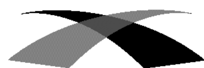
Religious Diversity in Central Indiana



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Central Indiana's Future:
Understanding the Region and Identifying Choices

Central Indiana's Future:Understanding the Region and Identifying Choices, funded by an award of general support from Lilly Endowment, Inc.,is a research project that seeks to increase understanding of the region and to inform decision-makers about the array of options for improving quality of life for Central Indiana residents. The Center for Urban Policy and the Environment faculty and staff, with other researchers from several universities, are working to understand how the broad range of investments made by households, government, business, and nonprofit organization within the Central Indiana region contribute to quality of life. The geographic scope of the project includes 44 counties in an integrated economic region identified by the U.S.Bureau of Economic Analysis.

The Center for Urban Policy and the Environment is part of the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis. For more information about the Central Indiana Project or the research reported here, contact the center at 317-261-3000 or visit the center's Web site at www.urbancenter.iupui.edu.

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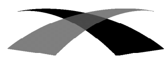


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 44-county Central Indiana region often has been viewed as culturally homogenous, but in fact, the inhabitants are strikingly diverse, particularly in the area of religion. A wide assortment of religious groups cohabit the region, with no one group claiming dominance. Furthermore, although Central Indiana is often viewed as a highly religious area, nearly 60 percent of the region's inhabitants do not belong to any organized denominational group—a higher percentage than for any state outside the Pacific Northwest. (However, surveys do show an overwhelmingly popular belief in God.)

It is apparent that religion and religious denominations have a major influence in shaping the culture of an area. Religious beliefs can help provide a worldview for its adherents and these beliefs have influenced historical movements such as abolitionism, temperance, and civil rights, but the effect on public policy is not always easily predictable. Some middle-class people distrust organized religion and try to welcome all faiths, and members of religious organizations often may deviate from stereotypes. However, some tendencies can be noted. For example, mainline denominations often have embraced social justice issues while fundamental and evangelical groups may focus on matters relating to individual salvation. Religious affiliation also has been linked to the degree and type of community involvement and volunteer work that individuals may pursue.

The demographics and history of organized religion in the Central Indiana region result in important differences among religious groups that may influence our region's sense of itself. These differences also will affect debates about public policy.

CENTRAL INDIANA OFTEN IS VIEWED AS CULTURALLY HOMOGENOUS

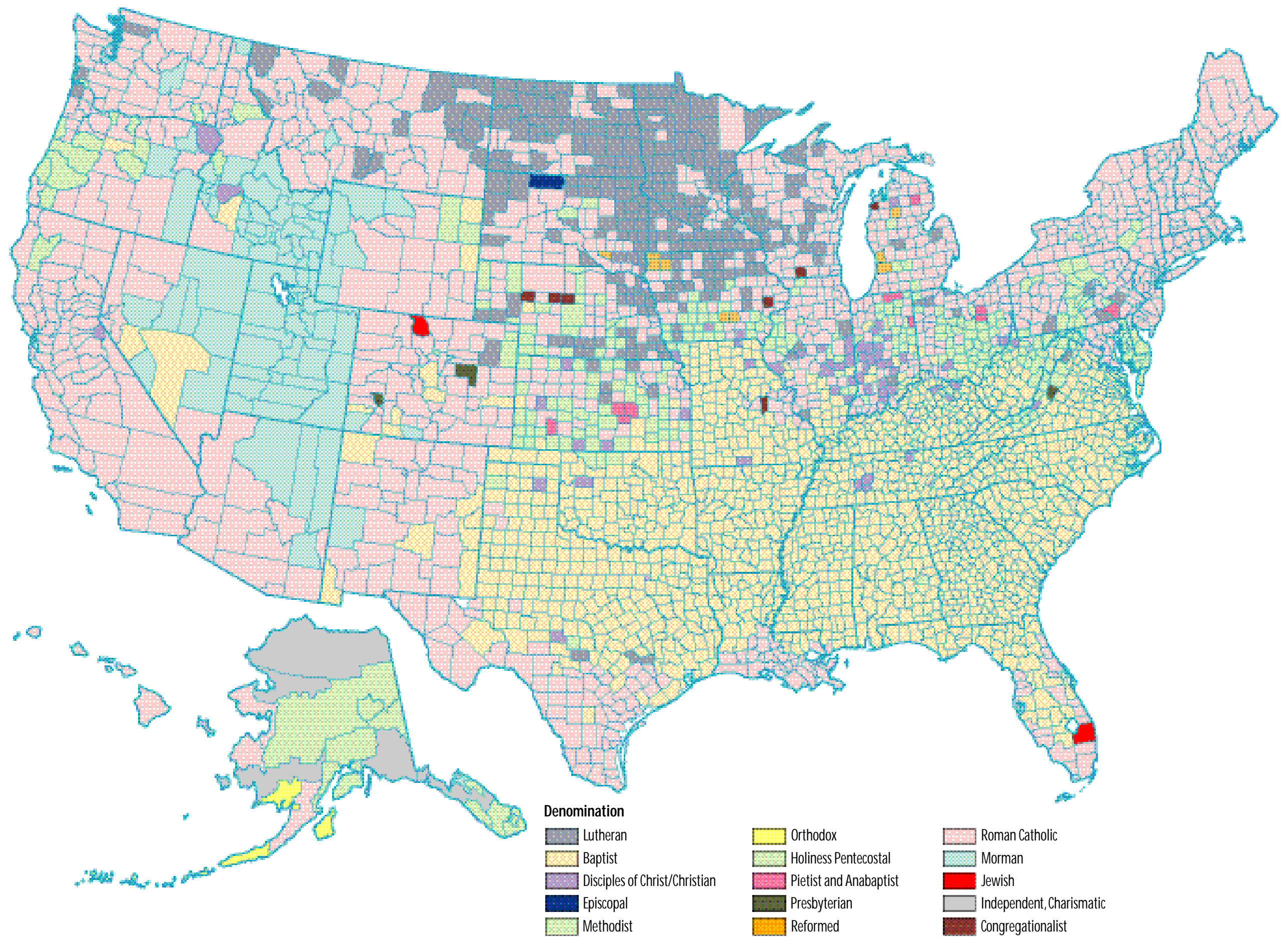
Map 1: Central Indiana Region

How culturally coherent are the 44 counties that compose the Central Indiana region? We often have assumed an answer of homogeneity by reference to the noticeable absence of large ethnic groupings in the area's population,especially when compared with other Midwestern metropolitan regions, or with the transcendent middle-class values so often noted by scholars and commentators alike. We have viewed the region as "Middletown," the name given Muncie in a pioneering sociological study in the 1930s and 40s, and have repeatedly seen this image reinforced as commercial marketers use the area as a test bed for new products. This notion of Central Indiana as the locus of heartland values is remarkably persistent. Our 19th-century ancestors touted the region as the Crossroads of America,an appellation we still embrace. It surprised no one that in 1993,ABC News selected Indianapolis (Marion County) as the place best suited to gauge public response to the new Clinton administration. The same thing had been happening for much of the 20th century.

From other angles, the region appears less homogeneous. The rural-urban divide among the counties is long-standing and historically has resulted in significant cultural tension,if not conflict. The state's overwhelming embrace of Republican presidential candidates during recent elections has obscured the region's political divisions and the fundamental differences in values they reflect. Not only has the region boasted a healthy two-party system over the course of the 20th century, it also has been the national headquarters for political groups as ideologically diverse as the Ku Klux Klan,the Socialist Party of America,and the John Birch Society. This diversity has existed in other areas as well. During the past century, Central Indiana simultaneously was headquarters to numerous national labor unions including the Teamsters, the American Federation of Labor, and the United Mine Workers, and was the home of David Parry, head of the National Association of Manufacturers, the nation's most aggressive anti-labor manufacturers' association.

Ironically, it is from the perspective of organized religion that the region appears especially diverse. Much of the belief in the essential religious homogeneity of Central Indiana rests on two assumptions:that the area is especially religious, and that in its religious expression,it overwhelmingly subscribes to mainline Protestant denominations. Neither assumption is true. Not only is the region average or even somewhat below average in its percentage of adherents, its religious culture is largely dominated by independent or non-affiliated Christian churches with a worldview significantly different from mainstream Protestantism.

Figure 1:Regional Denominational Predominance, 1990



Source: Map was created by Kevin Mickey of the Polis Center using data from Glenmary Research Center (1992).

NO RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION IS DOMINANT IN CENTRAL INDIANA

When compared with a map of religious adherents nationally, both the state and region are clearly anomalous. Unlike the Catholic Northeast, the Lutheran Upper Midwest, or the Mormon Mountain West, Indiana has no dominant religious tradition, at least in denominational terms (Figure 1).

The state counts 85 separate organized religious groups, as measured by the decennial Glenmary census of 1990,the contemporary successor to the early 20th century federal census of religious bodies. This wide array is not a recent phenomenon,as revealed by the federal censuses from the first part of the century. Throughout the 20th century, the religious diversity of Indiana stood in marked contrast to the homogenous religious culture of much of the nation.

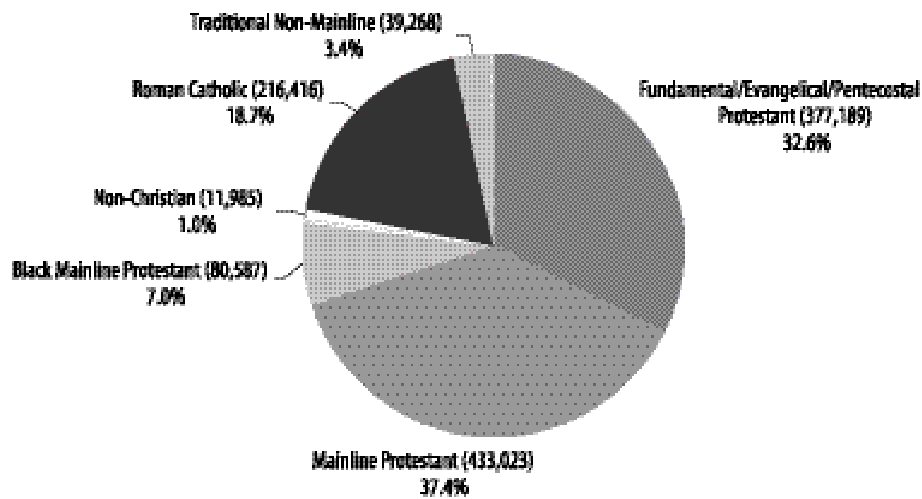
Religious diversity also is a hallmark of Central Indiana culture. No single religious group dominates the region. In 1990, Glenmary identified 75 denominations in the 44-county area. These numbers admittedly undercount historically Black groups, so it is probable that the number is considerably higher. (The list also includes some groups, such as the Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit Predestinarian Baptists, whose 24 members make it only a nominal presence in the region.) How far any group is from dominance is seen in Figure 2 (see page 6) showing the distribution of adherents.

Examined by county, the generalization is even more evident.Only one county in Central Indiana,Union,boasts a majority of its church membership from a single category, in this case Methodist. In no other county, regardless of size or demographic character, does a single denomination claim a majority of the county's religious adherents. At times, the contrast among counties that share a jurisdictional boundary can be sharp, as is the case of the nine-county Indianapolis Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). Hamilton County and Morgan County, contiguous to Marion County on the north and southwest, respectively, represent two different religious worlds.Hamilton County has the highest percentage of Catholics in the MSA,while Morgan has a higher percentage of conservative Protestants[1] than all other denominations combined.

The regional patterns of religion become clearer when the diverse denominations are grouped according to theological and ecclesiastical traditions. When re-coded into six categories—mainline Protestant, fundamental/evangelical/ Pentecostal Protestant, Roman Catholic, Black mainline Protestant, traditional non-mainline, and non-Christian (see Figure 2 on page 6)—the dominance of Protestantism is evident, as is the essential split in Protestantism (see Table 1 on page 7).

[1] Fundamental/evangelical/Pentecostal Protestants, as defined in Figure 2.

Figure 2:Distribution of Religious Adherents* in Central Indiana,1990



* As used here, **mainline Protestant** includes the seven historic mainline denominations: American Baptists (U.S.A.),Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),United Church of Christ , and United Methodist Church.

Black mainline Protestant includes Black Baptist and Black Methodist conventions/denominations.

Fundamental/evangelical/Pentecostal Protestant includes those who adhere to the conviction that the Bible is the inerrant, infallible Word of God, believe in the gifts of the Spirit, are members of the National Association of Evangelicals, and/or belong to Adventist, Holiness, or Baptist traditions (except those included above).

Traditional non-mainline includes other, more diverse historic groups, such as Mennonites, Unitarian-Universalist Association,and the (non-Protestant) Orthodox churches (e.g.,the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch).

These categories were created by Professor Jan Shipps, with additional development by William Mirola (2000),for use in the forthcoming book, *Charting Congregational Cultures:An Atlas of Indianapolis Religion.* See the Appendix for details regarding the denominations within each category.

Source:Glenmary Research Center (1992).

Note: The Glenmary data are self-reported and thus omit a substantial number of religious adherents for denominations and independent congregations that did not provide information.

Table 1 reveals two striking characteristics of the region. First, Central Indiana has a relatively small percentage of Catholics.(Elsewhere in Indiana, Catholics are 33 percent of all religious adherents.) And second, the fundamental/evangelical/ Pentecostal elements of Protestantism are strong compared with the rest of the state. It is important to note that this distribution reflects the 1990 configuration. The 2000 Glenmary census likely will reveal growth in both categories and slippage in the percentage of mainline Protestants, continuing trends established in the last half of the 20th century (see Figure 3 on page 8). Undoubtedly the new numbers also will reveal a larger non-Christian population,especially Muslims and adherents of Asian religions.

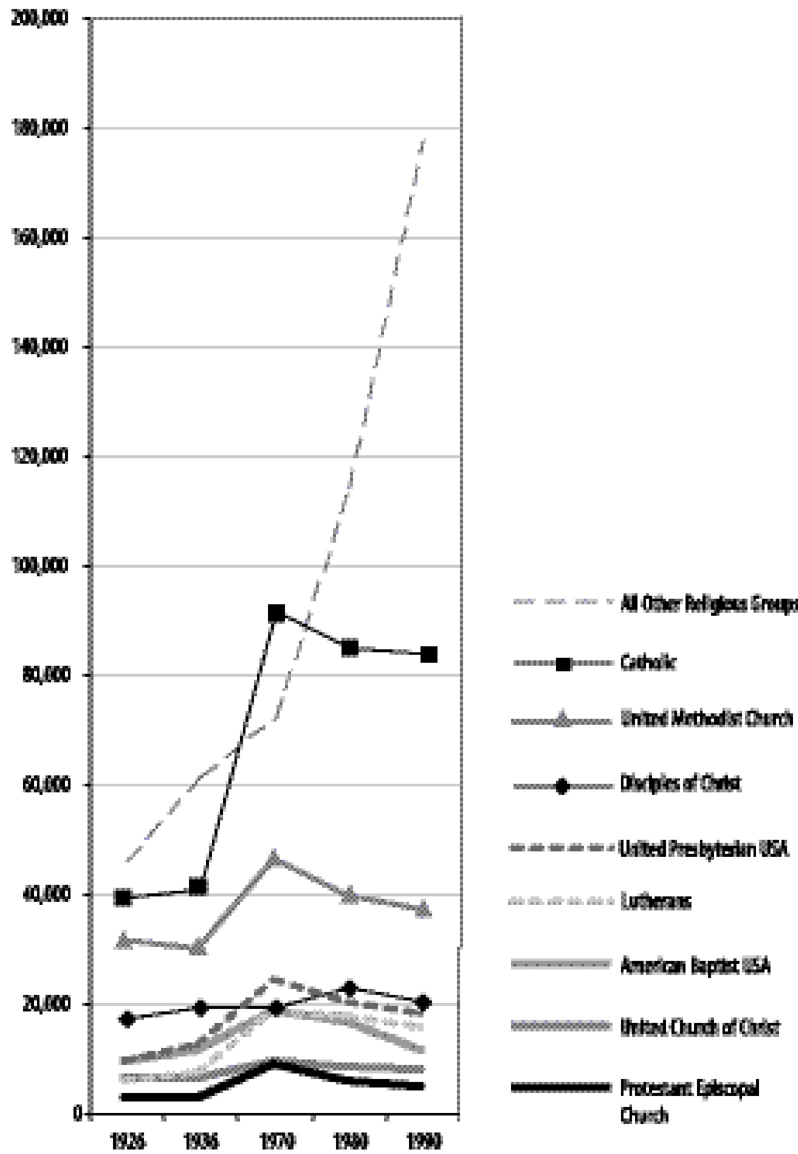
The Glenmary data do not consider the religiously unaffiliated population, though it too is part of the regional story. Even correcting for the undercounting that plagues the self-reported Glenmary census—e.g.,many independent congregations are by definition unaffiliated and thus not counted—the majority of residents in Central Indiana (58 percent) do not belong to any organized denominational group. This is a higher percentage than for any state outside the Pacific Northwest. This circumstance, of course, says nothing about the essential religious stance of the region or about the role people assign to religion in their individual or collective lives. Surveys consistently reveal overwhelming popular belief in God, and research suggests that in the United States, non-adherents demonstrate a high degree of orthodox belief and practice when compared with other cultures (Reimer 1995). The figures on non-adherents also obscure the historical trend that reveals a steady growth over time in the percentage of the adhering population,as the graph for Indianapolis demonstrates (see Figure 4 on page 9).

Table 1:Distribution of Central Indiana Religious Adherents by Type, 1990

Category	Adherents	% of All Adherents
Mainline Protestant	433,023	37.4%
Fundamental/evangelical/ Pentecostal Protestant	377,189	32.6%
Roman Catholic	216,416	18.7%
Black mainline Protestant	80,587	7.0%
Traditional non-mainline Protestant	39,268	3.4%
Non-Christian	11,985	1.0%

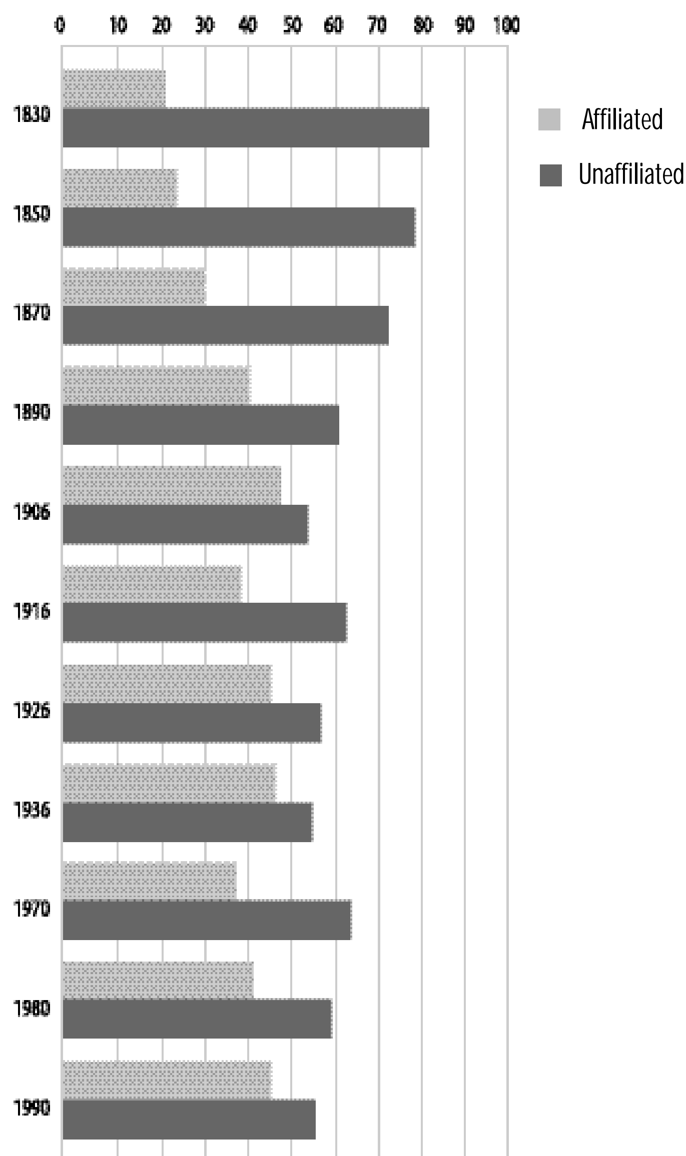
Source: Adapted from Glenmary Research Center (1992).

Figure 3: Membership of Religious Bodies, Marion County, Indiana, 1926–90



Source: United States Bureau of the Census 1930, 1941; Glenmary Research Center 1974, 1982, 1992.

Figure 4:Religious Affiliation in Indianapolis, Selected Years, 1830–1990



Sources: Compiled by Shipps (1994, p. 175) from William R. Holloway, Indianapolis *(Indianapolis 1870); Jacob Piatt Dunn,* Greater Indianapolis *(Chicago 1910); U.S. Census; and data published by the Glenmary Research Center, Atlanta,Georgia. As mentioned elsewhere, the Glenmary data are self-reported and thus omit a substantial number of denominations and independent congregations that did not provide information.*

Figure 5: Indiana Religious Judicatories, United Methodist, Presbyterian (USA), and Roman Catholic

Sources: Indiana Area Office of the United Methodist Church (2000), adapted; Synod of Lincoln Trails (2000); Archdiocese of Indianapolis (1996), p. 7.

RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY IN CENTRAL INDIANA HAS A LONG HISTORY

The patterns of diversity in Central Indiana have roots in the 19th century. Within two decades of the establishment of Indianapolis, for example, the small frontier capital city claimed a wide assortment of religious groups beyond the Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians that established the city's first and most prominent churches. While mostly Protestant in belief, these other groups existed at the margins of the establishment mainstream. They made their appeal to the large floating population of unchurched, and a number of these groups were successful enough over time to form a second tier of established denominations.

The 20th-century censuses reveal a diversity of faith traditions across the 44 counties that belie the notion of a culturally coherent region, at least by the measure of religion. The jurisdictional lines drawn by denominations with an ecclesiastical polity, that is, with hierarchical structures, also suggest a much different sense of region than the boundaries adopted by governmental or human service organizations (Figure 5). The Methodists, Presbyterians, and Catholics are cases in point. Methodists, historically the largest Protestant denomination in Indiana, are organized under a state episcopacy, subdivided into North and South conferences, each with numerous administrative districts headed by superintendents. None of these divisions track the jurisdictional boundaries used in other arenas. In fact, the Methodist conference lines divide the region, with the 44 counties further split into 11 separate districts, four reporting to the North conference and seven to the South. The Presbyterian Synod of Lincoln Trails includes both Indiana and Illinois, and Indiana's three presbyteries segment the region. Catholics, too, adopt a governance scheme that divides the region, with some of the counties reporting to the Indianapolis diocese and some to the Lafayette diocese. In fact, these diocesan lines do not recognize the Indianapolis MSA as a governance unit; Hamilton County, the MSA's second largest county in terms of population and numbers of Catholics, reports to the Lafayette diocese rather than to Indianapolis.

Of course, a number of denominations are not organized hierarchically. Central Indiana, in fact, has a large representation of non-hierarchical denominations, some with confusing taxonomies. The association known as Christian Churches and Churches of Christ (not to be mistaken with the related and equally independent Churches of Christ) has historical roots in the Midwest, and participating congregations are sometimes referred to as "Independent Christian Churches." These congregations do not make up a denomination, but a fellowship. The same is true of Pentecostals, who join together under a denominational banner but embrace a

congregational polity. Baptists are another example. The term comprises at least 18 denominations regionally, including more than 250 congregations in Indianapolis alone, each independent of the others. Black Baptists offer a good illustration of this point. Although often counted as one group, Black Baptists comprise a number of denominations, though each one prizes the freedom and democracy of the local congregation and recognizes its authority. They unite in a variety of associations, usually along state lines, but only for the purpose of fellowship and consultation. Indianapolis alone has six such associations, with none dominant in terms of the number of member congregations (Table 2).

Table 2: Black Baptist Conventions Represented in Indianapolis

Convention*	Congregations in Indianapolis
Missionary Baptist Churches	39
National Baptist Convention of America, Inc.	39
National Baptist Convention USA, Inc.	30
National Missionary Baptist Convention of America	24
National Missionary Baptist Convention	11
Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.	6

* Many of these congregations use the phrase "Missionary Baptist" as part of their name, whether or not it is included in the name of their convention. Also, a number of local congregations participate in more than one convention.

Source: Church Federation of Greater Indianapolis (1997).

POLICY ISSUES CAN BE AFFECTED BY A REGION'S RELIGIONS

What do these denominational,doctrinal,and jurisdictional patterns of diversity have to do with regional issues, cultural or otherwise? Central Indiana has no dominant religious tradition,but does this matter? A recent study by distinguished sociologist Alan Wolfe, *One Nation After All* (1998), argues that the vast majority of Americans see religion as a private matter to be discussed only reluctantly. They were particularly distrustful of organized religion.[2] His middle-class respondents also reported trying to be welcoming to all faiths and believed that truth claims by one faith as opposed to another were divisive and destructive to civil society. If this is the case, what difference would religion make in any effort to forge common regional interests and identity?

[2] At least one commentator finds a striking similarity between the distrust of organized religion and the contemporary distaste for politics."Both involve public expression, collectivities of personalities involved in a shared enterprise, rules and convictions, and sometimes hard-hitting encounters. That we seem not to have the stomach for either suggests our capacity for democracy itself is growing ever more anemic." (Elshtain 2000, p. 11)

Throughout our history, religion has been one of the constitutive elements of American society. Numerous commentators have noted its ability to draw people together, counteracting the tendency of both democratic egalitarianism and the market economy to foster the pursuit of self-interest. Its aim to shape societal values has been key to popular reform movements from abolitionism and temperance to civil rights and the War on Poverty. Even if not viewed today as a basis for the creation of civil society, religion has played this role in our past and likely will do so again.

Religion provides a worldview for its adherents, and this perspective has the potential to influence political attitudes and behaviors, even if indirectly. Consider, for example, the basic stance toward society that separates Catholic and Protestants. Drawing upon the work of David Tracy, sociologist and Catholic priest Andrew Greeley (1990, p. 45) observes:

> The Catholic tends to see society as a "sacrament" of God, a set of ordered relationships, governed by both justice and love, that reveal, however imperfectly, the presence of God. Society is "natural" and "good," therefore, for humans and their "natural" response to God is social. The Protestant tends to see society as "God-forsaken" and therefore unnatural and oppressive. The individual stands over against society and not integrated into it. The human becomes fully human only when he is able to break away from social oppression and relate to the absent God as a completely free individual.

This difference can be seen most clearly in the way the two faith traditions identify their church community. For Catholics, the church is the parish, a geographical area that includes all people living within its boundaries;for Protestants, the church is the congregation,a free association of people with similar beliefs (see Bellah 1999).

Of course, these lines quickly blur when considering the differences within Protestantism. Mainline Protestant denominations, for example, have long embraced issues of social justice, while fundamental and evangelical groups focus more exclusively on matters relating to individual salvation. In a recent study, sociologist Robert Wuthnow (1999) found this difference had important civic consequences: "For mainline Protestants, the more active a person is at church, the more likely that person is to be a member of a wide variety of community organizations" (Wuthnow 2000, p. 32). But among evangelicals, church attendance was strongly associated with membership in church-related groups and volunteer work. Church involvement for evangelicals, Wuthnow concluded, "is not positively associated with engagement in the wider community." Data from a 1998 study revealed a somewhat different pattern. Christian Smith discovered that fundamentalists, evangelicals, and mainline groups were similarly represented among individuals who volunteer a lot for community organizations (though all three volunteered in this category less than Catholics), but evangelicals were more likely to volunteer for a church program that served the community than were the other groups (Smith 1998).

The so-called "culture wars" of the past three decades, conflicts that often centered on issues of education and class, have fractured denominations further, making it difficult to predict behavior based on past patterns. Evangelicals, for example, took their anti-modern cues early in the 20th century from fundamentalists, thus shaping our view of them. Yet today many evangelicals are upwardly mobile, increasingly suburban, and eager to send their children to elite schools. In his recent book, *Christian America? What Evangelicals Really Want*, sociologist Christian Smith (2000) found that two-thirds did not want to prohibit abortion completely, only 20 percent thought a woman's place was in the home, and most supported the separation of church and state. Overall, if the association between religion and political and social issues is not clear-cut, there remain important differences among Catholics, mainline Protestants, and fundamental/evangelical/Pentecostal Protestants that may influence the region's sense of itself. In a 1999 Polis Center survey, the distinctions between Catholic culture and Protestant culture—and within Protestant culture—were readily apparent. When asked what was the most important priority for a religious group, Catholics were far more likely than Protestants to list providing social services to the needy, and evangelical Protestants were more likely to emphasize encouraging members to share the faith (see Table 3 on page 15).

Also in the survey, respondents were asked whether religious groups should seek to influence public policy regarding business development. Almost 67 percent of evangelicals answered "strongly agree" or "somewhat agree" compared with 44

percent of Catholics and 53 percent of non-evangelical Protestants. On the question of whether to keep religion out of politics and political issues, evangelical Protestants were most opposed:42 percent strongly disagreed with the idea of separating religion and politics, compared with 25 percent of Catholics and 23 percent of non-evangelical Protestants. Finally, evangelical Protestants were far more likely than the other two groups to use their religious beliefs to form an opinion on political issues, as revealed in Table 4.

Table 3:Responses to the question,"What is the most important priority for a religious group?"from three options provided

Priority	**Christian Type**			**Total**
	Catholic (n=142)	**Evangelical** (n=116)	**Non-evangelical** (n=302)	
Providing services to those in need				
Count	88	47	149	284
% within Christian type	62.0%	40.5%	49.3%	50.7%
Encouraging members to share their faith				
Count	34	55	97	186
% within Christian type	23.9%	47.4%	32.1%	33.2%
Bringing about social and political changes				
Count	20	14	56	90
% within Christian type	14.1%	12.1%	18.5%	16.1%

Note:Chi-square for table is significant at the p<.001 level.
Source: Polis Center 1999 survey of Indianapolis residents.

Table 4:Responses to the question,"How important to you is using religious or spiritual beliefs to form your opinions on political issues?"

Importance	**Christian Type**			**Total**
	Catholic (n=143)	**Evangelical** (n=119)	**Non-evangelical** (n=301)	
Very Important				
Count	36	72	70	178
% within Christian type	25.2%	60.5%	23.3%	31.6%
Somewhat important				
Count	58	37	134	229
% within Christian type	40.6%	31.1%	44.5%	40.7%
Not too important				
Count	33	5	54	92
% within Christian type	14.1%	4.2%	18.5%	16.3%
Not at all important				
Count	16	5	43	64
% within Christian type	11.2%	4.2%	14.3%	11.4%

Note:Chi-square for table is significant at the p<.001 level.
Source: Polis Center 1999 survey of Indianapolis residents.

If religion is an important variable in decisions affecting regional identity and issues, public education may be the place where it first appears. In a recent national survey, David Sikkink (1999, p. 51) found that "religiously conservative groups . . . express alienation from public schools, and that alienation is associated positively with the lower and middle classes and with several contextual factors, such as ruralness, residential instability, racial heterogeneity, religious adherence, and homogeneity." This distinction, which closely tracks Christian Smith's 1998 study of evangelicals and politics, is especially sharp when compared with Catholics and mainline and liberal Protestants, as seen in Table 5.

Given the religious diversity in Central Indiana, Sikkink's conclusion holds special interest: "Overall, communities with greatest moral integration [i.e., ones with diverse moralities or religious views] are more likely to have individuals who sense moral and spiritual alienation from public schools and are willing to express this view publicly" (1999, p.73).

Pennsylvania's efforts to implement educational reform in the early 1990s suggest the potential for religious division over an important regional issue. The Pennsylvania Board of Education sought to implement "outcome-based education" (OBE) as part of an effort to make the state more competitive in the global marketplace. The proposals caught the attention of a coalition of conservative Catholics and Protestants who had recently suffered a political defeat on school-choice legislation. With much of their former coalition still intact, they were able to mobilize with surprising speed, and 30 organizations met to address this threat. Supporters of outcome-based education were caught off guard; they also underestimated the effectiveness of their opponents' published materials, which they viewed as too outrageous to be believable. An opponent in the legislature sent out alerts warning that the word "Christmas" could be banned and barcodes would be put on children's foreheads, as, he alleged, had already happened in a school in Portland, Oregon. Materials from other sources warned that the OBE proposal would promote racial guilt and would "classify almost every student as 'mentally ill' in need of special education, re-thinking education and re-socialization." Elsewhere, opponents claimed that OBE was "focused on overpopulation and requiring birth control; and human sexuality teaching that is pro-abortion and immoral; and 'Earth Day' (an annual program to introduce all children to worshipping the rocks, birds, plants)." Ultimately, the 575 outcome statements were reduced to 53, and the regulations included a statement that the achievement of outcomes "does not require students to hold or express particular attitudes, values or beliefs." The implementation required by law was "vague and permissive" and relied heavily on local plans (Boyd, Lugg, and Zahorchak 1996, p. 11).

Table 5: Respondents from different religions who perceive public schools as hostile to moral and spiritual values

Group	Percent	Sample Size
Churchgoing Protestants		
Pentecostals	70%	164
Charismatics	62%	300
Fundamentalists	51%	797
Evangelicals	55%	699
Mainline Protestants	39%	916
Liberal Protestants	31%	606
Catholics		
Churchgoing Catholics	22%	117
Nominal Catholics	15%	68
Other		
Non-Christian religious	20%	100
Not religious	25%	60

Source: Sikkink (1999).

One conclusion of the most thorough study of the Pennsylvania controversy is especially noteworthy for Central Indiana, given the high value Hoosiers generally place on consensus mechanisms as a way to reach solutions to important social issues. "Religious conservatives," the authors report, "are not just another special interest group. Nor do they fall into the neat category of 'stakeholder.'" They indeed hold a worldview and maintain a moral compass that set them apart from society, thus creating tricky political dilemmas for educational policymakers (Boyd, Lugg, and Zahorchak 1996, p. 362). Some scholars have concluded that political parties are becoming more divided along religious lines (Layman 1999). More positive news comes from a national study of denominational influences on socially divisive issues which concludes that "except for a couple of notable examples, attitudes among members of denominational groups have not generally become more polarized over time" (Hoffmann and Miller 1998, p. 528).

Differing religious views may frame issues in a socially or politically divisive way, but might not religion offer a bridge to common action both through its call to community and its engagement with it? Robert Putnam, among others, has recently noted the decline in civic engagement since the 1950s and views congregations as bulwarks against a growing disinclination in our society to join groups and a loss of the sense of community. Numerous policymakers and public officials also have touted the social capacity of congregations, most often to aid government in the delivery of social services through faith-based partnerships. Two former elected officials from Indiana, Dan Coats and Stephen Goldsmith, were (and remain) national leaders in this movement, Coats as the principal U.S. Senate sponsor of the Charitable Choice provision of the Welfare Reform Act of 1996, and Goldsmith as the progenitor of the Indianapolis Front Porch Alliance, a local government initiative to create faith-based partnerships.

Unquestionably, congregations serve to create community among their members. They are voluntary associations of a high order, offering a place for engagement within the organization and often beyond it through various mission or outreach activities. They also provide meaning for their members, giving them a framework for the transmission of values, especially to children. They often join with other religious and secular groups to achieve important civic goals, from support of Habitat for Humanity, neighborhood soup kitchens, and clothing closets to community development corporations. Their members, especially from mainline congregations, are often found in positions of civic leadership, although they are by no means devoted exclusively or even largely to liberal or progressive causes.[4]

[4] "Church involvement among mainline Protestants also is positively associated with filling leadership roles in other community organizations, volunteering for service agencies, and participating in electoral and partisan political activities. The pattern for evangelical Protestants is quite different . . ." (Wuthnow 2000, p. 32). Wuthnow's findings appear to be true for Indianapolis throughout the 20th century. A study of the city's social service directors in the 1930s discovered a heavy representation from the mainline denominations (Sample 1998). Also, an analysis of church affiliation among individuals noted by the *Indianapolis Star* in its periodic listing of civic leadership reveals a disproportionate representation from mainline congregations, though less than the Sample thesis found.

But it would claim too much to view congregations as primary agents for the solution of larger community problems. A study conducted by the Polis Center in 17 areas throughout Greater Indianapolis from 1995 to 1999 reveals less connection between congregations and community than advocates of faith-based partnerships assume. Mainline Protestant churches are more involved in these relationships than are fundamental/evangelical/Pentecostal congregations, which tend to remain separate from the larger community. The Catholic Church has historic connections through such organizations as Catholic Charities, but individual parishes have fewer relationships than mainline Protestant bodies.

Even if congregations desired such involvement with their external community—and many do not seek these connections, largely because their mission is to promote faith and not social justice—the Polis study found that few congregations have the resources to do much. The average size of Indianapolis congregations is 400 people, but this number is skewed upward by a handful of mega-churches.More than half of all congregations have fewer than 150 members. The same result applies to congregational budgets: the average annual budget is $270,000, but the median is only $127,000. When asked how much they spend each year on social services, half of all congregations reported $4,000 or less. In fact, in some inner city areas, the single largest congregation with the most programs accounted for almost 90 percent of all social service money spent by churches in the neighborhood (Farnsley 2000).

The research from Indianapolis also challenges the assumption that congregations are uniquely local institutions and thus are well positioned to create community within their neighborhoods. Typically, fewer than half the members live in the immediate area. Church and synagogue buildings may be fixed assets in a neighborhood, but congregations are collections of people who can and do relocate both singly and collectively. Because Black churches are in predominately African-American neighborhoods, many people believe that the congregations are tied to the community; in fact, their members are no more likely to live near their houses of worship than are Whites (Farnsley 2000).

In sum, it is a mistake to view congregations as unique agents for larger social purposes, especially for ends that have scant connection to religion.Churches, temples, and mosques house communities of faith. These groups generate social capital by linking people with one another. They strengthen the bonds of friendship and commitment and thus serve indirectly to form part of the cultural base for a broader regional community. However, only a handful of congregations as congregations would define their role in terms that further regional identity or regional decision-making.

Does this mean,then,that religion is inconsequential in the development of regional identity or a regional strategy? If considered in its institutional context, the wide array of faiths and their competing and overlapping jurisdictions suggest that religion likely could never achieve the central purpose necessary to make it an actor on the regional stage. It is difficult to imagine an issue on which so many denominations and congregations might agree, much less one they could address with an organizational strategy. But if framed differently, that is, religion as a way of thinking about and relating to the world, then the answer is less certain. A number of regional issues, education and other socio-cultural issues especially, have the potential to energize significant numbers of religious adherents. Although it is much too early for definitive answers, what is clear is that the region's religious diversity may well pose problems for any regional strategy that ignores it.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF THE RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY OF CENTRAL INDIANA

What are the policy implications posed by the region's religious diversity? In part, they depend upon the issue and how it is framed. A goal of promoting economic progress through a conventional strategy directed at light industry, for example, might be interpreted as having no direct religious consequence and may stir no religious opposition. But an economic development plan dedicated to the production of popular culture, say, the music video or computer games industry, might invoke religious passions, especially from denominations with a belief system in tension with these forms of entertainment. In another scenario, an attempt to extend gambling could draw opposition from religious groups, even though these groups may not share a common frame of reference about the issue. Mainline Protestants more likely would be motivated by concerns about social justice—i.e., the poor disproportionately bear the adverse consequences of gambling—while evangelicals and fundamentalists might view it more in terms of personal sin and salvation.

Religion may or may not be an explicit focus for policies relating to the regional development of Central Indiana, but it is likely that the religious views of individuals and groups will affect the outcome of policy debates or decisions either directly or indirectly. Religion matters to a large public in Central Indiana, and increasingly, policy makers and others are conceiving a role for religion in public affairs. For policy makers, finding the proper role for religion will not be easy. Central Indiana is unusually diverse religiously, a circumstance that may breed tension and suspicion among religious groups and cultures that do not share common beliefs about the fundamental issues that lie at the heart of many policy debates. Social and cultural issues will be most problematic, and it will be important not to underestimate the connection of these issues with economic strategies. Recruiting a nationally competitive workforce, for example, may require health coverage for same sex partners, an action that some faith traditions will not endorse and may actively oppose.

Policy makers who are alert to these issues and wish to negotiate them must be willing to spend time getting to know the various religious traditions present in Central Indiana. Several lessons will emerge from this involvement. Religious organizational cultures differ widely, so the same strategy will not apply to all denominations. (For example, to work with the Roman Catholic Church, you contact the bishop or archbishop, who speaks for the diocese, but to work with Baptist churches, you approach each congregation.) Religious coalitions can and do form across theological and ecclesiological lines, but often these alliances will be transitory and focused

on a single issue or a set of issues.Liberal or conservative theological positions do not always correspond with liberal or conservative social attitudes. Finally, religious groups by definition are forms of community, and thus, they enhance social capital, but faith communities may or may not have any intention or capacity to interact with the secular world.

What will become most apparent, however, is that religion and religious denominations have had and continue to have a major influence in shaping the culture of Central Indiana. This influence—and the religious groups themselves—must be taken seriously if efforts to develop a regional consciousness and a regional approach to economic and social policy are to succeed.

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APPENDIX

RELIGIOUS ADHERENTS WITHIN GENERAL CATEGORIES*

A chart showing the proportions of adherents in each classification is included as Figure 2 in the body of this report. The denominations within each classification are listed in this appendix.

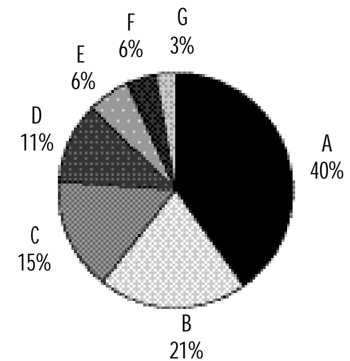
* These categories were created by Professor Jan Shipps, with additional development by William Mirola (2000),for use in the forthcoming book, *Charting Congregational Cultures: An Atlas of Indianapolis Religion.*

MAINLINE PROTESTANTS

According to Glenmary, followers in this category make up 37.4 percent of religious adherents in the Central Indiana area. Specifically, the number of adherents in each of the seven historic mainline denominations in the region are as follows:

Segment on Chart	Denomination	Adherents
A	United Methodist Church	173,895
B	American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.	88,873
C	Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)	66,909
D	Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)	48,871
E	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	24,990
F	United Church of Christ	17,796
G	Episcopal Church	11,689

Figure 6: Mainline Protestant Adherents, Central Indiana,1990



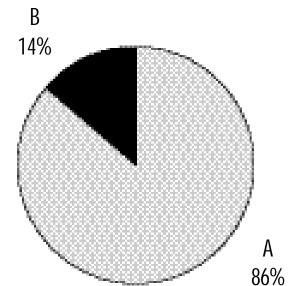
Source:Glenmary Research Center (1992).

BLACK MAINLINE PROTESTANTS

Black mainline Protestants comprise 7 percent of Central Indiana religious adherents. This group includes Black Baptist and Black Methodist conventions/ denominations. Glenmary reports only two denominations in this group:

Segment on Chart	Denomination	Adherents
A	Black Baptists	69,546 (estimated)
B	African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church	11,041

Figure 7:Black Mainline Protestant Adherents, Central Indiana,1990



Source:Glenmary Research Center (1992).

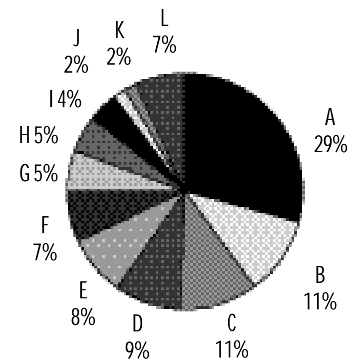
FUNDAMENTAL/EVANGELICAL/PENTECOSTAL PROTESTANT

This group makes up 32.6 percent of religious adherents in the Central Indiana region. It includes those who adhere to the conviction that the Bible is the inerrant, infallible Word of God, believe in the gifts of the Spirit, are members of the National Association of Evangelicals, and/or belong to Adventist, Holiness, or Baptist traditions (except for those in the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.). By far the largest denomination shown in this group is that of the Christian Churches and Churches of Christ. Eleven denominations each have 2 percent or more of the followers in this group. Of the smaller groups, collectively shown here in the "other" category, 36 separate denominations are represented and nearly half have fewer than 300 followers.

Segment on Chart	Denomination	Adherents
A	Christian Churches and Churches of Christ	110,111
B	Church of the Nazarene	40,668
C	Southern Baptist Convention	40,115
D	Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod	34,444
E	Assemblies of God	31,326
F	Churches of Christ	26,602
G	Independent Non-Charismatic Churches	20,572
H	Church of God	18,861
I	The Wesleyan Church	15,736
J	Independent Charismatic Churches	6,535
K	Seventh-Day Adventists	6,288
L	Other*	25,931

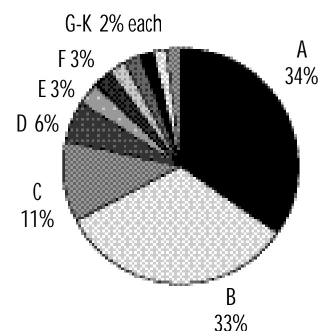
* Other includes Free Methodist Church of North America (3,681);International Church of the Foursquare Gospel (3,577); Salvation Army (2,141);Christian and Missionary Alliance (1,838);United Baptists (1,597);Brethren Church (Ashland, Ohio) (1,274);Midwest Congregational Christian Fellowship (1,092); Evangelical Free Church of America (1,035); Pentecostal Church of God (1,007); Presbyterian Church In America (801); Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod Church of God of Prophecy (788);United Brethren In Christ (777); Free Will Baptist, National Association (667); Conservative Congregational Christian Conference (644);Church of God of the Mountain Assembly (509);Missionary Church (448); Evangelical Methodist Church (447); Lutheran Churches, The American Association of (351);Churches of God General Conference (323);Apostolic Christian Church of America (253); Primitive Baptists Associations (226); Baptist General Conference (219); Free Lutheran Congregations (206);Christian (Plymouth) Brethren (204); Central Baptists (201);Church of God General Conference (150);Christian Reformed Church (124); Baptist Missionary Association of America (117); Evangelical Congregational Church (113);Old Regular Baptists (106);North American Baptist Conference (83); Evangelical Lutheran Synod (69); Evangelical Mennonite Church (31); Two-Seed-In-The-Spirit Predestinarian Baptists (24);and Allegheny Wesleyan Methodist Connection (19).

Figure 8: Fundamental/Evangelical/ Pentecostal Protestant Adherents, Central Indiana, 1990



Source:Glenmary Research Center (1992).

Figure 9: Traditional Non-Mainline Adherents, Central Indiana, 1990



Source:Glenmary Research Center (1992).

TRADITIONAL NON-MAINLINE

Traditional non-mainline followers make up 3.4 percent of religious adherents in Central Indiana. This diverse group includes the following:

Segment on Chart	Denomination	Adherents
A	Friends	13,617
B	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints	12,815
C	Church of the Brethren	4,343
D	Unitarian Universalist Association	2,199
E	Mennonite Church	1,216
F	Congregational Christian Churches Additional	1,043
G	Congregational Christian Churches, National Association of	927
H	Reformed Church in America	884
I	Old Order Amish Church	750
J	Moravian Church in America (Unitas Fratrum) No Prov	693
K	Other*	781

* Other includes: Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church In America (409); Cumberland Presbyterian Church (138);Mennonite Church The General Conference (108); Beachy Amish Mennonite Churches (86); Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church (33);Christ Catholic Church (7).

NON-CHRISTIAN

Although there are many non-Christian denominations, the Glenmary organization reported only 11,985 Jewish adherents in this group in Central Indiana. Apparently no other non-Christian denominations reported their membership numbers to Glenmary. This group accounts for 1 percent of adherents in the Central Indiana region.