

## **Protestant Evangelicals and Recent American Politics**

( プロテスタント福音派と近年のアメリカ政治 )

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The increasingly complicated matter of defining “evangelicalism” is the place to begin a consideration of evangelicals and recent American politics. Historically, what it meant to be an “evangelical” was relatively clear, although the Anglo-American context has always been different from continental Europe. In Europe to this day, “evangelical” still means “of the Reformation” or more simply just “Lutheran.” Thus, the largest North American Christian denomination that uses the term evangelical for itself is the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (5 million members), and in Germany the Lutherans are the “evangelische,” while the dissenting, free church, or independent Protestants of the sort referred to as “evangelicals” in North America are in German the “evangelikale.”

For the more usual Anglo-American usage it once was fairly easy to distinguish “evangelicals” along two trajectories. From a historical angle, “evangelicals” meant the churches and voluntary organizations descended from the eighteenth-century Protestant renewal movements sparked by John and Charles Wesley, George Whitefield, and Jonathan Edwards. The churches and organizations descended from these revival movements have existed in an incredible diversity of institutional forms, but they have been identifiable by maintaining the quest for “true religion” as defined by these great revivalists of the eighteenth century. Denominations today that are marked by this historical evangelical tradition include the Southern Baptist Convention (about 16 million members); Pentecostal bodies like the Assemblies of God (at about 4 million members a denominational grand-child of the Wesleyan revival); Holiness groups like the Church of the Nazarene (about one million members) or the Salvation Army (several hundred

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thousand members); scores of smaller Baptist, Presbyterian, Church of Christ, Methodist, and Episcopal or Anglican denominations; new organizations like the network of Calvary Chapels and the Vineyard Association; and tens of thousands of independent local churches. Many of the older mainline Protestant denominations with strongly revivalist roots—like the United Methodists (7 million members), the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (2.5 million members), or the Disciples of Christ (about one million members)—were once thoroughly within this evangelical tradition, but have moved to one degree or another away from it. To make things more complicated, quite a few denominations that did not participate in Anglo-American revivals now see themselves as evangelicals, including some Mennonites, some Lutherans, some in the Dutch Reformed denominations, and some Quakers.

The second angle that is important for definition is doctrinal. Evangelicals have consistently been identified by their convictions. David Bebbington of Stirling University in Scotland, and one of the key interpreters of evangelicalism in the United Kingdom, has provided a widely adopted four-fold definition of these convictions. It highlights the Bible (or reliance on Scripture as ultimate religious authority), conversion (or an emphasis on the New Birth), activism (or energetic, individualistic engagement in personal and social duties), and crucicentrism (or focus on Christ's redeeming work as the heart of true religion).<sup>1</sup> In Bebbington's approach, evangelicals are the ones who embrace these four convictions wherever they exist on the map of Christian denominations. For much of the twentieth century in the United States, it was possible to provide a little more specificity. *Fundamentalists* were those who hold these four convictions most literally or most militantly. Generic *evangelicals* held them somewhat less militantly and somewhat less literally. *Pentecostals* or members of *charismatic* movements shared most evangelical or fundamentalist characteristics but also stressed the special gifts of the Holy Spirit, including healing and speaking in tongues.

Simple definitions for "evangelicals" are, however, no longer possible, as illustrated by two questions, one unthinkable until recently, the other perennial. First the previously unthinkable: can Roman Catholics be evangelicals? Second, the perennial: are African American Protestants evangelicals?

In 1996 an extensive cross-boarder survey put Bebbington's four convictions to use in asking numerous questions of a large number of Canadians and Americans.<sup>2</sup> Almost one-third of all Americans affirmed all four of Bebbington's characteristics, and about one-eighth of all Canadians. Yet among the Americans

whom the survey could identify as evangelicals on the basis of the four Bebbington traits, almost one-fifth were Roman Catholics; in Canada, it was one-third. From this survey, and other proliferating evidence, it is important to realize that the gulf that once divided evangelical Protestants and Roman Catholics into two completely different camps is shrinking and at least for some Catholics has become very narrow indeed.

With respect to African Americans, this same 1996 survey found that more than one-eighth of all Americans who could be identified as evangelicals by the Bebbington characteristics were African Americans. In the United States, white evangelical church-goers and black Protestant church-goers affirm just about the same basic convictions concerning religious doctrines and moral practices. But for well-established historical reasons concerning the discriminatory treatment of African Americans, black Protestant political behavior and social attitudes are very different from those of white evangelicals. If in terms of both historical descent and religious convictions, most black Protestants could also be considered evangelicals, the history of racial attitudes has driven a sharp social wedge between them and white evangelicals.

Two final preliminary questions are important: How many evangelicals are there, and where do they live? The 1996 survey showed that evangelicals, as identified by their agreement with the four Bebbington characteristics, were strongly over-represented in the South, somewhat over-represented in the Midwest, and under-represented in the Northeast and West.

**Regional Division of Those Affirming the Four Evangelical Convictions (1996)**

	Northeast	South	Midwest	West
Total U.S. Population	20	35	23	22 (=100%)
% of All Evangelicals	14	44	25	17 (=100%)

As for the evangelical proportion of the voting-age population, the sophisticated surveys of John Green, James Guth, Lyman Kellstedt, and Corwin Smidt have provided a clear accounting.<sup>3</sup> Their research divides the citizenry by denominational classifications and also by religious activity, because both of these divisions are better predictors of political behavior than divisions based only on doctrinal and moral convictions keyed to Bebbington’s characteristics (though, of course, the well-recognized evangelical denominations are where the largest number of evangelicals can be found as defined by doctrinal and moral convictions).

The four political scientists' analyses also incorporate two other important clarifications. Their categories of denominational adherence are based on a sophisticated assessment of both history and convictions, especially to distinguish "evangelical" from "mainline" denominations. They also expand the "secular" or "no religion" category; if respondents identify themselves as Catholics, Baptists, or whatever, and yet rarely or never attend church, say that religion is unimportant in their lives, and rarely engage in religious practices, such nominal adherents are classed with the seculars.

From surveys these scholars have carried out with Pew funding at four year intervals since 1988, they estimate the religious breakdown of the American electorate as follows (Total 100.1%):

White Evangelicals: 24.7%	Catholics: 19.0	Jews: 2.1
Black Protestants: 9.0	Latino Catholics: 4.2	Other faiths: 2.8
Latino Protestants: 2.7	Other Christians: 2.5	Seculars: 9.0
Mainline Protestants: 17.1	Unaffiliated believers: 4.2	Athsts/Agnostics: 2.8

There is no need to apologize for taking so much time on matters of definition. Slippery usage of terms like "evangelical" is a plague among pundits. Granted, the word is flexible and may legitimately mean different things. But to deserve a hearing, commentators must first indicate how they are using the word before what they say about "evangelicals and politics" is worth anything at all. With these preliminaries in place, four points can be made about evangelicals in recent American politics, two at some length and two much more briefly.

**1) The United States' white denominationally evangelical population has become the leading element in the national Republican coalition, but this is a fairly recent development.**

Again with analysis provided by Lyman Kellstedt, the following chart on the white evangelical vote as a percentage of national Republican vote reveals several interesting things, especially when compared to similar charts for mainline Protestants and Catholics. (These charts rely on surveys by the Gallup Poll and the National Election Service and are keyed to denominational affiliation; thus "evangelical" equals those in evangelical denominations.)

**Voting Percentage by Religious Subgroup  
Compared to National Percentage**

<b>Year</b>	<b>White Evangelical Vote as a Percentage of National Republican Vote</b>	<b>For comparison: Mainline Protestants</b>	<b>For comparison: Roman Catholics</b>
1936	0	+33	-50
1940	+2	+29	-38
1944	0	+25	-31
1948	-7	+34	-39
1952	+9	+24	-16
1956	0	+18	-8
1960	+18	+37	-67
1964	+15	+39	-33
1968	+28	+33	-26
1972	+31	+17	0
1976	+4	+31	-10
1980	+16	+25	+4
1984	+28	+24	-5
1988	+34	+21	0
1992	+55	+31	+7
1996	+45	+29	+12
2000	+45	+9	+13
2004	+55	+20	+2

It is significant that, compared to mainline Protestants who have always voted Republican, evangelicals only moved decisively into the Republican camp with the elections of the 1960s and early 1970s: Kennedy-Nixon (1960), Johnson-Goldwater (1964), Nixon-Humphrey (1968), and Nixon-McGovern (1972). The solid showing among white evangelicals of Democrat Jimmy Carter in 1976 demonstrates how relatively bi-partisan the evangelical constituency was at that late date, although it is noteworthy that Bill Clinton, like Carter a Southern Baptist Democrat from a Southern state, did much worse in 1992 and 1996 among evangelicals than had Carter.

It is also noteworthy that the decisive swing of evangelicals to the presidential candidates of the Republican Party since the second Reagan election of 1984 has

been matched by a strong swing of Catholic voters in the same direction. (The relatively small Catholic margin for George W. Bush in 2004 is accounted for by a significant division among Catholics. Those who can be identified as traditional Catholics were 20% more likely than the general population to vote for Bush, while modernist and Latino Catholics were about 35% less likely.)

As a last datum about these voting numbers, the growing evangelical pluralities for Republican presidential candidates are especially important since, while the proportion of mainline Protestants in the total population has been shrinking quite rapidly and the number of Catholics has remained roughly constant, the proportion of citizens associated with evangelical churches and denominations has been growing steadily since at least the 1960s. This means that, in 2004, white evangelicals made up nearly 40% of George Bush's vote.

Accounting for this massive evangelical shift to Republican presidential candidates naturally involves many factors. The simplest explanation for this major political development is the move of the once Confederate South from a one-party Democratic region to a region where Republicans dominate national elections. The South, with its preponderance of evangelicals, had been a one-party Democratic stronghold since the end of Reconstruction in the 1870s into the 1950s. The source of this Democratic dominance was race. Blacks were excluded from the white-only Democratic primaries and largely excluded from general elections, and the Democratic Party rode this racial exclusion to political dominance in the region.

Race is, therefore, important to the shift of the South to the Republican Party, but in a complicated scenario. Southern white evangelicals did not approve of Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954 (which desegregated public schooling) nor of the Civil Rights and Voting Acts of the 1960s (which forced states to register African Americans), but they did accept them. A century earlier, Southern evangelicals had led the defense of slavery by a determined appeal to the Bible. In the 1950s and 1960s, by contrast, the strongest supporters of a segregated, dominant white society were non-evangelical Democrats or former Democrats like Governor George Wallace of Alabama and Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina. Moreover, if white evangelicals (North as well as South) did not embrace school integration and voting rights for blacks enthusiastically, they nonetheless did not mount the kind of determined biblical resistance that their ancestors in the Civil War era had done. The result was grudging evangelical acceptance of black civil rights, and even in a few cases, like

Billy Graham, a measure of evangelical leadership in promoting integration, at least for strictly religious purposes.

The most important factor in realigning evangelical political allegiance was not race directly, but rather the expansion of central governmental power, felt first in the enforcement of desegregation but then in other federal mandates for rights-based change. As sociologists, especially Robert Wuthnow and Steve Bruce, have shown, the great political complaint of modern evangelicals has been directed against what is perceived as a federally sponsored intrusion of alien moral norms into local situations where local mores and local leaders had once dominated.<sup>4</sup> This resentment began in the 1930s, with the New Deal. It was strengthened by the expanded federal power exerted on behalf of civil rights in the 1950s and 1960s. But it did not explode as a realigning political force until the 1970s and 1980s. Since then, evangelicals throughout the nation, but especially in the South, have reacted to intrusions of the federal government by swinging to the Republicans as the party that promised to remove or reduce the intrusions.

So the first explanation for the shift of evangelical voting support to the Republican Party is offense taken at the expansion of central power over local self-determination. In this process, race was a major factor, but race was not the root cause. (It is very important to note, as David Chappell, Charles Marsh, and other historians have documented, that African American varieties of an essentially evangelical religion provided a critical stimulus for the civil rights movement that led to the expansion of federal authority that eventually led many white evangelicals to support the political party that seemed to oppose the expansion of federal authority.)<sup>5</sup>

The second large cause for the shift of evangelicals to the Republican Party was evangelical opposition to the *kind* of national mandates imposed by the federal government on the localities. Here it is only a slight exaggeration to say that all of the offensive intrusions concerned the family, gender, and sex.

These intrusions are well known, but they are often not recognized for how they were perceived by evangelicals. First in time was federal sponsorship in the 1950s of new science curricula as part of the effort to catch up with the Soviet Union after Sputnik. The unintended spin-off of these curricular intrusions was evangelical offense at the national promotion of evolution. As several historians of science have shown, creation science was languishing in backwaters until the 1950s when the federal sponsorship of the new curricula for primary and secondary schools that stressed evolution brought it back to life as a reaction to that

federal move. The evangelical offence against evolution has never been precisely science; rather, it has always been more political resentment that tax dollars for public education were being used to inculcate teachings that seemed to overthrow what parents wanted young people to learn about God's presence in and behind the world. The result of government bureaucrats rushing to catch the Soviets and worried parents rushing to protect their children resulted in a situation where, to paraphrase G. K. Chesterton, "the clumsy collision of two very impatient forms of ignorance became known as the quarrel between Evolution and Creation."

Then came the *Roe v. Wade* decision of the Supreme Court that legalized abortion on demand. Ironically, major evangelical institutions like the Southern Baptist Convention and *Christianity Today* magazine were not particularly offended when the decision was announced in 1973. To them, abortion was still a mostly Catholic issue. As such, whatever nervousness evangelicals might have harbored about abortion-on-demand was for a year or two dampened by the instincts of historical Catholic-Protestant antagonism. (Evangelicals reasoned that if the Catholic bishops were opposed, they should be in favor.) This situation did not last long. Rapidly healing relations between Catholic pro-life advocates and some evangelicals, as well as effective pro-life publicity from key evangelical leaders, especially the populist theologian Francis Schaeffer, soon made anti-abortion into a foundation of evangelical political mobilization. In the 1950s and 1960s, most evangelicals did not approve when a few states began to loosen abortion restrictions. But they were not galvanized into political action until the late 1970s when they followed their leaders in concluding that the Supreme Court's mandate overturning the entire nation's legal restrictions on abortion was a dangerous error.

A third issue was the Equal Rights Amendment, a proposed revision to the Constitution with a formal statement of legal equality between men and women. Evangelicals again resisted this proposal as a disruptive federal meddling with firmly settled gender traditions. It was rejected even by evangelicals and Pentecostals whose denominations had pioneered in supporting the public ministry of women.

A fourth issue, which factored large in 2004, was homosexual rights. Enough evangelical families have personal experience with lesbians and homosexuals, and enough evangelicals really do believe what they say about separating condemnation of behavior from acceptance of the person, that gay issues would have remained only a mid-level concern, were it not again for the perception that

central authority was imposing alien legal standards. The imposition of these standards on matters concerning personal sexuality, marriage, and family-formation has been felt as particularly offensive in light of the deeply engrained evangelical conviction, which is shared by other Christian traditions, that issues of personal sexuality, marriage, and family-formation are at the heart of faithful living before God.

So why did white evangelicals become Republicans? Because the South became Republican, and because evangelicals resented the federal enforcement of alien moral norms.

## **2) White denominationally evangelical political behavior is relatively unpredictable because of the absence of strong political ideology.**

Evangelical politics are fluid because evangelical political principles are fluid, and evangelical political principles are fluid because evangelical religion is fluid. As I have tried to spell out in a number of publications, evangelical Protestantism in the Anglo-American world arose during the eighteenth-century as a Christian reaction to, but also a Christian embrace of, the Enlightenment.<sup>6</sup> In sharp contrast with Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and older forms of Protestantism, the new evangelical movements stressed personal choice, they put a high premium on individual experience, they distrusted tradition, they wanted to create their own institutions rather than inherit them, they adapted themselves readily to the marketplace, they displayed a great trust in ordinary people (especially of the middle classes), they were active in missions and evangelism, they did not recognize culture as a distinct level of human creation or divine superintendence, and they easily accommodated themselves to the principles of democratic liberalism.

This was a religion, in other words, made for the new United States of America. To be sure, the Founders of the new country in the 1770s and 1780s employed somewhat more secular principles in creating the American republic, but even if they did not intend to do so, the Founders created a polity in which evangelical Protestantism could flourish. Especially when that polity reluctantly accepted the separation of church and state, which at the end of the eighteenth century almost all of Christian Europe considered an unimaginable mistake, the scene was set for the dramatic expansion of evangelical religion. Evangelicals, in fact, became the driving force that shaped—indeed, that created—American national civilization. From the mid-1790s evangelicals led the way in organizing education. They

developed through voluntary societies a wide range of philanthropic as well as more specific religious activities at a time when the federal and state governments did almost nothing to provide social services. Evangelicals authorized lay people, women as well as men, to read the Bible for themselves, encouraged them to take leadership in all manner of local organizations, and empowered them to create a vibrant civil society. So powerfully did such mobilization work in the half-century between 1800 and 1850 that evangelicals succeeded in creating the most Christian nation on the face of the earth.

The extent of evangelical dominance is suggested by a few factual matters: in 1850, there were as many Methodist ministers as members of the armed forces; as a national average individuals heard two or three times as many sermons each year as they received pieces of mail; despite rising Catholic immigration more than 90% of the organized places of worship were Protestant (and almost all of those were evangelical to one degree or another); and the combined income of the churches and religious voluntary societies came very close to the income of the federal government.

Evangelicals in this period were ceaseless in their political activity. In partisan terms, by the 1830s the more activist evangelicals backed the Whigs and supported the vision of Whig stalwarts like young Abraham Lincoln of Illinois for enabling personal and communal self-improvement. The more sectarian evangelicals like the Baptists backed the Democrats, not because they rejected service in the public sphere, but because they resented the efforts by officious Whig evangelicals in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia to tell them what to do.

Both the more churchly and the more sectarian evangelicals were constantly active in public political life. Yet—and this is the key theoretical point—their politics were characterized not by the outworking of self-conscious theological principles, but by the same traits that marked their religion. These traits were *moral activism*, *populism*, *intuition*, and *biblicism*. How these traits developed and what they led to I have tried to describe in *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*. What I would add now is a fifth trait, taken from my understanding of David Tracy's analysis of theological patterns of thought.<sup>7</sup> Nineteenth-century evangelicals were, in his terms, *dialectical* instead of analogical. They reasoned in terms of dissimilarities and opposition rather than similarities and consensus—which is only what we should expect from a religion whose leading figures (with phrases from the Bible) insisted that auditors “choose ye this day whom ye will serve,” always warned them to “flee from the wrath to come,” constantly urged

them to turn “from darkness to light,” repeatedly insisted that “now is the accepted time, today is the day of salvation,” and compassionately held out “the New Birth” as the one essential matter for all of time and eternity.

An evangelical politics of moral activism, populism, intuition, biblicism, and dialectical thinking has been capable of luminous results. The three-time Democratic presidential candidate (1896, 1900, 1908), William Jennings Bryan, provided a disproportionate share of such moments—whether in speaking out for debtors crucified upon a cross of gold, in resigning as Secretary of State when he concluded that President Wilson was pushing the nation needlessly to war, or in opposing Social Darwinism, which was his real concern at the Scopes Trial in Dayton, Tennessee, in 1925, because of what the doctrine of the survival of the fittest entailed for little people.

Yet evangelical politics marked by these traits has not been stable. In particular, it imploded in the 1850s when populist biblical opponents of slavery squared off against populist biblical defenders of slavery in a death struggle that could not be resolved by either shared evangelical convictions or shared evangelical political practices. More generally, an intuitional evangelical theology has never fully grasped the depth and prevalence of racism in America, nor understood the extent of social transformation required to root it out. (Of course no other American ideology has done very well at overcoming American racism either.)

When thinking about the intuitive character of evangelical politics, a sharp contrast is manifest. If in the nineteenth century, evangelical intuitions drove vast voluntary armies to create American civil society, in the twentieth century equally powerful intuitions moved vast armies of evangelicals to opt out of civil engagement in favor of narrowly sectarian and otherworldly causes. At least, that is, until the recent evangelical political mobilization, which has brought back some of the activities of the nineteenth century.

Evangelical biblicism has likewise been both a strength and a weakness. In recent decades, and very much in keeping with evangelical history, the Bible has been a constant promoter of evangelical compassion—first for the unborn when they were abandoned by the law, but then (at least in part because of tutoring from other Christian traditions) for the mothers of the unborn, for prisoners, for the homeless, for victims of HIV/AIDS at home and aboard, and for many others among “the least of these.” In typical evangelical fashion, this biblical compassion has usually acted personally, ad hoc, and through freshly created institutions rather than communally, legislatively, and through inherited institutions. But it

has acted in many places on behalf of many causes and with very good effects.

Yet there is also a much less noble side to evangelical biblicism. Strange interpretations of the book of Daniel and Revelation abound, and some of these interpretations cause real trouble for international relations. Irresponsible self-appointed leaders regularly parade their opinions as from the Bible, and if they are rhetorically effective or skilled in the media, they can acquire huge followings and raise a great deal of money. Some go on to make the most outrageous statements on theology, world events, and much else. There is, in sum, almost nothing so powerful for good as an evangelical with Bible in hand and fire in the eye; there is almost nothing so powerful for social disorder, political alienation, or unmitigated nonsense as an evangelical with Bible in hand and fire in the eye.

The evangelical political style that emerged with such liberating joy in the eighteenth century, that did so much to create American culture in the first half of the nineteenth century, that failed in the face of the crisis of the Civil War, that languished in the throes of fundamentalist and otherworldly preoccupations during the first half of the twentieth century, came back to life with a great rush in the second half of the twentieth century. Yet the outcomes of this political mobilization, when considered as developments in evangelical theological or intellectual history, are curious. To take one instance, politically conservative evangelicals have been fully mobilized on issues having to do with the Supreme Court for more than a generation, but most of the prominent jurists whom evangelicals have supported as upholders of a more conservative jurisprudence, including the two most recent nominations to the Supreme Court, are Roman Catholics. The reason seems obvious: Catholicism has nourished traditions of careful study and close legal reasoning; evangelicalism has nourished neither. More generally, the revitalized evangelical politics of recent decades has decisively altered the shape of American public life—and, I conclude as an evangelical myself, both for good and for ill.

### **3) The white denominationally evangelical support for the Republican Party is not as inevitable or as strong as it seems.**

As a religion, evangelical Christianity has a very strong theology for individuals: it begins with the grand imperative, “you must be born again,” and goes on to exacting but also fulfilling standards in personal piety. By contrast, its theology for church, for community, and for society has always been indeterminate. Leading early evangelicals included, for instance, the Tories John Wesley and William

Wilberforce, as well as the American Revolutionaries Patrick Henry and Samuel Adams. Given the nature of evangelical theology, combined with the nature of evangelical politics, the current allegiance of white evangelicals to the Republican Party must be considered provisional. At least some surveys, for instance, show evangelicals to be just as committed to environmental reform as the general public, almost as nervous about the war in Iraq, perhaps even more committed to comprehensive health care reform, and certainly more committed to humanitarian foreign aid. In other words, apart from political issues that involve central authority imposing alien moral standards, evangelicals are mostly centrist in their political views, and even on a few issues moderately left-wing. Evangelicals have been, are, and always will be moral conservatives. But they are not necessarily small-government conservatives, neo-conservatives of the militarily expansionist sort, or even pro-business conservatives.

Because of their individualistic and market-accepting heritage, evangelicals do tend to be more suspicious of non-business central authorities, like the National Education Association, than of large businesses. But the strong world-awareness of evangelicals, which is sustained by deep involvement in foreign missionary work, means that evangelicals are predisposed to some progressive positions in international politics. For example, they generously support large development organizations like World Vision (with a budget 50 times or so of the World Council of Churches) and are among the leaders in promoting micro-enterprise as a development strategy in many parts of the Majority World. It is even possible to speculate that the once-overwhelming evangelical opposition to anything called socialism may not be entirely set in concrete. For decades, evangelicals read “socialism” as “communism,” and “communism” as “atheism.” Now with Marxist state-socialism in eclipse and the world’s one remaining Communist colossus, China, increasingly recognized as the country with the fastest growing evangelical population in the world, it may even be that American evangelicals could consider a socialist option for at least some issues, like health care—though such options would probably stand a better chance for receiving evangelical support if the word “socialism” were avoided, and if they were advocated as part of a comprehensive “pro-life” agenda.

In other words, if credible Democratic candidates for local and federal office could present themselves as even somewhat more pro-life and just a little more pro-local option than Democrats have been perceived among most evangelicals, the current political alignment could change rapidly. To be sure, given the strength

of the electoral affinities that have been built up since the 1970s, rapid change is not necessarily imminent. But it is at least possible that the re-emergence of two-party politics among white evangelicals could be accomplished if the Democrats nominated a presidential candidate who was at least moderately pro-life.

**4) When comparing the situation of American evangelicals to evangelicals in the world, the political situation in the United States is only marginally useful for assessing evangelical political behavior elsewhere.**

Evangelicals worldwide are moral conservatives as in the United States, they lean toward democratic and liberal policies (though with exceptions), and they are often friendly rather than hostile to U.S. interests. Yet the most salient feature of evangelical politics abroad, as expertly described in two informative recent books by Paul Freston, is chameleon-like variability.<sup>8</sup> In Fiji and Nagaland, evangelicals and ethnic identification run together, with the result that Fiji has seen intermittent government by what is in effect a state-church Methodist regime; if Nagaland could ever gain its independence from India, it would become the world's first quasi-official Baptist state.

In Germany and the Netherlands, evangelicals play a part in the Christian Democratic parties, extensively so in Holland. Yet in Germany the *evangelikale* give more support to the Social Democrats than to the Christian Democrats. In Britain and in Canada, evangelical forces contributed to the rise of socialist parties, respectively, the Labour Party and the New Democratic Party. But today evangelicals in Britain are spread among Tories, Labour, and the Liberal Democrats. In Canada, the new Conservative Party and its predecessor Reform and Alliance parties, have been led by evangelicals from the prairies, including the son of a long-time radio preacher who was also the long-time premier of Alberta. But in Canada, evangelicals are also active in the Liberal and New Democratic Parties as well as among the Conservatives. In India, evangelical political movements among the Dalits are reformist and radically democratic. In Guatemala evangelical political movements have been authoritarian and radically repressive. Brazil, with the largest evangelical population in Latin America (and after the United States perhaps the largest in the world) has seen a number of well-known evangelical pastors enter parliament, but with shifting political partners.

In the world today there also exist scores of distinctly evangelical political parties. None, except in Fiji, has gained power; none has acquired the heft of several of the Catholic political parties that emerged in nineteenth-century

Europe and Latin America.

In sum, evangelical politics worldwide can be associated with certain moral emphases, styles, and instincts that are also strong among American evangelicals. But no consistent or predictable economic and geopolitical agenda defines evangelical politics worldwide.

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A final word of caution is that any analysis of evangelical politics must remember that evangelical self-identity depends—even in this partisan American period—primarily on religion and only secondarily on politics. In general the nature of evangelical religion probably pushes its adherents slightly to the Right, but for the broad stretch of American history and in the world broadly considered today, the political bearing of evangelical Christian has always been more unpredictably variable than ideologically fixed.

### Notes

- 1 D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 1989), 2-17.
- 2 The survey was conducted by the Angus Reid polling organization; the figures used here from that survey were prepared by Lyman Kellstedt, emeritus professor of political science at Wheaton College.
- 3 The information in this article was prepared especially by Lyman Kellstedt. See, for published analyses, John Green, James Guth, Lyman Kellstedt, and Corwin Smidt (in various combinations), *Religion and the Culture Wars: Dispatches from the Front* (Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996); "Who Elected Clinton: A Collision of Values," *First Things*, August/September 1997, 35-40; "Why Moral Values Did Count: Religion and Religious Commitment in the 2004 Election," *Religion in the News*, Spring 2005, 5-8; "Onward Christian Soldiers? Religion and the Bush Doctrine," *Books & Culture*, July/August 2005, 20-21; and "Faith and Foreign Policy," *The Review of Faith and International Affairs* 3 (Fall 2005): 3-10.
- 4 Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); and Steve Bruce, *The Rise and Fall of the New Christian Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).
- 5 David L. Chappell, *A Stone of Hope: Prophetic Religion and the Death of Jim Crow* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); and Charles Marsh, *The Beloved Community: How Faith Shapes Social Justice from the Civil Rights Movement to Today* (New York: Basic, 2004).
- 6 See Mark A. Noll, "Political Reflection," in *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids:

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Eerdmans, 1994), 149-76; *One Nation Under God?* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988); *American Evangelical Christianity: An Introduction* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 2001), 209-36; and *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

7 David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination* (New York: Crossroad, 1981).

8 Paul Freston, *Evangelicals and Politics in Asia, Africa and Latin America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); and *Protestant Political Parties: A Global Survey* (Williston, VT: Ashgate, 2004).