
THE IMPACT OF PROTESTANT FUNDAMENTALISM ON EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT*

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Sociological interest in the material consequences of religious orientations died out following raging debates during the 1960s and 1970s. Using insider documents from conservative Protestant communities, we reopen this issue by examining how fundamentalist Protestant cultural orientations discourage educational pursuits. Using data from the Youth Parent Socialization Panel Study we demonstrate that fundamentalist beliefs and conservative Protestant affiliation both have significant and substantial negative influences on educational attainment above and beyond social background factors.

"[A]mong the philosophers who attempted, by reason and learning, to pierce the heavens, what shameful disagreement! The higher any one was endued by genius, and the more he was polished by science and art, the more specious was the colouring which he gave to his opinions."

—John Calvin ([1559] 1953:60)

For most of the twentieth century, sociologists have fiercely debated the material consequences of cultural orientations. Beginning with Max Weber's (1930) *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* and forcefully applied to the American case by Lenski (1961) in *The Religious Factor*, an impressive assembly of studies has sought to explain—or explain away—the influence of religion on the life chances of believers. In-

deed, Glenn and Hyland (1967) deemed the relationship between religious orientations and life chances "the most viable topic of debate in the sociology of religion in the United States" (p. 73). Despite considerable interest in the religion and stratification nexus in the 1960s, research on the topic waned during the 1970s and 1980s. The declining appeal of questions regarding the religion-stratification connection can be attributed to: (1) increasing awareness of the sizable variation in attainment among Catholics from different ethnic origins, among Protestants from different denominations, and among members of religious group across sociohistorical circumstances (Greeley 1964; Roof 1979; Schuman 1971; Stryker 1981); (2) mounting empirical evidence suggesting that family background—not religious culture—creates religious differences in educational attainment (Featherman 1971; Mueller 1980); (3) the irrelevance of Weberian theories for explaining differences other than those between Catholics and Protestants; and (4) the ascendancy of "structural" approaches to stratification (Jencks 1992). Despite declining interest in the religion-stratification connection, sophisticated sociological studies have found significant effects of "religio-ethnic" background net of other social background factors on one key aspect of attainment—educational achievement (Duncan and Featherman 1973; Featherman 1971; Stryker 1981). What has been missing is the establishment of a direct connection between religious prescriptions/proscriptions and educational attainment.

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Based on the writings of popular conservative Protestant authors, we demonstrate why fundamentalists are less inclined toward attaining higher education, regardless of their status origins. To test this, we use data from the Youth-Parent Socialization Panel Study (Jennings and Niemi 1981), which provides measures of educational attainment, social background, curriculum, grades, and beliefs in the inerrancy of the Bible.

RELIGION AND EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Education is a principle medium through which cultural understandings are transmitted to new generations, directing youths toward particular value orientations. Coleman (1993) writes: "Teachers and schools, like parents and families, cannot avoid teaching values. And as schools come to encompass an increasing part of most children's lives, the values transmitted by schools come to be a larger part of the cultural heritage that the younger generation receives from the older" (p. iii). The centrality of education for the transmission of cultural values gives religious groups a considerable stake in the education of young members. The cultural orientations of some religious groups may conflict with the educational goals of secular society, and members who hold strong religious convictions may approach secular education with disinterest, caution, or even hostility. Sociological research on the relationship between religious values and educational attainment hit a dead end when studies of Protestant-Catholic differences reached an impasse. To revive investigation of the connection between religion and educational attainment, we focus on a large, thriving, and distinctive segment of American religion—Protestant fundamentalism.

Sociological concern with the relationship between religious values and educational attainment was peaked by Lenski's (1961) study, *The Religious Factor*. For Lenski, Protestantism's focus on individual salvation (or election) and asceticism made it uniquely amenable to economic life in a capitalist society and to secular educational pursuits as well. In contrast, Catholicism is seen to have an anti-intellectual and otherworldly orientation, directing members away from worldly

success by socializing them to obey authority rather than to act on and for their own accord (Lenski 1961). While a few studies have supported Lenski's findings, most results are inconsistent or provided no support at all (Glenn and Hyland 1967; Greeley 1964, 1969; Mueller 1980; Roof 1979), owing to the incredible diversity in attainment among Catholics from particular ethnic groups and among Protestants from different denominations (Featherman 1971; Roof 1979; Stryker 1981). Such diverse effects of religion could not be explained by existing theories, and Catholic-Protestant differences in attainment were seen to "have become so small and insignificant that they hardly warrant extended debate" (Roof 1979:288).

The debate over meager Catholic-Protestant differences, however, shunted attention away from one of the largest and most influential segments of the American religious market—fundamentalist Protestants. Opposition to secular education by conservative Protestants is rooted in their unwavering conviction that the Bible is inerrant and is unitary through both the Old and New Testaments (Ellison and Musick 1995). Fundamentalist Protestant orientations are potent cultural attributes developed through intense early socialization, reinforced by strict parenting techniques (Ellison and Sherkat 1993a, 1993b), and sustained in tightly-knit communities that promote particular interpretations of sacred texts. The early development of such deeply held sentiments and the closely integrated social ties promoting shared understandings could limit the secular opportunities that young fundamentalist Protestants afford themselves.

Tension between conservative Protestant religions and secular education has always been high. The furor over teaching Darwin's theory of evolution in public schools was raised early in the twentieth century, and Protestant skepticism over the value and propriety of scientific investigation has continued unabated since then (Eckberg and Nestrenko 1985; Ellison and Musick 1995; Provenzo 1990). Issues of submission to authority and faithful acceptance of "Truths" are equally important. For many conservative Protestants, education serves to undermine both secular and divine authority by promoting "humanism" and denigrating faith. Con-

sequently, organized movements have sought to resacralize public education by controlling curricula and textbook selection, reinstating mandatory or officially-sanctioned voluntary prayer, or providing alternatives through home schooling or fundamentalist schools (Page and Clelland 1978; Provenzo 1990).

Conservative Protestant opposition to secular education stems primarily from conflicts over how children should be socialized and the desirability of secular humanist values. Prominent fundamentalist critics argue that parents must battle for the souls of their children. Commentator R. J. Rushdoony (1973) explains:

Control of children and their education is control of the future. Humanists have always understood this . . . they rightfully understood that the only way to destroy Biblical faith was to control the schools, and, little by little, remove Christianity and introduce Humanism. (P. 31)

Opposition to both humanism and scientific pedagogy permeates fundamentalist critiques of secular education (B. LaHaye 1977; T. LaHaye 1983; Maddoux 1992). Simply put, the view is that if public schools succeed in inculcating humanist values in the offspring of fundamentalist devotees, the children will burn in hell. In one text commonly used in fundamentalist schools, a full-page highlighted passage attributed to Martin Luther reads:

I am much afraid that schools will prove to be great gates of hell unless they diligently labor in explaining the Holy Scriptures, engraving them in the hearts of youth. I advise no one to place his child where the scriptures do not reign paramount. Every institution in which men are not increasingly occupied with the word of God must become corrupt. (*Rebirth of America* 1986:127)

Many fundamentalists see education as valueless unless it is religious in content and orientation. They maintain, "We need a Copernican revolution again that is going to . . . put God back into the center of American education . . . or else . . . the whole system should be abandoned and be allowed to sink in its own filth" (Kennedy 1986:125).

Fundamentalists also find fault with the scientific method—an approach to learning that seeks to *discover* truths rather than claiming to *know* "The Truth." Scientific discover-

ies are seen as promoting alternatives to divine truths already specified in scripture—a course of inquiry considered inappropriate by many fundamentalists (Ellison and Musick 1995). The theory of evolution's counter to the creation myth is one clear example of this, and the scientific study of religion creates a firestorm of controversy. Even the "new math" has been opposed on the grounds that it could relativize thinking and ". . . destroy the student's belief in absolutes, . . . such as Christian faith" (Hefley 1979: 42).

Fundamentalists are especially critical of institutions of higher education. B. LaHaye (1977) explains,

One of the dangers of secular college education today is that the whole educational system has been taken over by an atheistic, humanist philosophy that is largely anti-God, anti-moral, and anti-American. . . . We have seen scores of fine Christian young people go down the drain or lose interest in spiritual things while attending such [secular] colleges. (P. 116)

From this perspective, the only type of college that might be of value is a "Christian" college, meaning a fundamentalist college or a Bible school.¹ It is not lost on fundamentalists that most opportunities for higher education are secular in nature. Opportunities for fundamentalists to remain in educational environments that embrace their religious beliefs are few and costly. While religious conservatives may find some merit in attaining additional education in order to "better serve Christ," when confronted with a choice between affordable state-supported secular institutions or no higher education, advice from renowned fundamentalist authors is

¹ Most fundamentalist attacks on education focus on public education, but it is noteworthy that virtually all private institutions of higher education are subject to the same criticism. Prominent private universities are considered bastions of humanism, despite the religious origins that many hold. Even traditionally conservative religious universities have become secularized, as exemplified by recent divorces between Baylor and Samford Universities and the "re-fundamentalized" Southern Baptist Convention. Additionally, many "acceptable" Bible colleges do not grant four-year degrees, and few provide the opportunity for graduate study, thus limiting educational options.

clear: No schooling is better than secular schooling. B. LaHaye (1977) sums up the point.

I am convinced that all Christian young people should avoid the secular college as long as possible and trust God to provide them with a Christian college experience. . . . We have heard many parents say, "We can't afford to send our young people to a Christian college. We will send them to a state school; it is much cheaper!" It actually turns out to be the most expensive thing they ever did. (P. 117)

Given that most parents and students have budget constraints, if such an appeal is successful it would severely limit educational opportunities beyond high school.

Secular educational approaches, then, are considered antagonistic to fundamentalist Christians' religious values. These distinctive religious beliefs could influence which educational options adherents deem desirable or plausible. Individuals who believe that the Bible is the inerrant source of truth may be ambivalent about secular studies, if not hostile toward them. Thus, fundamentalist students might not "make the grades," they may curb their educational aspirations, and may choose secondary curricula that limit opportunities for higher education. When kin, peers, and other associates are beholden to these cultural convictions, this can produce social pressures militating against secondary or post-secondary educational pursuits. Fundamentalist parents and denominations may not encourage children to excel in secular studies, may discourage educational aspirations, and might direct children away from college preparatory curricula. Our investigation of insider documents from fundamentalist communities suggests that cultural factors could indeed play a role in every aspect of the educational attainment process. If youths have internalized the values and beliefs of their fundamentalist leaders, they will likely limit their educational pursuits.

DATA

We use data from the Youth Parent Socialization Panel Study (YSPSP), collected by the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan (Jennings and Niemi 1981). In

1965, the first wave of the study yielded interviews with 1,669 high school seniors, 99 percent of those targeted. A randomly selected parent of each child was also interviewed, resulting in 1,562 interviews with parents (93 percent completion). In 1973, the second panel retained 1,348 (80.8 percent) of the students, and in 1982 the third wave obtained 1,135 interviews (a 68 percent retention rate over 17 years). The YSPSP is biased against high school drop outs—approximately 26 percent of the birth cohort. Corrections for sample selection bias on missing data are not possible. If fundamentalism has a significant negative impact on secondary educational attainment then our estimates will be close to correct, or even conservative. However, fundamentalist orientations may have a weaker influence on secondary attainment, thus giving a negative bias to our estimates. Indeed, obedience-oriented fundamentalists may be more likely to complete mandatory high school education, and this bias may influence the generalizability of our study. We do provide accurate estimates, however, for effects of fundamentalism on post-secondary educational attainment among high school graduates.

MEASURES

Educational Attainment

In both 1973 and 1982, educational attainment ranges from (1) high school, to (2) some college, to (3) college graduate, and to (4) graduate degree. In 1973, 36.5 percent of the respondents had only a high school degree, 31.6 percent had some college education, 27.3 percent had earned a college degree, and 4.6 percent had attained a graduate degree. By 1982, 11.9 percent had earned graduate degrees and another 24.4 percent had college degrees and 41.0 percent had attended some college. By 1982 the percentage of respondents with only a high school degree was 22.7 percent.

Biblical Inerrancy

In the 1965 panel, youths and their parents were asked: "I'd like you to tell me which is closest to your own view: (1) The Bible is God's word and all it says is true. (2) The

Bible was written by men inspired by God, but it contains some human error; (3) The Bible is a good book because it was written by wise men, but God had nothing to do with it; and (4) The Bible was written by men who lived so long ago that it is worth very little today.” Dummy variables identify those who chose the first response—39.8 percent of the youths and 34.2 percent of the parents chose response 1.

Denominational Affiliation:

We constructed dummy variables tapping youths' and parents' affiliation with conservative Protestant denominations (Baptists, Assembly of God, Pentecostal, Holiness, Church of Christ, Church of God, etc.).²

Grades and Curriculum:

We assess students' grade point averages in high school (on a four-point scale). Students indicated their curriculum in high school: college preparatory, vocational, general, business, agricultural, or other. We created a dummy indicator for college preparatory course-work. The YSPSP was not designed for a thorough examination of other aspects of the educational attainment process. There are no other measures of educational ability or achievement, educational expectations (as opposed to aspirations), peer aspirations, parental expectations, and the like.

Social Origins

We control for the effects of parents' education, income, and occupational status. We use the average education level of the parents—children from single-parent families are given the value for the one parent. This seven-point measure runs from: (1) Neither parent has more than primary school education, to (7) Both parents have graduate degrees. Parents' income in 1965 runs from (1) under \$1,000 per year to (9) over \$15,000.

Fathers' occupational status is measured using Duncan's SES scale.

Demographic Controls

Females, African Americans, residents of nonmetropolitan areas, and southerners are distinguished from other respondents using dummy variables.

METHODS

First, we compare conservative Protestants and Biblical inerrantists with other respondents by examining unadjusted and least-squares adjusted means. Second, we estimate a structural equation model with six equations: (1) educational attainment in 1973;³ (2) college preparatory course work in high school; (3) aspirations to continue education; (4) high school grade point average; (5) belief that the Bible is the inerrant word of God; and (6) parent's belief in Biblical inerrancy in 1965. Since college preparatory curricula and Biblical inerrancy are both binary response variables, we transformed data into Pearson's product moment, polyserial, and tetrachoric correlations (Joreskog and Sorbom 1989). Since correlations are used as data in model estimation, all estimates are standardized. Models were estimated using LISREL 8 and were cross-validated by splitting the sample randomly into halves and re-estimating the equations (Hayduk 1987).

RESULTS

Table 1 compares members of conservative Protestant denominations and those holding inerrantist views of scripture with other respondents. Looking first at the unadjusted means, we find that conservative Protestants and Biblical inerrantists have significantly lower educational aspirations than other respondents. Conservative Protestants and Biblical inerrantists are also less likely to have taken college-preparatory courses. Addition-

² Our classification of denominations follows Roof and McKinney (1987). Even though there is variation both across and within these denominations in support for fundamentalist orientations, these groups are clearly more supportive of fundamentalism than are other religious groups.

³ Models of educational attainment in 1982 (available on request) mirror the results for 1973. Examining gender differences in the effects of fundamentalism on attainment is beyond the scope of this paper, and there are too few African Americans to analyze them separately.

Table 1. Differences between the Means on Selected Education Variables: Conservative Protestants versus Others, and Biblical Inerrantists versus Others, Youth Parent Socialization Panel Study, 1965 to 1982

Education Variable	Conservative Protestants	Others	Biblical Inerrantists	Others
<i>Unadjusted Means</i>				
College preparation	.36 ***	.56	.40 ***	.58
Educational aspirations	3.83 ***	4.22	3.93 ***	4.25
Grade-point average	2.56	2.61	2.58	2.61
Educational attainment, 1973	1.77 ***	2.10	1.78 ***	2.17
Educational attainment, 1982	2.02 ***	2.36	2.05 ***	2.42
<i>Adjusted Means ^a</i>				
College preparation	.44 **	.53	.45 ***	.54
Educational aspirations	3.98 *	4.16	4.04	4.16
Grade-point average	2.57	2.61	2.57	2.62
Educational attainment, 1973	1.87 ***	2.05	1.88 ***	2.10
Educational attainment, 1982	2.12 **	2.32	2.14 ***	2.35

^a Parents' education, family income, father's occupational status, race, gender, region, and rural are controlled.

p* < .05 *p* < .01 ****p* < .001 (two-tailed tests)

ally, compared to other respondents both conservative Protestants and inerrantists have significantly lower educational attainment in 1973 and 1982. Conservative religious respondents were indistinguishable from others only in grade-point-average. When controls for social background are taken into account, we find that most of these relationships remain significant (Table 1, adjusted means). Conservative Protestants have significantly lower educational aspirations when background characteristics are taken into account, but the difference in aspirations between inerrantists and other respondents does not reach statistical significance. Both conservative Protestants and Biblical inerrantists are significantly less likely to take college preparatory coursework than other respondents, even when social background is held constant. Finally, the adjusted means show that inerrantists and members of conservative denominations have significantly lower educational attainment in 1973 and 1982.

Table 2 presents direct effects from the structural equation model for educational level attained by 1973. We focus our discussion on how the religious factors influence educational attainment processes. When

other factors are taken into account, Biblical inerrancy not only has a significant negative direct effect on educational attainment, but inerrancy also influences two key aspects of the educational attainment process: (1) Believers in the inerrancy of scripture are significantly less likely than other respondents to enroll in college-preparatory courses, and (2) such beliefs have a modest negative estimated effect on grade-point average in high school. Estimates in Table 3 show that belief in the inerrancy of the Bible has a significant and substantial indirect effect on educational attainment.

Parents' religious orientations and denominations also influence youths' educational choices. Youths are less likely to take college preparatory courses if parents subscribe to fundamentalism. Conservative Protestants are significantly less likely than members of other denominations to take college preparatory curricula. Youths' fundamentalist orientations are influenced by parental and denominational socialization, as well as by status backgrounds that support otherworldly cultural outlooks (Stark and Bainbridge 1985). Fundamentalist parents instill these beliefs in their children, and conservative Protestants are also signifi-

Table 2. Standardized Estimates for the Structural Equation Model of Biblical Inerrancy and the Educational Attainment Process: Youth Parent Socialization Panel Study, 1965 to 1973

Predictor Variables	Parent's Belief in Biblical Inerrancy	Youth's Belief in Biblical Inerrancy	Grade-Point Average	Educational Aspirations	College Preparation	Educational Attainment
College preparation	—	—	—	—	—	.544*** (.026)
Educational aspirations	—	—	—	—	.410*** (.021)	.122*** (.023)
Grade-point average	—	—	—	.271*** (.026)	.255*** (.021)	.104*** (.021)
Youth's belief in Biblical inerrancy	—	—	-.052 (.028)	-.039 (.026)	-.090*** (.022)	-.073*** (.020)
Parent's belief in Biblical inerrancy	—	.274*** (.026)	—	—	-.042 (.022)	—
Conservative Protestant	.173*** (.026)	.172*** (.027)	—	—	-.050* (.021)	—
Parents' education	-.069** (.026)	—	.061* (.027)	.049 (.026)	—	.044* (.019)
Parents' income	-.115*** (.029)	-.039 (.028)	—	.181*** (.028)	.055* (.023)	.051* (.022)
Father's occupation	-.135*** (.029)	-.110*** (.027)	.133*** (.029)	.160*** (.029)	.188*** (.023)	.051* (.023)
Female	—	.126*** (.024)	.228*** (.026)	-.102*** (.026)	-.096*** (.020)	-.072*** (.019)
Black	—	—	-.101*** (.027)	.063* (.026)	—	.052** (.019)
Southern	.077** (.027)	.085** (.026)	.070* (.027)	—	—	.073*** (.020)
Rural	.115*** (.026)	—	.129*** (.028)	—	-.073*** (.021)	—
R ²	.170	.235	.101	.184	.503	.548
Number of cases	1,337	1,337	1,337	1,337	1,337	1,337

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. Model $\chi^2 = 21.18$ (d.f. = 18); goodness of fit = .998; adjusted GFI = .987.

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed tests)

cantly more likely to hold inerrantist positions, net of other factors. Table 3 shows that both conservative denominations and parent's beliefs in Biblical inerrancy have substantial, statistically significant indirect effects on educational attainment through their impact on youth's beliefs and curriculum choice.

Finally, social background factors influence cultural orientations independent of other sources of socialization. Parents with high education levels, income, and occupa-

tional status are less apt to hold inerrantist positions and are therefore less likely to inculcate such orientations in their children. In contrast, parents from the South and rural areas are more likely to believe that the Bible is the inerrant word of God. Youths from the South and females are more apt to hold fundamentalist beliefs, net of other factors. Overall, we find that social background variables and status factors influence fundamentalist cultural views that reproduce status positions.

Table 3. Total and Indirect Effects of Predictor Variables on Educational Attainment: Decomposition from Table 2

Predictor Variables	Total Effects	Indirect Effects
College preparation	.544*** (.026)	—
Educational aspirations	.345*** (.024)	.223*** (.016)
Grade-point average	.337*** (.024)	.232*** (.017)
Youth's belief in Biblical inerrancy	-.153*** (.027)	-.080*** (.018)
Parent's belief in Biblical inerrancy	-.065*** (.014)	-.065*** (.014)
Conservative Protestant	-.069*** (.013)	-.069*** (.013)
Parents' education	.085** (.023)	.042** (.013)
Parents' income	.157*** (.027)	.106*** (.017)
Father's occupation	.278*** (.028)	.228*** (.020)
Female	-.102*** (.025)	-.030 (.018)
Black	.040 (.023)	-.012 (.013)
Southern	.078*** (.022)	.005 (.011)
Rural	-.004 (.015)	-.004 (.015)

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors.
p* < .05 *p* < .01 ****p* < .001 (two-tailed tests)

Our estimates show that the direct impact of fundamentalist orientations on the post-secondary educational attainment of high school graduates is roughly comparable in magnitude to the estimated effect of gender. Indeed, the total effect of youth's fundamentalist orientations rank close to parents' income and education in magnitude. Of course, great caution must be exercised in making comparisons of estimates in these models (given intercorrelations among status background factors and sample biases against high school dropouts); however, it is apparent that these cultural orientations have a nontrivial impact on educational attainment.

DISCUSSION

Sociological debates in the 1960s and 1970s over the material consequences of culture ended, we believe, prematurely. We have reopened this discussion by isolating cultural effects on attainment for a clearly defined group—contemporary American fundamentalist Protestants. We have reconstructed conservative Protestant worldviews on secular education using materials circulated in the community of believers. We tested the influence of religious orientations on educational attainment using panel data, and our results have revealed that fundamentalist orientations significantly retard educational attainment above and beyond the level predicted by social background factors alone.

A key starting point for understanding how such cultural orientations become consequential is to take seriously the ongoing discourse among fundamentalists. Insiders from cultural groups identify relevant issues and interpret or amplify how such matters should resonate with the schematic orientations of members. Religious interpretive communities negotiate interactions with broader social environments according to particular cultural scripts. Previous research has examined insider documents from conservative Protestant communities to uncover the ideological foundations of child-rearing orientations (Bartkowski and Ellison 1995; Ellison and Sherkat 1993a, 1993b), beliefs about scientific inquiry (Ellison and Musick 1995), and attitudes toward pornography (Sherkat and Ellison 1997). Future studies should ascertain specific orientations that undergird conservative Protestant aversion to secular education, such as opposition to humanism, skepticism about scientific scrutiny, and beliefs in the creation myth. Also, religious groups are not alone in producing insider documents that could allow researchers to examine and reveal cultural understandings. Research using insider documents could also investigate political cultures, gendered understandings, valuation of art, and the like.

Cultural orientations define what is considered valuable for members of a group, structure preferences for available choices (Sherkat and Blocker 1997; Sherkat and Wilson 1995), and even determine which choices are considered at all (Darnell n.d.:

Kuran 1993). It is easy for outsiders to simply write off conservative Protestant aversion to secular education as "ignorance," but from our perspective this would confuse a systematic construction of value with an inability to understand opportunities. Rather than misunderstanding their secular opportunities and restricting their options because of confusion, fundamentalists value choices in a different way, which may eliminate options that are simply not valued in conservative religious communities. Religious communities not only inform members' preferences and considerations of options, but also sanction members' behaviors (Sherkat and Wilson 1995). Religiously motivated social constraints on educational choices are suggested by our finding that parents and denominations influence curriculum choice above and beyond youth's religious beliefs.

Conservative Protestants are not averse to worldly pursuits. However, they are admonished to avoid choices that might endanger their souls. Fundamentalist minister Kenneth Copeland (1992) aptly conveys the tension between worldly attainment and otherworldly concerns: "Christians have avoided prosperity like the plague because they have been taught that it would defile them. But the end result of prosperity is destruction only to the one who seeks it without fear of the Lord and without the Wisdom of God" (p. 29). Cultural orientations promote different conceptions of the good life, and the goal of material gain is subordinated in many cultural perspectives. Indeed, conservative Protestants share antimaterialist orientations with such diverse groups as the Hare Krishna (Rochford 1985), civil rights and anti-war activists (McAdam 1989; Sherkat and Blocker 1997), and "new class" information specialists (Macy 1988). Future studies investigating the link between culture and stratification should focus on how other cultural groups view educational and occupational pursuits and why.

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