thinking "I don't want to go there." And then it wouldn't leave me alone, so that I thought, "okay, maybe I'm supposed to go here, and there's something I'm supposed to learn." So I've been praying throughout the whole thing. Not quite sure yet what that final lesson is supposed to be, but I know what you're talking about.

Peterson: Well, it's a subject I wish would leave me alone. I am really weary of it because the hard part for me is you can't hold to a traditional orthodox position on this without being branded as gay-hating, and I just don't feel myself in that way. But I do happen to believe that human beings are called to a restrained life, whether you're gay or lesbian. I think life is about learning to live with restraint, and the Bible describes…gives the circumference, the design wherein we must live restrained lives whether you're homosexual or heterosexual. And we just don't want restraints on us at this moment in history. We want freedom to do what we want to do. I just think it will bring us to destruction eventually.

Morris: It kind of appears that way.

Peterson: I'm probably taking you away from your questions.

Morris: No actually that was one of them. I was going to ask how you respond to the critics who accuse you of being homophobic or things like that. I think you just touched on that.

Peterson: Yes, it's hurtful. As I'm sure my attitude, my conviction on this, from a biblical perspective at least, is hurtful to the other side. But I don't know; I don't like being told that I am these things when my conviction is born out of a doctrine that has

been embraced by the smartest people who have ever lived on the planet. I mean you look at people like, all the great thought leaders in history. This is where almost all of them have come down. And somehow for being in concert with them at this moment in history, I'm now a gay-hater. No, I just happen to think life doesn't work that way.

Morris: So one of the other new developments that I've read about recently is within the Catholic Church with their ordinate that they created that I think just got started at the beginning of this year for Anglicans who are trying to reconcile with the Catholic church, and for a lot of them for the recent ordaining of the bishop in New Hampshire who is openly gay. So I'm not sure if I'm on the right track, but does that kind of tie in with this Evangelical Covenant Order that you were just involved in? Is that similar?

Peterson: Well, there are certainly similarities between what's going on in the Anglican world and what's going on in the Presbyterian world. Although they're more of a global…globally, they're more connected to each other than the Presbyterians are. You know Presbyterians are spread all over the world too, but we don't have the network that you have in the Anglican world. Our situation, we would apply it somewhat differently than they do in the Anglican Church. But I made a decision. What we're working on with ECO [Evangelical Covenant Order] and the Fellowship of Presbyterians is…this may be a fool's errand, but we're actually, I think, just trying to disconnect ourselves from the old way of doing the argument. Those of us who started this thing, there were six of us, seven of us who started this a few years ago. One of the first decisions…in fact, there were three of us who started this thing. It was a conversation between two of my friends and me. After the General Assembly made its decision to open the way to ordination for gays and lesbians, we had this telephone call, this conference call to each other, and we asked the question "what's our plan?" We realized we didn't have a plan. So we decided, ok, it's time for us to develop a plan. Foundation number one of the plan: we're not mad anymore. We're tired of being mad. What good does that get us? We are of the mind that the culture is going the way it's going, and there's probably not much that can be done to stop it using the old tactics. It used to be that Christians were in charge of establishing the social moral consciousness of society; we don't do that anymore. It comes from somewhere else, but it doesn't really come so much from the church. So instead of being the ones who are in control of society now, we're the ones who are, I think, a contrast, if that makes any sense. Until 325 when Constantine was converted, Christians lived on the margins of society, and then in 325 they became the definers of the moral order for 1600 years. But now what's happening is the culture's becoming more secular. Christians find themselves once again more and more on the margins, and so learning to live on the margins is really an interesting proposition. There are some people in Christian community who think that we can still win back the culture if we can just get the right judges in place and pass the right constitutional amendments then we can hold the culture in place. I'm not as optimistic as they are that that can happen. I think what Christians are going to need to do is begin an alternative lifestyle which is the lifestyle that is faithful to scripture in a historical sense until the world realizes that the way that they followed really doesn't work. It does a lot of damage, and [the world] starts looking around for alternatives, and all of sudden Christianity gets rediscovered again. And it's, "wow, that really does work." There are people in the Christian community, some of the people I think you've been talking about earlier, some of the churches that have gone, they're going with the cultural flow; they're not going to provide that contrasting style. They're

just going to buy in to what's going on right now, so they're not going to be able to offer much help. You know, if there's a natural disaster, the first phase of the natural disaster is called the rescue phase. It's when you're trying to rescue those who are still alive. That goes on for four or five days. After that it goes to recovery phase. And I just have this feeling in culture that we are moving from the rescue phase where we can save the culture to a recovery phase which is you go back and you help people put their lives back together again on the other side of loss. You have a lot of people whose lives have been, I think, deeply damaged by the cultural trends, by decay of marriage, sexual disorder, and all that stuff. There's just a lot of woundedness out there, and the church needs to begin to reestablish itself as the place you go for healing. Not the place you go to get judged. Not the place that's throwing hand grenades into the, the sinful, terrible world out there…

Morris: like Planned Parenthood clinics?

Peterson: Yes. Yes. Please let's just not do that. Let's be the place where there's actually hope and healing. That's where we're trying to go with ECO and Fellowship. We're not trying to be the angry crowd anymore. We're trying to be the source of healing and hope.

Morris: Just an aside, I didn't see a list. This is totally unrelated to my topic, but related to me. Are there any churches in Fort Worth that joined the ECO?

Peterson: There are about 100 churches right now that are expressing an interest in joining the ECO. I haven't seen the list, so I'm not sure who is on that list.

Morris: The reason I ask is my husband lost his job in Miami, and now he's in Fort Worth and so as soon as I finish I'm going to be in Fort Worth.

Peterson: Well I know the First Presbyterian Church in Fort Worth would tend to be on the moderate to liberal side of these conversations, but there are a lot of other Presbyterian churches in that area. Highland Park Presbyterian Church is on what would be described as the conservative, evangelical. I hate those terms now because they've become political parties.

Morris: They have, and you say are either of those and you're labeled.

Peterson: It's a horrible thing; I'm just sick and tired of hearing it on the news. I just don't want to be one of those.

Morris: Especially on a college campus. I already stand out anyway, but then I start expressing more conservative, moderate views, and I'm almost excluded from the discussion.

Peterson: It is very…it's disheartening, and I think it poses a real challenge to the way we conduct ourselves as Christians. We're just going to have to behave differently than we have in the past.

Morris: So I'm going to turn more to the political side of this, then, and acknowledging that Annise Parker had been in city office before she was elected to mayor, but it seemed like mayor was more significant for several reasons. What was your reaction when she was elected as mayor?

Peterson: Well she was an experienced insider in Houston politics, so in that sense I knew that she would have a handle on how things work around here. There's an advantage to that I think. I don't really know her that well. I knew about her sexuality, but I personally am not inclined to be opposed to someone…I'm not a one-issue kind of person. I don't think that either candidate… I didn't vote for her, but I didn't think that we had a really strong candidate pool to choose from. And I think that was one of the reasons that she got elected. I mean even the reasons she's stayed in office is because for

whatever reason our best people are not particularly inclined to run right now. So my reaction was just sort of mixed. Like ok.

Morris: I couldn't vote. I didn't live in the city at the time, so I just watched all the news coverage. There's not a whole lot of difference between the candidates.

Peterson: Yeah, it was an odd campaign in that sense. There weren't real clear-cut differences.

Morris: She, after talking to her, I kind of figured it out, but she was very assertive in saying that she is non-religious and that religion had nothing to do with her elections. Which when you look at it from her side, that does appear to be the case. Gene Locke got all the Black vote, well, you know, the preponderance of the Black vote, and according to surveys, Blacks tend to be Protestant, so he was very highly correlated to the Protestant survey results. And I can show you these cluster maps that show where all these people are, and I'm wondering why aren't they voting?

Peterson: Why aren't they voting?

Morris: Why aren't they voting? In your position, can you, or how do you, encourage people here to vote?

Peterson: Well, we do encourage people to vote, but we're, in theory and in practice, we're discouraged from… and I wouldn't tell people how to vote. People around here in this church tend to be pretty intelligent. I think they would be…it would almost be counterproductive for me to try and steer an election in one direction or another. I think they would prefer me not to do that. And I don't have any inclination to do that. I don't think I'm smart enough to know.

Morris: it's hard enough to figure out my own vote. That seems challenging enough.

Peterson: Yes, this is not a community of people that's really involved in the politics in that sense. We're very involved in the needs of the city but not politically.

Morris: So how…this just boils down to my whole question of why I picked this topic, but how would you explain that she won the election in a city that had such high and still, according to the survey, has a high level of religious affiliation, people who say religion is important to them, a high Protestant and Catholic affiliation. How do you think that happened? And Burton told me, Burton Bagby-Grose, told me in our interview that up until she was elected to mayor, the office of mayor, she refused to take her oath of office on the Bible. She did in 2009. That was the first time she took her oath on a Bible, and he said the gay community wasn't all totally thrilled with her either, especially gays that he says are of faith. But he was upset by the fact that now she's mayor so now she's more visible so her advisor probably told her, "you don't want that to be the headline the next morning that you refused to put your hand on the Bible."

Peterson: It's hard to overcome a bad start. I don't really have any… I don't know that I have any wisdom to offer on that, which is not very helpful to you. I think people do compartmentalize a little bit their faith and other elements of their lives, so they were able to see the mayor's office as something other than an extension of what they happen to believe when they go to church on Sunday. They saw her as an experienced leader in the city, and, short of truly exciting alternative, I think she won. My opinion: she won as much by default as by passion. I never sensed "this is our great mayor." It was "well okay, we'll take her."

Morris: The only person, of course I was reading it from a distance, the only one that seemed to be passionate, at least in the 2011 campaign, was Dave Wilson. And he was a

single-issue candidate being anti-gay. That was his platform, just to get her out of office. He came in, I think, fourth in the results. So that didn't prove very effective, and it's not…I don't want to come across as saying that I'm opposed to her just for that either. It just seemed to be such a disconnect to me that these groups here in the city that on the surface at least say they're against it, it didn't play out, I guess, in the election.

Peterson: I grew up in Oregon and came here 17 years ago. Houston, Texas. Truly the last place in America I thought I would ever live. And here I am. How did I get here? When we were coming here from the Pacific Northwest, people said "how can you move to a place like Houston, Texas? It's just sort of the armpit of the world." And so we were a little nervous about what we were moving in to. But there were a few exceptions to that, and the exceptions were all people who'd lived here. And every one of those people said "you're going to love it. You're not going to love it because of the weather, but you will love it because of the people." And they told us, without exception, "These are some of the greatest people that you'll be around." And it's a city of great hospitality. When I called Vic Pentz, who at the time was pastor at First Presbyterian Church, because he'd been here awhile, he's a West Coast guy. He came here a few years before I did. I asked him "what's it like?" And he said "Houston's like a big town. Not like a big city, like a big town." And when we got here, we discovered that all of that is true. Very warm, very gracious, very welcoming place. I say all this because I think there is an attitude in Houston, and I don't think people…this is not a city that is easily…you can't ignite it around issues. You can't get people mad at each other. We don't want to be mad at each other. I think it's a very agreeable community in the sense that we're not deeply polarized by social issues and financial issues and stuff like that, if that makes any kind of sense. I just don't think people wanted to fight over that issue. So I think it casts the city in kind of a dark light that everybody gets angry about it. Plus the city is…I think what we're seeing right now is it's managing somehow to live creatively with enormous diversity. I don't know if you saw…

Morris: Right, I did.

Peterson: the article in the paper the other day. It was quite remarkable.

Morris: I grew up in Angleton, so to see that article saying Pearland was one of the most diverse…

Peterson: Can you believe that?

Morris: Pearland was like this big [makes small circle with fingers.]

Peterson: So I think somehow all these factors fit together. This city likes being a diverse plurality, and with that being the case and with a vibrant economy, then I just don't know that there's a heart in most cases for people to begin to arguing, fighting with each other and giving an impression to the wider world that Houston's just an angry Southern city. Anyway, that's my theory.

Morris: Well if you have a few minutes I'd like to show you some of these maps.

Peterson: I looked at some of these after the election.

Morris: These are some that I did from my survey data. The Black areas on these cluster maps are the highest clusters. That was the voter turnout in 2009 and the voter turnout cluster in 2011.

Peterson: Black means highest?

Morris: Black is the highest clustering of voters.

Peterson: And blue is the lowest?

Morris: Yes. This is voter turnout, but just a percentage map showing where it was highest, where it was lowest. It's also interesting to note that if you didn't see the turnout amounts in 2011, the turnout was less than 13% of the registered voters. In this one it was 16%.

Peterson: So you're talking about a very small percentage. If you use the election as a way to characterize the city [laughs] that's not going to work very well.

Morris: Right because this is where, according to the Houston Area Survey, one of their variables, people that… in that survey, they combined a couple of questions to group respondents into Secularists, Fundamentalists and Progressive, and these are the areas where the Secularists are clustered, which strikes me as interesting, too, because all within this area you've got Lakewood, Second Baptist…

Peterson: You've got all the big churches

Morris: All the big ones. So it's kind of an interesting juxtaposition.

Peterson: It is interesting.

Morris: This is the one that really amazes me. **"**Religion is very important." That one question. These light blue areas are the only areas in the city where less than 50% of the respondents say religion is very important, so almost the entire city says it's important to them. And this is the 2009 election with the votes between Gene Locke and Annise Parker. You can see the very definite…I didn't bring in a census map, but you can see the definite break.

Peterson: that would also suggest to me that the part of the city that is the most active politically is also the part of the city that is least, oddly enough, inclined to vote a strictly religious line. The most open-minded.

Morris: This, and I'm sure you've seen this survey data too, the category of "Nones," no religious affiliation. Fastest growing category according to the surveys and literature I've read. This is a correlation to voter turnout so it's very highly correlated right in here.

Peterson: That's part of what I was saying earlier that…Christianity is no longer the driver for thinking in the city. We're on the margins again.

Morris: We have a really small percentage of people, like you say, who are politically active and determining the leadership of the city. Unless they do get… I guess it would take something like an Obama-type person running for office to get a lot of voter turnout to make it really...

Peterson: it will be interesting in this next presidential [election], depending on who the Republican is, how these maps might change will be interesting to see when we get a higher turnout of voters.

Morris: And the interesting thing about the survey is I could do it on a zip code level. Most of the other data is at…the smallest level is county, which would have been okay, but I could do this survey data at the zip code level and get it really local.

Peterson: And this is all from Klineberg's work?

Morris: Yes. These analyses are. I have census data. I didn't really roll in census data into the regressions that I did. I used the survey because the survey asks the questions about religion or attitudes toward gay people. They ask all kinds of questions related to anything in Houston. I just used that because it was more, I think, applicable to what I was trying to study. And anyone can look up the census data. That's where I'm going with this right now. I guess the religious landscape in Houston changed enough over the

last twenty years to leave it open for this kind of opportunity for Annise Parker. It is what it is.

Peterson: Yes, it is puzzling that there haven't been other people coming forward to run for office. I don't have any explanation for that. I'm a funny guy because I'm…I think that generally speaking, life, history…I think that everything…politics, education, religion…everything moves at the speed of friendship. So, you know, I try to stay friendly with a broader of variety of people. When you do that you sort of keep in the conversation on, you know, various sides and topics. You get branded a little bit sometimes as being not convicted enough on certain topics, but I hear some of the buzz on either side of these candidates and of these issues, so I get lobbied actually. I've been lobbied a bit recently on both sides of this topic. So for instance I'm actually serving on the host committee for the Mayor's Charity Tea coming up in April because the mayor, in collaboration with an organization I've been very active with for a number of years, is developing a very strong initiative to help children in Houston. So as far as I'm concerned I can set aside my convictions about her understanding of human sexuality because I think together we have a responsibility, an opportunity to do something for kids in this city that is bigger than my opinion or her opinion of me or mine of her.

Morris: That kind of just brings up another question spontaneously that you have your opinions; she has hers. How do we get past, and this may not even be directly related to the thesis topic, but how do we get past this conception of the minute I say I'm Christian, this whole list of preconceived notions comes up, and I'm branded as such, and it seems like nothing else I say can convince anybody that I don't always agree with everything that some of the right wing people say. I don't always, you know, follow these things. How do you get past that?

Peterson: I think it's what Eugene Peterson describes as a long obedience in the same direction if that makes any sense. I think you just keep doing what you believe is the right thing to do no matter how you get beat up on either side. And you associate with people on either side, I think, as they are doing things that you understand to be consistent with the Gospel. And you just let that take you wherever it takes you. I'm just finishing a book. This is really a sidebar. On a topic that's become of a lot of interest to me. First eleven chapters of the Bible are pretty grim. I mean you're in this…you're not three chapters in of 31,173 verses in the Bible… there are only a few versus before the whole thing has fallen apart. You've got the Fall, and then God puts a fix on that and sends them out of the Garden and gives them a chance to start over again. And just a few verses later, and it's total chaos. And you've got the Flood, and then God puts a fix at that with Noah and the ark and all that stuff. And you're just a few verses out of the ark, and you've got them building the tower to heaven. This is eleven chapters out of all these chapters in the Bible, and then you get into chapter 12 of Genesis and think so what's God going to do now? What's his next solution to the human problem? Genesis chapter 12 is, I think, so profoundly important. God appears to one man, his name is Abraham, and He says "I'm going to bless you and through you I plan to bless all the families of the earth." I think the rest of the Bible is about that. I think the power of blessings is how God is going to change history. I think Jesus is the expression of his blessing. I think you have to apply those blessings everywhere that you are. And in every way that you can. And I think that it's really that function of blessing other people, and this whole book's about how you do that.

Morris: What's the name of the book?

Peterson: It's called <u>Receiving and Giving</u>. We received a blessing; our response is to give. I think that is how God's going to fix what's broken, and, for me, that means we bless everybody. It doesn't make any difference whether they're Republican or Democrat, whether you agree with them or don't agree with them. You look for a way to bless them because if you ask me whether or not you think I have a better chance of influencing Annise Parker by throwing hand grenades into her world or blessing her and her charity tea, I think I've got a better chance influencing her for the Gospel by joining her in the charity tea. And so that's …it's taken me 40 years to get to this place. Pretty much where it's the conviction I'm choosing to offer with my life now. And…

Morris: if you get stuck somewhere and stop trying to grow in our faith or in how we practice it, we end up in stuck in a place where we want to throw hand grenades, I think.

Peterson: Yes. It just doesn't work. We've got a lot of history showing that it doesn't. There's no history, in my opinion that shows that that approach really reaches a good outcome.

Morris: One of the totally sidebars again. One of the courses I'm taking this semester is Jewish geography, and I sit in that class, and I'm Miami so there's a very large Jewish population, and most of the students in the class are Jewish, and I sit in there going "Oh my goodness. That was not good." Most of that history.

Peterson: Oh yeah.

Morris: Okay. I need to do what I can in my world to make sure that doesn't happen.

Peterson: That's right. So you have had a hard time finding a person like me to talk to. I'm kind of curious about that.

Morris: I tried talking to someone at the Archdiocese and kind of got bounced over to Strake Jesuit because my son is a teacher over there and the lacrosse coach at Strake Jesuit, and he talked to the chaplain over there and said he agreed to talk to me, but every time I tried to contact him, email, phone, I never got a response. I didn't find anybody at St. Thomas to talk to. I did talk to one minister on staff at Second Baptist. I could probably get an interview with President Obama before I could get one with Joel Osteen. Nobody at Lakewood would talk to me.

Peterson: I believe it. And I don't think he really wants to get into this debate either.

Morris: No. He was a little uncomfortable on Piers Morgan. I watched that clip. It's been a bit of a challenge.

Peterson: Most of us have just been beat up for a long time. Tired of talking about it. We get characterized every time the subject comes up, and who needs that?

Morris: And so, you know. Of course I'm writing as a thesis. It's supposed to be just "here's the facts" kind of thing, but I do intend to write it in such a way with all the viewpoints that I've gotten with "he says this" and "he says this" and not portray either side in any kind of inflammatory way because I don't think that accomplishes anything. My main goal is just to get the thesis done and get back to Texas.

Peterson: You sure do get to that place, don't you?

Morris: One month from today is my thesis defense.

Peterson: Really? So you've got a lot of writing to do.

Morris: I've done the bulk of the writing. I have to write my findings chapter, but for a lot of the findings I had to do these [maps] to be able to say okay, explain it rather than just put a picture there. So that's the last big push. But yes I have to get that done.

Peterson: Well good for you. It's a big accomplishment to do something like that.

Morris: And it landed in my lap. It was one of those total gifts from God because I couldn't find a job other than the temporary pool and went over to talk to the person in the geography department because they had a listing for a job, office manager of the geography department. I thought I'm going to at least try for that. It would be the same department. So I went over and talked to the person who was vacating the position, and he said, "We have one more funded position in the master's program. Why don't you apply for that instead?" Within about ten days I applied, took the GRE, which was sheer torture, and got all the recommendations and transcripts and everything that I needed and was accepted. And it's fully funded, because I never would even have attempted to go to University of Miami otherwise. There's something here I'm supposed to learn, so hopefully I'm learning it and applying it and bringing it back. And whatever is coming up next I don't know yet.

Peterson: So you're getting your masters and after that what do you hope is next?

Morris: Well, I'm going to look for a job back in Texas. Haven't decided. I have experience in oil and gas pipeline, land. That's why I got involved in geography to begin with when I went back to school. In a land and right-of-way department. So I have that experience and could go back to it. My husband is saying maybe with all this work you've done you should try to get on with somebody as a political analyst kind of person. So I'm open.

Peterson: Do they have an equivalent? So you're going to be in the Fort Worth area?

Morris: Well, we're going to do either one, Houston or Fort Worth. Because we were not able to sell our house in Conroe. We still have our house in Conroe. So I may be there.

Peterson: After how many years?

Morris: Let's see. We moved over there in 2009, so we had it on the market it, leased it, on the market, leased again, and it's about to be on the market again.

Peterson: So frustrating.

Morris: So I may be in Conroe looking for a job in Houston.

Peterson: Well maybe something like Rice with Klineberg and all that with your experience.

Morris: And TCU's not far from where we're staying in Fort Worth. That's next on the agenda.

Peterson: So you've been getting significant introduction to I guess what would be described as human geography rather than physical geography?

Morris: Definitely. No physical geography. That would involve going out in the field and encountering reptiles and insects. Not going to do that.

Peterson: Well in today's world, human geography is a big deal.

Morris: It is.

Peterson: Understanding that, helping other people to understand what's going on. I mean the world I grew up in is so different from this world that we live in right now. It's astonishing.

Morris: Well, and I've seen Houston change.

Peterson: In 17 years we've seen it change.

Morris: Even from Angleton. We used to come up here all the time. But I lived here after I got out of high school. I lived in Houston until 2009. Saw lots of changes and it been pretty amazing.

Peterson: Well it's really a great city. I don't know how its future is going to be. I think we've got such a strong…Everybody I know in the oil and gas world say that a revolution is about to take place in energy. And ground zero for it is going to be Houston. And by revolution I mean an explosion of prosperity potentially. So I think Houston's future in terms of…of financial picture looks very promising, but I'm still just very curious how being the most diverse city in America will play out.

Morris: And we still have the image of every day is Go Texan Day.

Peterson: Yeah.

Morris: I'm in Miami, and when I mention my topic and why, a lot of the response is "Are you sure that wasn't San Francisco?" And I say I'm positive; I'm absolutely positive. And I tell people Houston has one of the most active world-class performing arts districts and art museums, world-class museums, things like that, and they can't get past the "well where's your boots? Where's your gun?" I don't have either one.

Peterson: I had such a stereotype of Houston when I moved here. Houston is just as much Los Angeles as it is Atlanta. I thought it was going to be… I don't know what I thought it was going to be. I thought it was going to be an arid desert.

Morris: When I mentioned after the drought how many trees the Houston area had lost and people said "Trees? In Houston?" Yes!

Peterson: 66 million trees. Did you see that thing in the paper this morning that as of yesterday's rain, for the first two and half months of this year, it took till November of last year to get the same amount of rain.

Morris: I know I came back over here in the summer after school. I did stay most of the summer in Miami, but I came back probably in July, and it was just depressing.

Peterson: It was just cranking up then. Did you come back after that?

Morris: Oh yes, I've been back a couple of times, but this time was the first time I noticed when we came down from Fort Worth driving into Houston, it's green again.

Peterson: It's green again, but so many dead trees.

Morris: My son and daughter-in-law live in Kingwood, and that's where I lived for a long time. At Thanksgiving and Christmas we walked around the greenbelt areas, and the trail association was going through and cutting down dead trees. The ones they hadn't gotten to yet were all marked, and it was just an incredible number.

Peterson: Have you seen Memorial Park?

Morris: No, I haven't been to Memorial Park lately.

Peterson: Unrecognizable.

Morris: Really?

Peterson: I mean it's like 90% of the trees in that park died. They talk about 10% of the general population of trees will die, but it's a much higher percentage in Memorial Park. Almost all the pine trees died. It's just unbelievable. It looks like a war zone. Bald. Especially now because the deciduous trees haven't put out their leaves yet, so I'm especially aware of it. I started noticing late in the summer as I was driving through Memorial Park. You look on I10, you look over toward Memorial Park, and you see all the pine trees, and they had that kind of gray look to them, and you realize they were dying. Once they get to that point, they're not going to survive. It's not just like there was a tree here and a tree there. It was every tree. Made me sad. I couldn't even drive there for a while.

Morris: After we moved to Conroe, and then again after we moved to Miami, I'd tell people the thing I miss most about Houston is Memorial Park and that trail.

Peterson: It's not anything like it was now. You'd be stunned when you go by there. We were down there a couple weeks ago driving through. They're in the logging operation now just trying to clean out all those trees because they're very concerned about a big major forest fire with all those dry trees. It's all cut up because of that.

Morris: I'm going to have look at my house in Conroe and see what trees I have to remove.

Peterson: Well I wish you well with this project. It's been fun talking to you.

Morris: Well thank you so much.

Peterson: I didn't know what to expect. I thought "Oh my God. Am I going to get beat up again?"

Morris: No I'm not going to come in and beat up anybody. Because I talked to Burton Bagby-Grose, and I didn't beat him up, and I talked to the mayor and I sure wasn't going to beat her up. That would get me arrested. It was in her office. They wouldn't have had to go far to look for me.

Peterson: Well I'm impressed that she talked to you.

Morris: I was surprised. I kind of on a whim…Last fall I was reading some of my research and going over data and things like that and thinking who should I talk to to kind of flesh this out a little bit and thought why not go to the top. Why not ask. So I sent an email. I had looked at her... This was during the time of her campaign and I had looked at her campaign website, and it had a little blurb on there about if you would like for Annise Parker to make an appearance at your event or if you would like to speak with her and request a meeting, send an email to this person. It had two different emails, so I sent one to both. That was on a Saturday, and Tuesday I got a response. Her scheduling office called. It was right before Thanksgiving, and we tried to get something scheduled while I was in town for Thanksgiving. That didn't work, so it was Christmas break, and they said "yes, sure come on."

Peterson: So she took you up on your invitation of an appearance in your master's thesis.

Morris: I guess.

Peterson: Good for you.

Morris: I've been upfront with everybody telling them why I am doing it and what I plan to do with it. They've all been "okay".

Peterson: Well I know she's been very interested in mainstreaming her life and probably willing to partner with anybody who sheds a little light on that.

Morris: One of the best quotes I think she gave me which I'm trying to figure out how to work this into my results chapter. I asked her how you win these elections with your lifestyle. And she said well definitely not a ... it's a negative. They acknowledge that right off the top, so they work to make it less negative. So she talked about in some of her early campaigns… that one of her city council campaigns her opponent was a Republican male, and he came out negative about her being lesbian, and she shot right back with "well he's a lobbyist." And she did the same thing with Gene Locke. And so the lesson is apparently to people here who vote who care, being a lobbyist is worse than being a lesbian.

Peterson: See old school thinking. In my opinion, old school thinking is that people are going to be deeply persuaded by the sexual lifestyle of the candidate. And I just don't

think…I think that's old school thinking. I don't think people are deeply persuaded by that. In fact the more you rattle that saber, it's almost as though you cast yourself in a negative light.

Morris: And it makes you a target to find any kind of dirt that they can find on you.

Peterson: Any flaw. That's exactly right. Oddly enough, it's almost as though even though I think it remains a very important topic for many people, it's not a campaign…you can't make it a campaign issue. You lose if you make it a campaign issue. It's a weird world we're living in right now.

Morris: It is. Very weird.

Peterson: Ok. Well thanks for spending a little time with me.

Morris: Thank you!

Peterson: I appreciate having a chance to get to know you.

Appendix E - Notes from Field Visits
July 19, 2011

  Second Baptist Church –Jonathan Marks, the Minister on Call, reported that Second Baptist has combined membership at the five campuses of over 54,000. The Woodway campus is the original location and still the largest. Members come to this location from all over the Greater Houston Area; the other four locations pull mainly from their surrounding neighborhoods.

  When asked about the church's position on homosexuality, Marks said he feels that we "forgot God's voice. It has to become the most important." He added that the church needs to be vocal and reflect the grace of God. What is spoken from the pulpit at Second Baptist, according to Marks, is grounded in the Word and explains how the world relates to God. "It's all about speaking the truth in love and showing that the mercy and grace of God is for everybody." He said the pastoral staff strives to inform the congregation of God's word and instructions and to evaluate political candidates against those instructions and vote according to the scriptures. The pastors do not recommend one candidate over another in any election because doing so could jeopardize the church's tax status. He said members of Second Baptist are from every political party – Democrat, Republican, Green, etc. When asked how a city like Houston has managed to hold on to its strong religious base, he said that "Texans have a deep history and heritage as Christians. And Texans don't let go of things like that easily." When asked how he thought a city with such a strong Christian heritage elected an openly lesbian mayor, speaking for himself, he feels that politics sometimes influences people's religion more than the other way around.

  Second Baptist Woodway campus is a very large physical plant. It has grown from the original sanctuary that is now a chapel on the grounds to the large sanctuary that seats several thousand people for each service. The building houses a members-only fitness center, a bookstore, and a café/coffee shop open to the public. There is a K-12 school at this location, too. Second Baptist also has taken over most of a strip shopping center on property adjacent to the church. Second Baptist offers many programs year-round for all ages and stages of life. The field visit occurred during Vacation Bible School, a high-energy week-long summer program for elementary school children.

  Because of its size and the business-type activities during the week, there is a corporate feel to the church; however, it appears to retain its Christian focus.

  Windsor Village United Methodist Church (WVUMC) – Senior Pastor Reverend Kirbyjon Caldwell is a prominent local pastor who has also received national attention because of his friendship with President George W. Bush. Caldwell delivered the benedictions at Bush's 2001 and 2005 inaugurations. He also officiated at Jenna Bush's wedding. However, he supported Obama for president in 2008. Caldwell has been pastor at WVUMC since 1982. Rev. Caldwell was unavailable to interview because of a death in his family. Millicent Haynes, Director of Ministries on the administrative staff represented the church during the field visit. Ms. Haynes said the membership is over 16,000 with average weekly attendance of 6500. Membership is pulled from a 10-12 mile radius of the church campus located in a predominantly Black neighborhood that has recently become more mixed Black/Hispanic. Church membership is predominantly Black. The position of the church with respect to politics is to encourage the members to

"pay attention to the facts, educate ourselves and allow the Holy Spirit to guide." Ms. Haynes referred to Ecclesiastes 5 – 7, a scripture she says describes the hierarchy of elected officials and the vanity of human religion. "The lines are getting blurred; we have to get past all the labels and get back to the Word," she said. The church offers a ministry through its Care and Coaching Supernatural Services and Communications called "Metanoia" that "Provides Christ-centered instructions for those seeking freedom from habitual sins including prostitution, homosexuality, lesbianism, and sex addiction" (http://www.kingdombuilders.com). The ministry is offered to people who contact the church asking for help with these issues. The sessions are held in confidence off-campus in a confidential location with the guiding principle "love the sinner, hate the sin." Haynes said that the church offers a ministry of holistic salvation for people struggling with demonic strongholds, and through this approach the church gives tools to maintain and improve the life of its members. Haynes said if the church detects a need among the members then the staff addresses it. Through its "234-acre vision" WVUMC has developed programs for the community and the church by establishing partnerships with public and private entities. Examples include a day care partnered with Neighborhood Centers that uses the church facilities to provide day care to area working parents; a partnership with Texas Children's Hospital Health Care to provide pediatric care in the neighborhood that previously had no pediatrician; and a new YMCA located near the church that is the first one built in a predominantly Black community. The focus of Rev. Caldwell's entrepreneurial efforts has been "Christ Over Culture" so that members can rely on the church to be a safe haven and place of fellowship.

Lakewood Church – The church is accessible only by scheduling a tour in advance or going to a service. Pastor Osteen Osteen's administrative assistant explained that Osteen does not do interviews, and the church's official position is that it does not help with research or papers. She did confirm membership of over 40,000 from all over the Greater Houston Area. She referred me to the website.

The worship team could be heard rehearsing in the sanctuary, which was closed to visitors. The concession stands that once sold beer and nachos to Rockets fans have been replaced by information kiosks describing Bible study classes, small groups, and children's programs. There is a bookstore with recorded Osteen messages playing on the television screen and, of course, Osteen books for sale along with books by many other Christian authors and Christian gift items. A book available for purchase is titled "The Agenda: The Homosexual Plan to Change America" by Rev. Louis P. Sheldon. When asked if the book reflected Lakewood's position on homosexuality, the sales associate said she did not know since she had not read the book. She emphasized the Christian duty to bring people to Jesus regardless of their circumstances and to pray for them and let God do the rest because we cannot change other people. She does not represent the official position of Lakewood, but she did lend warmth and friendliness to an otherwise corporate experience.

Bibliography

"About Fernando Herrera." *Fernando Herrera for Houston Mayor.* November 2011. http://votefernandoherrera.com/about (accessed January 17, 2012).

Antill, Jenny. "Mayor Annise Parker Gets Sworn In." *Houston Chronicle.* January 2, 2010. http://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/article/Mayor-Parker-takes-oath-with-budget-on-mind-1708556.php (accessed September 12, 2011).

Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. *Fast Facts About the Archdiocese.* 2010. http://www.archgh.org/Newsroom/Fact-and-Backgrounders/Fast-Facts-about-the-Archdiocese/ (accessed April 2011).

Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies. "County Membership Report - Harris County, Texas." *Association of Religion Data Archives.* n.d. http://www.thearda.com/mapsReports/reports/counties/48201_2000.asp (accessed April 13, 2011).

—. "Sources for Religious Congregations & Membership Data." *The Association of Religion Data Archives.* 2009. http://www.thearda.com/mapsReports/RCMS_Notes.asp (accessed April 4, 2011).

Bagby-Grose, Burton, interview by Nancy Morris. *Chaplain, Houston GLBT Community Center* Houston, TX, (January 26, 2012).

Begley, Sharon. "What the Beatles Gave Science." *Newsweek*, November 19, 2007: 59.

Bellah, Robert N. "Civil Religion in America." *Daedalus* 134 (2005): 40-55.

Blumenthal, Ralph. "A Preacher's Credo: Eliminate the Negative, Accentuate the Prosperity." *New York Times*, March 30, 2006: E1.

Boston, Rob. "Levitating Over the Church-State Wall? Hollywood Celebrities, ex-Beatles Join Forces to Push Transcendental Meditation in Public Schools." *Church & State* 62, no. 6 (2009): 7-10.

Brown, Michael, Larry Knopp, and Richard Morrill. "The Culture Wars and Urban Electoral Politics: Sexuality, Race and Class in Tacoma, Washington." *Political Geography* 24 (2005): 267-291.

Burt, James E., Gerald M. Barber, R, and David L. Rigby. *Elementary Statistics for Geographers.* New York: The Guilford Press, 2009.

Buttimer, Anne. "Afterword: Reflections on Geography, Religion, and Belief Systems." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 96, no. 1 (2006): 197-202.

Cadge, Wendy, and Courtney Bender. "Yoga and Rebirth in America: Asian Religions are Here to Stay." *Contexts - American Sociological Association* 3, no. 1 (2004): 45-51.

Caldwell, Kirbyjon H. "Pointe 2.3.4." *Kingdom Builders.* 2004. http://www.kingdombuilders.com/templates/cuskingdombuilders/details.asp?id=23260& PID=655842 (accessed July 20, 2011).

Cartwright, Gary. "Ghosts of War." *Texas Monthly*, April 1, 2009: 132.

Chapman, Thomas, Jonathan I. Leib, and Gerald Webster. "Race, the Creative Class, and Political Geographies of Same Sex Marriage in Georgia." *Southeastern Geographer* 47, no. 1 (2007): 27-54.

Chidester, David. "The Church of Baseball, the Fetish of Coca-Cola, and the Potlatch of Rock 'n' Roll: Theoretical Models for the Study of Religion in American Popular Culture." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 64, no. 4 (1996): 743-765.

Data Archive. 2010. http://www.thearda.com/Archive/browse.asp (accessed April 2011).

Dave Wilson Campaign. *Park-Her In 2013.* 2011. http://davewilsonformayor.com/ (accessed December 6, 2011).

D'Emilio, Frances. "Vatican Unveils Home for Anglicans Here; City to be Hub bor Episcopalian Priests and Their Flocks that Join Catholic Church." *Houston Chronicle*, January 2, 2012: A1.

Dowland, Seth. ""Family Values" and the Formation of a Christian Right Agenda." *Church History* 78, no. 3 (2009): 606-631.

Dudley, Scott. "Forum on Homosexuality and the Bible." *The Fellowship of Presbyterians.* October 13, 2006. http://www.fellowship-pres.org/wp-content/uploads/Forum-on-Homosexuality-and-the-Bible.pdf (accessed February 7, 2012).

ECO: Evangelical Covenant Order of Presbyterians. January 2012. http://www.fellowship-pres.org/evangelical-covenant-order/ (accessed February 5, 2012).

Fellows of the Research Institute. "Homosexuality: Your Questions Answered." *The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.* June 15, 2005. http://erlc.com/article/homosexuality-your-questions-answered/ (accessed June 2011).

Ferber, Michael P. "Critical Realism and Religion: Objectivity and the Insider/Outsider Problem." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 96, no. 1 (2006): 176-181.

Finke, Roger, and Christopher P. Scheitle. "Accounting for the Uncounted: Computing Correctives for the 2000 RCMS Data." *Review of Religious Research* 47, no. 1 (2005): 5-22.

Fleischmann, Arnold, and Jason Hardman. "Hitting Below the Bible Belt: the Development of the Gay Rights Movement in Atlanta." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 26, no. 4 (2004): 407-426.

Florida, Richard. "The Economic Geography of Talent." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 92, no. 4 (2002): 743-755.

Fryrear, Melissa. "Homosexuality: Your Questions Answered." *The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.* June 15, 2005. http://erlc.com/article/homosexuality-your-questions-answered/ (accessed June 2011).

Gates, Gary J., and Jason Ost. *The Gay & Lesbian Atlas.* Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute Press, 2004.

GIS Technology Division. *COHGIS 2009.* July 10, 2009. http://cohgis.houstontx.gov/cohgis2009/index.htm (accessed March 2011).

Goen, C. C. "Broken Churches, Broken Nation: Regional Religion and North-South Alienation in Antebellum America." *Church History* 52, no. 1 (1983): 21-35.

Goodchild, Michael F. "Scale in GIS: An Overview." *Geomorphology* 130 (2011): 5-9.

Gray, Lisa. "City Beginnings: Born on the Bayou - Allen's Landing's Murky History." *Houston Chronicle*, August 21, 2008: Star 1.

Gross, Martine, and Andrew K. T. Yip. "Living Spirituality and Sexuality: A Comparison of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Christians in France and Britain." *Social Compass* 57, no. 1 (2010): 40-59.

Halvorson, Peter L., and William M. Newman. *Atlas of Religious Change in America, 1952-1990.* Atlanta, GA: Glenmary Research Center, 1994.

Harris County Clerk's Office, Elections Division. "Election Results Archives - Canvass Report." *Harris Votes.* November 10, 2009. http://www.harrisvotes.com/HISTORY/110309/Cumulative/cumulative.pdf (accessed May 2011).

—. "Election Results Archives - Canvass Report." *Harris Votes.* November 15, 2011. http://www.harrisvotes.com/HISTORY/20111108/canvass/canvass.pdf (accessed December 6, 2011).

—. "Election Results Archives-Canvass Report." *Harris Votes.* December 18, 2009. http://www.harrisvotes.com/_eresults.aspx (accessed May 2011).

Haynes, Millicent, interview by Nancy Morris. *Director of Ministries, Administrative Staff* Houston, TX, (July 19, 2011).

Hensel, Deborah Quinn. "Mega-church minister Osteen signs on for reality TV series." *Reuters.* December 1, 2011. http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/12/01/us-joelosteen-tv-idUSTRE7B02YH20111201 (accessed February 7, 2012).

"Houston, Texas Code of Ordinances." *Municode.* n.d. http://library.municode.com/index.aspx?clientID=10123&stateID=43&statename=Texas (accessed December 4, 2011).

Humes, Karen R., Nicholas A. Jones, and Roberto R. Ramirez. "Overview of Race and Hispanic Origin: 2010." *U.S. Census Bureau.* March 2011. http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-02.pdf (accessed May 5, 2011).

InfoGroup, Social Explorer. *Religion 2009 (InfoGroup).* 2011. http://www.thearda.com/DemographicMap/displayIGMap.asp?ZipCode=77002 (accessed April 2011).

—. *Religion 2009: Religion by Tradition (InfoGroup).* 2011. http://www.thearda.com/DemographicMap/displayIGMap.asp?ZipCode=77002 (accessed April 2011).

Ivakhiv, Adrian. "Toward a Geography of "Religion": Mapping the Distribution of an Unstable Signifier." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 96, no. 1 (2006): 169-175.

Jack O'Connor Campaign. "About Jack O'Connor." *Jack O'Connor for Mayor.* November 2011. http://jackforhouston.com/about.htm (accessed January 17, 2012).

Jenkins, Jack. "Presbyterians officially to allow gay clergy." *Houston Chronicle*, July 14, 2011: Belief 3.

Jewish Federation of Greater Houston. *A Study of the Houston Listed Jewish Community.* Mandell L. Berman Institute, North American Jewish Data Bank, Storrs, CT: University of Connecticut, 2002.

Kale, Sudhir H. "Spirituality, Religion and Globalization." *Journal of Macromarketing* 24, no. 2 (2004): 92-107.

Kennedy, J. Michael. "Boom is Over Houston - Foreclosure City, U.S.A." *Los Angeles Times (Pre-1997 Fulltext).* October 21, 1985. http://search.proquest.com/docview/292182661?accountid=14585 (accessed December 3, 2011).

Klineberg, Stephen L. "Codebook: Houston Area Survey 1982-2010." *The Association of Religion Data Archives.* 2010. http://www.thearda.com/Archive/Files/Descriptions/HOUSTON.asp (accessed April 10, 2011).

—. *Data Archive, Houston Area Survey 1982-2010.* 2010.
http://www.thearda.com/Archive/browse.asp (accessed April 2011).

Klineberg, Stephen L., and Michael Emerson. "The Kinder Houston Area Survey -
2011." *Kinder Institute for Urban Research at Rice University.* April 2011.
http://has.rice.edu/uploadedFiles/Reports/Kinder%20Houston%20Area%20Survey%20R
eport%202011(1).pdf (accessed March 20, 2012).

Kong, Lily. "Geography and Religion: Trends and Prospects." *Progress in Human
Geography* 14, no. 3 (1990): 355-371.

Kong, Lily. "Mapping 'New' Geographies of Religion: Politics and Poetics in
Modernity." 25, no. 2 (2001): 211-233.

Kosmin, Barry A., and Seymour P. Lachman. *One Nation Under God: Religion in
Contemporary American Society.* New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1993.

Kosmin, Barry, Ariela Keysar, Ryan Cragun, and Juhem Navarro-Rivera. "American
Nones: The Profile of the No Religion Population." Program on Public Values, Trinity
College, Hartford, CT, 2009.

Lakewood Church. *Home.* 2011. http://www.lakewood.cc/Pages/Home.aspx (accessed
April 2011).

—. "New Here? Our History." *Lakewood Church.* 2011.
http://www.lakewood.cc/pages/new-here/our-history.aspx (accessed April 2011).

Ledbetter, Tammi Reed. "30,000-Plus Texas Volunteers Trained to Aid Katrina Victims."
Baptist Press. September 6, 2005. http://www.bpnews.net/BPnews.asp?ID=21542
(accessed October 2011).

Leib, Jonathan, and Nicholas Quinton. "On the Shores of the 'Moribund Backwater'?:
Trends in Electoral Geography Research Since 1990." In *Revitalizing Electoral
Geography*, edited by Barney Warf and Jonathan Leib, 9-27. Burlington, VT: Ashgate
Publishing Company, 2011.

Lindsay, D. Michael. "Mind the Gap: Religion and the Crucible of Marginality in the
United States and Great Britain." 49 (2008): 653-688.

Locke for Mayor: Experience & Achievements. 2009.
http://www.genelocke.com/free_details.asp?id=102 (accessed December 4, 2011).

Macken, Paul, Steven Wilson, Thomas Fischetti, and Justyna Goworowska. "Population
Distribution and Change: 2000 to 2010." *U.S. Census Bureau.* March 2011.
http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-01.pdf (accessed April 25, 2011).

Marks, Jonathan, interview by Nancy Morris. *Minister On Call* Houston, TX, (July 19,
2011).

Marler, Penny Long, and C. Kirk Hadaway. ""Being Religious" or "Being Spiritual" in America: a Zero-Sum Proposition?" *Journal for Scientific Study of Religion* 41, no. 2 (2002): 289-300.

Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church: About Us - Who We Are. 2010. http://www.mdpc2.org/cms/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3&Itemid =863 (accessed February 7, 2012).

Mitchell, Joshua. "The Equality of All under the One in Luther and Rousseau: Thoughts on Christianity and Politial Theory." *The Journal of Religion* 72, no. 3 (1992): 351-365.

Moran, Chris. "Experts Say Parker Needs Big Win to Set Tone for 2nd Term." *Houston Chronicle.* October 23, 2011. http://www.chron.com/default/article/Experts-say-Parker-needs-big-win-to-set-tone-for-2231744.php (accessed November 18, 2011).

—. "Megachurch asks mayor not to promote same-sex marriage." *Houston Chronicle.* February 27, 2012. http://blog.chron.com/houstonpolitics/2012/02/megachurch-asks-mayor-not-to-promote-same-sex-marriage/ (accessed March 18, 2012).

National Hurricane Center. *Hurricane History.* 2008. http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/HAW2/english/history.shtml#galveston (accessed May 4, 2011).

Noll, Mark A. *American Evangelical Christianity: An Introduction.* Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, Inc., 2001.

Olson, Bradley. "Houston Makes its Choice; Parker Makes History." *Houston Chronicle.* December 12, 2009. http://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/article/Houston-makes-its-choice-Parker-makes-history-1589385.php (accessed September 25, 2011).

O'Reilly, Kathleen, and Gerald R. Webster. "A Sociodemographic and Partisan Analysis of Voting in Three Anti-Gay Rights Referenda in Oregon." *Professional Geographer* 50, no. 4 (1998): 498-515.

Osteen, Joel. *Our Ministry.* 2011. http://www.joelosteen.com/About/Pages/OurMinistry.aspx (accessed April 2011).

Parker, Annise, interview by Nancy Morris. *Mayor of Houston* Houston, TX, (December 17, 2011).

Peterson, Dave, interview by Nancy Morris. *Senior Pastor, Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church* Houston, TX, (March 12, 2012).

Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. *U.S. Religious Landscape Survey Religious Affiliation: Diverse and Dynamic.* Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center, 2008.

"Piers Morgan Tonight." *CNN.* January 24, 2011. http://www.cnn.com/video/#/video/bestoftv/2011/01/24/piers.osteen.homosexuality.cnn?iref=allsearch (accessed August 2011).

Port of Houston. *General Information.* 2009. http://www.portofhouston.com/geninfo/overview1.html (accessed May 4, 2011).

Portes, Alejandro, Ruben G. Rumbaut, Patricia Fernandez-Kelly, and William Haller. "Religion: The Enduring Presence." In *Immigrant America: A Portrait*, by Alejandro Portes and Ruben G. Rumbaut, 299-342. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2006.

Proctor, James. "Introduction: Theorizing and Studying Religion." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 96, no. 1 (2006a): 165-168.

Proctor, James. "Religion as Trust in Authority: Theocracy and Ecology in the United States." *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 96, no. 1 (2006b): 188-196.

Putnam, Robert D., and David E. Campbell. *American Grace.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010.

Quinton, Nicholas, and Gerald R. Webster. "Electoral Alignments and Place-Based Cleavages in Statewide Votes in Alabama." In *Revitalizing Electoral Geography*, edited by Barney Warf and Jonathan Leib, 195-218. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2011.

Reed, John Shelton. "The South: Where is it? What is it?" *Cultural Maps: American Studies at University of Virginia.* August 25, 2001. http://xroads.virginia.edu/~DRBR/REED/tears.html (accessed March 19, 2012).

Rodriguez, Eric M., and Suzanne C. Ouellette. "Gay and Lesbian Christians: Homosexual and Religious Identity Integration in the Members and Participants of a Gay-Positive Church." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 39, no. 3 (2000): 333–347.

Roof, Wade Clark. *Spiritual Marketplace: Baby Boomers and the Remaking of American Religion.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999.

Sappenfield, Mark. "Houston Mayor Race Shows Progress - and Limits - of Gay Rights." *Christian Science Monitor.* December 13, 2009. http://search.proquest.com/docview/405583215?accountid=14585 (accessed April 2011).

Second Baptist Church. *Beliefs.* 2011. http://www.second.org/en/Woodway/About/Beliefs.aspx (accessed April 2011).

—. *Woodway.* 2011. http://www.second.org/Woodway.aspx (accessed April 2011).

Sherrill, Kenneth. "The Political Power of Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 29, no. 3 (1996): 469-473.

Sheskin, Ira M., and Arnold Dashefsky. "Jewish Population in the United States, 2011." In *Current Jewish Population Reports, Number 4 - 2011*. Storrs, CT: Mandell L. Berman North American Jewish Data Bank, The Association for the Social Scientific Study of Jewry, and The Jewish Federations of North America, 2011.

Silk, Mark, and Andrew Walsh. *One Nation, Divisible: How Regional Religious Differences Shape American Politics*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2008.

Smith, Buster G. "Attitudes towards Religious Pluralism: Measurements and Consequences." 54, no. 2 (2007): 333-353.

Stetzer, Ed. "100 Largest Churches in America for 2009." *Church Relevance.* September 24, 2009. http://churchrelevance.com/100-largest-churches-in-america-for-2009/ (accessed April 2011).

Stump, Roger W. *The Geography of Religion: Faith, Place, and Space.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2008.

Sui, Danile Z., and Peter J. Hugill. "A GIS-Based Spatial Analysis on Neighborhood Effects and Voter Turn-out: a Case Study in College Station, Texas." *Political Geography* 21 (2002): 159-173.

Sundby, Elaine. "Welcoming Gay Friendly Churches in Texas - TX." *Gay Church.* 2011. http://www.gaychurch.org/Find_a_Church/united_states/us_texas.htm (accessed August 25, 2011).

Surratt, Geoff, Greg Ligon, and Warren Bird. *Multi-Site Church Revolution: Being One Church in Many Locations.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006.

Texas State Legislature. "Local Government Code: Chapter 42. Extraterritorial Jurisdiction of Municipalities." *Texas Constitution and Statutes.* 1987, as amended. http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/LG/htm/LG.42.htm#42.001 (accessed February 5, 2012).

The Fellowship of Presbyterians. "About." *The Fellowship of Presbyterians.* January 2012. http://www.fellowship-pres.org/about/ (accessed February 7, 2012).

Thompson, Eric V. "A Brief History of Major Oil Companies in the Gulf Region." *Oil Company Histories.* n.d. http://www.virginia.edu/igpr/APAG/apagoilhistory.html (accessed May 4, 2011).

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. "Issues and Action: Human Life and Dignity." *United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.* November 14, 2006. http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/homosexuality/upload/minstry-persons-homosexual-inclination-2006.pdf (accessed September 24, 2011).

University of Texas. "Perry-Castaneda Library Map Collection." *University of Texas Libraries.* 1976. http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/atlas_texas/states_pop_origin.jpg (accessed April 2011).

Van Geest, Fred. "Christian Denominational and Special Interest Political Action on Public Policy Issues Related to Sexual Orientation." *Sociology of Religion* 69, no. 3 (2008): 335-354.

Vojnovic, Igor. "Laissez-Faire Governance and the Archetype Laissez-Faire City in the USA: Exploring Houston." 85, no. 1 (2003): 19-38.

Warf, Barney. "Class, Ethnicity, Religion and Place in the 2008 U.S. Presidential Election." In *Revitalizing Electoral Geography*, edited by Barney Warf and Jonathan Leib, 133-156. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2011.

Warf, Barney. "Religious Diversity Across the North American Urban System." *Urban Geographer* 27, no. 6 (2006): 549-566.

Warf, Barney, and Mort Winsberg. "The Geography of Religious Diversity in the United States." 60, no. 3 (2008): 413-424.

Webster, Gerald R. "Religion and Politics in the American South." *The Pennsylvania Geographer* 35, no. 2 (1997): 151-172.

Webster, Gerald R., Jerrod Bowman, Daniel McGowin, and Heath Robinson. "Research on the Political Geography of the South, 1980-2005." *Southeastern Geographer* 47, no. 1 (2007): 1-12.

Webster, Gerald R., Thomas Chapman, and Jonathan Leib. "Sustaining the 'Societal and Scriptural Fence': Cultural, Social, and Political Topographies of Same-Sex Marriage in Alabama." *The Professional Geographer* 62, no. 2 (2010): 211-229.

WFX Worship Facilities. *Dallas 2011 Solomon Awards.* 2011. http://www.wfxweb.com/dallas-2011/solomon-awards/best-design-implementation-and-operation-of-an-a-v-lighting-801-2000/ike-worship-center-restoration-at-second-baptist-houston (accessed May 4, 2011).

Whitmire, Kathryn J. *Kathryn J. Whitmire Papers, Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries.* June 2006. http://www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/uhwarc/00027/warc-00027.html (accessed December 3, 2011).

Williams, John Hoyt. *Sam Houston: The Life and Times of the Liberator of Texas, an Authentic American Hero.* New York: Touchstone, 1993.

Windsor Village United Methodist Church. "Meet the Pastor." *Windsor Village United Methodist Church.* 2004.

http://www.kingdombuilders.com/templates/cuskingdombuilders/details.asp?id=23260&
PID=74051 (accessed July 18, 2011).

—. *Ministries: Supernatural Services and Communications.* 2004.
http://www.kingdombuilders.com/templates/cuskingdombuilders/details.asp?id=23260&
PID=74208 (accessed July 19, 2011).

—. "Supernatural Services and Communications." *Kingdom Builders.* 2004.
http://www.kingdombuilders.com/templates/cuskingdombuilders/details.asp?id=23260&
PID=74208 (accessed July 20, 2011).

Winter, R. Milton. "Division & Reunion in the Presbyterian Church, U.S.: A Mississippi
Retrospective." *Journal of Presbyterian History* 78, no. 1 (2000): 67-86.

Yip, Andrew K. T. "The Persistence of Faith Among Nonheterosexual Christians:
Evidence for the Neosecularization Thesis of Religious Transformation." *Journal for the
Scientific Study of Religion* 41, no. 2 (2002): 199-212.

Zelinsky, Wilbur. "An Approach to the Religious Geography of the United States:
Patterns of Church Membership in 1952." *Annals of the Association of American
Geographers* 51, no. 2 (1961): 139-193.

Zelinsky, Wilbur. "The Uniqueness of the American Religious Landscape."
Geographical Review 91, no. 3 (2001): 565-585.