

POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT AMONG RELIGIOUS LEADERS
AND THEIR RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE MEDIA

A Professional Project

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SAMUEL JOHN ROTH

Stacey Woelfel, Project Chair

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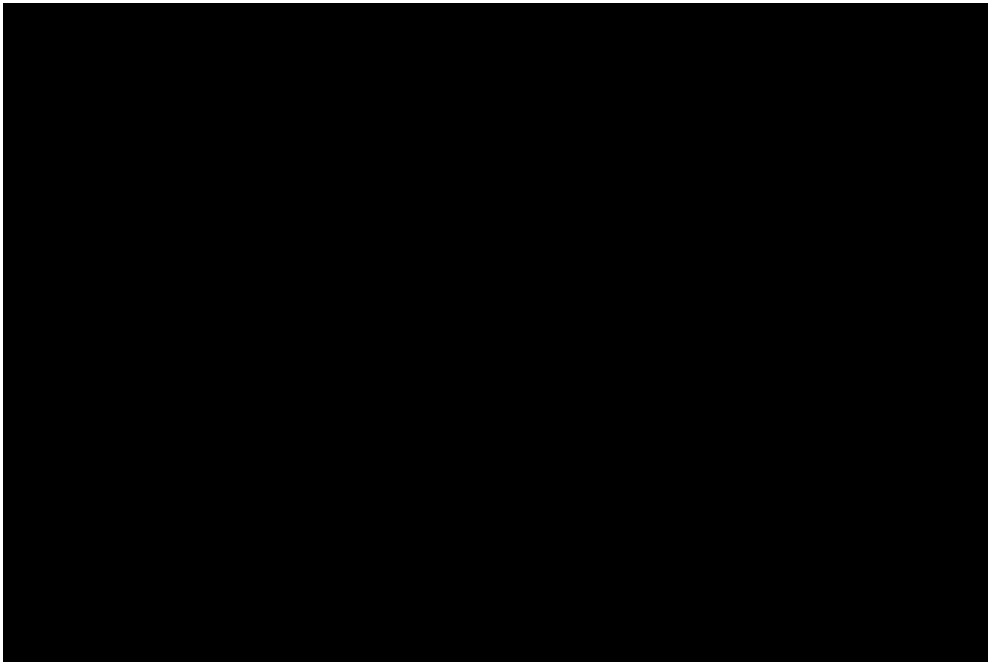
And thank you to George Scott, for not only allowing me to shadow and film him, but for having faith in me and my motivations as a filmmaker and providing considerable hospitality and access during my time in Pennsylvania.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
CHAPTERS	
Media	1
1. INTRODUCTION	2
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	6
3. PROFESSIONAL ANALYSIS	17
APPENDIX	30
A. FIELD NOTES	30
i. June 2018	30
ii. August	33
iii. September	41
iv. October	45
v. November	57
vi. December	81
vii. March 2019	84
B. EVALUATION	88
C. INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS	91
D. PROJECT PROPOSAL	116

Media

For the professional skills component, I made a short documentary film entitled “Holy Fire” that is intended to be used as a sample for a feature-length version of the same film. The short film is 28 minutes and 13 seconds in length, formatted for MPEG, with a 16:9 aspect ratio. Film attached below.



Chapter 1

Introduction

I grew up around religious leadership and political conflict in the church. My grandfather was a pastor at Zion Lutheran Church in Ferguson, MO and president of Evangelical Lutherans in Mission (ELiM), an organization of moderates within the conservative Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS). During his tenure as president, ELiM provided significant financial support for Christ Seminary-Seminex (“Samuel,” 2002), which was formed when a large contingent of students and faculty walked out of LCMS Concordia Seminary due to theological differences. ELiM and Seminex led to the creation of the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC), which led to a merger with the Lutheran Church in America (LCA) to create the moderate Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in 1988.

My father was a pastor in Jacksonville, IL before being elected bishop of the Central Southern Illinois Synod in the ELCA in 2011. The role of the bishop requires him to attend to the ceremonial, spiritual and administrative needs of 130 congregations, and situations with the synod can range from peace and unity to infighting, mutinies against council members and pastors, weak understandings of church systems and protocols and politically and theologically divided congregations.

Society’s relationship with religious leadership is complicated. With its already complex web of political ideologies, the interdenominational Christian church at-large struggles with a host of issues, including the pandemic of sexual abuse in the Roman

Catholic church, scandals among prominent clergy and the glacial transition to LGBTQ acceptance. My objective with this research is to explore the relationships between clergy and the media in relation to political engagement, clerical perception of media influence and clerical participation in image shaping through media. This research was carried out by interviewing religious leaders who have shown strong interest or participation in political engagement, including George Scott, pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in East Berlin, PA who ran for US Congress in 2018. The first subtopic of interview questions address how these politically active religious leaders see leaders in ministry and politics portrayed in the media. These questions allow each interviewee to identify the most prominent examples of clerics and politicians in different kinds of media, from fictionalized representations of religious and political leaders in film and entertainment to ostensibly truthful representations in news media. The respondents had an opportunity to reflect on these prominent representations and break down their perceptions of how clerical representations manifest, how they are disseminated, and what they perceive to be the intended and actual response to these representations from their congregations and constituents.

I also asked the respondents how they personally use media to project or amplify their own ideologies and motivations. We live in a world with an ever-changing media, as well as evolving mentalities on what purposes the media serve and how the media depict the world around us. This section of the research explores how politically active religious leaders embrace or reject personal use of the media, as well as how individual clerics see media used by other religious leaders and organizations.

This written report supplements the work conducted through the professional skills component, which is a documentary film about the aforementioned George Scott and his leave of absence from his congregation to run as the Democratic challenger in Pennsylvania's 10th Congressional district in the 2018 midterms. Along the way, Scott experiences personal growth and evolution as he goes through the experience of becoming a political candidate, and the congregation of Trinity Lutheran Church, his parish, goes through change as well with the revolving door of interim pastors sent by the synod to fill the pastoral void left by Scott's absence. Throughout Scott's campaign, the big unanswered question is the obvious one: will he win or lose the congressional race? This question has lasting ramifications: if Scott wins, he begins the process of transitioning to Congressional office, while the church would move on to its third interim pastor before calling a new permanent pastor. If Scott loses, he would go back to Trinity and resume preaching, which would bring a host of other questions to the surface. After filming for months, we watch Scott lose on election night. The big question then changes: will he run again in 2020?

The film, entitled *Holy Fire*, will provide an intimate observational portrait of Scott's transition from minister to political candidate and will analyze the context of those leadership roles, the effect on the people he represents and the perspectives that were shaped about Scott through the media lens. The film will also include interviews from members of the congregation to provide insight into their perspectives during this unique episode in the life of the church.

The finished film is the result of nine trips to central PA over a span of six months, with cumulative time spent in PA totaling about seven weeks. The production journal in this report includes a comprehensive account of the creation of the film.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

There is a prevalent history of religion intersecting with politics in the last few centuries (Jevtic, 2009; King, 1997). Political science began as a formal method of study in the late 19th century, and shortly after this time period, religion became a subject of political research (Jevtic, 2009). Jevtic also notes that the United States was not the only place to experience a growth in religiosity in the 20th century: European political scientists note an awakening of the political role of Islam in world politics, as well as Buddhist influences in Tibet, South Vietnam, Japan, and Sri Lanka, and the success of the Hindu party Baratiya Janata in India. At the same time, Roman Catholicism was gaining political significance in eastern Europe (pg. 411). This massive politicization of religion has resulted in a dramatic influence on democratic election; the 1980s saw the rise of the Moral Majority (founded by Jerry Falwell), which designated itself as a purveyor of firm moral standards desired by a majority of Americans and had strong ties to conservative leaders like Ronald Reagan and Pat Robertson, and Revtic provides the example of George W. Bush's re-election in 2004, when evangelical Christian voters came out for a man who sold himself as an evangelical (pg. 410). The prominence of evangelical Christianity in today's political arena was not always the case, however; evangelical Christians largely stayed away from political participation until the 1970s, when major developments in evangelical Christian movement began to unfold (Diamond, 1989).

Religion, Technology, and Media

Before long, religious organizations started using new forms of technology to spread their messages. In *Spiritual Warfare: The Politics of the Christian Right*, Sara Diamond explains how Christian radio broadcasts began in the 1920s with the first Christian signal being transmitted from Calvary Episcopal Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (pg. 2). Other stations started springing up, including KFUD, a station created by the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, and WMBI from the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. These technological developments coincided with a period of ongoing tension between fundamentalists, or biblical literalists, and more liberal Christian denominations. These tensions resulted in the rise of prominent Christian voices to help guide listeners in what was thought to be a correct course: Father Charles Coughlin, a prominent Catholic priest who founded the National Shrine of the Little Flower, gained significant political influence in the 1930s and 1940s when he began projecting anticommunist radio broadcasts. His messages were sometimes overtly anti-Semitic and pro-Nazi, and he was able to gain millions of listeners (pg. 3).

Missionary radio networks, such as HCJB (“Heralding Christ Jesus’ Blessings”) began setting up long range towers and broadcasting into Latin America and Europe. HCJB was the first radio station to broadcast Russian language gospel programs into the Soviet Union (pg. 5). After World War II, the FEBC (Far East Broadcasting Company) began broadcasting into countries that were denying access for US missionaries to physically enter the country. The FEBC mainly focused on spreading Gospel messages to communist countries, placing an emphasis on China, the Philippines, territories of Southeast Asia, and the Soviet Union. The FEBC also has two stations in South Korea

that broadcast into North Korea (pg. 7). In the 1950s, Paul Freed, through connections in the Youth for Christ organization, set up TWR (Trans World Radio), which was established in order to commit to global missionary work. TWR uses Mount Angel in Monte Carlo, Monaco, the same site for transmitting where Adolf Hitler once constructed a transmitter to spread Nazi propaganda (pg. 9). In 1985, TWR announced a plan to collaborate with HCJB's Ron Cline and FEBC's Bob Bowman to share their resources and increase their Gospel footprint.

Because of the post-World War II "Communist Menace" phenomenon, in conjunction with the rise of the Youth for Christ organization, William Randolph Hearst and Henry Luce, of *Time* magazine, decided to provide a platform for Billy Graham and his conservative Christian message. Graham's message was stark and clear; by the mid-1950s, he was preaching: "Either Communism must die, or Christianity must die" (pg. 10). This simple message, in addition to celebrity guest appearances, brought about a million young people into the evangelical Christian fold by 1946.

This kind of messaging crossed over to the television format with the Christian Broadcasting Network, which Pat Robertson established in the early 1960s (pg. 12). Robertson created a television program called *The 700 Club*, which was based on the idea that if 700 people donated \$10 a month, the network would be able to stay afloat (pg. 13). The network very quickly gained many more donors than that; *The 700 Club* had a minimum monthly intake of \$1.4 million by 1978. Programming on *The 700 Club* would consist of covering nightly news stories through a biblical lens, often with politically conservative interpretations. Through his TV presence, Pat Robertson became

an iconic figure of Christian conservatism, injecting himself (and his money) into political issues, culminating in a run for the presidency in 1988.

Robertson ushered in an era of televangelists, such as Kenneth Copeland, Jimmy Swaggart, and Jim Bakker, who adhere to a charismatic interpretation of Christianity and preach “prosperity Gospel,” promising that donors will “reap the harvest if they sow the seed.” However parasitic and egregious televangelism appears, Quentin Schultze points out in *Televangelism and American Culture* that televangelists use the justification and firmly believe that the more resources they acquire, the more people they are able to reach with the Gospel (pg. 17). Even so, televangelism operates as a business, making sales to the impressionable and impoverished while bolstering its own image. Despite the predatory business practices, the televangelist image can remain generally pristine to the common viewer, unless a clearly defined and credible scandal emerges. Scandal, to the socially prominent, ostensibly holy televangelist, is devastating, but not decapitating. Scandals are not uncommon for televangelists either: Swaggart was exposed for an affair with a prostitute in 1988, in retaliation for Swaggart exposing another minister’s affairs. This led to Swaggart’s loss of ministerial credentials in the Assemblies of God, though Swaggart kept preaching elsewhere. He initially repented for the 1988 immorality, but did not give such repentance for a similar incident in 1991 (“Swaggart,” 1991). Bakker had a string of shocking crimes in the 1980s, including a payoff for the silence of Jessica Hahn, a woman who Bakker drugged and raped (“Interview,” 2005). He resigned from ministry as a result, but he also was found guilty

of 23 counts of fraud. After serving some jail time, Bakker now hosts a TV show in which he sells survival packs for the end-times (Mohr, 2015).

In addition to the business side of Christian media, evangelical Christianity has established itself as a brand of fearing God. In *Religion of Fear*, Jason Bivins analyzes the role that the politics of the *Left Behind* book series has in conservative Christianity. *Left Behind* is a series where the Rapture takes place, causing a mass disappearance of most humans and leaving some behind to deal with the apocalypse. This series of books, which has since taken off as a film series and multi-media phenomenon, reinforces more literal interpretations of the Rapture portion of the bible, and urges its readers and viewers to shape up so that they wouldn't be "left behind" if we arrive at the end-times.

Group Identity

Religion itself is considered a cultural basis for organization (Ross, 1997) that holds tremendous political significance in today's world (Olson, 2011). Religious organizations, like any secular organization, bring together likeminded individuals that are able to formulate and mobilize a singular message on how biblical texts dictate social constructs. These constructs are most clearly seen in law and can be compartmentalized into two main areas: the law of God, or what is sinful, and the law of man, or what is legal (Clark, 1982). Various interpretations of religious authority lead to discrepancies in group understanding of what is right or lawful. Religion ties its constituents to each other in various ways that are completely separate from politics, including beliefs like the existence of heaven and hell, and physical proximity and

fellowship through church services and activities (Pew); however, the psychological power of group identification is crucial to religion's effect on politics (Olson). In fact, the prominent motivation for religious groups to maintain solid political participation is the prospect of effectively abstaining from all issues, thus giving silent power to other affiliations who would be willing to fill those roles (Menendez, 1977).

Interpretation of authority

A major factor in the differentiation of religious denominations is how each group interprets authority. Considering the Bible and Scripture prominent sources for the written authority of God, the Pew Research Center has conducted thorough surveys of Americans in an effort to determine the religious landscape of the country. The study asked individuals how they interpret Scripture. Out of 35,071 respondents, 31% said that the Scripture is the word of God and that it should be taken literally, 27% said that the Scripture is the word of God, but not everything should be taken literally, 3% said that the Scripture is the word of God, but they don't know how to interpret it, 33% said that the Scripture is not the word of God, and 7% said other/did not know. This shows a relatively even split between three main groups: those that take Scripture literally, those that allow figurative interpretations of Scripture, and those that disregard Scripture as the word of God.

The breakdown by denomination provides a view of wide disparities in the interpretation of Scripture among American churches (Figure 1). The majority of Catholics don't interpret everything in Scripture literally (36% figurative, 26% literal, 28%

not word of God), while evangelical Protestants are much more likely to interpret Scripture literally and reject the notion that Scripture is not the word of God (55% literal, 29% figurative, 8% not word of God). Historically black protestant churches showed similar numbers to evangelical Protestants (59% literal, 23% figurative, 9% not word of God), and they both differ greatly from mainline Protestants (24% literal, 35% figurative, 28% not word of God).

Religious leader role conceptions

Like many vocations, religious leaders take part in professional socialization. Professional socialization is the process by which a vocation produces change in a person through work requirements (Frese, 1982). The pastoral role would first be defined and established in the seminary, and once a clergy was brought into their first parish, they would bring with them casual observation of their older colleagues or a disciplined study of pastoral theology (Sernett, 1973).

Theological textbooks generally provided the image of a minister in three capacities: his “closet,” his study, and his parish. The “closet” refers to the pastor in his private life, that he should be deeply impressed by the magnitude of the office to which he has been called. The pastor must demonstrate eminent piety, or the necessity of more than a general sense of piety, which would come as a result of working in the field in addition to having an inner calling into ministry (pg. 5).

The pastor operating within the study conveys the need for clergy to continue studies of Scripture, the Bible, and other religious texts to not become complacent or

out of touch with their calling (pg. 7). This call to always maintain the identity of a student was an attempt to counteract the gap between the pulpit and the pew; pastors need sound theology to be able to convey Scripture accurately and in an understandable fashion for their congregation. Otherwise, a complacent cleric could potentially draw the ire of the community, becoming “a mere desultory man, a gossip from house to house, skimming the surface of popular thinking,” and in turn, rejecting the virtue of self-regimentation (pg. 9). Pastors who procrastinated on their sermons until Saturday night, or those who would trust that they could deliver in the moment, would draw lasting criticism. Much of the pastor’s time was undefined, but productivity was still critical for credibility among a community.

The pastor among his people is the culmination of time within the closet and the study. All three components work in conjunction, with the private time proving the validity of the public presentation. Pastors have a great deal of control of their own conduct, which can affect their image, but they have very little control over their ultimate reception. Sernett notes that in post-Appomattox America, some critics wrote ministerial profession off as a life of ease unequal to the demands of an age of active energy (pg. 11). Others stress the dispersion of power within a congregation; while a pastor can maintain a strong appearance of authority, the ultimate decisions for a church body will be written and voted upon by a congregation and its council (Ingram, 1980). It should be considered that in certain circumstances, in which all or most relationships within a congregation are positive, the pastor can end up being the most powerful member of the congregation.

Research Questions

RQ1: How do religious leaders who choose to be politically active see the religious leader role depicted in media?

RQ2: How do religious leaders who choose to be politically active use the media to share their own beliefs and stances with their constituents?

Methodology

To complete the written component of the project, an interview was conducted with Scott, as he was able to provide a politically active, clerical perspective.

To supplement Scott's experience of being a religious leader entering a political arena, interviews were conducted with current pastors who have shown political participation in some form. Political participation of a religious leader could mean direct involvement with public office, including previously held public office, attempts at running for office, appointment to advisor of public office, or direct involvement with the public, including leaders who have spoken at events with political topics or marched with demonstrators/advocated for a specific political stance. The inclusion of clerics who operate outside of government provided a perspective that is more indicative of voluntary activism; these respondents will be participating politically out of will, rather than necessity. These respondents were sought in Columbia, Missouri and the surrounding area, and these interviews were conducted in person.

The semi-structured, qualitative interview approach allowed for a natural dialogue to occur, rather than an interviewer having to work from a set of established questions, even if the conversation goes in a different direction. The interviews began with relatively simple questions that allow for a wide range of interpretation, before narrowing in on specific questions about intersections of religion and politics, public perception of clergy, and media influence on public perception. This qualitative approach allowed the participants to provide the most comprehensive version of their perspective (Leech, 1992). With each of these interviews, each participant were able to provide at least two perspectives: a personal perspective, as well as the general sentiment from the denomination or affiliation that they belong to. This allowed them to speak both as an individual and a representative.

Sample

The sample began with reaching out to Dave Cover, Keith Simon, and Shay Roush. These three individuals are co-lead pastors at The Crossing, a non-denominational church in Columbia, MO. Under direct supervision by its co-lead pastors, The Crossing has been involved with implementing screenings of films from the True/False Film Fest, an annual documentary film festival in Columbia, Missouri. These screenings have included films such as *After Tiller*, by Lana Wilson, in which late-term abortion doctors help patients through their difficult situations. Screenings like these encourage discussion of contentious political topics in a religious setting and context. This initial batch of respondents will be able to provide a perspective of voluntary political activity, and with their network, will be able to suggest other pastors who

would be interested in participating in this research. In my correspondence with The Crossing, all three pastors were relatively busy during my window to conduct interviews, but Keith Simon was able to make room in his schedule for me.

In addition to the pastors at the Crossing, I reached out to roughly 20 pastors in the Columbia from various Christian denominations, including Catholics, Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, and other non-denominational churches. Of these inquiries, I was able to sit down with three other pastors. Marvin Lindsay is the senior pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Columbia, Missouri, and is also a volunteer member of the city spirit house and task force in order to be a church liaison for housing issues in the community. Chris Cordes is a Catholic priest at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Columbia, Missouri. Tim Morris is the senior pastor at Alive in Christ, Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod in Columbia, Missouri. Our Lady of Lourdes, Alive in Christ, and The Crossing all participate in multi-church coordinated community service event day called For Columbia.

Chapter 3

Professional Analysis

Pastor portrayals in media

Interviewees were first asked about portrayals of clergy they have seen in media. The answers to this question varied in specificity; some gave examples of specific events that have unfolded in the media involving pastors, while others commented on general character traits that are often associated with pastors. Pastor George Scott noted that in the TV shows and movies with which he is familiar, “pastors are portrayed as judgmental, narrow-minded and sometimes hypocritical”, and he saw this as an unfortunate misrepresentation of reality. For Scott, the vast majority of clergy are highly dedicated men and women who work to share God’s word in the best way they can, and these clergy are aware of the negative perceptions and labels placed on the vocation and are working on a step-by-step basis to carry out their call faithfully. Pastor Keith Simon showed this awareness of the negative perceptions of clergy by wanting to separate himself from the term “evangelical” entirely. He commented that Christians come off as rude or bigoted in religious liberty cases such as the baker denying a wedding cake to a same-sex couple, or any other case of denying goods or services based on identity.

Pastor Marvin Lindsay gave more specific examples of portrayals of clergy in the media. He mentioned two events that came to mind: the continuing sex abuse crisis in the Catholic church and the decision on the prohibition on same-sex marriage at the

United Methodist Convention. Lindsay sees this crisis and decision as contributions to the erosion of credibility in religious institutions, and especially a black eye for Christianity. Father Chris Cordes expanded on the Catholic sex abuse crisis, saying that the first scandal that shook everything up occurred in 2002, and there's utmost importance for the scandals to be covered journalistically and exposed. Cordes appreciates when these situations are portrayed in a balanced way, and understands that the plight of the victims must not be overlooked or minimized, but worries when all pastors, priests, and religious leaders are lumped into one group as potential perpetrators.

Relationship with media

Scott feels that pastors are "prone to misunderstanding", not only by the media but also people within the overall culture. Scott observes that if an individual does not have a personal experience or connection with a pastor, that person will often resort to the generalizations found in the media portrayals of pastors. Scott admits that pastors are human beings and prone to error, but one of the mistakes that a pastor may routinely make is to become increasingly absent in society or community by focusing all resources within the walls of the church. The alternative is the desire to be open and inviting; pastors should be outside of the church doors, as Christ was, meeting people in their daily lives and providing care for those in the congregation and beyond.

Cordes notes that the release of sex abuse stories from the media has had lasting impacts on the Catholic church. The big exposure of the crisis in 2002 resulted in shock

and dismay, but the overwhelming volume of reports showing how widespread and invasive the problem is causes the church to enter an almost cyclical, collective hurt. He started by saying that the church feels a collective disappointment, but disappointment was not a strong enough word, and that it requires close attention.

Relationships with parishioners and the public

The common perceptions of pastors made prominent through media affect the daily lives of pastors in their correspondence with their parishioners. Lindsay has full knowledge that many in his congregation consider his sermons to be more political and challenging than his predecessor's sermons, which tended to give the congregation a more comforting message. Lindsay emphasized the importance of grounding oneself in the word of God in order to deliver consistent messaging in sermons that don't pander to a specific audience. This is a difficult concept to put into practice, since there is no way to control the perceptions of a message or the takeaways that people gather from sermons. Sometimes, what people hear and what Lindsay preaches are two different things. Lindsay says that "I have been praised for things I've never said in a sermon and I've also been condemned for things I've never said in a sermon, but they usually hear the sermon they want to hear, for good or for ill."

Lindsay offered the story of Jesus feeding 5000 people with five loaves of bread and two fish as an example of potentially politicized content. Lindsay points out that the sermon payoff, that you give those who are hungry something to eat, can be then politicized and shaped into certain narratives. The conservative Republican solution to

feeding the hungry could potentially include contributions made through private acts of charity, and the more liberal approach would be to move towards implementing governmental programs to assist the downtrodden.

Cordes expressed that he has felt nothing but support from his congregation during times that cause trouble or concern within the Catholic church. He has been told by other Catholic priests that they have received dirty looks or avoidance from others when in public acting in the capacity of a priest, but this isn't Cordes' experience. This contrasts with Keith Simon, who said that he prefers that his friends do not refer to him as pastor or clergy when he is outside of the church in a casual setting. He said that he doesn't want any of the baggage that comes with the term "pastor" or "evangelical" and prefers to conduct conversations while avoiding self-labeling. Simon says that "when I'm out I never introduce myself as a pastor... It kills a conversation if you're not a churchgoer, so I like to break stereotypes in what a pastor is like." Simon goes as far to say that certain parishioners will watch what he wears, where he eats/shops or where he lives to see how he spends his money and whether or not they can accuse him of hypocrisy.

Relationships with other clergy

Cordes admits that he hasn't had much interaction with the larger community of clergy in Columbia. He's had positive relationships with fellow clergy in the Catholic church, as well as strong ministerial alliances in smaller communities. He notes that when a new accusation of sexual abuse by a Catholic priest surfaces, there are a number

of emotions to work through: there's an anger at the prospect that it happened and a feeling of loss when there was a personal relationship with the accused, knowing that that is someone you would have potentially liked and that they have such a troubling reality happening in their life. There is also the feeling of a need to provide a system of mutual support for clergy, as collective bodies of religious leaders can experience a drop in morale when a new chapter in a storied crisis emerges.

Church use of media

For Scott, it is important for individual pastors to establish a relationship with their local media in order to give the media a basic knowledge of the church's presence and to have a relationship in place in the event of a crisis that needs to be addressed. This contrasts with an inability to effectively coordinate with the media, a situation in which a pastor would adopt a purely reactionary stance in the event of a crisis.

The role of televangelism is prominent in the discussion of media implementation within churches. The consensus among the respondents was that there are some pastors who use TV and social media to broadcast their message faithfully and bear fruit, but the industry is rife with those who undermine the work of the church as a whole in order to exploit its parishioners and acquire personal wealth.

Political Engagement

Most of the interviewees expressed a relative distance from political engagement due to the nature of their role. Cordes said that there may be engagement through participating in a prayer service, whether it be a pro-life event or other public

prayer events that call attention to a certain issue, but something like what Scott did would be unheard of in the Catholic church. If a Catholic priest took a similar “call” to run for office, that priest would most likely be stripped of his credentials and ability to serve in the capacity of a priest. This would also not be likely to happen, as men who are preparing to become priests are taught that they will serve in no other capacity. All respondents agreed that it would be very difficult to return to preaching at a church that they had previously served after attempting to run for public office.

Discussion

Scott’s assessment of the small percentage of clergy who embody the depictions of narrow-mindedness matches recent surveys conducted in the Lutheran church. Recently, a survey on political affiliation found that with a scale of seven positions, with the first and last positions being the extremes of the left and right, fifteen percent of Lutheran Church Missouri Synod identify as committed conservative, or hard right, and eight percent of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America identify as liberal progressive, or hard left. Similar to Lindsay’s point on the loudest voices overpowering any other voices in the conversation, this fifteen percent in the LCMS and eight percent in the ELCA account for a large percentage of the points of contention and division concerning political issues.

The diversity of political affiliations in America’s churches points to growing divisions both between the political right and left but also within Christian denominations, congregations and families within congregations. A good number of

moderate viewpoints within churches tend to avoid conflict by sticking to non-confrontational methods of communication and church representation. Both Miller and Lindsay stressed that the reasonable voices on the left and the right tend to be overshadowed by loud voices with extreme stances, and this is compounded when parishioners look to church as a sanctuary from the political divisiveness in their lives.

The reality of political divisiveness notwithstanding, the respondents noted that media can be used as a benefit to ministry, but it can also be a hindrance or distraction. Media are a tool in the toolbox of the modern day clergy, where social media and online presence becomes increasingly prominent.

Conclusions

Religious leaders have a keen awareness of the perceptions that are placed on the pastoral role, and they try to find ways to strengthen individual relationships and engage with the community, while not discounting the need to have conversations about issues within the church and the community. Political engagement and communal outreach in relation to these issues and topics varies from denomination to denomination; while some denominations can feel closed off to the outside world, as Scott describes, others take part in organized, cross-denominational service events or try to spread their message with social media outreach. There is a concern among religious leaders that overtly extreme viewpoints will continue to mask the conversations that happen closer to the middle of the political spectrum, and that

specific crises and tragedies within the church will continue to be the overarching narrative of the church, rather than attempts to engage with society.

To approach the first research question, respondents were asked about representations of clergy in media and the effects of these representations on their relationships with the media, parishioners, the public and other clergy. Representations of clergy in media ranged from broad characterizations, such as pastors seeming narrow-minded and judgmental, to specific references to pastors in the media, such as the Catholic sex abuse crisis. Respondents shared a sense of disappointment in the prominence of extreme voices dominating the representations of clergy in media; they share that the referenced news stories and characterizations are seen in the church as a reality for some, but considered fringe or extreme to a majority of churchgoers. Relationships that clergy have with various parties are largely supportive, with pastors and parishioners citing the importance of an individual, personal relationship with a pastor.

For the second research question, respondents universally pointed out the use of media as a tool for ministerial work and that there is an inherent distance that clergy must take from politics while serving in the pulpit. Pastors see media implementation as a benefit to the church, in that churches are allocating budget and hiring staff to spearhead media and marketing efforts to further the church's image and message.

Limitations

Several factors led to limitations in the study. Methodically reaching out to pastors in the Columbia, Missouri area and conducting interviews only in-person serves as a convenience sample, which could be more indicative of a specific region than other sample methods. The interview sample also lacked diversity in gender and race (all respondents were white and male) and lacked a full breadth of Christian denominations (Baptist, Methodist, and Episcopalian ministers were contacted, but were unable to commit to an interview).

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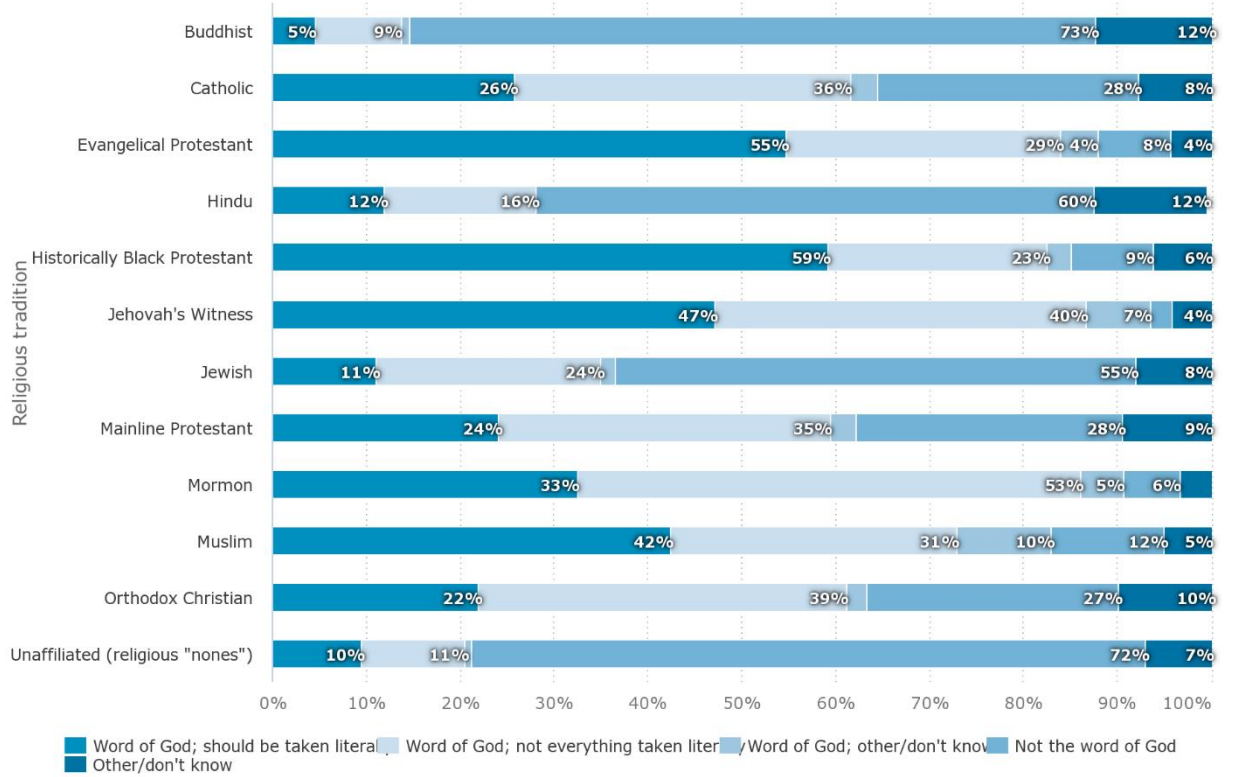
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FIGURE 1

Interpreting scripture by religious group

% of adults who say the holy scripture is...



PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Pew Research Forum

<http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/interpreting-scripture/>

Appendix

A. Field Notes

On May 16, 2018, Emily Stewart wrote an article in Vox with the headline: “Gun-burning Army vet George Scott just won his Democratic House primary in Pennsylvania.” The article mentioned that Scott was a Lutheran pastor, which seemed like it fit the themes of my pitch. Once I learned that Scott was an ELCA Lutheran pastor, I asked my father to reach out to the bishop of Pastor Scott’s synod: Bishop Dunlop. Bishop Dunlop suggested that Scott would be open to the idea, so I spent some time crafting a proposal and reached out to Scott about a collaboration.

i. June 2018

June 8, Day 1

George said that he would work with me last night. I was on the phone with my parents, wondering what my next move should be. I hadn’t heard from George in a week and was seeing if I should nudge him. And then when I hung up, George’s e-mail was sitting there for me. Driving to PA now to meet him tomorrow. Found a place to stay in Columbus, OH around midnight, 1am eastern.

June 9, Day 2

Need to make it to Cumberland, PA by 3:30pm, so I leave around 8. Drive straight to the Cumberland County Democratic Headquarters where George is attending a public meeting. Catch the tail end of the meeting and we locate each other. I meet George and

his campaign manager, Brad Koplinski. The three of us head across the street to Dunkin' Donuts to chat about the project. We identify a few times I can film during the week to see how it goes. The first one is tomorrow: a campaign meeting from 12-5pm. Brad says I can be there from 2-4pm. I spend the rest of the day locating my AirBnb (in York) and napping.

June 10, Day 3

I attend Trinity Lutheran church's Sunday service at 9am. Pastor Aaron is preaching, and George is in attendance. He mentions that he tries to attend Trinity once a month. I begin to mention to some members of the congregation that I am there to make a project with George.

I show up to the meeting and position myself in the corner. They carry on for about three hours; they are meeting to plan the organizational structure for the campaign in the events leading up to the general election. Before we all leave, I reconvene with George to check the schedule. He has private call time in the morning and then the Poor People's campaign at the Capitol Building in the afternoon. I spend the night watching FS5 tutorials in the stifling AirBnb.

June 11, Day 4

I show up to the Capitol building not entirely sure where the Poor People's Campaign is meeting or how filming inside the Capitol building will work. I mix in with the protestors and have no trouble getting in and out with equipment. The gathering is in the rotunda,

and I wait to see when George will show up. George arrives and talks to a few folks. Not very eventful. There are some chants on the steps outside as well.

June 12, Day 5

Energy Advocacy Day at the Capitol. More of the same: advocacy groups on the steps at the capitol, George participating but as a supportive bystander.

June 13, Day 6

Brad mentions that he thinks it would be good to have me at a York County Democratic meeting. I attend, George gives a speech. After the meeting, George mentions that he has call time and then a Strawberry fest. I say it's worth it for me to be there for some call time, so the plan is to meet at his house and then go to the strawberry fest an hour later.

June 14, Day 7

George and Jeff Kaloc are at his kitchen table, going through sheets and lists of names and numbers to call. They request no sound, and there is another person that doesn't want to be on camera. George, Nick, Jeff, and I then pile in the truck and go 50 minutes north to Elizabethville. The strawberry fest is at this old gorgeous church on a hill out in the middle of nowhere Pennsylvania. Once we're back at the house, George and I discuss a potential plan for August: come in with sound and observe for about two weeks in mid-to-late August.

June 15, Day 8

Driving back. Stay in Richmond, IN.

June 16, Day 9

Back in Columbia. Need to adjust to a seasonal job. I was supposed to start working at Caterpillar on June 10th, but luckily I was able to push it a week back, which made this trip possible.

ii. August

August 12, Day 10

Yesterday was the Boone Dawdle. The day before that was my last day working night shifts at Caterpillar. Driving and contacting Bruce to see about the housing situation. I learned that Mike and I would be staying in separate houses for the first two days, and then moving to a location where we could both stay. They wanted more information about us before we were given addresses. Picked up glasses at my parents house and can see clearly now. Stayed in Richmond, IN.

August 13, Day 11

Driving. Bruce tells me that I should contact Stephany Dugan, and that she wants to talk before I do any filming. I also learn that I'm staying with Kathy Yorkiewitz and John Dernbach in Camp Hill. I contact Stephany to see when we can meet. Jason and Stephany set up a call for 8:30pm. I get into Harrisburg around 7pm and spend time around the capitol. I set up in my car for the call, and at 8:30, I'm explaining my observational intentions to Jason and Stephany. Stephany talks about some public

events on the 16th, 17th, and 18th that we can attend. We decide that we can meet in person tomorrow afternoon. I go to Kathy and John's around 9pm, and Kathy, John, Dwayne, and I talk around the kitchen table about the project.

August 14, Day 12

I pick up Mike from the airport around 11am, and we head downtown to check out the district and the capitol. We walk around with the camera on, and notice that it is auto zooming randomly. We put the camera down, I chase down a guy who gave me a ticket by mistake, and we go to Zemby's for tacos and beer. I had texted Stephany at 11:45, hadn't heard by 2, so I called and left a voicemail. She immediately texted and said we could meet and greet at the campaign office around 3pm. The campaign office was around the block, and we went in with releases to discuss paperwork (Stephany wanted to see that first). We discussed filming issues, concerns, schedules, intentions for the project, liability, and Jason made clear that this wouldn't be happening if George hadn't signed off in June.

Mike and I wanted to decompress a bit after the meeting and went to the Cornerstone Coffeehouse to talk about what had just happened. While there, Stephany called and said the Thursday event was canceled and the Saturday event had been replaced. She e-mails me the new info, and I reply asking if there is any other time we can spend with George. We went back to the Durnbach's, Mike met Dwayne, John, and Kathy, and we all went over to Lou and Lynn's, where Mike would be staying. We get in the door, and Lou is entertaining. He makes us Manhattan's, a cheese platter, and bacon-wrapped

scallops, before we head to the back deck for steak and wine. During the raucous entertainment, George calls me and asks how things are going. I tell him about the hesitance from the campaign and the events we'll be attending, and he mentions that if things feel like they start going off track, I can contact him directly. I head back in and have a politically charged conversation with everyone at the table, and head back to Durnbach's for the night.

August 15, Day 13

Lou takes Mike and I to the Cornerstone Coffeehouse, where the who's who of old Camp Hill Democrats gather every day for coffee. It happens to be Wednesday, when they play a trivia game. We get to meet and greet. Lou then takes us back to his place to show us his flight simulator (Lou is a retired pilot). We get word from Charlie Wilson that we are moving locations tonight, and that there is a Democratic canvassing discussion group happening tonight. I call John Haiden, our new host, and we set up dinner for 5:15pm. Mike and I go to Theo's Diner for lunch and continue to discuss the situation with Stephany and Jason. We decide to get some driving B-roll and drive out to the church on a hill in Elizabethville. Once out at the church, I send an opportunity for a non-disclosure agreement (since I haven't heard back from Stephany). She calls me, says nothing has changed for Thursday, an NDA sounds fine if we want to present one, and that we need to cut down on "traffic" in George's inbox, so just talk to Stephany. We drive to John and Jess Haiden's, a cabin-in-the-woods type home with no AC. We eat with John and then go to the discussion group. We meet Charlie Wilson, who set up our presence at this meeting. Brief intros, and a brief run-in with Assisted

Living management, and we film the group for an hour. We talk more with Charlie and Brandt, and head home with John. Charlie calls me, talking about a group called “Progressive Jewish Values”.

August 16, Day 14

It was a pretty uneventful day as we were caught in between having no information/canceled events from the campaign, and being too annoying and pushing them for more information. After getting a pizza buffet at Mama’s Pizza, we drove to Baltimore for an off-day recuperation. On our way, we decided to stop in York to scope out the place where the event was supposed to take place that night, in case we wanted to come back and see if we were fed misinformation. We arrived in Baltimore and quickly decided that some fruitless recon paled in comparison to a day in Baltimore. We bar hopped at Max’s Tavern, Bertha’s, and another place, and took in the sights. We got back to Harrisburg and went back to our favorite place, Zembie’s.

August 17, Day 15

Jess’s parents arrived in town, so I moved my things to another bedroom, where there is a spare mattress on the ground. Hey, it’s free. Mike and I headed out to capture audio at Negley Park and downtown. We then headed to York to see George for the first time this trip. The dunk tank was right outside a restaurant, and we initially approached the restaurant for permission to film, assuming George would be in and around the premises. It starts pouring and we decide to wait it out. We go to our car, head back with the gear, and see George in the tank. We get some footage of people trying to

dunk him, and then I take a turn and nail it miraculously. We coordinate with George and Stephany, and George lets us know about a canvassing meet-up at Dunkin Donuts the next morning. I call Dunkin Donuts to see if we can film.

August 18, Day 16

We arrive at Dunkin Donuts and ask permission to film. The night crew had not communicated with the day crew, and the manager was beholden to the franchise, so no agreements signed. We meet Marta Peck, the volunteer coordinator, and Mike Dunn, the Field Director. Marta fills me in on the balance between local campaign staffers, like herself, and how many jobs have been given to people coming in from the DCCC to provide organizational oversight, in an attempt to secure the win. We decide not to film, since we learn that Mike is trying to coordinate more and more canvassing events and there will be other opportunities. We meet Kiem, George's bodyman who is hoping to run for the state house in 2 years and is excited to see how the campaign is put together. We follow George and Kiem to the Weekender, a music fest. We meet Stephany at the event (though Stephany did not tell us about this event). We then go to the Back to School bash, and wait for George and Kiem as lots of kids and parents wonder why we are there. Good footage. We then travel to Negley Park for a Cumberland County Democrat picnic (another public event that Stephany didn't tell us about), and meet a number of people who support George. We then travel to a "sip 'n chat" at the house of Lisa Kennedy, where George addresses a number of issues, ranging from education to infrastructure (another event Stephany didn't tell us about). Best footage. Kiem tells us about a house party happening tomorrow, another thing we've

been shut out of. I find out that George is attending Trinity tomorrow morning. He gives me Pastor Aaron's number, and I call him to make sure filming is ok at church. Turns out that they're having church at the community park at 10a, with a picnic to follow.

August 19, Day 17

I attend church, and then eat with George and his wife, Donna. She tells me that they were both divorced and got together at a high school reunion. Pastor Aaron tells me that he is leaving in September, and there will be an interim pastor for six weeks, fate depending on the election. I decide I need more footage with the congregation. We play Bible Bingo. George tries to contact Stephany about the house party, and then texts me later saying that it's too late/not enough warning for hosts and attendees. I e-mail Lou to talk about his house party, e-mail Charlie to follow up on leads, and e-mail Stephany to try and set up a meeting to hack out a schedule. Stephany says she will call in the morning. Lynn invites me to dinner. Charlie wants to help.

August 20, Day 18

Charlie called to give me the number of Jon Brandow, the creator of Progressive Jewish Values. I called Trinity to see if it would be alright to film the Budget Planning Meeting and the Naughty Knotters. She said she would call me back. Haven't heard from Stephany all morning. Just got an interesting message from a recent backer: Lisa Budwig is with the leadership of Capitol Region Indivisible. I'll set up a meeting with her. Stephany calls and tells me about one event on Thursday, and I ask if I can chill out

at the office without cameras or audio equipment or anything. She gives me the address and we set up a time for tomorrow. Later, I go to Lou and Lynn's house to meet her sister and husband, Peggy and Keith, and to talk about potentially filming their donor house party for George on September 5th. We end up drinking a lot, Lou shows me his man cave and koi pond, and we agree to terms of filming. I also bring up the idea of Lou showing George his flight simulator, which is met with some skepticism and curiosity.

August 21, Day 19

Jen from Trinity called to tell me that the Budget Planning Committee and Naughty Knotters were uncomfortable with me filming. Listened to talk radio about the Pennsylvania Catholic Church scandal and then called Jen back to talk about potentially sitting in on the meeting tonight. Jen let me know that she didn't actually talk to any of the committee members, but sensed from e-mails that they were uncomfortable. She puts me on hold and I talk to Pastor Aaron, who talks about how no one is allowed in the meeting because they need to be able to privately begin conversations about the church's budget. We discuss other possibilities for shooting, including a parish life meeting and how we will approach conversations with the interim pastor during the September/October months. We will try to set up a meeting between myself, Pastor Aaron, and the interim pastor sometime this week. Pastor Aaron also let me know that a representative from the synod is coming to the congregation on September 9th to talk about the transition process and to hold a town hall to field any questions that folks might have about the situation (NEED ACCESS). I go to the campaign office to see the

space (no cameras, no audio, no anything). Everybody seems to be watching what they say around me, which is normal. This is the first time I've been around in this office, and it only gets more comfortable. Mike clarifies that something he said was only a joke. I didn't hear whatever it was because I was typing this. At one point, Jason passes by and says "Crickets." But I don't look up because I don't care. Marta addresses the messages that have been sent to me about additional support for the film. I look on her Facebook page; she shared the Indiegogo campaign and donated. This means that there is a small public presence in Pennsylvania now, so we need to find a way to keep this pretty quiet for the time being. Note from Stephany: When George comes to the office, I can cut him off if I need to so that he gets to the finance area to take and make donor calls.

August 22, Day 20

I went to hang out at the campaign office again. People in the office open up a bit. Stephany tells me that they are still deciding which events George will go to, and that Bruce will be the one to decide. I ask if there will be any conversations in which they deliberate which events to go to, and if I would be able to film. No filming completed.

August 23, Day 21

I come to the campaign office with the camera and ask Bruce if he is willing to appear on camera. He says 50/50, so I start filming. I record a conversation with Bruce and Marty, Bruce and Kiem, and Bruce and Stephany. I break out the tripod and film some establishing shots of the riverfront. I talk to Dan, a volunteer, and film him making signs. While filming, Brad pulls me aside and asks what Jason thinks about me filming,

and I express what I believe to be Jason's concerns and misgivings. Brad says that he doesn't want the campaign to waste my time. It's decided that George is going to go to a brewery meet and greet, and then a donor house party. I go ahead of time to the Brewery in Carlyle to get permission to film. While I'm talking to the manager, Bruce calls/texts me to say that George just got back to the office and is not going to the brewery anymore. I grow concerned about the unsigned waivers and the reality of not filming any events this week, and the prospect of losing access to the campaign entirely. I rush to FedEx to revise and print a non-disclosure agreement, and then head back to the campaign office to talk to Stephany. I give Stephany the NDA and tell her how I'm signing over my life to them and that I want people to know that I'm not going to screw anybody over. I leave, feeling better. Time for Telluride.

iii. September

September 5, Day 22

I fly into town around 11, after getting a half hour of sleep, talking to Paul Sturtz about Telluride and Toronto all the way to Chicago, and then napping all the way to Harrisburg. Stephany calls me and says that it isn't a great time for me to be there, as George is "unavailable" for Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. I get to Lou and Lynn's around 1:15 and talk to them about tonight's party. They are semi-busy prepping. I get a shot of the CAT construction outside and then take a nap. I wake up for dinner, see the mess happening on the 24 hour news cycle, and then prepare for guests to arrive. I film the house party for three hours, with George's arrival, mingling, and address to the

attendees, with Q&A. People depart as George has a conversation with Lou. When he leaves, George tells me that he is riding with Jeff to Philly and then closed door meetings (no filming), and then a funeral for a veteran in DC on Friday (no filming), but mentions that Saturday may work for some filming. Everyone leaves except for Jeff (different Jeff), the piano player. Jeff stays to play selections for Lou and Lynn, and then stays a bit longer to discuss George and politics. Great footage.

September 6, Day 23

I slept until noon and then called Pastor Marty to set up a meeting, and also e-mailed Pastor Rob, who will be leading the town hall discussion at the church on Sunday. I go hang out at the campaign office for a few hours, and learn that they are going to have phone banking at 5:30. I ask Stephany if I can film, and then approach the volunteers (and Mike, the field coordinator). The volunteers are a bit timid to appear on screen; one says he feels “uncomfortable yelling” in the office and decides to phone bank from home. I also learn that there is a new George Scott campaign ad, and that it is supposed to air at 8:52pm during the Eagles game. I head home to Lou and Lynn’s to prepare for the meal, and Chef Stevie and her husband are there. I let them know that the commercial is supposed to air, and then we end up watching half of the Eagles game before seeing the ad.

September 7, Day 24

I went to Trinity Lutheran to meet with Pastor Marty. We discussed the project, focusing on the wellbeing of the congregation, and how the congregation is faced with a

very difficult situation. I draft a letter to the congregation and share it with Jen, the church secretary. She says that she will share it with the council president and the council members. Pastor Marty mentions that there is a council meeting on Thursday, and that they will be able to discuss the project then. I need to brainstorm reasons why they wouldn't want the project to happen. I got some footage outside of Lou's house as they were filling in the street, and then headed to the campaign office. Things are quiet until it's revealed that some volunteer that had come in to get literature had been placing literature in mailboxes, but also had been writing threatening messages on the literature, and the whole staff is trying to stop this guy. Meanwhile, Dave Sharrer, the council president of Trinity Lutheran, tells me that he received the letter from Jen, and that he feels there needs to be some sort of approval by the council for me to film, and for the congregation to be comfortable with filming. This means that at this moment, I do not have access to film on Sunday. We are both going to think more on what we can do about Sunday. I called Dave back to get more information about the congregation and filmed. I also learn that the church is just outside of the new district, and that most of the members of the congregation are probably not voters in the 10th district. This does not affect the film. The film is still about George and all of the people he represents, including everyone in the 10th district, as well as the congregation. He's going to get in touch with Pastor Aaron to talk more about Sunday.

September 8, Day 25

I was turned down for shooting with George and the family during his daughter's birthday, so I took a day trip to NYC to meet up with John Love, my friend from Chicago. We went to a Mac DeMarco concert in Central Park.

September 9, Day 26

I went to church to observe. During the service, Mark stands up and makes an announcement that he is going to have a house party for George on October 14th. After the service, Sandy, the Council VP, flags me down and we discuss the project. We go downstairs to the gathering area where Pastor Rob addresses the congregation (he mentions that he would have been fine with me filming). He walks the congregation through the transition process that is about to take place. The congregation was upset when George left, was uncertain, and then fell in love with Pastor Aaron, who is now leaving. Now they will get Pastor Marty, but it is uncertain how long Marty will be there. If George loses, he will go back to the congregation immediately (and it was mentioned that he might be sad to come back to the congregation). If George wins, then Marty can stay until the end of the year, and after that they'll have to find another interim pastor before they call a new pastor. Some in the congregation are upset because they didn't ask for any of this; they bring up the possibility of not wanting George as their pastor anymore. What if the congregation has changed too much, or George has been changed too much by the process? Pastor Rob then asks Pastor Aaron to introduce me, and then I talk to the congregation about filming their situation. How do they feel about me being there? I have a nice conversation with some allies, and then head to York for the grand opening of a new George office.

I approach Stephany to see what I can film, which is minimal (and she mentions that I can't film at the Meet the Candidates event next). I film George's speech, and then Stephany, Jason, George, and Matt go downstairs to talk privately. I follow and am present for their conversation, but can't film anything. It's revealed that Scott Perry is going to be at the Town Hall as well. I go ahead and call the place to see if they are ok with me filming. I go early and clear permission with them; at that point, I'm independent of the George Scott campaign. I film at the Town Hall, and am disappointed; I would have wanted to get them talking about the town hall on camera, but they wouldn't allow it. Gotta leave for the airport.

iv. October

October 4, Day 27

Call Stephany and George, they tell me about a Dauphin County dem dinner at 5:30p on Friday the 5th. I also catch wind of a debate between Scott Perry and George that is happening tomorrow. I do some research at the airport and learn that it is exclusive to Hill Society members at the Hilton in downtown Harrisburg. I try to contact Lindsay Smith who works Special Events at the Hilton, seeing if I could get access (a likely no, but still worth a shot).

I have salad and chili at the airport Chili's and then make to Lou and Lynn's for the night. The plan is to go to the Hilton bright and early to try and talk to someone about filming the debate, and then find a FedEx to print off more Non-Disclosures.

October 5, Day 28

9:00am

I make it to the Hilton. I decide against approaching anyone about access; even if they got to the point of considering, I assume they would want to clear it with both candidates, and I don't want any reason for them to blame me for Scott Perry canceling the debate in case he suspects the George camp of trying to plant a camera. I instead familiarize myself with the lobby and where the debate will be taking place, and plan to be there after in case there is a gaggle of reporters.

9:30am

I go to a print shop to print 3 copies of the non-disclosure, in case Jason decides to crumple up two.

10:00am

I head to the campaign office, where I meet up with Stephany. She lays down the law, telling me that they will not allow any filming on the night before the election. Her defense is that there will be too many new people coming in and out of the office to be able to explain who I am. She is under the impression that, as communications director, it is part of her job to make sure that no one is in the dark about my presence. I argue that that isn't necessary, as there is an insignificant chance that anyone who doesn't know what is going on will end up on camera; if they are involved in an on-screen conversation, I will inform them about my project myself. I also present the NDA, sign

it, and say that this protects them from any confidential information EVER being disclosed, and how most of it won't even end up on camera at all. Stephany hits back, saying that they don't even want the possibility of that happening. I ask if they don't trust me, and she denies this; she says that they simply don't want the situation at all, nothing personal. We are both frustrated with each other. She goes to two new field staffers and tells them about who I am. It has little to do with anything because I most likely have no reason to put them in the film. Stephany says that she doesn't want to be in the film, and I oblige. All the while, Kavanaugh confirmation proceedings take place on the TV in the lobby. I ask who is going to the Hilton with George; Stephany and Jason are riding together, and then Kiem and George are in a car.

11:00am

I end up riding with Kiem and George to the Hilton. Kiem lets George out, and I go the opposite way to Pita Pit (we don't want the George Scott team showing up to the debate with a cameraperson). I have a Baja Chicken Bacon Ranch, and then walk back to the Hilton and chill in the lobby. I ask the people manning the entry to the debate if they have seen any reporters. They tell me I am the first. I explain that I am there to film, but only if there are other reporters there to ask questions. I learn that the debate is being streamed on Facebook Live. I log on and plug in headphones to prepare for the debate to end. While I wait, a reporter (who I learn is Marc Levy, AP), walks up to the desk to ask if he can go in and take pictures. They deny, and he throws a minor fit. Now, Marc and I wait in the lobby. The debate ends, and Scott Perry comes out

first. Marc approaches Perry and his posse and asks questions. Perry departs and I jump up to ask Marc if I can film his questions for George. Marc talks to the Perry posse, and I catch that Marc cares about Perry. Marc is fine with me filming whatever, but in an ambivalent, arrogant way. He asks George questions. After, George, Stephany, Kiem, and I pile into the car and go back to the office. I try to get in on a meeting with George, Stephany, Jason, and Brad, but they shut me down (on camera).

4:00pm

George takes call time after the meeting. I'm able to sit in on one call, but without filming. Stephany gives me the contact for the Dauphin County event: Rogette.

I then leave for the Dauphin County democratic dinner (featuring Secretary Julian Castro). I ask for Rogette, and get to see the dining room. I go to the bar and get two deep. I go and film a bit of the reception/meet and greet before the dinner. Stephany tells me that the dinner may be better to film, and that the reception may raise some eyebrows. I oblige, and we talk about our conversation earlier, and how I may take a different approach going forward to be able to still have access. I go back to the bar for a third, and then go wait outside until the dinner. A man approaches, wondering what I'm filming. Turns out he is covering the dinner, and ran against Scott Perry two years ago. The George Scott team makes their way to the dining room, and I join them. People give speeches, everyone drinks more. I meet Peggy Grove, a major DNC donor. A few minutes into our conversation, Stephany feels the need to swoop in and explain

things away. She is her own worst enemy. The night goes on far too long: there's an auction, a silent auction, speeches, music, and then speech by Julian Castro.

October 6, Day 29

9:00am

I meet George, Kiem, and Stephany at Panera as they prep canvassers. I hop in the car with Kiem and George, and we go to Sertoma Pancake breakfast. On the way to the breakfast, George is watching a video of Scott Perry addressing his supporters on FB. We meet and greet at the pancake breakfast, and I film a few conversations. Stephany meets us there, and when we're on our way out, George tells Stephany that he wants to do something like what Perry was doing in his FB video.

10:00am

We head to Oktoberfest. We meet with Judge Treblinka, and some Combat Army vets. Some of the combat army vets are from Columbia, MO.

1:00pm

We then head to the Pumpkin Fest in Pennsboro, where George and I walk through until we arrive at the George Scott tent, where the big George Scott cut out is. Multiple conversations happen, including one with George, an atheist non-believer, who leads me over to his tent at the very corner of the festival. Barely any traffic. They are right next to the flat-earth society. I go back to George Scott's tent, and try to film another

conversation when the man asks that I don't film. He later came up to me and said that he would have the right to sue me for identity theft if I used his image without his permission. It was easy to mitigate, even though I didn't tell him he was incorrect. George was headed to two house parties after the fest (which I could not attend), and my car was still at Panera. Luckily, Lynn was working at a democratic tent two away from George's, and so I was able to hitch a ride to Panera when Lou came to pick Lynn up.

6:00pm

We have Manhattan's when we get back to the place, and Lou and Lynn went out to the symphony. I stayed and did some work. I tried to call Pastor Marty to let him know I was coming to church in the morning, but had to leave a voicemail.

October 7, Day 30

8:00am

I go to church at Trinity in East Berlin. George arrives with Dawn. Dave Sharrer comes over to me and lets me know that I can make an announcement when they ask, so when Pastor Marty asks for announcements, I stand up and tell them who I am, and let them know that I'll be available to talk after the service. I record the sermon, and then chat with Kathy and her brother after the service. Kathy is a new member at Trinity. I wanted to get a chance to talk to Mark, who is hosting a house party for George on

October 14th, but I get swept along (with Shelly) to adult Sunday School, where lo and behold, they are discussing religion and politics.

10:30am

Stomach drops. I knew I couldn't just break out the camera; the council had previously decided in their September meeting that they wouldn't allow filming in church. So I bit the bullet, and decided that sitting down and being a part of the conversation will still be very insightful. Mike Brown is leading the discussion, and begins by talking about the stark partisanship on display in the country. Then he brings up the question: who is to blame for the contrast? Is it the President? The other elected officials? The voters? The consensus among the room is that the voters are ultimately responsible, since they are the ones who put the elected leaders in position. Someone points out that the polarization was happening under Obama too. Another man mentions that the commercialization and sensationalization of the news is a large factor in sowing division. There is a discussion on tribalism vs. globalism, and Pastor Marty takes a theological approach, saying that it is man's sinful nature to divide themselves: a sign of the ultimate divorce (today's sermon was about how you can't really pass judgment on those who divorce, since it is inherent to man's nature). Mike shifts the conversation to Creation (they are going to have a 3 week series: today is Issue 1: Creation. Next week is issue 2: Creation, continued. They are going to take 2 weeks off to not talk about politics and then pick up again on November 4th. This works perfectly for me – those are the three segments of time in which I will be in Pennsylvania. This raises my anxiety just

a bit higher, as I know that they have completely shut down my filming access at this point.) Mike discusses the environment, and the man who mentioned Obama asks what this has to do with politics. Mike says that he's getting to it, because after all, the decisions that are made by elected officials effect the environment, as well as all of those living in creation.

11:30am

After the conversation, I talk to Mike and thank him for hosting this discussion series, and get his e-mail address. I talk briefly to Dave, council president, about how I missed Mark. He says that he'll try to remember to give me his contact info.

12:30pm

I go back to Lou and Lynn's. I film Lou playing with his flight simulator. I text Stephany to see where the canvassing event is at 3pm. I've missed the noon canvassing event. I receive the location a few hours later, and by that time I'm headed to Best Buy with Lou and Lynn (Lou is looking for a bag for his fancy new gaming computer). Stephany also asks me for any B-roll of George shaking people's hands. She wants the footage to upload to FaceBook TODAY. I explain to her how impossible that is, and decide to skip the canvassing event. Later, Lou invites his friend Bill over for steak, and we indulge in bottomless Manhattans. Once we're good and liquored up, and end up blabbering on and on about the project, and Bill and Lou seem really invested (that maaay pay off in the end, literally). I stumble to bed.

October 8, Day 31

I was aiming to go to the Cornerstone Coffeehouse with Lou in the morning, but I ended up being sick and sleeping until noon. Once I was over the hangover, I went to the campaign office to make amends with Stephany before I left town. I wanted to let her know that I'm open to interviews (she said after the election would be best). I also wanted to sit in on call time and any meetings, but George wanted me to ok it with Nate, and Nate wasn't around. I instead synced up with Bruce on scheduling, telling me that there will be some dinners next weekend. He also gave me the number for Mark Boyer, the host of the house party on the 14th. I leave the office and George texts me, wondering if I'm still there and wanting to see if I want to sit in on call time. I honestly can't thank him enough for everything he's doing for me, and how he's so willing to help.

October 10

Back in Columbia, I ask John and Kathy if they are willing to host me on the 12th-14th. She responds, it's a go.

October 11

I call Mark Boyer to see if he would be ok with me filming. He thinks it is a good idea for me to film, and is interested in the project.

October 12, Day 32

I fly to Philly in the morning and drive to Harrisburg. On the way, Brad lets me know that it will be no problem getting into the York County democratic dinner. I get to the office around 3pm and decide to keep the camera running without intentionally shooting anything. I find some maybe establishing shots that I can come back for. I talk scheduling with Bruce and Stephany, and then head out to the York dinner. It's nice to be at the dinner, but mostly a dead end: repeat of footage from the Dauphin county dinner, not as good lighting, same speeches. I also do not sit with the campaign staff at the dinner; in the moment, it seemed like it wouldn't be good for appearances. At one point, I go up to George and ask him when he is being picked up by Bruce in the morning. He says they have added a stop before canvassing in Elizabethville, so I will go to George's house around 7:45am.

October 13, Day 33

I get to George's house a bit before Bruce, and we go to north Harrisburg to attend an Interdenominational Pastor's Alliance meeting (African-American pastors of different denominations who come together to discuss issues). I introduce myself and hand out cards; could be a useful connection for research or future projects. We drive to Elizabethville to a canvas kick-off at McDonald's. Film a little, and then hit the town to follow George and Bruce as they knock on doors. Canvassing in rural Dauphin county for about 3-4 hours. George describes it as probably the most lukewarm response he has received while canvassing. Bruce describes a hostile situation where the husband slammed the door on him once he mentioned George/democrats. We see some

Confederate flags. For a while, George and I are able to chat about Lutheran synods and bishops in between door knocks.

We drive back to the office, and George naps in the front seat. At the office, Swing Left is there waiting for Abbi Jacobson to arrive. She comes, does an Instagram story with George, and then gives a pep talk to all the people gathered to either canvas or come into contact with Abbi. George and Bruce head off to a house party, and I catch an Uber to George's house to pick up my car. I go to Mark Boyer's house to see the location and meet with him about tomorrow's party. He tells me that he wanted to be a star in the movie ever since I stood up and made an announcement in church about the project. He talks about how most of his family attends Trinity, how he's been there since birth, but now he splits time between PA and NY. He said that about 16 people run the church (they are having a congregational meeting in November to elect new members to the church council). Mark is expecting to be on church council next year.

I go back to John and Kathy's in time to see First Man with them and some of their friends. They stick around for drinks after the movie and seemed pretty interested in the project. One friend sends me an article to read.

October 14, Day 34

I go to Trinity and make another announcement when it is time to do so during the service. I record Pastor Marty's sermon again, and then go to Sunday School. Mike was originally fine with exploring the possibility of filming, but then was informed of the council decision to not allow filming. I take a nap, and then head to Mark's house for the

party. He, his sister Beth, and a local artist were there, all ready for the party. Beth is on church council, and she is initially fine with me filming, but then becomes noticeably more reserved as more people show up and time goes on. Mark is the opposite; he has no problems with me pointing the camera at him. Mark gives George's wife a tour of the house, and we all meet and greet with members of the congregation. George addresses the room, and I group-ask everyone for release signing (pretty indifferent response; one person signed, and they also wanted me to film their conversation with George). After George leaves, I make sure to have a conversation with Dave that is not about the project or the congregational situation. Mark is busy cleaning after the party and says that we can catch up about the party and talk scheduling later. I leave and go to bed early; I have to leave Harrisburg at midnight, drive to Philly, drop off the car, board the plane, and get back to Columbia in time for work and school.

October 15

George participates in a town hall debate with Scott Perry. I make it back in time for work, then go home and take a nap, then lead a discussion in Seminar in Comm Law about FOIA.

October 18

George participates in a TV debate hosted by WGAL. All of the footage available and recorded.

October 24

Mike Pence touches down in Lancaster, PA, and stumps for Scott Perry. All footage available and recorded.

October 25

In preparation for Nov 2-12, I reach out to Mike, Dave, and Sandy about potential filming opportunities at the church.

October 26

I reach out to Stephany and Bruce about filming with George and the campaign. Mike cannot make it out for audio, and Alex can't make it out from NY for camera. It may just be me and Olivia, which should be fine.

October 29

I have an discomfoting exchange with Pastor Marty: He's writes me back that the council's decision to not allow filming (written into the council meeting notes) is very clear as to whether or not I can film his sermon. He says that he is frankly uncomfortable with the request and does not see how it would be relevant. I respond with a lengthy e-mail about why I would like to gather this footage, but he still says that we just aren't on the same page.

v. November

November 1, Day 35

I leave for Columbia Regional around 12pm, and run into early traffic for the MAGA rally that is happening at Columbia Regional. It takes me about a half hour to wade through

all the traffic. There are Trump merch tents on the side of the road and people walking the line of cars trying to sell MAGA hats. There are three checkpoints to get through; at the first, I say I'm just trying to get to my flight, and they're a bit taken aback. They point me in the direction of Airport Rd, and they ask to see my itinerary at the second check point to make sure that there aren't rallygoers trying to buck the system. The third checkpoint points me in the direction of a small bit of leftover parking in the overflow lot. The inside of the airport isn't terribly busy, and I've got an hour to kill. I try calling Stephany, but no dice. More and more passengers come in telling us about how it's getting worse outside with traffic. We're notified that the American flight before my United flight has been delayed because there's no American crew out on the tarmac because they can't get through the traffic. My United flight is only delayed by about 10 minutes, and they rush us onto the tarmac and into the air because they're trying to shut down the airport for the arrival of Air Force One.

I make it to O' Hare, and everything's fine. I make it to Baltimore, and everything's fine. I drive to Camp Hill, and everything's fine. I text Stephany to let her know that I'll just be at the office the next morning.

November 2, Day 36

I get to the office around 10 in the morning. Things are definitely busier; the field team is in full swing with tables laid out for volunteers and canvassers to pick up their materials. Stephany is in her office dealing with a reporter. I hang around to catch snippets of what is going on. Bruce is much busier and more irritable. I learn from Kiem

that George is going to a Muslim event. I get the details from Kiem, and then head out to the location. Jeff is the first person from the campaign that I see at the Misjad Al Nur mosque in Mechanicsburg. He has been sent as the advance to see how many people are present, what the layout is, and where they should park and/or drop off George. They have a “three words” system that lets you know a square coordinate of exactly where you are. I talk to the parking attendant and he gives me a ticket to an event that he said he was supposed to be handing out. Meanwhile, Jeff talks to the man in charge (Noaman) at the mosque. I go and explain to him who I am, and ask if I can go in and observe. I go take my shoes off and enter the worship space. The imam is giving the Friday sermon. I sit in the back. The prayers begin, and there is a beautiful moment where all of the attendees bend down, and you instantly see one of the children standing at the top of the pulpit let out a little giggle. I need to be capturing something, so out with the phone and recorded some. The man next to me asks if I’m new, and I say I’m just observing.

After the prayers, the man asks me what I was observing. I say that the worship didn’t seem all too different from the Christian services I had been a part of. He tells me that his name is Ahmed, but sometimes he goes by a more Western name like Chris so that people won’t treat him differently, as if he had a Middle Eastern name. During this conversation, George comes in to talk to those who are still present. George talks about the importance of people respecting the Muslim community, and Ahmed asks me if I can take his picture with George.

We then depart for the next mosque, the Islamic Society of Greater Harrisburg. George introduces himself again here, and I'm able to talk to Noaman Hasan more about my project. Pictures, meet and greets.

Back to the office to find out more about the schedule. I learn that George is going to a Black Minister's Association meeting in York. I head down there and meet George and Bruce outside of the Baptist Church. We go inside and listen to a conversation about education funding, and George is making comments about how the numbers don't work out. They then invite George to talk in front of the group, and to take questions from the meeting attendees. No time to introduce me, but I now know that this group is here and I can reach out in the future.

We go to a Latino First Friday event at a Lutheran church. Jeff and I walk in, and there is a young man performing spoken word poetry. There is a band providing music, and it's so boomy that I figure I can get coverage of the event and lay the music over, but no conversations. When George arrives, he is able to meet and greet with people, but is on a lot of calls simultaneously. I see Bruce have a conversation with Donna, and Donna looks concerned, so I capture that moment with the music going in the background. It's raining, it's pouring outside.

November 3, Day 37

There's a canvassing kickoff at the campaign office, and then another canvas kickoff at a union workers office. At the union workers office, Bruce fills me in on the breaking news: Scott Perry has been holding on to a photo of George from 1989 in which George,

in celebration of the capture of a dictator, is pointing a gun at the head of a subordinate while they are arm in arm. Perry plans to use this picture in a negative ad against George. I follow George and Kiem to the market, where they walk around talking to people. I call Olivia, who is at O'Hare, to tell her about this new information and to start looking for ads that we can download before they are taken down. We head back to the campaign office for a few seconds, and then head out to a GOTV event. Here, I get footage with a union worker, and others. I get caught up in a great filming opportunity that I'm late getting to the airport to pick up Olivia. I fill her in on what's going on, and text Kiem to see what he and George are up to. They say they're probably going home because it's not looking good for canvassing in the afternoon. Olivia and I stop by the campaign office so that she can see it in person, and then we hit Zembie's to drink and plan. After Zembie's we drive around getting pretty driving/establishing shots. I also take Olivia to Negley Park where we had filmed a scene in August, and get some nice progression-of-time shots. We then head to Lynn and Lou's, where we have steak and Manhattan's. We then watch The Meaning of Life with Lou and Lynn, a goal of mine checked off.

November 4, Day 38

Olivia and I attend church in the morning. I point out a few people: Mike, Sherry, Mark, Dave. I stand up and give an announcement about the project again, and it seems like people are happy to see me. I record Pastor Marty's sermon a third time. After the service, Don asks if he can talk to me. He says that he wants to help with the project, and gives me his card. This is Don Manzullo, former 10-term congressman from

Rockford, Illinois. I signal Olivia to join us to make that instant Rockford connection. He also tells us that he started attending Trinity Lutheran with his wife, Frida, after George started running for office, and so all he knows about George is what he has heard from others. He also tells us that he is a staunch conservative Republican, and he sees George as too liberal, that he shouldn't have run for office. We make our way down to Sunday School with Don and Frida. We briefly talk to Mike and decide that we can talk to the group about the project after the discussion, instead of trying to film an additional portion of the conversation. The Sunday School discussion is the most contentious yet, with Don being a dominant conservative voice. After the discussion, I give an extended talk about the project and ask if people have questions. After, Olivia and I work the room and gain a few contacts who might be interested in sitting down in front of the camera.

We head back to Harrisburg to get in position for the Biden rally. We arrive at the Farm Show, and approach the volunteer to get access to the press entrance. She gives us a bit of a hold-up, as we hadn't received a press pass from Stephany. I basically explained who I was, showed her my business card for proof, and she ushered us through, at that point, all of the volunteers just pointed us in the right direction. We park, get out, gear up, and go in through the press entrance. We start seeing familiar campaign faces, which makes our passage easier. Brendan flips through to make sure my name is on the list, and then inform him that Olivia will be among the crowd during the rally.

The rally is in the hallway off the main arena area. We walk down the hall to explore and run into Lou, who is working out front. We go outside briefly to get a few shots of

the crowd gathering; the line to get in is hundreds deep. We make it back inside just before they start letting people in, and then grab a shot of Lou taking a ticket, and then book it to the press riser so I can get in place. I'm wedged in between Fox5 and ABC27 or something like that. Stay in place as the droves come in, and then the important people fill in the area right in front of the podium. I find Olivia in the crowd, we meet at the barrier and I get extra batteries. Speeches begin. I see Lou has taken a place right behind the curtain. There's a break in the speeches; they're waiting for Biden to land, and can't start Tom and George until he's there. We see security detail show up. I text Lou and he tells me Biden is on the ground. Then, Tom Wolf introduces George, George comes out and speaks, and then introduces Joe Biden. Joe has somewhat lost his voice from being on the campaign trail for so many people. After his speech, they all come down and greet the crowds who stick around for pictures and brief conversations. Olivia and I catch Bruce to talk about tomorrow, and he has honestly no clue what is going on the next day.

Olivia and I go to the Millworks to drink and talk unendingly about what just happened and what is about to happen.

November 5, Day 39

We are aware of the orders to not record audio inside the campaign office, so we decide on covert operations. We have to go to a high level in a parking garage downtown to 1) get the car out of the torrential rain to get the camera set up (I had left the camera in the trunk, and it was pouring consistently) and 2) put on the lav mic. I was wearing

underwear meant for a baseball cup and hid the transmitter down there. The decision was to wear a lav, put it on the highest setting (hot mic) and pick up as much as possible that way. We decided to test in while in the parking garage; we didn't want to go to these lengths and then get purely unusable audio. It works, so it's a go. We decide that we will have the second camera in the bag capturing the lav audio, and to signal Olivia to record, I'll text "Scott".

We go to the campaign office and set up our bags and a charging station in the center storage area. Some introductions for Olivia; it works to say that she is essentially my campaign manager, and everyone is like "Ohhhh," in an impressed way. I seem way more professional with Olivia around. Bruce arrives, and I go in his office. He starts talking about the schedule, so I text Olivia and start recording video. I'm with Bruce for a while, and then go back and sit with Olivia. George then shows up, and I get a 30-minute floating camera shot with George walking around the office and interacting with people. Once George leaves, we decide to "un-Scott", and then move to a side office to get out of the way of the campaign volunteer's lunch spread.

We are in the side office dumping footage from the rally when Jason comes in our doorway and says, "You picking me up on the hot mic?" Olivia and I look at him confused, and then each other confused, and he says, "You know, the mic you're running right now?" I continue to stutter and gesture to the camera sitting still on the table. Heart pounding; I feel like this is it. Somehow he knows. How can he know? The only way would be if he had seen Olivia operating out of the bag in the storage room, or if someone had gone in there and discovered the camera with all the audio gear rigged

up and recording. We weren't actually recording at the time – we had un-Scotched - but he wouldn't know if we were or not. He would only know that a mic existed.

"I'm fucking with you." He laughs. We go along with it. I say "We can definitely hook you up if you wanna say something." I pick up the camera and point it directly in his face. We then are wondering if this was a weird way of Jason trying to be friends with us. Get us scared with a joke, and then talk about general stuff. Stephany comes to the doorway too, seemingly having the same friendly intentions. I think they were still trying to feel out if there was anything weird about us, but Stephany was also talking about a reporter, Charlie Thompson, that she was dealing with. She said he was trying to get access to things and she was having to shut him down. They don't like him because of his Perry bias. It sounds like they are trying to buddy buddy with us against common enemies, but I'm never quite sure. I've got to get the wire off as soon as possible.

Jason mentions a potential filming opportunity at a canvas kickoff, also mentioning that there should be some important people there. He goes back to his office, but I go knock on his door to try and find out where it is and who will be there. He says Leslie Odom, and I don't realize that he's talking about the guy from Hamilton; in my head, I was imagining important politicians to be there or something. Apparently they don't want us capturing audio at this event either, since George is going to be off-script, but that's a slightly ridiculous request since it is technically open to the public. Olivia pack up and get in the car to head that way; we also try to wrap our heads around the Jason/Stephany exchange we had just had.

We go to the canvas kick-off, we meet Leslie Odom Jr., and we see a lot of people recording with their phones so we ask to be in touch with them about video and audio. I also sprint out to Leslie's car as he's leaving; he has a brief conversation with George, and I hope the lav that I was wearing picked it up. Once the kick-off is winding down, everyone is going home for the day. When Jason is leaving, he suggests to us that we get a hotel room at the Clarion; that's where the election night party will be, and it'll be a late night with alcohol.

We go take naps, and then book a hotel room and have a glass of wine and watch John Oliver with Lou and Lynn. But we have to go see George and see how he is doing.

We drive out to Dillsburg, and the dogs start going crazy once we pull into the driveway. We sit down with George; he's doing really well, just answering some e-mails and finalizing the schedule. We do get a schedule from Bruce, but we have to plan when to be back at the house in the morning; the plan is to follow George the entire day, be a tail, eat when they eat, get gas when they get gas, be present and observe just like how we'd done it all along. We decide that it's best to arrive just a few minutes before 6:30 and to stay outside to try and not disturb the dogs, which would disturb the rest of the family. I also ask George about the war room situation: all I know at this point is that there will be a main party area and a war room where the senior campaign staff and family will be. George isn't sure how it will play out; he says he'll ask Jason about me being in the war room.

We head out and get ready for election day.

November 6, Day 40

We pull up to George's house around 6:25am. We start shooting to try and get a shot of him in the window as it rains outside. Once George comes out of the house, I hop out of the car, Olivia goes to the driver's seat, and I ask George if I can ride with him on the way to pick up Nick. I ride along as George calls Stephany. George lets me know that my rental car's lights aren't on; I'd turned them off once we got to George's house to not disturb the dogs, and hadn't told Olivia to turn them back on! I called and her and we got it straightened out, kind of just a funny moment.

George picks up Nick and we go to the first polling place. Nick casts his vote, and once they are back in the car, George tells me how hostile of territory it was. Based on the looks he was getting, everyone there was voting straight Republican. It's amazing how people show utter contempt or disgust just on the basis of what they are told through political campaigns, not knowing anything about the person. Although, I can't say I know Scott Perry personally.

George drops Nick off at school and goes back to the house to pick up Donna. From there, they go to vote (in another staunch Republican polling place) and then go to eat at Baker's Diner. It's at the diner where it hits me that that may be the best part of someone's day: when they go vote in the morning, got to breakfast, and then see the candidate they just voted for.

From here, we go from polling place to polling place for the rest of the morning. This is when it feels like Olivia and I are hitting are stride. We hop out of the car, everybody

with George knows who we are, I just start filming stuff, and then once a conversation ends, Olivia is there to swoop in, get a release signed, and then talk to them about the project while I'm filming something else. This worked well for the most part. Sometimes we would get caught trying to get a release signed and the George caravan would be pulling away for the next stop.

We started experiencing random moments of serenity: whenever we show up to a new polling place, it seems like we are able to see George interact with a group of people that hasn't been represented in the film yet. One particularly memorable moment was after George had been interviewed by ABC and was about to leave. Right then, nuns started piling out of a van, and George greeted them. They were very enthusiastic about meeting George, and it was a tremendous visual for us.

We checked in to our room and went out again to catch up with the George car. This time, we were at an old church in Harrisburg, and there was a really cute baby that lit up when George and Donna started playing with them. Onto another polling place, here to talk with an older veteran, and then back to the hotel for some R+R before election night.

At 7:00pm, we were in our hotel room, and I didn't know where anything else in the hotel was. I knew there was a main party area and the war room, but I didn't know the layout at all. The first mission was to find the main party area and see what was going on. Not much activity in the main party area, and no senior campaign officials, except Brad briefly, to be seen. It also seemed like it would be strange to ask Brad where

everyone was in the moment. I got some video of CNN talking about Pennsylvania and went back to the room to update Olivia on the situation. The new objective was to find the war room.

I head back down towards the main party area and slow down a bit when walking by the Ambassador's Lounge. I hearing talking on the other side of the doors, and peer in through a crack to see a campaign staffer. I know where the war room is now. I go back to the main party area to try and get a shot of a TV as Pennsylvania polls close at 8pm. Unsuccessful. I hang around a bit more. New objective is to figure out a time when I can be in the war room. I text George saying that I'm outside the ambassador's lounge, but he and family are still out to dinner, and he doesn't know when he'll be in the war room. I go back to the party area and spot Stephany working with reporters and important people. When I see her making her way back to the war room, I walk with her to explain my one filmmaking goal for the night: I want a single shot, no audio if necessary, of George's face reacting to something. Preferably, when he finds out the results, but I could work with anything beforehand, in the anticipation and buildup to that moment. She says that they may be able to get me in AFTER he knows, but right now, they're not even letting Donna in the war room.

It's 8:20pm, and I feel like I'm going to be shut out of the room. Restricted to main party area. I go tell Olivia the rough news, and she replies that that's not an option, and that we've come too far for that. At this point, I'm scared by the visual of Olivia having to take it up with Stephany, and I decide that it's time to kick it into gear. My plan is to hang around the hallway, keeping a distance from the war room but having it within

eyesight to be able to pick up on foot traffic routes in and out of the room. I still don't where George and family are. I see Bruce walking down the hall in the other direction and decide to follow him. He goes to room 114, and I have a feeling this is George's room. Donna opens the door for Bruce, and George and I make I contact.

"Oh, hey Sam. Give us five minutes, ok? You can hang out in this other room if you want." I go through the bedroom to the main area of the presidential suite, where Donna, Alex (daughter), Donna's sister, and Peter (Donna's sister's fiancé) are hanging out. George comes in after a few minutes and says that he will go to the war room to see what the situation is and if I can get in. I get into a conversation with Peter; he seems pretty interested by the whole documentary situation that I'm presenting. And it helps me, because I thought I was going to be paying for drinks all night (\$6 for a whisky coke in the party area) but Peter offers me the first free beer of the night. George comes back and says, "We can get you in in 30 minutes. Give us 30 minutes, but then we'll be good to go." Perfect. We're in. Before anything else happens, I sprint back to the main party area to grab the camera bag and tell Olivia what just happened.

I go back to the presidential suite and keep talking to Peter about documentary. George comes back and says I can go in in 5 minutes, and Stephany will be contacting me directly. 50 seconds later, Nick comes into the suite with all of his high school friends. They gather around the table in the suite, wait for George to join them, and then have an impromptu birthday celebration, with cake, candles, balloons, for Nick. During this time, I was going back and forth on when I'll have to leave for the war room, not wanting to have the shotgun mic on the camera (the rule is no audio in the war room),

but I quietly put the mic back on the camera and start recording. There's no way I'm leaving the suite in 5 minutes if this is happening right in front of me.

At that point, I'm basically in the suite for the rest of the night. I do end up going with George to the war room for one shot, but I'm not even sure if I'll have to use it with everything else that was going on in the suite. After the birthday party, Nick went back to the main party with his friends, Bill (George's brother) joined the family in the suite, and we waited it out until results started coming in. George does some math on some paper in the doorway with the numbers coming in from each county, Bill reads off numbers that he's pulling from CNN's website, George goes back and forth to the war room more frequently, but I'm learning throughout the night that George is spending most of his time with family in the presidential suite. They'll hold normal, mundane conversations, and then George will turn the attention back to the results coming in on the news and Donna will look concerned. At one point, George is sitting on the table and flips the channel to see Scott Perry being interviewed at his election night party, feeling confident.

We knew what was going on around 10:30pm. They were planning to make a "too-close-to-call" speech, but were then seeing if it was statistically possible for them to come back. Around 11pm, they changed to a concession speech, and I took my place in the hallway in order to get a tracking from the hallway to the main party area, which would be the first time those attending the party had seen George that night. We make our way into the party area, he gives the speech, and he's left to greet supporters and answer questions from reporters.

Olivia and I were getting ready to sleep and around 1am, Stephany texts me and says that we're welcome to join them in the Ambassador's Lounge, the former war room. We quickly decide that we can't turn that down, so we hop on down to the war room to find an absolutely silly party going on. Everybody is drunk, except for George: he had a beer or two, but even then, was still composed as ever. Bruce had kicked off his shoes, grabbed a guitar, and begun embracing the Johnny Cash image that he had donned for the entire day. Donna was the life of the party. Stephany was laughing like I'd never heard her laugh. Jason said that he'd tell me anything I wanted to hear, that he'd give me an interview. They made sure we were well-lubricated. At one point Donna and another staffer were trying to match-make Olivia and me. I grabbed a short video of Bruce and George singing "The Gambler"; maybe that can be a nice little thing for the end credits. Olivia was able to have a good conversation with a former Biden-speechwriter. It was surreal and ephemeral. We were in that room until 3:30 in the morning. The guard had officially been let down, and we had unofficially been accepted into the campaign family.

November 7, Day 41

Up at 9. Olivia heads down to breakfast. I go shortly after and find George and Donna having breakfast in this beautiful open area in the middle of the hotel. I grab food and sit down with George and Donna. They're both beat, and we talk about everything but business. Eventually Bruce, Bill, and Mike Mountz join us. George mentions the prophetic duty of a leader: the importance of being a voice to call out injustice, even if

the battle is lost. I have to leave; it's time to check out. I call my dad and we talk all the way until we get out of the car at the steps of the capitol.

Someone had put an art display on the capitol steps: two pairs of eyes, watching every move. We got multiple shots of these steps, and then went to Strawberry Square, a mall district, for lunch. At lunch, my physical and emotional exhaustion is on display, and we talk and talk about everything. We decide to go check in on Lou and Lynn. We are offered drinks almost immediately upon arrival. Lynn is sad, Lou is upset. Olivia gets a notice from American, saying that her flight has been delayed, meaning she'll miss her connection. She gets on the phone with American, and is able to get a flight out of Baltimore. We hop in the car to Baltimore, I say goodbye to Olivia, and then drive to a community college parking lot to take a nap, but end up just weeping for 10 minutes, thinking about everything election day, before I drive back to Camp Hill. I talk about the film with John and Kathy for about an hour, and then pass out.

November 8, Day 42

I plan to catch up on school work, but I want to stop by the campaign office for a bit to try and scavenge some resources. I go by around noon, and the field team is compiling everything. After that, it's like the swan song episode of a sitcom, where every major character comes through the door every five minutes or so, ending with George himself. Most of the time, they're locked away in the call room, and there's no reason for me to be in there. The campaign story is over. I start gathering everything I can: stickers, buttons, bumper stickers, flyers, yard signs. They even let me sift through documents to

benefit me in my research. You know you've got some trust when senior level campaign members will let you parse through their shred pile, relatively unsupervised. I also learn that the campaign building is being demolished (we joke that we could commit arson and call it a HOLY FIRE) and there is also a rally on the steps of the Capitol about moving forward and calling on Whitaker, the new attorney general, to recuse himself from the Russia investigation. Stephany tells me that the eyes on the Capitol are to symbolize the children that were separated from their parents at the border.

I go Burger King, ready to get some written work done, and right when I finish eating, I get a text from Lou, saying that they are at the house making signs for the rally on the steps. I go to Lou and Lynn's and film them making signs, and then go with them and some friends (including Jeff, the piano player) to the rally. After some speeches, they open the mic to anyone, and Lou goes up and give a stirring address. I got the first sentence of his address and then THE CAMERA CUT OUT. I don't know how, maybe I pushed a button accidentally, but I noticed about 3 minutes later that I was on standby, and I felt like an idiot. It's ok, maybe it's enough to have Lou attending and being a prominent figure at the rally. Still, smh. We go out to eat and I have a fancy Manhattan at a fancy restaurant.

November 9, Day 43

Today's the day. I get some R+R, catch up on some work, and stay in John and Kathy's house the whole day. I did a slo-mo shot of some rain puddles, but that's it. Kathy and I tried to take a break and go see The Old Man and the Gun with her sister at the

Midtown arthouse theater, but lo and behold, their projector was broken for all of the Old Man and the Gun shows that night. We perused at the midtown bookstore for awhile, and then went home and watched Incredibles 2.

November 10, Day 44

With still nothing to film (George was spending some much needed R+R with family) and tired of the house, I took a day trip to Gettysburg. Had always wanted to go ever since I grew up on Gettysburg Drive in Jacksonville, IL. Saw some ancient gun collections, saw some battlefields, climbed an observation tower. Got back to Camp Hill before dark and had dinner, beer, and a conversation with John.

November 11, Day 45

I go to Trinity in the morning, and just choose a seat in the back corner. Today is not the day to make an announcement about the project. George is there with Donna. In the announcements, I learn that the cottage meeting George and the congregation is now set for November 25th. After the service, Donna comes over and tells me that George's first Sunday back preaching will be December 2nd, and that there is pretty significant interest, that there might be campaign people there to see it.

I go down to Sunday School, and they've moved on from politics to The Law and the Gospel, which still sounds pretty political to me. Notably, Don and Frida are not at church or Sunday School. I think they're in Rockford.

November 12, Day 46

I go to the Cornerstone Coffeehouse to meet Lou, Lynn, and the usual suspects. I find out that Lou had given a talk about stories from the cockpit yesterday at the Cornerstone at 2pm, and I'm bummed because I didn't know about it and had gone home to nap instead. I leave the Cornerstone, pack up, and head out to Baltimore.

November 14

I write to George, requesting filming access to the cottage meeting and December 2nd.

November 16

George calls me, saying that he saw my e-mail and wanted to talk about the cottage meeting, that he had gotten lunch with Dave and Sandy, discussed it, and said that the conversations would be too sensitive to be filmed. I said that I respected that, but wanted to give the congregation's perspective equal footing in the film somehow. I also explained my ideas for filming December 2nd, which he said sounded interesting by would still have to check with council.

George then sent an e-mail with these details, CC'ing Dave and Sandy.

November 17

I respond to George's e-mail with the concession of not filming the cottage meeting and requesting that we revisit the September decision with the December 2 amendments in mind.

November 18

I'm working on research papers when I see Jim Yale share Ken Bradbury's CaringBridge site. There's an update saying that Ken has been moved to Comfort Care, so I start making calls to see if there are any more updates and if there would be time to go visit him. I talk to Laura, my sister, to see if she has heard any updates. We hang up. She calls me back and lets me know: Ken has passed away.

Ken was an enduring outlet for artistic creativity and a constant source of inspiration to thousands; he wrote many of the nationally-distributed speeches for middle school speech team, wrote original plays for Triopia High School in Arenzville, IL that would involve nearly half the school, pack gymnasiums to the brim, and have people lined up, waiting for hours to buy tickets, and he founded a performing arts camp that has been running for at least 30 years.

I grew up attending that camp as a camper and then a counselor, and I drummed in 5 or 6 shows that he wrote from scratch. He is one of the main reasons why I became involved so heavily in the arts, and certainly why I'm making a documentary. Ken was the first person to donate to the Indiegogo campaign. The last update he saw was the story about the man inside the mosque. He was excited to see what I was making.

This is for Ken.

November 19

I wake up to an e-mail from Sandy. She says that she is "reiterating again" the fact that the council decided on no filming in September. At this point, it sounds like they think I just don't get it. "How many times does he need to be told?" I imagine someone saying.

It makes me feel like more of an annoyance. I figured we would be able to discuss specific possibilities, and get past the blanket no-filming policy from the days when we barely knew one another. At this point, I've sat with them in 4 Sunday School classes and about 7 or 8 church services, not to mention Mark's house party. Just a frustrating way to start the day, and I'm still reeling from the events of the day before.

I try to keep writing, but my mind goes back to Ken. I keep looking on FB and there's an absolute outpouring from the Central IL community. I pull out journals from Ken that he would give to the cast and crew of his plays. I read the one from the first run of Genesis: The Musical, and I'm instantly cheered up by his writing: it's like he's in the room with you. I decide right then and there that things are going to be OK in PA. I'll just take this mentality, that everything happens for a reason, and approach the first conversation I have with George in that positive way. It doesn't matter if the church never lets me film anything: we'll figure out another way to tell the story.

November 20

I write back to Sandy, saying that I will certainly respect the wishes of the congregation and its leadership, and that I appreciate any time she is willing to talk with me at church on the 25th. I also privately e-mail George, letting him know that I do think things will turn out fine, even if there is some access some people are unwilling to concede.

November 21

I'm about to head out to STL for the holidays when George calls me, wanting to talk about scheduling. He had been at a monastery for a few days without phone or

computer. We talk about the 25th, 2nd, and mid-December. He mentions that Sandy is a pretty by-the-book person, and that there may be others in the council who might be willing to work with us. We decide that we'll be able to meet on Saturday sometime, though he has to carve out time to go and pick up his motorcycle. He also mentions that there is a campaign thank-you party for the volunteers on December 17th, when I am planning on being back to conduct interviews.

November 23, Day 47

I fly to Baltimore and get to Lou and Lynn's after bedtime. George will text me in the morning.

November 24, Day 48

It's Lou's birthday. Today is also Ken's funeral. Ken died on my dad's birthday (November 18th) and my dad is officiating the funeral. Lou was George's first campaign donor. Ken was the first person to donate to my Indiegogo crowdfund. God works in mysterious ways.

George texts me, saying that he can meet before noon. We meet at a Dunkin Donuts around 10:50 and continue the conversation from our latest phone chat. George says that Sandy is not only obstructing the film to the point of being counterproductive, but she does that for some council/church issues as well. George thinks that the narthex idea (tracking shot from pastor's office) may fly, but we'll know more tomorrow, based on how well the cottage meeting goes. George also updates me on his side of campaign things: he is still making thank you calls and notes, and a lot of people want him to run

again. I mention the potential of getting audio of the service, but it's too early to talk about that.

I end the day celebrating Lou's birthday at the house, we have a good dinner conversation, and I end up filming as he gives me a personal "Tales from the Cockpit" presentation, the one that I missed earlier in the month.

November 25, Day 49

I go to church in the morning. The service happens. Not the time to say anything about the project. We go to the cottage meeting, which is being held in the 1st level fellowship hall. The meeting is also serving as a going-away party for Pastor Marty. I snap some pictures. Everybody grabs cake and gets settled. I make sure to record the meeting on my phone, for reference, of course. The meeting goes relatively well. Mike brings up the elephant in the room, but everybody knew that there would be dissent, and it was civil. Things were going extraordinarily well until I started talking to Sandy, the council VP. She mentioned that she understood how it must be frustrating to be a filmmaker and be told to not film anything, but she is telling me that she never knew enough about the project, was hearing all kinds of things of what it might be, and felt like it was always changing on them too much for them to be able to form an opinion on it, and that it would have been nice to have some sort of letter of agreement. I tried to stress that these were the kinds of communication that I had been trying to establish since September, but she also didn't like the amount of e-mails that she would receive, but

also didn't like how she may not have been receiving all of the information. One of the most frustrating conversations I've ever had.

George and I talk on the phone afterwards and he tells me he decided to stay out of the conversation based on body language. We talk about coming up with a list of things I would like to shoot on December 2nd, to present to the council.

November 26

I run a message by George before sending to the council; there are three things I would like to capture: George in the office before the service, George walking down the hall, and George entering the sanctuary. George calls me to see if we can do a conference call with the council on Wednesday.

November 28

Conference call. We're cleared for all 3.

vi. December

December 1, Day 50

Layover from Hell. I begin the day at Columbia Regional at 5:30am. The plane is "overweight" and not taking off until they find 13 volunteers to change flights, and my layover is 45 minutes anyway, so I volunteer. The next flight out of Columbia is at 10am, and the connecting out of Chicago is at 7:30pm. Also getting sick. 17 hour day of layovers and flights. Miserable. I get into Camp Hill around 11pm.

December 2, Day 51

At Trinity in the morning at 7:15am. Just George and Karen, the organist, in the church. I get a few unplanned shots of George, and then follow George up to the narthex in order for him to start the service. The shot doesn't work quite the way I imagined it. Quite a few folks from the campaign come to show support for George. I get brunch with George and Donna at the Cross Keys Restaurant. Back on the plane. I was in PA shorter than it took to get here.

PRODUCTION – OBSERVATION is WRAPPED after 51 days of production.

December 14, Day 52

Jane Arnot and I embark on a road trip, on a mission to interview George and others from the campaign. We have secured interviews with Jason and Stephany, it's just a matter of finding a good place to conduct the interviews. We begin brainstorming and imagine a conference room setting with windows and natural light, maybe downtown.

December 15, Day 53

We get into town and get settled with John and Kathy. Reach out to Lou and Lynn to see where they are in the world, but they must be off on the cruise. John and Kathy invite us to a Christmas party across the street.

December 16, Day 54

Sunday at Trinity. I point people out to Jane. We attend Sunday School. Mike is having people read an Adam Hamilton book, so I grab a copy. We set up interviews with Jason

and Stephany for the next day. I'm still trying to find a location, but I notice that John and Kathy's living area is a pretty good option.

December 17, Day 55

Stephany has to cancel; we reschedule for Wednesday at her house in Hershey. Jason comes in from Lancaster to John and Kathy's house and he gives us an hour of content. He's a talker. Two camera set-up, one coverage and one wide with camera and filmmaker visible. We are set for Mike and George tomorrow.

December 18, Day 56

We head down to East Berlin to Mike and Sherry's house. They're getting work done in one of the rooms, and the construction provides nice diffusion for us. His interview is sobering. We also learn that there is a church council meeting that night, and I'm going to see if I can attend. We mention that we're going to try and make it to Gettysburg on our way out of town, and Mike offers to guide us around on Thursday. We grab lunch and then head to the church to meet George for his interview. They are shampooing the carpet at the church, and it is super loud. We figure out that we need to relocate to George's house and pray that the dogs aren't riled up. We're also limited on time; George has to take a call at 4, and it's 2:30. We get set up for the interview by 3 (after a little trouble with cards) and then knock it out in an hour. Having Mike and George's interviews on the record is a bit of a relief; those were the ones that we absolutely needed.

December 19, Day 57

Next up is Brad in downtown Harrisburg. He lives in an old Victorian looking place, perhaps in a perpetual state of transition. We quickly get to know Truman, Brad's big black dog. We do a similar set up to Jason's interview. The first 30 minutes goes fine, but then Truman gets restless and the next 45 minutes is Truman-centric. The dog is horny. Probably the most humping in an interview I've ever experienced.

We try to brush off the interview with lunch at a shopping mall right outside the capitol, and then head to Hershey, where Stephany lives. Stephany's place is the most pristine interior I've ever witnessed. Everything is white. The walls, the carpet, the furniture. There are entire rooms with one, carefully placed items, like, Idk, a baby grand. We decide to frame Stephany with the piano, with another camera doing the whole reflexive we-are-filming-you shot.

After Stephany's, it's another landmark moment because PRODUCTION IS COMPLETELY WRAPPED after 57 days of production. Hershey's Chocolate World is basically across the street so we go celebrate.

December 20

Jane and I leave town, but we stop in Gettysburg for the guided tour with Mike. He takes us to the Cyclorama, a gigantic painting of the battlefield, and then we hit the fields. Mike tells us that he takes drives down to Gettysburg before church sometimes to clear his head and ready himself for the Sunday School discussion. And then we left Pennsylvania. Time to edit.

3g. March 2019

March 22

I make it to Wheeling, WV for the night. Little town on an island between WV and OH.

March 23

Wake up and send the 75 feature cut and 33 short cut to Robert and Stacey. I get out of Wheeling and into Harrisburg. The campaign office hasn't been demolished. I head to John and Kathy's and chat with Kathy for awhile.

March 24

I go to church, see George, meet Jerry Mummert, who is a visiting pastor. George and I are set to screen at 6:30 tonight. I go down to Gettysburg, visit the seminary, and then head over to George and Donna's.

It goes really well. They're taken by most of it, have some questions and suggestions that are on point. George points out that we need a better sense of why he's running, and who Scott Perry really is and what his track record is. He wants his identity as a pastor to be prominent, which we should be able to accomplish once we record the audio of the letter to the congregation. I learn about a Clergy Leadership program in central PA, and George is speaking to them on May 6th.

March 25

I start a list of pastors in Columbia I want to reach out to, and then drive north into Dauphin County. I see a few landscape B-Roll locations that I want to revisit in the next few days. I also stop by Hershey World to restock the snacks. I drive past a church

around 6 as its bells are chiming. Maybe a good chance for audio capture. I head home and John shows me the first copy he just received of a book he co-edited that provides comprehensive solutions to implementing policies that fight climate change.

March 26

I visit the church with the bells around noon and ask how often the bells toll. They say every day at noon and 6. I attend a "Good News and Brews" in Abbottstown. It's an event that George leads with other area pastors for their three congregations. They meet at a pub and have a discussion about a topic. This week they talked about addiction.

March 27

Still working on contacting pastors. I call George to make sure we're good for audio recording tomorrow. I do one recording of the church bells. I screen the 75 minute cut for John and Kathy. We had to watch off of the Vimeo link because the hard drive wasn't working.

March 28

I drive north to Dauphin County to get B-roll, and then back to the church for bells again, different angle. I make it to George's house around 6:30, and we set up in the kitchen, hoping that the dogs aren't going to whimper. We record George reading the letter a couple of times, and then I ask him a few questions for a little extra interview. George

then looks over my changes to the release and he signs it. We now have releases from George, Stephany, Jason, Brad, and Mike.

B. Evaluation

The first major hurdle was finding a character, and once I learned of Scott's primary victory, the project depended on Scott's response to the proposal. If Scott had rejected my proposal, I would have returned to the beginning of the casting process closer to the Midwest. Fortunately, Scott had faith in me and trusted the process from the day we met. That willingness to let me tag along with a camera turned into 40+ hours of intimate campaign footage.

Some in the campaign were initially skeptical of my intentions, but this reached fever pitch when the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) came to town. The middle of August proved to be one of the more frustrating sequences of events; this was our introduction to Jason O'Malley, Scott's new campaign manager, and Stephany Dugan, the new communications director, who were prepared to halt the project but gave into Scott's approval. Still, part of their strategy to manage me would be to limit my information intake and obstruct us from events about which we would eventually find out and attend.

Trinity Lutheran Church was as skeptical of my presence, if not more so. I began attending church services, initially wanting to have footage of George in more pastoral roles. A common perception among congregation members was that I was a videographer hired by the George Scott campaign to get footage of the church. I attempted multiple times to reach out to the pastors, church council and congregation, with little success. After a few interactions with me, they decided during a council

meeting that there would be no filming of church services or church-related activities. Once this was written into the minutes, some on the council treated it as permanent doctrine. The rule was largely upheld through the campaign process all the way to December, as the council still denied access to church services and activities after months of knowledge of the project. Throughout the process, many seemed curious about the project, but the church was generally unhelpful.

However, there were individuals along the way who were very generous with their support. Mike and Shelly Brown, members of the congregation, took interest in the project, and Mike agreed to be interviewed about the situation. The campaign also got in touch with Charlie Wilson to find supporters who would house me and my crew. They put us in touch with Lou Thieblemont, Lynn Ahwesh, Kathy Yorkiewitz, John Dernbach, John Haiden and Jess Haiden, who were generous enough to take us in through the Fall.

Generally speaking, the process went very well. In the end, I felt that I was fortunate to be in the positions into which I got myself, and each trip was productive enough to move the project forward. Being in place at the election night party and capturing his near-victory was a cathartic validation of the groundwork we had begun laying in June.

An experience like this that relies heavily on intuition comes with a myriad of what-if scenarios and regrets. The biggest obstacles to the success of the project were travel distance, filmmaker commitments and money. Living in central Pennsylvania from May-December 2019 would have been an ideal shooting scenario, albeit impossible due

to housing burdens, rental car costs and other graduate school requirements. The project relied on maximization of travel, and the cost of travel limited our chances for maximization.

C. Interview Transcripts

George Scott

Trinity Lutheran Church, East Berlin PA

Sam Roth: What's your relationship to the media like as a religious leader?

George Scott: It's fairly positive, and it's important to maintain positive professional relationships with the media. The media has a job to do, job to report, if you treat them in a hostile way, that doesn't help. Most of the media was very professional, but occasionally there were set ups. With a local tv station, I thought it went really well, but they had these video images that they laid over the narrative and it completely distorted the narrative and it gave you a false impression about what my campaign was doing, so you have to be careful around the media, but I don't think poorly of them, they are important to the political process.

SR: How do you see pastors portrayed in media?

GS: In TV shows and movies, pastors are portrayed as judgmental and narrow minded and sometimes hypocritical, which is unfortunate because that's not the majority of clergy I know. Sometimes the mega pastors, the celebrities have betrayed the trust of their supporters and put the church in a bad light, the vast majority are highly dedicated women and men, and to share God's word in the best way they can.

SR: What are some ways pastors can use media?

GS: They can establish relationships with media in the community, and we talked about this at seminary, if you have print media, make sure they know who you are before a crisis erupts, establish some degree of knowledge in advance.

SR: Looking at televangelists, with an overt use of media, when pastors don't give a good name to the vocation, how does one in that role combat that negative perception?

GS: I'm not sure one individual pastor can other than being a servant to the people you serve. What the televangelists have created, you can help people's perception past what they see on tv, and there are some televangelists or modern media that broaden media to a wider audience, and there are a lot of instances that bear fruit, but the ones that get wealth, those undermine the work of the church as a whole

SR: Looking at the current landscape, is the relationship between pastors and media helpful, hurtful, or what?

GS: It's prone to misunderstanding, increasingly, not only media but people in our culture, don't have experience with someone who is a minister, when you don't have a personal experience, you go along with the portrayals, rather than dealing personally with a parish pastor like any other human being. We're human, we make mistakes, and that is increasingly absent in our society, to be available, to be present, outside of the church doors, as Christ was, meeting them in their daily lives, just trying to be reserved to what happens in the walls of the church building.

Marvin Lindsay

First Presbyterian Church, Columbia, MO

Sam Roth: How have you seen clergy represented or portrayed in the media?

Marvin Lindsay: Most recently, the two things that come to mind are the continuing sex abuse crisis and the decision with the United Methodist Convention, prohibition on same-sex marriage, that wasn't directly related to the clergy, that affects everyone in the congregation.

SR: With these negative connotations, what effect do these representations have on relationships with parishioners and congregations?

ML: It hasn't affected relationships here, although I think it's a black eye for Christianity in general, it makes the task of ministry more difficult and erodes credibility in religious institutions across the board. This congregation has a pretty tight and well written policy, sexual misconduct policy, for peoples protection and for maintaining high ethical standard.

SR: That specific instance of the sex abuse story, what's the interplay, conversations between denominations, conversations between leaders in different denominations?

ML: There was a congregation in the area, there was an individual was grooming a congregation and the gentleman disappeared and the pastor emailed us to make us aware of this individual, who is a predator and has a record of praying on congregations
With regard to the Methodist decision, this congregation does not have a policy on same sex marriage. After the decision came out, we were getting a lot of questions, and the denominational policy is that it's up to congregations on whether they will perform

same-sex marriages. I've been here since July 2016, but it's silent on same-sex marriage, and that's an interesting pastoral conversation to have with people. The congregation is politically and theologically divided.

SR: Is that common for congregations to be divided politically and theologically?

ML: Yes, and there can be different reasons. Strategic leadership is one approach, meaning we'll cross that bridge when we get to it. Then you have the discussion. Or it could be conflict avoidance. That it's the preferred strategy to not to talk about things.

SR: Would that stifle political participation in a larger way?

ML: That could certainly stifle political engagement, at least collective political engagement. This congregation is pretty involved, they're in communication with their leaders, but as individuals, not as collective, but yeah conflict avoidance is your style, and you're not even purple, red and blue, the church is not going to take a partisan political role.

SR: Are those conversations happening in the church?

ML: People talk to me a lot about politics. There's a guy whose politics are the polar opposite of mine. We agree on theology but not politics, and he'll ask me to lunch. He talks, I do a lot of listening, and we'll talk about religion and politics.

Those are individual conversations, but as far as were going through a discernment process and we had an event we tried to identify the congregation and we learned that politics and social issues are kind of taboo in this congregation. We look at the

information that comes out of those events and set goals out of it. We talked about the need for some forum opportunity, not like talking heads on cable news, not like crossfire where people try to change minds, but more a forum, where we just talk and if someone mind is changed, well that's interesting, and we learn about why we hold the convictions we do, and if there are convictions that transcend partisan and political difference, so we hope to bring something like that back.

SR: In those conversations, does it seem like people surprise you with opinions they bring, do people make assumptions about what you'll think vs what they think pastors will think?

ML: If I follow them on FB or Twitter I know where they are. A lot of people I wouldn't know what to say. My pulpit voice is different than my predecessor. Some perceive my sermons as too political. I got feedback from the event Sunday that someone contrasted it between a comforting or comfortable message that my predecessor would deliver as opposed to a challenging message that I deliver, and people hear a challenge and contrast with what they are used to hearing. So part of it is the strange what I say and what people hear are sometimes different things. I've been praised for things I've never said in a sermon and I've been condemned for things I've never said in a sermon, so it's, but someone told they usually hear the sermon they want to hear, for good or for ill.

SR: So it's whether or not people expect comfort or disruption. Are there takeaways in people thinking things are partisan?

ML: If I preach on feeding the 5000 and preaching about hungry people. And Jesus says you give them something to eat. So a sermon payoff would be that you give something to eat. So is that a political message? I could just be talking about contributing in private acts of charity, and that could be a conservative republican stance, is that it could be taken care by individuals rather than the government. Or if something is misinterpreted, then you could be telling people to enable bad behavior in some way.

SR: Looking at the usefulness of media, what are some ways in which ministry has evolved to the media landscape? Could be a conversation about traditionalism vs. progressivism, or tools of media incorporated into ministry.

ML: Well our website sucks. We need to fix that. That's the electronic face of the congregation. But our FB, I hate FB, I think they are not a good corporate actor, but everybody is there. The staff tries to post to FB, whatever we are working on , use that as an information tool, begin livestreaming their services, mainly the attempt is to help homebound members of the congregation but could be an evangelism tool as well. We have a Youtube channel, we livestreamed when weather was bad. I was on Youtube live and several reached out to me expressing their appreciation, so yeah, we are one of those in between congregation, so we don't have dedicated staff for social media outreach, just what we know how to do and what we can do on a day to day basis.

Related to politics, again after the Charlottesville incident, there was the first community policing forum that the NAACP hosted at first Baptist, I encouraged people to attend that because I said you read and see reports about underpaid and overworked discouraged police officers, you get complaints from people of color of racial profiling,

let's join together with our fellow citizens to improve relationships between police and members of all communities, and 20 in the congregation turned out for that, and that was just good old fashioned preaching.

SR: Overall, what kind of opportunities do you have going outside of the church, still in the clerical capacity, but with folks with secular viewpoints and broad understandings of religion?

ML: Right now I'm serving on the city spirit house and task force and I volunteered for that because the governing board of the church, the members of the session have a focus conversation, housing is one of the most pressing issues, and I can be a liaison. So on that board, I try to present a moral viewpoint, a non-sectarian, so I don't talk about Christ, but what do we owe people, our fellow human beings, I talk about justice, so that's one opportunity, but yeah, in my role, I get sucked into a lot of administrative details, so that's the constant push pull in ministry is attending to your own flock, but have interactions with those outside of the church. The pull in is strong.

SR: Balancing administrative duties with pastoral duties, balancing spiritual life outside the church. Do you get to focus on spiritual health of the congregation as a priority?

ML: So administration can be a form of spiritual development, which has to do with things breaking down, people being upset by it. It can be processes, it can be infrastructure. Modeling good behavior, staying connected to the most curmudgeonly people in the congregation, and then supporting and enabling the talented and healthy members of the congregation, so administration can be a form of spiritual counsel.

SR: Your approach to admin and health of congregation, with the identities of the congregation, is it received in the expected way, the fringe is fringe, and some people will take it as is, or apply their own meaning?

ML: Sometimes it's misunderstood, sometimes its unwelcome. So I've been reading this book on family systems theory called Generations and Generations. The concepts in the book are kind of diffuse through ministerial community, but what he talks about, you have people who say we need to run the congregation like a business, and others like a spiritual community, but its like an emotional system, like a family, and then its composed of families. And then you have the leader and his or her family, so whatever happens in the congregation is an interplay between how it affects the families and the leader and his or her own family, so and the chief emotion is anxiety. People are always worried about things. So he takes family therapy model and applies it to congregation life. The leader is important but not in the ways you think. Sermons are too long or too short or this that, and all of these things are red herrings for the real issue, that the congregation leader is being a leader, and when you lead you are out in front of people, and people try to pull you back in, because emotionally immature can't be in a relationship with you, or write you off, and then there s no relationship. So you have to continue to preach and teach and ignore the noise but continue to relate to the people you're impacting without caving or writing them off.

SR: It could be then case by case, with these conversations, of political issues or representation in the media.

ML: The political payoff is we are increasingly partisan, and increasingly emotionally reactive society, so we don't think, we react, and react with fear and anger and horror in what's different from us, our lower brains functioning, our lower brains are designed to seek out threats, and our immune system seeks out pathogens, you're different, seek out and destroy, but in politics it would be anarchy, so we have to use our rational minds to govern the more primitive parts of our brain, but as a society were not using our thinking brains, we're reacting to things that are different than us. So maybe the political task of a congregation are people learning to live with each other and not to be threatened by their differences.

SR: Do you see that becoming a reality?

ML: I think it's going the other way. I think society is corroding the churches, the churches are not acting as a conduit for society.

SR: Is that corrosion profitable for the few who can manipulate the system? That extreme use of media in ministry, televangelists, the extremes of the vocation, there is this tie of manipulative use of media, and how that affects large bases of people.

ML: There's a book that analyzed county by county, granular analysis of Trump's electoral success, and he wasn't just popular with white evangelical protestants, but also church attendance was high, trump was low, these rural counties with this strong church culture were not interested in trump. It was these counties where church attendance was low that Trump was providing a feeling of cohesion and identity beyond what the churches were providing in that particular environment, and also a safety net.

I'm a democrat, but the state social safety net, you need strong families, you need strong neighbors, where those familial links are lacking, social workers can't make up for that, and Trump speaks to those people who are on their own. You're suffering, you've been cast adrift, and I will knock them around for you.

SR: And that demagoguery, the believe in me and I will provide, how prevalent do you see that in the mindset of the profitable televangelist? is that effectively pervasive in the church?

ML: Probably not in mainline congregations and not in this congregation. I think I saw that Trump's approval in mainline is 49 or 48. He does alright. I think that if your cutting taxes, then the policy outcomes appeal to you. My previous congregation, they would watch Joel Osteen, who is appealing to women my mom's age, and pretty appealing to some people in other congregations.

Chris Cordes

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, Columbia, MO

Sam Roth: What characteristics define clergy juxtaposing that with portrayals of religious leaders in the media?

Chris Cordes: That's a broad question, clergy in general, there are just so many churches denominations and religions, clergy covers a wide spectrum.

SR: We can narrow it down to Catholicism.

CC: With media, news media, the reporting thing, in terms of how its portrayed, there are portrayals that are positive and accurate and have constructive things and then there are buffoons and the comical characters, in terms of reporting, the catholic church, sexual abuse crisis in the last ten years. It's important, it needs to be covered and exposed, and I appreciate as a priest when that is done in a way that identifies the problem, I can think sometimes there are situations where things are portrayed that aren't as balanced as they could be in terms of that all or many clergy are this way, and not to minimize that some perpetrate, but that is not the majority, if that makes sense.

SR: When stories like that come out, how does that affect you and your relationships with parishioners.

CC: There's a collective... disappointment's not a big enough word... what is a better word... it definitely affects any Catholic in a significant way, and on one hand in 2002 the big exposure I think there was more shock, and now it just resurfaced again this year, and it's like a oh my gosh, that there's more that we haven't dealt with as a church, and as a priest, I felt supported by those in my congregation because to have on one hand the disgust of the reality of the church, but also being supportive of those who are clergy, and it hits them in a strong way, and in the church at large there's just a collective hurt, and support from those in the church.

SR: And how do events like these affect the relationships with other clergy? Be it other priest or with other denominations?

CC: The second one, haven't had as much interaction with the larger community. In smaller communities, the ministerial alliances are very much a part of that community. Since 2002 and since I've had positive relationships with clergy, I didn't feel any negative regard, part of being a catholic clergy, there's a mutual support and something we're all aware of, when there's another accusation and it becomes credible, there's an anger, if it did happen, there's a loss, someone you liked and obviously there's that reality in their life.

SR: Taking relationships one step further, relationship of those outside the church. Stories of sex abuse, if that is the only thing someone, interactions are limited.

CC: I've been pleasantly surprised that when I'm out in public as a priest, I haven't had people give dirty looks or anything and I have heard of other priests getting that but it hasn't been a part of my experience.

SR: What are those conversations like? And this may apply to internal conversations among priests, but are there conversations that attempt to be proactive about negative PR, or does it tend to be reactive, like the sadness you describe?

CC: It's a combo of disappointment and sadness, and the need for mutual support, keeping the morale up, it's probably more a recognition of needing to be aware of boundaries and realizing that the perception can be there, and what people see and assume, there are things that we have to be more aware of.

SR: Clearing away specific cases or instance from media, what are ways in which ministry has evolved or could evolve to the growing media landscape, religious leaders being able to use media?

CC: In the catholic church, Bishop Robert Barron, he does podcasts and YouTube videos, video series, travels around the world and portray the catholic faith. He's the best example. He's on an intellectual level with specific outreach to atheists, agnostics, the unchurched, and engages in an intellectual way, but also interfacing with people all over the place, so he's the best example of utilizing the media in an effective, positive way, to portray the catholic faith and faith in general. Local, working with a local media group to do social media to find ways, the media does great things, can be used in a lot of good, positive ways to get the faith message out.

SR: How do you see that implementation going so far? The church at-large, is there enough media presence?

CC: Ours in particular, or in general.

SR: General.

CC: The reality of it is the finances, finding the producing quality that looks appealing, that makes the church look like something that is viable and is appealing.

SR: Is it possible to have an authentic representation in balance with profit, to have adequate amount of resources? I look at televangelists, with money pouring in, but to what end?

CC: There's got to be a balance, I think there's a legitimate position to spending money on doing that if that is part of getting the message out, you can evaluate if its making a difference, but it's stewardship and fulfilling the mission, maybe the catholic church is a bit different with how we invite people in, but evangelism is what we try to do, in an inviting, not in a coercive way. Is that the question you're asking? Is it legit to use resources in that way?

SR: Yeah, the delicacies of the balance in finding the right approach.

CC: Not like we wouldn't ever advertise a campaign that we're trying to raise money for, but that isn't the main focus, the televangelist who are asking people to support that ministry, the catholic church wouldn't be as focused on that aspect.

SR: And then the public image, the media representation, how closely do you see that tied to political participation with religious leaders.

CC: People are all over the place on issues, candidates, parties, everything, the catholic church, as an organization, will speak to the issues that we see most impacting our beliefs and not in terms of endorsing candidates or parties, we can't do that, but it can vary from parish to parish, which issues people will get involved with.

SR: I used abortion as the example, but that's me saying the first thing I thought of, but what would you see the most pressing issues for the catholic church?

CC: Immigration is a big one, within the catholic church, different opinions, generally we're open to people coming to the country but the church doesn't have an official

stance on correct policy, but officially the catholic church would see an openness to immigrants. There are a variety of opinions on capital punishment, but officially that would be something that the church would need to impact societies vision of.

SR: Anything else you can think of?

CC: In terms of that example of the minister who ran for office, the last catholic clergy was Robert Drinnan, a US representative from Massachusetts, and since then, canon law says that clergy can't hold a public office. The church sees too much conflict, being identified in that way with a particular party. There would be some aspects of the platform that may not reflect catholic teaching. Part of my responsibility is to promote the teaching of the church and that would be in conflict with the church teaching.

SR: What are other ways for Catholic priests to engage actively in political issues?

CC: Being part of a prayer service, it could be a pro-life thing or to be involved in public prayer situations that bring attention to a certain issue, not endorsing a candidate or party, but things focused on the issues themselves.

SR: George said that he felt led to the process through a call process. Say a catholic priest felt a similar call, what would the steps be to deal with that?

CC: If he did do that, it would be automatic suspension of clergy faculties, to celebrate mass, to hear confession, the ecclesiastical consequence, knowing that the church doesn't allow it and I'm choosing to do that, and it's not like I wouldn't know that, when your ordained you just know that's not an option, there would be consequences for that

priests standing and ability to function as a priest. One of our priests in Jefferson City, he's the chaplain for the house of reps, and he's the spiritual guy with a connection to public life.

SR: It would be jarring for a congregation to see a priest switch roles.

CC: If he's removing himself, it would be hard to serve in office and then go back to preaching at the same place.

Tim Miller

Alive in Christ Lutheran Church, Columbia, MO

Sam Roth: What representations of pastors do you see in media?

Tim Miller: Pastors are portrayed as conservative, kind of zealous, just in popular media today, have to dig down in other media to see a variety. You don't see a lot of pastors in any shape featured on NPR but mainly in the conservative realm is where you see them, evangelical, very conservative, one-side, one voice, I don't see anything else. That could be that I'm not paying attention, but I don't see anything else, certainly not something like your pitch, to be able to sit down and have a conversation, be civil and thought-provoking, I don't see that a lot.

SR: Do you think those conversations happen and they just aren't represented well in media?

TM: I don't know, it's kind of interesting, because I'm sure they do, but probably at a bar and not in a feature film, my more liberal pastor friends, we'll go to lunch and talk about

what's going on, and even more conversation, they are happening, but more under the radar and not public forum.

SR: And do those representations that lean conservative in media, do those affect the relationship you have with parishioners?

TM: Yeah, where we are in church as a culture, I see a lot of presumption, we're not thinking deeply on how modern and traditional intersect, the superficial media stuff inflames them, FOX has a tagline: Fair and Balanced, and I don't know about that, but a lot of people stay in one camp, stick to one media outlet, getting one side of the coin. If I'm doing bible study on culture issues, listen to other sources, have to understand why they're saying what they're saying, we may agree on motive on whatever issue, but the means may differ.

SR: On bible study, or structured gatherings, what does that look like when discussing hot political issues or current events?

TM: We're pretty homogeneous; it's assumed that we're on the same page. Part of it has to do with who's leading or how it's presented. I know there are different points of view. People open up about the personal convictions that they don't want to open up about publicly. Like your pastor friend, now everything's out, but can't do that from the pulpit. Now that that's out, that changes how people see and perceive you, how the congregation sees you, the same things happen in that setting, in sharing opinions, you can see that not everybody agrees, there's a difference between unity and uniformity.

SR: Have people accused you of being too political in sermons?

TM: Yeah, they have, and I'm like ok, I go back and read the text and I don't see it, people have perceptions, and you can't control the perception, all you can do is be who you are and be faithful to what you feel like you're called to do and whether or not they receive it is up to them. I don't see myself as a particularly political person, not from the pulpit because that's not my role, now we do need to speak out but different outlets. Not very political.

SR: How do you handle that, being in this role with perceptions of what you preach being all over the place, in terms of the political issues and your role as pastor? Are there ways to use media?

TM: Let's not be deceived, churches use marketing, brand building, a lot of churches market their pastor as a selling point. Certainly you see a subculture of the A list pastors who are at all the conferences with books and videos and large crowds, and they are machines of modern American consumerism. There are churches trying to emulate other successful churches. It drives the church in America just like everything else, you see churches concerned about their brand and their reach, they have staff to make slick videos etc. so that is an emerging thing but also a cultural thing. It seems cultural to North America and European.

SR: That implementation, do you see that as a good amplification, or a departure?

TM: It's a tool, you can be good at it, or not, it can be a distraction or a blessing.

SR: How does the media integration affect the integration of politics in the church?

TM: In the church there's a strange relationship with politics, most people don't like mixing church and politics. They come to church and they don't want politics bc its 24/7 outside of this context. They want a sanctuary from that, they want something transcendent, removed from conflict, we have divided culture, no dialogue, which isn't really helpful.

SR: Is that an indication of a non-confrontational society?

TM: Except there's a lot of conflict because of the rhetoric. Trump and Twitter. He probably owns Twitter. It's changed politics. HW Bush was the last president respected from all sides, but since then it's been scandalous, and unsavory, and divisive, what people don't like about politics.

SR: As we escalate as a society, are we doomed to those who participate in conflict and sensationalize will be the only voices heard?

TM: I think that's where we're headed. I don't see more reasonable voices, or we're not hearing them, they don't dominate headlines, I know there are reasonable people, but we have the extremes dominating the medium. And there's a huge section on each side trying to do something constructive, but nobody is speaking for the middle, it's not sexy, not glamorous, serves the greater good.

SR: An overwhelming sense of dissonance, maybe there's room for something based on relationships? Some sense of communication?

TM: You can certainly be a catalyst for a certain kind of conversation. Asking someone to talk about something. That's not how you do church in America, but asking people to think about, that alone is a catalyst. And what does that do? They talk to people they're comfortable with, but not as a group of people or organization. Churches are very much like the rest of the world, everybody has their own stuff, different sources of news and information, when you come together as a church, there's a whole other world underneath what you see, and when you stir it up, it's an unusual context. Asking questions

SR: Relationships between pastors, are there conversations ecumenically?

TM: Not so much politically here in Columbia, but racially, how can we tackle the race issues in our community, we do our own little thing, sixth year of a community wide event called For Columbia. As many churches as we can, we have 54 churches and 2000 volunteers, a day of service from individuals homes to parks and rec, to other churches. How can we get together and talk about issues that we face? How can we partner on things we do agree on? There are certainly things we disagree on, but we can help each other help the poor. We continue to have those conversations. Non-white churches having additional burdens that white churches may not necessarily face. How do we help where we can, not as charity work, but more ministerial work. There is racism, but you don't overcome it until you come together, you can't beat racism with racism.

Keith Simon

The Crossing, Columbia, MO

Sam Roth: What kind of representations of pastors do you see in the media?

Keith Simon: Most people who are doing media I consume, I don't do a lot of conservative, the media I consume has a bit of distance from religion, the Times had to release a correction because they talked about easter in the wrong way, it's like me talking about nuclear physics, so mostly the media tends to have a negative slant, don't think of evangelical outside of the political context. I see an absence of evangelical Christians outside of a political context, evangelical is almost just a subset of the republican party, there are some evangelicals who are more left of center, but it's rare to see someone in the media that I would say feels like they represent me or have much in common with as a Christian. But I'm sure everybody says that.

SR: The word evangelical is interesting, so if I'm making assumptions about the word evangelical vs other evangelical denominations, with Trump having 81% of the evangelical vote, you feel like evangelical Christianity is indistinguishable from the Republican party or conservative politics.

KS: It's treated in the media as if it's a political group, and I don't think evangelicalism is based in politics, but that's the media interpretation, because oftentimes what I'm reading is an article about politics and it makes sense with doing it through the lens of the magazine, but evangelical becomes a term that I'm not comfortable with, that I don't want to identify as or be associated with, I don't want that baggage that comes with it, I never call myself an evangelical, but I imagine that that's one of the things you're doing in this project is using the term evangelical to refer to a group of people

SR: There is a negative connotation, a separation from what Christianity is. What are ways to combat the negative perception?

KS: Anybody can call themselves an evangelical. It's a self-labeling. Because like let's say I was a Republican or Democrat and did horrible things, it doesn't matter, they want to define one of us, former leader of Greenpeace in Canada writing about the silliness of global warming panic and he was fired but we think he's a crank. But nobody can do that with evangelicals so people get to proclaim that they're with a group and then whatever idiotic thing they say or do gets attributed to the entire group. So the big part of it is that there aren't clear bounds on who and who isn't an evangelical so you get a lot of stuff in the name of evangelicalism that is unproductive and unhelpful, and some of it is done by evangelicals and some of it is done by people we don't claim, does that make sense?

SR: Yeah, anything that is a self-labeling, because not all evangelicals agree on what evangelicalism is. And the portrayal in the media.

KS: If I was the king of evangelicalism today, I would try to find the things we have in common in order to call ourselves this, in a perfect world you could separate from crazy people, and evangelicals should get back to their primary their relationship with god, their obedience to the scripture, their following of Jesus, maybe do some self-examination before they protest what people on the outside of the evangelical circle are going, because right now they are known more for politics and what they're against than being faithful to Jesus and what they're for, which is unfortunate.

SR: And is it a matter of when the loudest voices.

KS: They try to put on the loudest, most provocative voices. Jerry Falwell Jr at liberty, nothing in common, I have more in common with an atheist friend, but he gets a lot of press time, president of school, etc.

SR: The identity that Falwell Jr. brings vs a more liberal identity like yours.

KS: Well he's made compromises with the political realm, when he talks about Trump being a hero of Christian faith, Billy Graham made compromises with politics, putting hope in political kingdom, I don't think Christians should put their hope and faith in politicians. It's naïve. Take For Columbia, CW Dawson who writes for Missourian, Black pastor, friends with, wrote a column on For Columbia, and that's the only time it's been written up, and yet here are thousands of Christians coming together and some of it is that Christians need to do more stuff like that and there needs to be more press. They can write what they want to write about, but it's a bummer when only the bad gets the press. Mike Pence is portrayed in media as homophobic, duplicitous dude, and whatever, and Pence has compromised himself by being in the administration, but his wife working at a school with what all Christians believed for decades, but now it's seen as horrifying, well up until 20 minutes ago on the world clock, all she's doing is going to teach art where she'd worked and what a lot of Christians had believe, but now the school is seen as a horrible place that is marginalizing people.

SR: Were they denying entrance for LGBTQ?

KS: They, something like that, parents had to sign a statement of traditional Orthodox beliefs. A couple days ago , Yale law school students go out and work in community at different projects and Yale gives stipends, and some were working with traditional Christians beliefs, but now Yale won't give the stipend to those with those beliefs about sexual ethics, so now Yale law school with traditional beliefs will be a much harder time.

SR: What are traditional Christian values and how does that intersect with today's political landscape, What accommodations are made for which types of groups. How does interpretation of scripture our understanding of ethics, authority.

KS: I think your question is how does the media portray Christians.

SR: It's wrapped up in the reality vs the portrayal.

KS: You have the bakery supreme court. So how are Christian's portrayed there, bigoted? Was he rude? Did he deny sales? He just , religious liberty, but the portrayal was bigoted hateful Christian rejects person yet again. What's driving this guy, presenting both sides of that story with a little more care, so each can say yeah that's fair. When you critique someone's argument, present it in a way that they agree is their position.

SR: With those different political issues that are politicized, what are those conversations like with pastor portrayals how does that affect relationships with parishioners?

KS: Haven't thought much about it. I'm very aware that people in our culture are suspicious of churches and pastors, and they bring assumptions in any conversation. When I'm out I never introduce myself as a pastor. I don't want the baggage. It kills a conversation if you're not a churchgoer, so I like to break stereotypes in what a pastor is like, so whether that's like a Mark Driscoll or James McDonald, or the catholic clergy or the southern Baptist in San Antonio express, any number, people are aware of that, and I know they bring that, people are careful to watch me, feels like living in a fishbowl, had more than one, they watch what I drive, where I live because they make assessments about integrity based on how we're spending money.

D. Project Proposal

Introduction

If you ask someone how they feel about the intersection of religion and politics, you are most likely going to receive one of two responses. Some say that the two subjects should not be mixed at all, that it is improper to talk of such things in “polite company” (Bivins, 2012), and that the founding fathers constructed the separation of church and state for a reason (though the argument for or against separation of church and state is more relevant to the study of the intersections of religion and the law [Ravitch, 2012]). Others will be more interested in exploring the complex relationship between the two subjects. Religion and politics are both vast topics that deserve libraries of books to research, and the intersection of these two topics is a highly contentious and passionate topic of debate and discussion (Jevtic, 2009; King, 1997). In recognition of the complexity, breadth, and depth of this topic, I’ve chosen to focus on a narrow passage of this enormous expanse: **clerical perception of media influence, and clerical involvement in image shaping through media**. My first objective in this proposal is to lay out who I am conducting research with and why: I seek to interview individuals who have held a clerical leadership role at some time in their life, but who have also shown strong political participation through activities such as running for and/or winning public office, or engaging in civil rights or social justice efforts. These are the strongest candidates to ask questions on the intersections of religion and politics, as they have spent their lives studying and scrutinizing these very subjects. I will seek interviews with leaders of religion and politics who have various backgrounds in political

ideology (i.e. liberal, conservative, etc.) and religious denomination (i.e. Baptist, Methodist, etc.) in order to diversify the research sample.

The first subtopic of interview questions will address how these politically active religious leaders see leaders in ministry and politics portrayed in the media. These questions will allow each interviewee to identify the most prominent examples of clerics and politicians in different kinds of media, from fictionalized representations of religious and political leaders in film and entertainment to ostensibly truthful representations in news media. The respondents will have an opportunity to reflect on these prominent representations and break down their perceptions of how clerical representations manifest, how they are disseminated, and what they perceive to be the intended and actual response to these representations from their congregations and constituents.

I will also ask the respondents how they personally use media to project or amplify their own ideologies and motivations. We live in a world with an ever-changing media, as well as evolving mentalities on what purposes the media serve and how the media depict the world around us. This section of the research will explore how politically active religious leaders embrace or reject personal use of the media, as well as how individual clerics see media used by other religious leaders and organizations.

This written component will influence the work that is conducted through the professional skills component, which is a documentary film (length TBD) about George Scott, a Lutheran pastor who takes a leave of absence from his congregation to run as the Democratic challenger in Pennsylvania's 10th Congressional district in the 2018

midterms. Along the way, Scott experiences personal growth and evolution as he goes through the experience of becoming a political candidate, and the congregation of Trinity Lutheran Church, his parish, goes through change as well with the revolving door of interim pastors sent by the synod to fill the pastoral void left by Scott's absence. Throughout Scott's campaign, the big unanswered question is the obvious one: will he win or lose the congressional race? This question has lasting ramifications: if Scott wins, he begins the process of transitioning to Congressional office, while the church would move on to its third interim pastor before calling a new permanent pastor. If Scott loses, he would go back to Trinity and resume preaching, which would bring a host of other questions to the surface. After filming for months, we watch Scott lose on election night. The big question then changes: will he run again in 2020?

The film, entitled *Holy Fire*, will provide an intimate observational portrait of Scott's transition from minister to political candidate and will analyze the context of those leadership roles, the effect on the people he represents, and the perspectives that were shaped about Scott through the media lens. The film will also include interviews from members of the congregation to provide insight into their perspectives during this unique episode in the life of the church.

This film will expand on the research discussions that are conducted with politically active religious leaders, since Scott addresses multiple layers of media access and utilization in the film. Throughout the film, Scott is working with his communications director to shape an image of a candidate, but during this time, Scott is

also aware of my presence and able to utilize me to construct a more intimate documentary portrait.

Professional Skills Component

In the Spring of 2018, I pitched an idea for a short film about two pastors at similar stages in their career paths, but on opposite ends of the political spectrum. The film would follow both pastors in observational portraits before bringing them together in a stylized, staged dialogue on culture war issues, such as gun safety, abortion rights, race relations, and the LGBTQIA+ community. The intent of this film was to provide a humanistic portrait of two individuals who could have a reasonably civil conversation on points of contention between political viewpoints within the context of religious leadership. This would provide a commentary on the intersection between religion and politics, and how, and to what extent, these two particular religious leaders would approach sensitive topics with their congregations, as well as others who would seek counsel or guidance from them.

There were a host of variables to take into consideration while conducting the casting process for the two clerics. I was receiving help from two familial sources: my father, John Roth, who currently serves as the Bishop of the Central/Southern Illinois Synod in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and my brother-in-law, Drew Snodgrass, who received a degree in religious studies and is Episcopalian. First, we would need to decide from which religion to choose willing participants. We had decided to focus on two Christian pastors, which seemed to be a good fit, as it would

provide for the greatest breadth of options when finding documentary subjects, and it was the sect of religion that we were most familiar with. From there, we had to decide on denominations in which we would begin the casting process; we wanted to choose two pastors from the same denomination, so as to not cast one denomination as representative of a strictly liberal or strictly conservative ideology. We also decided to look for two pastors within relatively close proximity of each other, and preferably in the Midwest Missouri/Illinois region for ease of travel and funding.

On May 16, 2018, Emily Stewart published an article for Vox with the headline, “Gun-burning Army vet George Scott just won his Democratic House primary in Pennsylvania.” I saw this article scrolling through the Google feed on my phone, and was compelled by the headline, since at the time, the gun debate was raging in the wake of a school shooting, and I was looking to shape the project around the national gun dialogue. Upon opening the article, I also learned that Scott was an ELCA Lutheran minister, and I didn’t quite believe the obvious connection: here was a pastor directly taking on political issues in a very pragmatic way, and it just so happened that he belonged to the same branch of Lutheranism in which I was raised and that my family had been instrumental in constructing. Even though Scott didn’t quite fit the concept for the film that I had in mind – I was still thinking of a dialogue-format with two politically-opposed pastors, and it would be awfully hard to find a direct foil to Scott while establishing access – I decided to pursue the long shot of potentially filming George Scott in Pennsylvania.

My father contacted Jim Dunlop, the bishop of the Lower Susquehanna Synod, to chat about the genuineness of Scott's character with respect to interacting with a graduate student, and Bishop Dunlop answered that Scott was a well-rounded pastor with bold but nuanced stances on political issues, as well as someone who may be willing to take on a project of this nature. This was enough information for me to send a proposal to Scott, outlining the type of project that I had in mind and asking if he'd be interested in being the sole main character in the documentary. Scott replied, saying that it sounded like an interesting concept, but he would have to check with his campaign team. After about a week, Scott said he would be happy to help, and offered his schedule for the next week to see when we could meet. The next day, I rented a car and drove out to central PA to meet Scott and his primary campaign manager, Brad Koplinski.

The finished film will be the result of nine trips to central PA over a span of six months, with cumulative time spent in PA totaling about seven weeks. Each trip has been crucial in securing each next step as the project has progressed: June 10-14 introduced me to Scott and the campaign from the primary, August 14-23 brought new challenges with the DCCC and the new campaign manager, September 5-9 gave me a fresh perspective on the struggles of the congregation and the interim pastors, October 4-8 and 12-15 strengthened my relationships with the matured campaign and individuals in the congregation, and November 2-12 took us all the way to election day and beyond. November 23-25 will be the first time Scott talks to the congregation about moving forward post-election, November 30-December 2 will be Scott's first time back

in the pulpit after the election, and December 16-19 will be time set aside for interviews with Scott, the senior campaign staff, and members of the congregation. A more detailed account of these trips will be available in the production journal.

Access has proven to be difficult to acquire in a myriad of ways, but has mostly been attainable through persistence and positive reinforcement. Looking back, access to the campaign in June was extraordinary, especially for how little contact I had at the time. I was allowed to film the campaign staff as it assembled for the first organizational planning meeting after the Democratic primary victory. This initial trust was based on the natural connections between Scott and me: that we had an ELCA background, that I had a generally trustworthy knowledge of documentary, and that Scott seemed to understand the importance of what I was trying to accomplish. My approach also helped me stay in the room once I was there; I chose a corner and did not move for the majority of the meeting, using a long lens to capture reactions and expressions. When I left in June, I planned with Scott to hit the ground running for two weeks in August, bringing in a sound person to capitalize on my travel time.

This plan hit a massive roadblock once the DCCC took over the campaign, which I learned while I was in Pennsylvania for the August shoot. My communications transferred to the responsibility of Jason O'Malley, the new campaign manager (Koplinski had been re-positioned as an advisor), and Stephany Dugan, the new communications director. Dugan's first day in the office included a meeting with me, and O'Malley and Dugan were skeptical of my project from the beginning. They closely monitored my whereabouts throughout the campaign, often restricting access to

private meetings and conversations, which I pushed back on in order to get a more intimate documentation. By November, a number of factors benefitted my relationship with O'Malley and Dugan. First, we had spent a number of months in communication and were used to each other's presence. Second, they were now getting requests from other media for access, having a much more frustrating experience dealing with them than with me; media outlets were now trying to pick up the story using their own limited interpretations of the campaign events, and this was the impersonal media headache Dugan was accustomed to. This is what she had expected from me as well, but as I spent more time with them, it became apparent that I was not there for an angle or a spin, and was more concerned with the personal interactions and relationships within the campaign. Third, it was evident that the campaign was coming to a close and that we would not be in contact for long, resulting in a somewhat sentimental swan song. And lastly, the presence of Olivia Jacobson, my producer, contributed heavily to the general air of professionalism surrounding the project, and I could feel the respect of the campaign instantly elevated when Jacobson arrived in Pennsylvania and began working with them.

Access to the congregation has been equally – if not more – frustrating since there has been a general lack of resulting cooperation. Similar to the campaign, the congregation was skeptical of me from the beginning. In June and August, they knew I was around and was working on some kind of project with a camera and with Scott. Some in the church suspected me of being a videographer for the campaign, arousing suspicion of my interjection of politics in their lives. A number of the congregational

members were still upset by Scott's decision to run for office, and by extension, they were upset with my presence, as they suspected that I wouldn't be there if this wasn't happening to them. In September, I tried to reassure them that my perspective had shifted once I had heard their side of the unfolding events, and I decided that it was just as important to show how Scott's decision to run affected them as it was to show Scott's campaign journey. I explained my ideas to them during a town hall meeting in which they were discussing the final six weeks leading up to the election. After this meeting, the congregational council met and concluded that there would be "no filming of church services or other church-related activities." This was written into their council minutes, and they have refused to alter this stance in the months that we have gotten to know one another, and even after the election has been decided and Scott prepares to come back to Trinity to preach.

This experience of gaining access to Scott will aid my research interviews with politically active religious leaders and will inevitably become part of the story in my final film. Based on this experience, it was more difficult for me to access Scott after he was back in his ministerial position than when he was a congressional candidate. There are many factors for why this is true, with the first and foremost being the influence of authority. Who had authority over each situation I wanted to film ultimately became the difference between approval and denial. With the campaign, Scott maintained authority over all of his personal time, but private meetings with campaign officials were usually off-limits to the filmmaking process. The campaign also controlled activity and foot traffic at campaign headquarters, but they eventually opened up to the idea of us

gathering permission from those inside the headquarters, and they would inform me of public events I could film. The church council has maintained all authority of church activity and does not allow any filming of the congregation as a whole. In the church stage of production, Scott had to balance the sensitivities of his congregation and the desires of the council with his willingness to give me access to film activities. This commentary on authority will be expanded upon when I am able to gain insight from my research respondents.

The project will utilize interviews with participants, archival footage of debates, campaign ads, public relations events, and church events, and 30-35 hours of observational footage gathered between June 14 and December 2. The overall tone of the film is yet to be decided, since there are various ways to work with the observational, interview, and archival material, but I want the film to be an intimately observed character portrait that addresses the effects that the character's decisions have on his power and authority over others. This film will be very similar in content and approach to *The Chinese Mayor* (2015), but will also share some similarities with *The War Room* (1993), *The Final Year* (2017), and *Emmanuel Macron: les coulisses d'une Victoire* (2017).

This intimate approach will be a sharp juxtaposition with the context in which the film exists. At the district level, PA 10 had not seen such a strong Democratic candidate in decades; the last Democratic congressman to serve central Pennsylvania was in 1968. Scott Perry, the three-term Republican incumbent had not seen a competitive challenger since he had taken the office. When George Scott announced his

run for Congress, the district (PA 4th at the time) was an R+20, safely Republican district. In August 2017, the state supreme court ordered the congressional map to be redistricted, and the 10th district was created as a solution to Republican-led gerrymandering. After this redistricting, the district was more competitive, albeit still an R+9 district. The night before the election, national polls had the Scott/Perry race listed as a straight toss-up. There were around 290,000 votes cast in the race, and George Scott lost by about 7,800 votes. On a national level, this hotly contested race was taking place during one of the most energized midterms on record, where many voters decided to go out to the polls for a de-facto referendum on Donald Trump's first two years in office.

This project also holds personal significance for me. Scott's decision to run for office had a ripple effect on many people. The congregation of Trinity Lutheran Church was thrown into a state of uncertainty: not only was the pastor taking a leave-of-absence to potentially not come back at all, but the position that he had taken on required a strong and thorough publication of his political views, which would not have been on such broad display while in ministry. This led to a significant moment of transition for the church. Even if Scott would come back to ministry, the congregation would have a lot to work through. I can connect to this situation on a visceral level because of my father's work in the ELCA. First, our home congregation went through a period of transition when my father was elected bishop. He had been serving as pastor of Faith Lutheran Church in Jacksonville, Illinois for 23 years, so it was a bit of a shock to the congregation when he announced that he would be leaving. Since entering the

bishop's office, my father has been tasked with countless difficult congregational situations; his role includes overseeing about 130 ELCA Lutheran congregations in Illinois, and every congregation has a varying degree of wellbeing.

Literature Review

There is a prevalent history of religion intersecting with politics in the last few centuries (Jevtic, 2009; King, 1997). Political science began as a formal method of study in the late 19th century, and shortly after this time period, religion became a subject of political research (Jevtic, 2009). Jevtic also notes that the United States was not the only place to experience a growth in religiosity in the 20th century: European political scientists note an awakening of the political role of Islam in world politics, as well as Buddhist influences in Tibet, South Vietnam, Japan, and Sri Lanka, and the success of the Hindu party Baratiya Janata in India. At the same time, Roman Catholicism was gaining political significance in eastern Europe (pg. 411). This massive politicization of religion has resulted in a dramatic influence on democratic election; the 1980s saw the rise of the Moral Majority (founded by Jerry Falwell), which designated itself as a purveyor of firm moral standards desired by a majority of Americans and had strong ties to conservative leaders like Ronald Reagan and Pat Robertson, and Revtic provides the example of George W. Bush's re-election in 2004, when evangelical Christian voters came out for a man who sold himself as an evangelical (pg. 410). The prominence of evangelical Christianity in today's political arena was not always the case, however; evangelical Christians largely stayed away from political participation until the 1970s,

when major developments in evangelical Christian movement began to unfold (Diamond, 1989).

Religion, Technology, and Media

Before long, religious organizations started using new forms of technology to spread their messages. In *Spiritual Warfare: The Politics of the Christian Right*, Sara Diamond explains how Christian radio broadcasts began in the 1920s with the first Christian signal being transmitted from Calvary Episcopal Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (pg. 2). Other stations started springing up, including KFUC, a station created by the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, and WMBI from the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. These technological developments coincided with a period of ongoing tension between fundamentalists, or biblical literalists, and more liberal Christian denominations. These tensions resulted in the rise of prominent Christian voices to help guide listeners in what was thought to be a correct course: Father Charles Coughlin, a prominent Catholic priest who founded the National Shrine of the Little Flower, gained significant political influence in the 1930s and 1940s when he began projecting anticommunist radio broadcasts. His messages were sometimes overtly anti-Semitic and pro-Nazi, and he was able to gain millions of listeners (pg. 3).

Missionary radio networks, such as HCJB (“Heralding Christ Jesus’ Blessings”) began setting up long range towers and broadcasting into Latin America and Europe. HCJB was the first radio station to broadcast Russian language gospel programs into the Soviet Union (pg. 5). After World War II, the FEBC (Far East Broadcasting Company)

began broadcasting into countries that were denying access for US missionaries to physically enter the country. The FEBC mainly focused on spreading Gospel messages to communist countries, placing an emphasis on China, the Philippines, territories of Southeast Asia, and the Soviet Union. The FEBC also has two stations in South Korea that broadcast into North Korea (pg. 7). In the 1950s, Paul Freed, through connections in the Youth for Christ organization, set up TWR (Trans World Radio), which was established in order to commit to global missionary work. TWR uses Mount Angel in Monte Carlo, Monaco, the same site for transmitting where Adolf Hitler once constructed a transmitter to spread Nazi propaganda (pg. 9). In 1985, TWR announced a plan to collaborate with HCJB's Ron Cline and FEBC's Bob Bowman to share their resources and increase their Gospel footprint.

Because of the post-World War II "Communist Menace" phenomenon, in conjunction with the rise of the Youth for Christ organization, William Randolph Hearst and Henry Luce, of *Time* magazine, decided to provide a platform for Billy Graham and his conservative Christian message. Graham's message was stark and clear; by the mid-1950s, he was preaching: "Either Communism must die, or Christianity must die" (pg. 10). This simple message, in addition to celebrity guest appearances, brought about a million young people into the evangelical Christian fold by 1946.

This kind of messaging crossed over to the television format with the Christian Broadcasting Network, which Pat Robertson established in the early 1960s (pg. 12). Robertson created a television program called *The 700 Club*, which was based on the idea that if 700 people donated \$10 a month, the network would be able to stay afloat

(pg. 13). The network very quickly gained many more donors than that; *The 700 Club* had a minimum monthly intake of \$1.4 million by 1978. Programming on *The 700 Club* would consist of covering nightly news stories through a biblical lens, often with politically conservative interpretations. Through his TV presence, Pat Robertson became an iconic figure of Christian conservatism, injecting himself (and his money) into political issues, culminating in a run for the presidency in 1988.

Robertson ushered in an era of televangelists, such as Kenneth Copeland, Jimmy Swaggart, and Jim Bakker, who adhere to a charismatic interpretation of Christianity and preach “prosperity Gospel,” promising that donors will “reap the harvest if they sow the seed.” However parasitic and egregious televangelism appears, Quentin Schultze points out in *Televangelism and American Culture* that televangelists use the justification and firmly believe that the more resources they acquire, the more people they are able to reach with the Gospel (pg. 17). Even so, televangelism operates as a business, making sales to the impressionable and impoverished while bolstering its own image. Despite the predatory business practices, the televangelist image can remain generally pristine to the common viewer, unless a clearly defined and credible scandal emerges. Scandal, to the socially prominent, ostensibly holy televangelist, is devastating, but not decapitating. Scandals are not uncommon for televangelists either: Swaggart was exposed for an affair with a prostitute in 1988, in retaliation for Swaggart exposing another minister’s affairs. This led to Swaggart’s loss of ministerial credentials in the Assemblies of God, though Swaggart kept preaching elsewhere. He initially repented for the 1988 immorality, but did not give such repentance for a similar incident in 1991

("Swaggart," 1991). Bakker had a string of shocking crimes in the 1980s, including a payoff for the silence of Jessica Hahn, a woman who Bakker drugged and raped ("Interview," 2005). He resigned from ministry as a result, but he also was found guilty of 23 counts of fraud. After serving some jail time, Bakker now hosts a TV show in which he sells survival packs for the end-times (Mohr, 2015).

In addition to the business side of Christian media, evangelical Christianity has established itself as a brand of fearing God. In *Religion of Fear*, Jason Bivins analyzes the role that the politics of the *Left Behind* book series has in conservative Christianity. *Left Behind* is a series where the Rapture takes place, causing a mass disappearance of most humans and leaving some behind to deal with the apocalypse. This series of books, which has since taken off as a film series and multi-media phenomenon, reinforces more literal interpretations of the Rapture portion of the bible, and urges its readers and viewers to shape up so that they wouldn't be "left behind" if we arrive at the end-times.

Group Identity

Religion itself is considered a cultural basis for organization (Ross, 1997) that holds tremendous political significance in today's world (Olson, 2011). Religious organizations, like any secular organization, bring together likeminded individuals that are able to formulate and mobilize a singular message on how biblical texts dictate social constructs. These constructs are most clearly seen in law and can be compartmentalized into two main areas: the law of God, or what is sinful, and the law of man, or what is legal (Clark, 1982). Various interpretations of religious authority lead to

discrepancies in group understanding of what is right or lawful. Religion ties its constituents to each other in various ways that are completely separate from politics, including beliefs like the existence of heaven and hell, and physical proximity and fellowship through church services and activities (Pew); however, the psychological power of group identification is crucial to religion's effect on politics (Olson). In fact, the prominent motivation for religious groups to maintain solid political participation is the prospect of effectively abstaining from all issues, thus giving silent power to other affiliations who would be willing to fill those roles (Menendez, 1977).

Interpretation of authority

A major factor in the differentiation of religious denominations is how each group interprets authority. Considering the Bible and Scripture prominent sources for the written authority of God, the Pew Research Center has conducted thorough surveys of Americans in an effort to determine the religious landscape of the country. The study asked individuals how they interpret Scripture. Out of 35,071 respondents, 31% said that the Scripture is the word of God and that it should be taken literally, 27% said that the Scripture is the word of God, but not everything should be taken literally, 3% said that the Scripture is the word of God, but they don't know how to interpret it, 33% said that the Scripture is not the word of God, and 7% said other/did not know. This shows a relatively even split between three main groups: those that take Scripture literally, those that allow figurative interpretations of Scripture, and those that disregard Scripture as the word of God.

The breakdown by denomination provides a view of wide disparities in the interpretation of Scripture among American churches (Figure 1). The majority of Catholics don't interpret everything in Scripture literally (36% figurative, 26% literal, 28% not word of God), while evangelical Protestants are much more likely to interpret Scripture literally and reject the notion that Scripture is not the word of God (55% literal, 29% figurative, 8% not word of God). Historically black protestant churches showed similar numbers to evangelical Protestants (59% literal, 23% figurative, 9% not word of God), and they both differ greatly from mainline Protestants (24% literal, 35% figurative, 28% not word of God).

Religious leader role conceptions

Like many vocations, religious leaders take part in professional socialization. Professional socialization is the process by which a vocation produces change in a person through work requirements (Frese, 1982). The pastoral role would first be defined and established in the seminary, and once a clergy was brought into their first parish, they would bring with them casual observation of their older colleagues or a disciplined study of pastoral theology (Sernett, 1973).

Theological textbooks generally provided the image of a minister in three capacities: his "closet," his study, and his parish. The "closet" refers to the pastor in his private life, that he should be deeply impressed by the magnitude of the office to which he has been called. The pastor must demonstrate eminent piety, or the necessity of

more than a general sense of piety, which would come as a result of working in the field in addition to having an inner calling into ministry (pg. 5).

The pastor operating within the study conveys the need for clergy to continue studies of Scripture, the Bible, and other religious texts to not become complacent or out of touch with their calling (pg. 7). This call to always maintain the identity of a student was an attempt to counteract the gap between the pulpit and the pew; pastors need sound theology to be able to convey Scripture accurately and in an understandable fashion for their congregation. Otherwise, a complacent cleric could potentially draw the ire of the community, becoming “a mere desultory man, a gossip from house to house, skimming the surface of popular thinking,” and in turn, rejecting the virtue of self-regimentation (pg. 9). Pastors who procrastinated on their sermons until Saturday night, or those who would trust that they could deliver in the moment, would draw lasting criticism. Much of the pastor’s time was undefined, but productivity was still critical for credibility among a community.

The pastor among his people is the culmination of time within the closet and the study. All three components work in conjunction, with the private time proving the validity of the public presentation. Pastors have a great deal of control of their own conduct, which can affect their image, but they have very little control over their ultimate reception. Sernett notes that in post-Appomattox America, some critics wrote ministerial profession off as a life of ease unequal to the demands of an age of active energy (pg. 11). Others stress the dispersion of power within a congregation; while a pastor can maintain a strong appearance of authority, the ultimate decisions for a

church body will be written and voted upon by a congregation and its council (Ingram, 1980). It should be considered that in certain circumstances, in which all or most relationships within a congregation are positive, the pastor can end up being the most powerful member of the congregation.

Research Questions

RQ1: How do religious leaders who choose to be politically active see the religious leader role depicted in media?

RQ2: How do religious leaders who choose to be politically active use the media to share their own political beliefs and stances with their constituents?

Methodology

To complete the written component of the project, I will first conduct an interview with Scott, as he will be able to provide a politically active, clerical perspective, and the access is already granted. The second stage of the written component will be an attempt to conduct semi-structured interviews with as many of the seven members of the incoming 115th Congress who have served in some sort of clergy capacity as are willing to participate; I will try to contact all of them, but any number of the seven would be a success for the study. In contrast with the film, I would like to talk with religious leaders who have already established political participation by actively pursuing and successfully attaining office; this will provide a range of perspectives from those who have seen the capabilities of governmental leadership firsthand, but can also provide a comprehensive collection of perspectives on clerical

engagement with societal issues. Due to the scattered nature of these representatives' jurisdictions and my limited resources to travel and visit them personally, these interviews will be conducted over the phone.

Recognizing that the prospect of interviewing sitting members of Congress is ambitious, my additional plan is to interview current pastors who have shown political participation in some form. Political participation of a religious leader could mean direct involvement with public office, including previously held public office, attempts at running for office, appointment to advisor of public office, or direct involvement with the public, including leaders who have spoken at events with political topics or marched with demonstrators/advocated for a specific political stance. This will be considered an additional phase, as opposed to an alternate or a back-up. The inclusion of clerics who operate outside of government will provide a perspective that is more indicative of voluntary activism; these respondents will be participating politically out of will, rather than necessity. These respondents will be sought in Columbia, Missouri and the surrounding area, stretching to surrounding states within driving distance, depending on the strength in candidacy of potential respondents, and these interviews will be conducted in person, preferably on camera. This phase of research will also utilize multi-criteria snowball sampling, in which local respondents will have the opportunity to identify potential respondents who share their hierarchical social roles that are required for this study (TenHouten, 1992).

The semi-structured, qualitative interview approach will allow for a natural dialogue to occur, rather than an interviewer having to work from a set of established

questions, even if the conversation goes in a different direction. The interviews will begin with relatively simple questions that allow for a wide range of interpretation, before narrowing in on specific questions about intersections of religion and politics, public perception of clergy, and media influence on public perception. This qualitative approach will allow the participants to provide the most comprehensive version of their perspective (Leech, 1992). With each of these interviews, each participant will be able to provide at least two perspectives: a personal perspective, as well as the general sentiment from the denomination or affiliation that they belong to. This will allow them to speak both as an individual and a representative.

Access to current US congressmen

Don Manzullo is a former US congressmen from Rockford, Illinois, who has attended services at Trinity Lutheran Church in East Berlin, Pennsylvania for the last few months. He served in the US House of Representatives from 1993-2013. With help from Don, I have begun to identify current representatives in the House who have previously held positions in ministry, and Don has agreed to help me get in touch with these representatives for potential interviews.

Current US congressmen

In this section, I will provide brief descriptions of the seven current US congressmen who have also served in clerical roles or are ordained ministers. If applicable, I will identify where they served a church congregation and for how long, in order to consider how far removed temporally they are from their clerical life. I will also

identify the competitiveness of their representative district in order to analyze their preoccupation with being re-elected and/or their volume of communication with constituents.

Doug Collins (GA 9), Jody Hice (GA 10), and Mark Walker (NC 6) identify as Republican representatives and Baptist ministers. Emanuel Cleaver (MO 5) is a Democratic representative and a Methodist pastor. Tim Walberg (MI 7) is a Republican representative and a non-denominational Protestant minister. Bobby L. Rush (IL 1) and John Lewis (GA 5) are Democratic representatives who have been ordained (Pentecostal and Baptist, respectively), but have not served a congregation as their pastor. These representatives show a wide range in congressional experience: Hice and Walker have served in the House since 2015, while Lewis has been in his position since 1987. All of these representatives serve in relatively safe voting districts; their vote totals in the 2016 election range from 60-80%.

Other politically active religious leaders

This study will include reaching out to potential respondents who are currently in a clerical role and have established some kind of political presence in their community. This phase will start with identified participants from one church, will utilize multi-criteria snowball sampling to expand participant options from this original participant group, and will also maintain an ongoing search for additional respondents.

The sample will begin with reaching out to Dave Cover, Keith Simon, and Shay Roush. These three individuals are co-lead pastors at The Crossing in Columbia, MO.

Under direct supervision by its co-lead pastors, The Crossing has been involved with implementing screenings of films from the True/False Film Fest, an annual documentary film festival in Columbia, MO. These screenings have included films such as *After Tiller*, by Lana Wilson, in which late-term abortion doctors help patients through their difficult situations. Screenings like these encourage discussion of contentious political topics in a religious setting and context. This initial batch of respondents will be able to provide a perspective of voluntary political activity, and with their network, will be able to suggest other pastors who would be interested in participating in this research.

Conclusion

With these plans to interview politically active religious leaders accommodating a documentary film about a Lutheran pastor's decision to run for US Congress, I hope to explore the complex intersections of religion and politics by analyzing the political participation of religious leaders and their perception of public opinion of clergymen in an evolving media landscape. I imagine there will be some obstacles to making this research a reality. One glaring predicament is the possibility of not being able to gain access to members of the House of Representatives. Knowing Don and seeing his willingness to help provide contacts and a shortcut to communication is a step in the right direction, but I will have to clearly articulate my intentions for the research and the importance of their involvement.

Even if all requests for interviews are granted, the diversity in content of the interviews remains to be determined. The sample of interviewees is simply a result of

who fits the religious and political characteristics in the given timeframe, and does not necessarily reflect the exact national makeup of politically involved Christian denominations. Four of the seven identified interview subjects are ordained Baptist ministers, leading me to wonder how similar or different their answers would be. The sample would certainly be limiting if only one or two current US congressmen respond, as their denomination would be given prominence in the research. With that being said, this can be taken into consideration when synthesizing the results of the interviews.

The professional skills component has its fair share of upcoming difficulties as well. Access with the church remains a dilemma, as the church council wants to do its very best to protect the congregation, which to it, means that a camera presence could be seen as potentially inappropriate or even damaging. I will also have interviews with members of the campaign and members of the congregation, and my readiness and preparation will have to aid the comfort level of subjects who feel that they are in a difficult situation.

The next phases of the professional skills component will be heavily weighted towards editing, which brings its own set of issues. I will need to sift through 30-40 hours of footage, compile a general assembly, and then bring in a team of editors to work towards a fine cut. I will also need significant help with color correction and sound mixing, as the footage is in a raw state. Trusting that these factors will come together as planned, I will have an examination of leadership, power, control, and decision-making, both in church leadership, as seen in church councils, pastors, and its members, but also in congressional leadership and its constituents.

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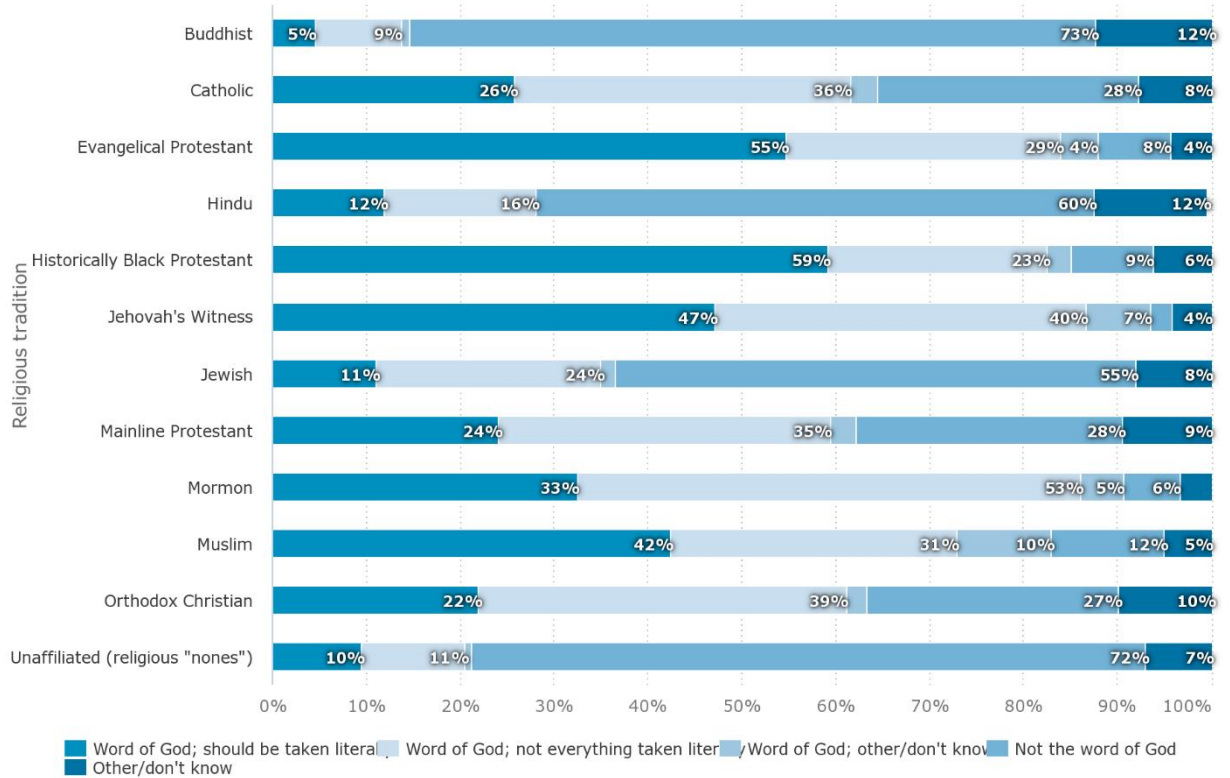
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FIGURE 1

Interpreting scripture by religious group

% of adults who say the holy scripture is...



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