Currents in Contemporary American Evangelical Political Thought

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CURRENTS IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN
EVANGELICAL POLITICAL THOUGHT

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of Government
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
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Master of Arts

by
Darrell Kopp
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APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Approved, July 1977

Roger W. Smith

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DEDICATION

Paul J. Abel is a teacher who introduces his high school students to previously undreamed of horizons of the mind. In so doing, he irrevocably changes their lives. I dedicate this paper to him.
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ABSTRACT

Following two generations of self-imposed isolation from the mainstream of cultural concerns, American evangelical Christians in the late-1940's began to attempt to bring their biblical perspective to bear on the pressing issues facing modern society. In the area of politics, this renewal of social concern has resulted in a stream of books, most of them published since the mid-1960's, in which evangelicals have attempted to address all phases of the political endeavor in light of biblical principles. These works are variegated in character, dealing in theory, praxis, criticism, and analysis.

Within this melange of writings, three distinct currents of thought can be discerned: mainline evangelical political thought, which perceives the American political process as basically sound though in need of certain reforms; radical anabaptism, which rejects direct political participation per se and advocates instead a politics of negative intervention and witness to the state; and Kuyperian political thought, which posits the imperative for evangelical political participation but which views the American political framework as inhibiting faithful Christian participation. Each of these represents a fairly distinct tradition within Protestant Christianity; and the historical-cultural context within which each has developed has influenced the manner in which each interprets the meaning of politics in light of Scripture (the final authority of which evangelicals do not question).

In addition to the efforts of writers and theorists, some elected evangelical politicians, including Congressman John B. Anderson and Senator Mark Hatfield, are attempting to apply their biblical faith to their everyday labors in government and politics.

In light of the quality of much of the political thinking that has recently emerged from the American evangelical community, and in light of the efforts of many evangelical political professionals and laymen to implement biblical principles in a practical political manner, it is the thesis of this paper that the possibility exists for an evangelical political alternative to surface in America, one that in both substance and style could break significantly with the mode of politics presently considered normative in this country.
CURRENTS IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN
EVANGELICAL POLITICAL THOUGHT
INTRODUCTION

[In the] ...forepart of the twentieth century, the term 'evangelical' was held in derision as an anti-intellectualistic shadow from the past. 'Evangelical thought,' moreover, was regarded as an incongruous association of ideas. And 'contemporary evangelical thought' even more so!

--Carl F.H. Henry¹

Had Dr. Henry continued his word constructions to specify "contemporary evangelical political thought," he would have been led to an embarrassing admission: scorn of that phrase would have been appropriate! For even in 1957 when he wrote his prefatory remarks to Contemporary Evangelical Thought, a body of current political thinking properly qualified as "evangelical" was virtually non-existent in the United States.

To be sure, evangelicals did revere a significant heritage of work which might be termed "state theory" from the Medieval, Reformation and post-Reformation periods. Also, much of the English and American Enlightenment political thinking which led to the establishment of the modern liberal state was adopted by many American evangelicals as integral to a Christian mode of constituting a political order.

But in terms of a modern body of political thought addressing the increasingly complex realities in America, evangelicals were nearly silent. What preliminary stirrings there were in evangelical
political thinking in the late 1940's and early 1950's were still subsumed under that category of Protestant practical theology, "social ethics," or simply "ethics."

However, a dramatic change has occurred within the past twenty years. In the late 1940's a small, determined group of persons began urging their evangelical brethren toward a more socially conscious posture. By the late 1960's this effort began to bear fruit in the area of politics and political thought. Since 1970—and mostly prior to the political ascendency of professing evangelical Jimmy Carter—there has been a veritable flood of books, pamphlets, and periodicals authored by evangelicals and dealing with various aspects of the political dimension in modern American life. Moreover, some elected officials on the national level (in addition to President Carter) openly espouse an evangelical viewpoint and claim to attempt to apply their Christian faith to their labors in politics and government.

This expanded concern with political theory and practice has come at a time of increased visibility of evangelical activity in general and during a period of considerable evangelical growth. Indeed, until recently, the words "evangelical" and "born again" were as uncommon to the public vocabulary as two other only recently publicized words, "Jimmy Carter." However, Carter's ready reference to his own born again religious condition, as well as the previous, widely-publicized conversion of Charles Colson (detailed in his 1976 bestseller Born Again) resulted in increased attention by the media in the evangelical movement. Major articles in the New York Times Magazine, Playboy and Newsweek represent only a small fraction of the
media treatment of "the evangelicals" during 1976.

Evangelical church membership has shown "amazing gains" since the mid-1960's according to Dean Kelley's important 1972 study, Why Conservative Churches Are Growing; and this growth, Kelley shows statistically and graphically, compares almost uniformly with membership decline in the mainline churches.6

This trend in church membership is concomitant with growth in other areas of evangelical activity. In correspondence with this writer in January 1977, a spokesman for the Evangelical Press Association reported an increase in member publications from 209 to 295 over the previous two years (reflecting an increase from 10.5 million to 12 million subscribers).7 A recent University of Arizona study of college enrollment trends since 1965 shows colleges with meaningful religious affiliations faring better than those lacking such affiliation; and both Christianity Today and the (evangelical) Christian College Consortium report that this trend has been especially pronounced in evangelical colleges.8 And the popularity of Colson's Born Again is only a minor index of the phenomenal growth in evangelical book publishing and sales in recent years.9 Such indices of growth point to what Time has referred to as "...the shift toward Evangelicalism throughout U.S. religion."10

It is noteworthy that the significant evangelical gains of the past ten years have accompanied a period of considerable ferment within American evangelicalism, especially over the issue of "social concern." The latter has become an umbrella phrase referring to the proposed need for evangelical witness and influence within the diverse facets of the society at large: academia, labor, the press,
the arts, and of course politics. Indeed, evangelicals have probably given greater attention to political theory and political affairs in recent years than to any other single area of social concern. It would be overstatement to link recent evangelical growth directly to the modest success that proponents of social concern have enjoyed within the evangelical movement. But it does seem fair to surmise that as evangelicalism has begun seriously to consider society's problems, so has the society begun to take evangelicalism more seriously.

To understand the significance of the social concern controversy and especially the interest in politics and political theory that it has helped spawn, one must consider the background of American evangelicalism.

During the nineteenth century, as Martin Marty points out, evangelicalism was virtually synonymous with Protestantism in the United States. Marty also avers, "For evangelicals to feel at home in America should not be a surprise, since they built so much of it."

However the latter part of that century saw the rise of several threats to evangelical orthodoxy and cultural hegemony. Biblical criticism, arising in Germany, threatened the veracity and authority of the Scriptures; biological Darwinism threatened the biblical account of creation as well as the evangelical conception of man; and the Social Gospel response to some of the horrendous evils of industrialization was perceived as an effort to bring about the kingdom of God on earth with no regard to the need for personal redemption through Jesus Christ nor biblically guided action.
These issues precipitated a decisive split within American evangelicalism. The "liberals" or "modernists" sought an accommodation between Christianity and the products of the modern intellect (biblical criticism, Darwinism). The "conservatives" or the "fundamentalists," on the other hand, sought a course of retrenchment, intent on preserving and defending the assaulted doctrines of their evangelical faith. Serious, systematic, persistent efforts to confront modernism on scientific, cultural and other terrains of the intellect were largely abandoned. And evangelical influence waned through virtual default. As participation in the broader culture became equated with contamination and compromise, evangelical cultural dominance was reduced to a past faded glory. The victory of the modernists over the fundamentalists in the churches in the 1920's was but the final humiliation in a long defeat that evangelicalism had been suffering.

Evangelicals claimed to possess and believe in the living Word of God which, they asserted, speaks to men and issues in every age; but on the critical, complex issues that came to dominate the world during the first half of the twentieth century, they were silent. Their intellectual endeavors were instead directed at defense of doctrine and opposition to modernism; and their social commentary was largely devoted to anti-Darwinism and later to anti-Communism (as Communism came to supplant Darwinism as the fundamentalist bogeyman).

Some evangelicals, however, found this position of alienation from society to be incongruous with their biblical faith. They rejected the ecclesio-theological horizon that fundamentalism
imposed on Christianity and sought a faith that compellingly addressed the critical issues of the age.

In an interview with this writer, Carl F.H. Henry poignantly summarized this sense of the irrelevance of fundamentalism that prevailed in the 1940's:

When people came to church they apparently had to tune out some of the most pressing problems of contemporary human existence... Fundamentalists were concerned with personal vices but neglected social issues. And you could go to the churches week in and week out, and year in and year out, and never hear any discussions pro or con on the issue of peace and war, or of race relationships, and the pressing problems of contemporary society. I just had a great sense of the wrongness of Christian irrelevance to these things if, as I believed, the Bible involved a world-life view and bore in a vital way upon every dimension of human existence... Whereas the evangelical right was always rallying on the side of war, I had the feeling that the first thing that the church was obligated to say on the scene of history was 'Peace!...' Within that, it negotiates with the tragedy of a necessary commitment to armaments in a world in which there are predator nations... I was reaching for some of these things in Uneasy Conscience."

There is widespread consensus that Henry's own book, The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism, constituted the major break with the cultural isolationism of fundamentalism. Variousy described as a manifesto, a catalyst, and a bombshell, the book spoke eloquently to the fundamentalist abdication of responsibility in modern affairs:

"It was the failure of Fundamentalism to work out a positive message within its own framework, and its tendency instead to take further refuge in a despairing view of world history, that cut off the pertinence of evangelicalism to the modern global
c risis... Whereas once the redemptive gospel was a world-challenging message, now it was narrowed to a world-resisting message... If historic Christianity is again to compete as a vital world ideology, evangelicalism must project a solution for the most pressing world problems. It must offer a formula for a new world mind with spiritual ends, involving evangelical affirmations in political, economic, sociological, and educational realms, local and international.15

The "evangelical affirmations" that Henry sought came forth only gradually,16 with those of a specifically political nature delaying their appearance until the mid-1960's. The movement for social concern within evangelicalism came to its maturity in November, 1973, with the Thanksgiving Workshop on Evangelical Social Concern held in Chicago. At that meeting, evangelicals of different ages, traditions and races joined in drafting the Declaration of Evangelical Social Concern. The less than 500 word document reads in the Confiteor style:

We confess that we have not acknowledged the complete claims of God on our lives... We acknowledge that God requires justice. But we have not proclaimed or demonstrated his justice to an unjust American society. Although the Lord calls us to defend the social and economic rights of the poor and the oppressed, we have mostly remained silent... We have failed to condemn the exploitation of racism at home and abroad by our economic system... Before God and a billion hungry neighbors we must rethink our values regarding our present standard of living and promote more just acquisition and distribution of the world's resources.17

This is the context, then, in which evangelicals have recently turned their attention to political concerns and political theory. Reflecting on a past that they consider
rich with evangelical Christian involvement in social and political affairs, they now seek to establish again an evangelical influence in directing the course of the great formative issues and events of the day. To be sure, not all evangelicals perceive the nineteenth century as a golden age of American evangelical social activity; some feel that the extent of biblical influence in nineteenth century American culture pales in comparison to the evangelical faithfulness evident in other lands or in other ages. But nearly all evangelical social activists and political theoreticians perceive the first half of the twentieth century as a period of tragic omission of evangelical involvement. And it is to fill part of this gap that evangelicals have belatedly begun to study systematically the political implications of their faith.

Though agreed that evangelical political analysis must address the pressing problems of the contemporary age from a biblically faithful point of view, evangelicals nonetheless differ among themselves regarding how to go about their task. Considering the diverse cultural traditions represented in contemporary American evangelicalism, this comes as no surprise. Out of a significant body of evangelical political literature that has emerged since the mid-1960's, three fairly distinct categories of thought have emerged. Each proceeds from a rather distinct tradition within evangelicalism.

Mainline evangelicalism represents the dominant and most prestigious elements within the broad American evangelical tradition. It has produced a body of political thought that generally seeks to attain its goals within political institutions as they presently exist. ("Mainline" is used in this designation in the
sense of what has become "establishment" evangelicalism. In this context, the term "mainline" is not to be confused with the common usage "mainline churches." The latter refers to churches whose leaders were victorious over the evangelical fundamentalists during the modernism-fundamentalism controversy earlier in this century. Typically, these churches are affiliated with the National and World Council of Churches, and engage in ecumenical activities. They thus stand for principles of ecclesiology which most evangelicals specifically disavow.)

Radical anabaptist political thought proceeds from a tradition that emphasizes the importance of individual and community lifestyle. Its contemporary political affirmations emphasize a style of political witness that is relevant to critical issues without being compromised by the "powers" of the world.

Kuyperian political thought represents a strain of Calvinism that has come to America by way of the Dutch experience, and many of this persuasion's adherents are of Dutch Reformed lineage. Basic to Kuyperian thinking is the supposition of the radically religious nature of all of life, including political life and thought. Accordingly, their thought leads them to advocate the need for structural change within the American political system, change which they feel would allow a more plural political expression and realization of the social, political, and cultural views of all religious communities, including their own.

In this paper, I attempt to show how each of these three political thrusts differs from the other two by virtue of its distinctive, historically qualified emphases, and to indicate how
each perceives its own political ideals in comparison with those prevalent in the broader American culture. I also try to point out some ways that these evangelical political ideals are beginning to find expression in praxis. In the latter connection, I consider some current modes of evangelical political involvement, including the political lives of two evangelical politicians.

I attempt to demonstrate that the thought of one of these politicians, Senator Mark Hatfield, does not appropriately fit into any one of the three major categories. Rather, Hatfield's thinking represents a kind of evangelical political eclecticism. His is an eclecticism which is emerging within the general framework of attitudes established by the three major evangelical political traditions, but one which is uniquely tempered by his own experience as a politician.

Both in light of and in addition to Hatfield's own evolving political ideology, it is my overall contention in this paper that recent developments in evangelical political thought present the possibility of a distinctly evangelical political option emerging in America. I do not suggest the specific content and direction that might characterize an eclectic evangelical political stance, although one might make guesses about its possible shape on the basis of the existing body of political theory from which it will probably in large part emerge. Nor do I even want to speculate on the likelihood that such a politics will emerge. I simply wish to show that, based on the strength of a serious and frequently insightful body of recently developed political thinking, the potential exists for evangelicals to devise a political paradigm that is in
style and substance distinct from present American political con­ceptions. I attempt to show this through extensive consideration of the three evangelical political viewpoints, and of Hatfield's thought as well.

Before turning to the subject of evangelical politics proper, one point needs clarification. Constant reference has thus far been made to the "evangelicals." But what does that term mean? It is to this preliminary question that we now turn.
Notes for Introduction

2. The proper etymological origin of the word "evangelical" is from the New Testament Koine Greek εὐαγγελία, Anglicized as evangel, meaning "gospel."
3. The words "born again" are taken from the third chapter of the Gospel of John (KJV) where Jesus uses the phrase in a discussion with Nicodemus. It appears elsewhere in Scripture as well.
7. From January 10, 1977, personal correspondence with Evangelical Press Association Executive Secretary Norman B. Rohrer.
8. "No Obituary Yet for Church Colleges," Christianity Today, January 7, 1977, pp. 41-42. The writer was also provided media releases dated October 1 and October 15, 1976, from the Christian College News Service. The "news service" items are dispensed under the auspices of the Christian College Consortium referred to in the text.
13. Carl F.H. Henry, The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamen-


15. Henry, Uneasy Conscience, pp. 32, 30, and 68.

16. Much has been written in general and in detail on the development of the social concern movement within contemporary evangelicalism. For example, see David O. Moberg, The Great Reversal (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1972). See also Linder, "Resurgence of Evangelical Social Concern," in The Evangelicals, pp. 200ff.; and George H. Williams and Rodney L. Petersen, "Evangelicals: Society, the State, the Nation," ibid., especially pp. 236-239.


18. Abraham Kuyper was a late-nineteenth-early-twentieth century Dutch politician, journalist, theologian and religious leader. He is more fully discussed in chapter five of this paper.
CHAPTER I
WHO ARE THE EVANGELICALS?

Martin Marty has noted the reluctance of historians and writers of fiction to begin with too many definitions; rather they prefer "... to let fences grow around concepts in the course of a narrative."[

"Evangelical" is just the sort of word that begs for terminological inexactitude at the outset. As different senses of it are discussed, a form begins to coalesce; and at some point an acceptable degree of recognition prevails. In such a manner the definition of "evangelical" is approached in this chapter.

When one begins the search for a definition of evangelical, it immediately becomes obvious that there is no consensus about the meaning of the word. In considering ways to go about defining the word, one approaches the crux of the difficulty. Is, for example, being an evangelical strictly a matter of one's theological beliefs? Is there a body of theological dogma the profession of which qualifies one as an evangelical? This is the intimation of the recent collection of essays, The Evangelicals: What They Believe, Who They Are, Where They Are Changing.

If evangelicalism is defined in strictly theological terms, what then is evangelical politics? Is it any political activity
or political thought carried out by one professing these theological propositions? If this were so, evangelical political thought would be qualified less by its content than by the religious condition of the individual evangelical political thinker. Even a cursory survey of recent evangelical political literature indicates that such a conclusion is unacceptable; but the "definition by theological affirmation" approach risks such a result.

Timothy L. Smith levels a significant criticism against The Evangelicals precisely because of this approach:

The nine scholars who write from inside the evangelical movement are partisan not simply on behalf of that movement generally but on behalf of one powerful tradition within it: the postfundamentalists of Presbyterian, Reformed and Baptist backgrounds who dominate the National Association of Evangelicals and govern a spate of what have become the nation's largest graduate theological seminaries --- Fuller, Trinity, Gordon-Conwell, Westminster and Pittsburgh... They eliminate from consideration many large and rapidly growing groups of evangelicals in America... One cannot, then, learn from this book who the evangelicals are, but only what the most prestigious party among them believes.2

Among those thus excluded from the evangelical umbrella Smith lists conservative Lutherans; the Southern Baptist Convention (and, one might add, many black Baptists as well); the "peace" churches (Mennonite, Brethren, evangelical Friends); the Wesleyan evangelicals (Nazarenes, Wesleyans, Salvation Army, Free and Southern Methodists, some United Methodists); black and white Pentecostals, and some charismatics.

Another example of this delimiting tendency in defining who
the evangelicals are is Bernard Ramm's comment on excluding anabaptists and other radical reformers from his discussion of The Evangelical Heritage. After discussing Lutheranism, Calvinism, and Anglicanism, Ramm says of the radical reformers, by way of a footnote:

They were a very active group of people with some very distinctive ideas, but they produced no great theologian. Neither did they achieve any great new theological synthesis.3

The propensity to define evangelicalism in narrow theological terms is especially pronounced within the tradition earlier referred to as mainline evangelicalism. This attitude represents an effort by that tradition to identify with itself and those consenting to its terms the primary meaning of the contemporary usage "evangelical."

The credentials of this tradition are certainly impressive enough. Mainline evangelicalism developed considerable muscle as the leading evangelical contender in the bruising bouts with modernism earlier in this century.

But mainline evangelicalism is not the only strand within the evangelical tradition, whatever the historical legitimacy of its claims. And its exclusivity is threatened by the current resurgence of evangelicalism in America. Renewed awareness and pride among previously silent evangelical groups are prompting challenges to the prerogatives of any single group that would presume to be the arbiter of the current evangelical situation. Interestingly enough, it is precisely from some of these interlopers that some of the most original, fertile, and incisive evangelical political analysis is
emanating.

The heart of the problem of trying to precisely define evangelical is this: it cannot be precisely defined at present because it represents a force that is still evolving. Who the evangelicals are in every instance remains, historically speaking, an open question.

But it is beyond question that there is a struggle currently underway over the appellation "evangelical." Witness, for example, the effort on the part of Christianity Today editor Harold Lindsell to make adherence to "biblical inerrancy" the litmus for evangelical legitimacy. The social concern issue is also part and parcel of this struggle. While some evangelicals are struggling to apply their faith to politics and political theory, there are others who are oblivious to the need for such an endeavor or who, in fact, question its very legitimacy.

This recent turn to political endeavors has in some ways exacerbated tensions within American evangelicalism. Traditionally, the "conservative" label applied to evangelicals by virtue of their protective stance regarding Scripture and doctrine has been appropriately descriptive of their politics as well. But in recent years, especially with the advent of the "young evangelicals." a new hybrid has surfaced: the evangelical who holds conservative views on the cardinal doctrines of the faith, but who has arrived at a politically liberal position on the basis of his or her conservative faith. Such forces are severely testing the elasticity of traditional evangelicalism.

The matter of race also hinders attempts to find out just
who the evangelicals are. Until recently, there has been hardly any contact between black and white evangelicals. Indeed, former National Black Evangelical Association head William Bentley cited the 1973 Chicago Thanksgiving Workshop as the first inter-racial evangelical encounter since 1920. If the churchmen of the two races hardly know each other, how can they determine who among themselves is evangelical?

It was not without insight that Carl F.H. Henry entitled his recent survey of evangelical activity *Evangelicals In Search of Identity* and concluded that the future of evangelicalism in America is uncertain.

Though who the evangelicals are cannot be precisely defined, the term "evangelical" is not hereby devoid of meaning. Some persons and groups are clearly at home within the evangelical tradition; and among these there are common characteristics which point toward a general evangelical make-up. In Marty's phrase, let us continue some "fence building."

**Past Uses of the Term**

The derision with which the term "evangelical" was held earlier in this century was both unfortunate and unjustified, for it began to acquire a rich historical meaning even during the Reformation. Its modern American use stems from eighteenth century England when it was used in reference to the great revivals led by George Whitefield and the Wesleys. At that juncture, the word began to acquire some of its contemporary
connotations: reaction against "dead orthodoxy," a revivalism/evangelism emphasis\textsuperscript{11} (à la Billy Graham), the importance of the personal Christian life (Holiness groups, others in the pietist tradition), the emphasis on the ethical Christ (Mennonites, others in the anabaptist tradition), etc.

It was in this form that the term crossed the Atlantic and made its initial impact during the First Great Awakening of the 1740's. The term became even more common during the Second Great Awakening of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The term gained further currency during the twenty year period of general revival beginning in 1822, a period which also saw the rise of that evangelistic giant of the mid-nineteenth century, Charles G. Finney; the famed Billy Sunday carried on this tradition through the latter third of the century.\textsuperscript{12} It was during this nineteenth century period that the word "evangelical" became entrenched in the American vocabulary and became virtually synonymous with Protestantism.

As the doctrinal imbroglios of the late nineteenth century developed within American Protestantism, the term "evangelical" went into eclipse as "fundamentalist"\textsuperscript{13} became the ascendent usage of the first four decades of the twentieth century. Indeed, Carl Henry points out that when the National Association of Evangelicals took up the term in 1942, it was a word "nobody wanted:" the theological liberals didn't want it; and Carl McIntire refrained from using it in founding his American Council of Christian Churches in 1941.\textsuperscript{14}

Since then the word has become controversial. Its claim by one segment of American Christianity has been disputed by others who thereby become, ipso facto, non-evangelical. Martin Marty says this
of the terminological dispute:

The battle over the name continued for some years and sounds of mopping up operations are still heard. Many participants in and observers of church life, I among them, have only grudgingly yielded them their chosen designation, having long preferred the earlier term Neo-Evangelical... Eventually, however, one gives in to sociological necessity; the term has won acceptance as a handy if still confusing and not always appropriate name.  

It is probably this reluctance to yield the term that has spawned a myriad of synonyms for "the evangelicals." In addition to Neo-Evangelical, there has been new evangelicals, evangelical revivalists, progressive conservatives, new conservatives, neo-fundamentalists, postfundamentalists, etc.  

Varieties of Evangelical History

As the discussion thus far suggests, there is much diversity within the broadly conceived evangelical heritage. This heritage --who the evangelicals were-- is an important prelude to saying who they are today. We will therefore proceed to consider some aspects of that heritage.

Bernard Ramm's effort to encapsulate "the evangelical heritage" within the perimeter of evangelical theology was noted earlier. From this point of departure, Ramm locates the substance of evangelical history in its encounters with the Enlightenment, theological liberalism, neo-orthodoxy, and other challengers to evangelical theological tenets.

Though Ramm mentions only in passing some elements of the
evangelical heritage, he does give extensive attention to the
two giants of that tradition, Lutheranism and Calvinism. It is
especially from the latter that mainline evangelicalism has taken
a major portion of its lifeblood; and Kuyperian political thinkers
hold Calvin in perhaps even higher esteem than do the mainline
evangelicals.

The Lutheran, Calvinist and Zwinglian phases of the Prot­
estant Reformation have been collectively termed the "magisterial
reformation" because of the willingness of the founders to
associate themselves with or even take up the gauntlet of worldly
governmental authority. Purity of doctrine was a major concern of
the magisterial reformers, with special emphasis given to the sole
authority of the Bible (sola Scriptura) and the justification of
the individual sinner by the grace of God through faith alone. But
in addition to doctrinal purity there was also a concomitant demand
for intellectual acuity in matters ranging beyond the theological
and ecclesiastical. Significant attention was given to the arts
and sciences, and especially to politics. Luther and Calvin both
held a high view of the political enterprise, and each wrote a fair
amount on the subject.

However the nature of the magisterial reformers' political
thrust prompted a reaction as early as the 1520's from elements of
the reformation who have come to be termed the "radical reformers."
During that decade a chasm began to develop between Ulrich Zwingli
and some of his followers over whether the Zurich city fathers or
the church should have final say over liturgical forms. The group
objecting to Zwingli's tacit approval of this secular arbitration
later broke with him and became known as the Swiss Brethren or Anabaptists. Of this phase of the Protestant Reformation, Martin Marty says:

These radical groups began to take shape within the first Protestant decade and appeared as a counterforce virtually wherever established Protestants came to power. It is difficult to trace all the lineages from continental Anabaptism... But even though they make up no large statistical bloc, they have always had influence beyond their numbers, and when taken together form the heritage of "radical Protestantism..."22

Anabaptists concerned themselves little with the intricacies of theological systems. Instead they concentrated on discipleship, the personal regeneration and lifestyle of the Christian, and the implementation of Jesus' commands in the Sermon on the Mount, all of which had implications for their political life. They emphasized a uniform ethic for both public and private life, and accordingly took Luther to task on his doctrine of the two kingdoms. They practiced non-violent resistance, refrained from holding public office, and objected to the "state church" concept because it violated their conception of the church as a voluntary association of believers. Indeed, Harold S. Bender contends that the concepts of voluntary religious association, freedom of conscience, and separation of church and state --concepts now embodied in democratic political documents-- are ultimately derived from the anabaptists of the reformation period.23 It is from this tradition of the evangelical heritage that contemporary radical anabaptist political thought finds its inspiration.24

The Pietist movement of more than a century later is similar
in some respects to anabaptism. Pietism arose out of the Lutheran tradition in seventeenth century Germany. It was a reaction against a Protestant scholasticism that had grown sterile because of its emphasis on preserving and refining the ideas of the original reformers. The father of German Pietism was Philip Jacob Spener whose pietist classic *Pia Desideria*25 emphasized the holy, Godly life. While Spener did not repudiate the need for orthodox doctrine, he insisted that doctrine was legitimate only to the degree that it served the needs of the "inner man."

Through its formative impact on Moravianism, pietism came to have a major impact on John Wesley. And it was through Wesley and his contemporaries that evangelicalism --and the pietist strains within it-- came across the Atlantic and helped shape nineteenth century American religious history.

It is to this Wesleyan-revivalist tradition that Donald W. Dayton traces some of the political reform movements of nineteenth century America --abolition and women's rights, for example.26 Of interest in Dayton's work is the contrast between Wesleyan revivalist Charles Finney's progressive position on social issues and the much more conservative stance taken by Princeton Seminary don Charles Hodge, who is considered a giant of mainline evangelical theology.

Contemporary emphases on evangelical traditions other than that of the magisterial reformation represent a challenge to the exclusivity of mainline evangelism. And when interpretations such as Dayton's imply a repudiation of portions of that powerful tradition, the causes for tension in the continuing search for evangelical identity become obvious.
Evangelical Religion

Evangelicals' religion is undoubtedly their most distinguishing characteristic. It is what sets the "born again" and the "Bible believers" apart from other elements of contemporary Christianity and from the remainder of society as well.

These two phrases --born again and Bible believing-- point to the basics of the evangelical faith: the need for personal redemption, and the acceptance of the Bible as the authoritative guide for attaining that redemption.

In their primary sense, these basics of the evangelical faith are pre-theological. When, for example, Billy Graham addresses crowds during his crusades, he does not present his listeners a great theological exposition; rather, he proffers them a simple --though apparently compelling-- biblical message, and urges them to accept Christ. He asks not for assent to a theological system, but for acceptance of a simple corrective to what he portrays as a defective human condition. This acceptance, whether sudden or gradual, is the evangelical conversion experience.

The Bible, which posits the need and means for redemption, is accepted by evangelicals as the authoritative word of the deity portrayed therein. Thus, for example, the current evangelical debates over social concern and scriptural inerrancy are not contests between those believing the Bible and those rejecting it. Rather they are disagreements between those who think that the Bible teaches one or the other side of the given issue. The final authority of the Bible is essentially unchallenged by both sides of
these debates.

In the context of American Christianity, having said that evangelicals accept the authority of the Bible and the need for personal conversion is to have said a great deal. Both of these positions clearly distinguish evangelicals from their counterparts in theologically liberal American Christianity. This sort of evangelical trust in the Bible is viewed as an unsophisticated vestige of a pre-scientific mindset; and the conversion experience conjures images of primitive emotional outpourings in tent meetings.

These two positions distance evangelicals even further from the non-Christian society at large. As John Schaar has said:

It is difficult for most intellectuals in this secular and enlightened age to take religion seriously. Many of us have grown out of it --if we ever had it-- ...Religion is something that primitive, traditional, and simple-minded folk have and need... Nor is this [evangelical religion] the cool, basically social and traditional, religion of established Catholics and mainline Protestants.27

Schaar's last remark hits the target: evangelical religion is anything but "cool." Rather, it is visceral and "heart" felt. It is, as Schaar and others note, the religion that one gets in America when one "gets religion."
Notes for Chapter I

5. This phrase has attained currency of late because of Richard Quebedeaux' The Young Evangelicals (New York: Harper and Row, 1974).
13. In its starkest sense, the word "fundamentalist" applies to those ascribing to the "five fundamentals" drafted at the Niagara Bible Conference of 1895. The five are: the verbal inerrancy of
the Bible, the deity and virgin birth of Christ, the substitutionary atonement, the physical resurrection of Christ, and the promised bodily return ("the second coming") of Christ. See Winthrop S. Hudson, Religion in America (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), p. 283.


18. See p. 17 above.


24. See, for example, Gish, ibid., and John Howard Yoder, The Politics of Jesus (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972). The latter work is discussed extensively in chapter four below.


CHAPTER II

EVANGELICAL POLITICS: THREE APPROACHES

As Dengerink declares, Christian political thought and action must not center merely in 'a few special subjects, but in the inner reformation of political life itself.' Evangelical Christians face the obligation of rethinking the structure, nature and task of the modern state. The Christian view, therefore, requires both a thorough understanding of the biblical principles of government and active judgements in political affairs.

--Carl F.H. Henry

The writings of evangelical political thinkers and practitioners are replete with references to God, the Bible, and the need for a biblically faithful political view. The above comment by Carl Henry is typical in this regard.  

Most evangelicals accept this Bible as a divine revelation of the God whom they believe is the Lord of the universe. To say this is not to posit a standard of eligibility for inclusion in a class of phenomena called "evangelical politics." It is simply to note a major denominator common to political thought described today with the modifier "evangelical." Evangelical political thinkers either start with the Bible, or trace the origin of their thought to perceived biblical principles.

Singling out a common source to which all evangelicals revert suggests a great deal about the sorts of politics that
will and will not emerge from the evangelical community. For example, all demand a politics which accords every man and woman a certain minimum respect and dignity by virtue of their having been created by God in his own image.

But while observing a professed biblical common denominator says much about evangelical politics, it also says far too little. The lack of scriptural clarity at many points results in major differences of interpretation even among those accepting the inspired authority of the Bible.

Interpretation is of course the key. If one is considering the political, in what form does one seek guidance from the Bible? Rules? Principles? Analogies? Examples? And where does one begin looking for the political in Scripture? Creation? The patriarchs? The judges? The prophets? Jesus? Paul?

Historical and cultural forces shaping the intellectual frameworks of evangelical political thinkers influence the development of various combinations of answers to questions such as these. This cultural diversity produces differences in approach, reading and interpretation of Scripture, even among those claiming a common belief in the Bible's authority.

Given the evangelical diversity that has surfaced in America, it is not surprising that evangelical political thought has developed into the three distinct forms noted in the introduction to this paper: mainline evangelical, radical anabaptist, and Kuyperian thought. As an aggregate, these three points of view include virtually all contemporary evangelical political thrusts. Even Mark Hatfield, who might be serving as midwife to another emerging viewpoint, has been heavily
influenced by elements of these three major "schools."

In his recent doctoral dissertation on Mark Hatfield, Robert Eells has designated roughly these same groupings as "American neo-Calvinist," "radical anabaptist," and "Kuyperian pluralist." I find Eells' second and third designations useful, and for the sake of scholarly continuity I essentially retain them. (My usual reference will be to "Kuyperian political thought;" though the additional label "pluralist" points to perhaps the most salient contemporary political feature of that tradition, its insistence on a revised conception of pluralism is not the sole Kuyperian distinction.)

However I replace Eells' "American neo-Calvinist" usage with "mainline evangelical." The latter is intended to broaden Eells' category so that it includes not only evangelical political thought from the Calvinist tradition, but also that from the religious amalgam tending toward right-wing fundamentalism (which evidences Calvinistic but a host of other influences as well). This fundamentalism, which is peculiarly American in character, is on a political continuum with "American neo-Calvinist" political thought, and so is appropriately classed with it. Moreover, though fundamentalism has produced little in the way of contemporary political thought or analysis of any sophistication, its adherents constitute a significant bloc of the evangelical laity; thus an evangelical political taxonomy must include it.

Before proceeding to discuss these three trends in evangelical political thought, it would be well to suggest some ways of thinking about them.

Mainline evangelical political thought emanates from the
dominant evangelical establishment in the United States. Portions of it are heavily influenced by the Calvinist tradition; but Wesleyanism and pietism also have an impact, as does a kind of nationalistic Americanism. Because of its broad grip on American evangelical institutions, this mainline thrust has gained a dominant place in the hierarchy of American evangelical political thought.

Radical anabaptism, on the other hand, comes from a heritage that has not in recent times been part of the American evangelical mainstream. It has rather maintained an often-silent-but-persistent protest stance, an "over-againstness," in relation to American society at large and to American Protestantism as well. Its adherents represent a fairly small group among evangelical political thinkers (mostly those from the anabaptist tradition, but also some from pietist and Wesleyan backgrounds). But it is now getting a serious hearing in evangelicalism, and is currently influencing the scope of evangelical political discourse in the United States.

Kuyperian political thought is the least known and perhaps the least influential of the three trends herein discussed. But the range and volume of its specifically political writings have earned it a place, however junior, on the American evangelical political spectrum. Proceeding from a Dutch Calvinist background, Kuyperian thought is sensitive to the virtues of parliamentary democracy and proportional representation. Kuyperians intimate that American politics could be made more genuinely pluralistic through structural changes within American political institutions.

A preliminary perspective on the relationship between these three political viewpoints and American politics at large can be
obtained by considering them from the standpoint of game theory. Mainline evangelicals accept both the games (politics) and the rules (two-party system, American constitution, authority of majorities, etc.). Kuyperians accept the game, but see the need to critique and reject or reform those rules they consider obstacles to evangelical politics. Radical anabaptists reject both the game and the rules, and attempt to develop a "witness" to politics and the state that is political in some senses and anti-political in others.

Let us now turn to a more extensive consideration of each of these three currents in evangelical politics. The task here is to represent fairly the salient characteristics of each political viewpoint, not to delineate exhaustively all variations. We will look at a prominent author (or authors) representative of each of these three positions.
Notes for Chapter II


CHAPTER III
MAINLINE EVANGELICAL POLITICAL THOUGHT

Mainline evangelical political thought is the most American of the three major outlooks treated in this paper. It is therefore not surprising that it is also the most prevalent among evangelical political thinkers, politicians, and laity at large.

Though ranging from very conservative to moderately liberal across its entire face, the mainline evangelical laity is largely politically conservative. As Lowell Streiker and Gerald Strober point out, this is "middle American." And Mark Hatfield refers to a "theological 'silent majority'" who

...wrap up their Bibles in the American flag, who believe that conservative politics is the necessary by-product of orthodox Christianity, who equate patriotism with the belief in national self-righteousness, and who regard political dissent as a mark of infidelity to the faith.

Most practicing evangelical politicians also fall into this mainline evangelical category. Their politics range from very conservative (e.g. former Arizona Congressman John Conlan, who was defeated in a primary race for U.S. Senate in 1976, thus relinquishing his House seat) to moderately liberal (e.g. Congressman John B. Anderson of Illinois).

A large portion of the contemporary American evangelical political writers and theorists also fall within the mainline
category. While some clearly reflect the conservative end of the political spectrum (e.g. H. Edward Rowe), most mainline evangelical political thinkers are moderates, holding a mix of both liberal and conservative views (e.g. Stephen Monsma).

The above paragraphs point to a discrepancy within mainline evangelicalism. While the vast majority of the (religiously conservative and/or fundamentalist) mainline evangelical laity holds conservative political views, the writings of mainline evangelical political theorists generally do not represent this pattern of thought. This political theory, coming for the most part from evangelical college faculties, tends to reflect a political position that is more liberal than that of the laity-constituency which the colleges serve. An anti-intellectual or an anti-intellectual element inherent in the nature of fundamentalism seems to preclude the formulation of systematic political theory. Though not necessarily unsophisticated in the broader cultural context, this mindset tends to find more comfortable political expression in God and country rallies, radio broadcasting, and politico-religious tract-type material. Frequently too, its Americanism (pointed to in Hatfield's comment on the previous page) contains an element of anti-communism that is almost doctrinal in nature. Carl McIntire, with his blend of Presbyterian theology and conservative Americanism preached daily over hundreds of radio stations, comes to mind here. When views from this facet of mainline evangelicalism are expressed in the form of published political commentary, the style is more that of the crusading journalist than of the patient political analyst.

This paper's basic concern is with evangelical political
theory; it is not a study of the political views of the evangelical laity. However this discrepancy between the views of the mainline evangelical political theorists and laity should not go unnoticed; for it is important in considering the future of evangelical politics in the United States.

One of the reasons that mainline evangelical political thought is the most American of the schemes discussed in this study is that it is most at home with and within American History. Tracing the original infusion of Christian political principle to the Puritans, mainline evangelicals generally perceive Christian principles to have been still largely regnant a century-and-a-half ago when the main American founding documents were drafted.® The principles outlined in or derived from the Constitution are generally taken to be Christian in character; the political and economic structures which have developed in America are considered basically satisfactory.

For mainline evangelicals, in short, America is basically sound, it has developed "a relatively just social system,"¹ and it provides a milieu and institutional framework within which Christian political expression is entirely possible.

Given this attitude toward the U.S., it comes as little surprise that some mainline evangelicals have a tendency to flirt with or even embrace what has come to be termed "American Civil Religion." This is especially true among the more conservative mainline evangelicals. This phenomenon is elaborated later in this and other chapters.
Stephen V. Monsma's *The Unraveling of America* is in several respects broadly representative of contemporary mainline evangelical political thinking. The scope, content, style, and (to some extent) proposed formulations of the work bespeak the mainline evangelical tradition from which it comes. Unlike some who are less systematic and comprehensive in their approach, Monsma proceeds from the most basic of principles to the most specific of proposals. Indeed, in his specificity his work is atypical of most evangelical political writing, which tends to be weakest when suggesting concrete proposals. Given the relative youth of the current evangelical political enterprise, many writers are still at the stage of searching for biblically based political principles. Further, a cultural distance from society's practical political problems and realities has tended to inhibit evangelical political writers in bridging the gap between principle and program. Monsma, in contrast, states his basic principles and then tentatively proceeds to try to translate them into possible programs for action.

Monsma, who is chairman of the Political Science Department at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, writes in the classic form: he begins with a discussion of the nature of man; thus armed, he proceeds to consider the nature of politics, giving appropriate attention to definition along the way. Having laid his philosophical groundwork, Monsma proceeds to deal with both American domestic and foreign policy, in each instance critiquing what he considers to be the philosophical starting points behind past and present policy and
then showing how the exposed weaknesses in theory have manifested themselves in policy. Finally, Monsma proffers for consideration a Christian alternative he terms "progressive realism," in which he addresses both domestic and foreign policy.

Let us now turn to some of these aspects of Monsma's work.

The Nature of Man

Man, says Monsma, is created in the image of God, a fact which results in his having certain "God-like" characteristics. He is a cultural being, to whom God gave certain distinctions and capacities that set him apart from the rest of creation. Man is a creative being, who must use his capacities and distinctions to perform certain tasks on earth. Man is a responsible being, given the capacity to make choices for which he is held accountable by God. Thus, Monsma concludes, that if culture is the "distinguishing mark" of mankind, and creativity "the moving force underlying culture," then "...in order to attain the fullest expression of what it means to be a person, one must be a willing, choosing, creative individual." But man is also a religious creature with a moral sense.

Man possesses the capacity --even the innate divine drive-- to judge things as morally good or bad... Man is unalterably a religious-moral being. Moral judgements fill his literature, actions and traditions...It is this dual creative-moral ability of man that comprises the image of God in man, that makes man in a real sense God-like. He is a thinking, willing being able to make moral judgements... Man, among all living beings, has the ennobling status of being at least a pale reflection of God in his perfect intelligence and goodness. It is this which makes man, human life, of inestimable worth.
Considering these capacities that God has given man, Monsma infers that man's basic purpose must somehow involve their proper use. And from biblical admonitions, he accordingly concludes:

Man's basic purpose is to exercise as fully as possible his creativity, guided by love for God and man. That is it. It is simple, yet the implications and applications are limitless.¹³

Monsma also looks to the Genesis account for insight into man's social nature (as do some other mainline evangelicals and some Kuyperian thinkers as well). From the creation of Adam's wife, Eve, Monsma concludes:

Man...is a social being; and thus it is only in conjunction with other human beings that he reaches the full essence of humanity, that he can attain the distinctive human traits of creativity and morality.¹⁴

Sin is an especially important foundational concept for Monsma's political theory. He specifically rejects what he calls "a naturalistic explanation" for the fact of sin, contending that the Bible does not teach that sin naturally originated in man's environment nor within man himself.

First, the Christians insist that man was created good, but fell into sin and therefore is morally responsible for the evil within him... Second, Christians see man's nature as being corrupted in a deeper, more far-reaching sense than do those offering a naturalistic explanation.¹⁵

As a result of man's falling from an original state of goodness into sin, "Man possesses an innate tendency to perform evil, moral-guilt-producing acts."¹⁶
The primary manifestation of sin among men is, says Monsma, violation of what Jesus posited as the foremost commandments: to love God with all one's heart, soul and mind, and to love one's neighbor as one's self. The "essence of sin --of the corruption in man's nature," Monsma says, is "pride, or love of self above all."17 Sin is thus not a "random assortment of specific acts" (sins); rather,

Finding its essence in rebellion against God and the enthroning of self in place of God as an object of worship, sin, in its specific acts, reaches to a wide range of acts and attitudes.18

What does sin thereby do to sociality and community? Monsma puts it this way:

Man's corruption is such that it tends to destroy community... Community must rest on mutual respect for the integrity of the person; sin is the antithesis of mutual respect. Sin, therefore, is a corrosive agent eating away at the bonds of human society.19

So: man was created good, with certain God-like characteristics; but man fell under the corrupting influence of sin. He is thus neither wholly evil nor wholly good. But what prevents evil from consuming good?

...the virtue and goodness we observe in man are there because God is actively restraining sin in man, not because man by his own powers is resisting the slide into the slough of absolute corruption...elements of goodness have been preserved in man... But man, and therefore society, is inclined toward evil.21

Monsma thus sees man faced with a paradox: "Man needs man; yet man cannot get along with man." And in the crucible of this
tension, Monsma finds the rise of the role and purpose of politics. 22

The Nature of Politics

Monsma's consideration of the nature of politics is taken up largely with development of definitions, a discussion of what he terms "true freedom," and determination of the proper place of politics in society.

In developing a preliminary framework within which the nature of government and politics can be effectively considered, Monsma posits certain basic concepts. "Legitimacy" is the acceptance of "...both the right of another person or institution to command one's obedience and the existence of one's obligation to obey these commands." 22 "Authority" is "...the capacity of a person or institution to command obedience in others because of the legitimacy accorded that person or institution by others." 23

Monsma is in agreement with "most present-day political scientists" in granting the importance of these two concepts for government and politics. What must be done, he asserts, is to carefully distinguish governmental authority from that of other societal institutions.

The government possesses the right to command obedience from all members of an entire society. Its authority is limited in its depth -- there are certain areas in which the government has no right to demand the obedience of its citizens-- but its authority is not limited in its societal scope. 24

"Politics" then is for Monsma "...the process of making
authoritative decisions for an entire society. Thus the government
is an institution and politics is what goes on within that institution.25

The idea of freedom is central to Monsma's conception of the
nature of politics; but he says that the word "freedom" has come to
have a problematic character.

Freedom is one of those words which has been used
and misused to the point that it communicates very
little. In today's world freedom --whatever it
is-- is considered to be something good... Yet
clarity concerning the nature of human freedom is
essential to an understanding of the role politics
plays in human society, since the role of politics
is tightly bound up with freedom and allied concepts
such as order and justice.26

To avoid the confusion that has accreted to the word "free-
dom," Monsma carefully moves toward a definition of an alternative
usage which he calls "true freedom."

He first notes that "absolute freedom" --to do simply what-
ever one pleases-- does not and cannot exist because of restrictions,
always present, over which one has no control.27 "But this basic
fact raises the difficult question of how, or according to what
principles, ought human freedom to be limited."28

Monsma proceeds toward a solution to this problem --and
toward a definition of "true freedom"-- through a consideration
of rights and obligations. A right --"that which justly accrues
to or is due a person"-- is always counterbalanced by an obligation.
These are "two inseparable sides of the same coin." Man, created in
God's image and with certain God-like capacities, "...surely has an
intrinsic worth and thereby intrinsic rights as well." And these
rights are "inalienable."29
Further, Monsma argues, as rights are expanded, so too are obligations. "...[A]s rights are expanded and protected, obligations and disadvantages, which restrict an individual's free choice, are also expanded. The very acts which expand freedom also contract it." 30

The rub then is to establish a criterion or criteria for weighing competing rights and obligations; and here Monsma returns to his conception of man's nature. He finds the basis for this needed standard in "...man's central God-given purpose as a creative, moral being..." 31

In light of this discussion Monsma is now prepared to define "true freedom." True freedom, Monsma says, is

...that condition under which man has the greatest opportunity to exercise and develop his creative capacity in keeping with love of God and man --the essence of the image of God inherent in him... True freedom in society is increased when more persons rather than fewer persons are given opportunities to act creatively in love; true freedom is increased in society when persons have the opportunity to act in more important ways in keeping with love of God and man rather than in less important ways in keeping with love of God and man or not in keeping with love of God and man at all. 32

True freedom, then, is for Monsma a matter of opportunity, of open possibility. It is a frame within which every man can exercise the unique capacities which befall him qua image of God. And as will be seen in his proposed "progressive realism," true freedom is also for Monsma a workable criterion for making societal decisions.

Having thus arrived at the meaning of "true freedom," Monsma
goes on to define: justice -- "the apportionment of rights and obligations which maximizes true freedom;" order -- "a condition in which rights and obligations are apportioned in a regular, predictable manner;" a just order -- where "rights and obligations are apportioned in a regular, predictable manner and in such a way that freedom is maximized;" an unjust order -- where "rights and obligations are apportioned in a regular, predictable manner, but in such a way that freedom is minimized (or at least falls short of being maximized);" and disorder -- where "rights and obligations are apportioned in a capricious, shifting manner, instead of in a regular, predictable manner." (It might be well to observe, especially in light of the usages of this paragraph, that after positing his definition of "true freedom," Monsma goes on to use the phrase interchangeably with the word "freedom." This is common throughout the remainder of his discussions.)

Monsma is now prepared to draw some conclusions regarding the role of politics in society. Because of man's excessive self-love, "a chaotic war of all against all" would result if no checks were placed on man. But because the government has society-wide authority, community is still possible. Man's sin "threatens all mankind with a breakdown of community;" and since the creation of the just order cannot come about through individual agents, "...politics -- the political resolution of conflicts-- remains as man's only hope for the establishment of a just order." So Monsma concludes that

The purpose of politics is to establish an order which maximizes man's true freedom, that is, man's opportunity to develop and exercise his creative capacities in keeping with God's law of love.
But while government and politics can do much to establish community and conditions of personal true freedom, they are limited. For the government itself is composed of men and women who themselves have natures disjointed by sin. "Politics thereby is a case of a physician seeking to cure an infection by a means which is itself contaminated by the same infection... At best, the cure is going to remain incomplete, imperfect." 36

In this lengthy discussion of a major portion of The Unraveling of America, Monsma's conception of "the infection" has been detailed. But what is "the cure" that he himself suggests? The answer to this question is found in Monsma's "progressive realism."

**Progressive Realism**

In considering American political history, Monsma analyzes the premises, political and governmental views, and practical results of three traditional political theories: traditional conservatism, classical liberalism, and revisionist liberalism and democratic socialism (he treats the last two as one). Monsma sees these traditional theories as having produced essentially three political alternatives now considered viable by many on the American scene: conservatism, which is basically the old classical liberalism; American liberalism, which is in the tradition of revisionist liberalism and democratic socialism; and new left radical, which shares some of the basic assumptions of old left liberalism, but which has also been subject to influences from outside the three
traditional approaches (e.g. existentialism).

Monsma sees conservatism, American liberalism and new left radicalism all leading to "dead ends."

Ignoring the actual nature and needs of man and seeking to build a post-Christian view of man on the basics of humanism, scientism and existentialism, they turn idealism into despair, hope into fear. A better way is needed.37

That better way, Monsma feels, might be progressive realism. He cautions that he does not pretend to propose a "tight, neatly packaged Christian answer to the issue of the proper role of government" in societal affairs. Rather than an answer, he is offering

...movement toward an answer --movement which carries us beyond the alternatives currently being offered and gives hope that the political process can be made to serve justice and freedom more fully than they [sic] do now.38

Progressive realism is progressive in that "...it believes progress is possible and strives to attain it." It is realism in that "...it attempts to take a hard-nosed, realistic approach to man and society."39

Basic to progressive realism are three fundamental tenets, two of which have already been discussed: the combination of good and evil implicit in man's nature, and the proper role of politics (as discussed above). Progressive realism's third basic tenet is an organic conception of society similar to that of traditional conservatism and approximated, for political purposes, in the modern political science notion of "political culture."
Monsma sees progressive realism's tenets expressing themselves in three primary ways. First, in...

...an activist, interventionist, humane politics. The oppressions, the sufferings, the exploitations present in society are recognized for what they are. The powerful grind the poor and powerless into the dirt, majority groups create a closed system into which minority group members have no access, and the rich use their wealth to live in a surfeit of self-centered luxury.

Though the sense of biblical justice moves the Christian to concern over such a state of affairs, Monsma says that the answers to three questions should determine whether or not a given political solution should be attempted: would enactment result in a loss of freedom by some segment of society (e.g. those who would lose purchasing choices by having to pay for a given program through additional taxes)? If the answer here is an expected "yes," a second question must be asked: would the proposed political solution then result in a "net gain of freedom for society?" Considered here would be the comparative number of those obtaining rights and advantages and those obtaining obligations and disadvantages, and the comparative importance and value of the rights and advantages being accrued by one group and the obligations and disadvantages being incurred by another. The third question is whether there is a political or a non-political alternative solution that would result in even greater freedom for the society as a whole.

In considering the questions posited here, one needs to recall the discussion of "true freedom" in the previous section of this chapter. In asking these questions, Monsma is attempting to
establish his definition of "true freedom" as a criterion for governmental decision making. Indeed, Monsma sees this as precisely the strength of his proposed decision-making model. By thus proposing to institutionalize true freedom as a decision making criterion, Monsma is seeking a politics that will have an inherent structural tendency to enlarge rather than contract the aggregate of individual opportunities to exercise the creative capacities of man created in the image of God. (It is apparent from the context that Monsma's interchangeable use of "freedom" and "true freedom" in stating his three questions represents no substantive distinction; it is likely a stylistic device.)

Monsma acknowledges the difficulty of applying such a mechanistic formulation (the asking of three questions) in concrete circumstances. But he thinks that the strength of making "true freedom" the criterion for societal decision-making overcomes this weakness.

In applying his own criteria in two cases, Monsma concludes that a comprehensive government health care program would expand true freedom in American society, and that substitution of a rehabilitative for a punitive system of dealing with criminals would reduce the overall true freedom for society.

In addition to the formulation of three basic questions which must be asked of any proposed political solution, Monsma suggests a second way that his progressive realism would manifest itself: through "...a cautious, watchful attitude toward public policy making which prefers to feel its way rather than suddenly to jump into a wholly new policy." This would result in "rolling
incrementalism" in policy application and change, supplemented by pilot test programs as a prelude to policy making.

A third development of progressive realism would be an improved system of institutionalized administrative checks designed to assure that the bureaucratic institutions "...will not be turned aside from the purposes for which they were..." created. Congress' delegation of less discretionary power to policy administrators and the inclusion of "sunset" provisions in laws are two such checks that Monsma proposes.

An Evangelical Lacuna

The care with which Stephen Monsma works out a political program for progressive realism is uncommon in the mainline evangelical tradition of which he is a part. The peculiarity does not lie primarily in the philosophical drift of progressive realism: some of his fellows would be comfortable with his direction, and some would doubtlessly consider it too liberal or statist for their political tastes.

Rather, Monsma's work is unusual in the extent to which he translates his evangelical principles into a more precise formulation --however tentative-- that attempts to speak to the political and governmental realities of contemporary America. Much mainline evangelical writing contents itself with a statement of basic biblical principles to be applied to governmental policy and politics, follows up with arguments urging application of these principles, and then stops short of applying them.
One reason for this is the youth of the whole evangelical political enterprise in contemporary America. It has only been as the movement for social concern has begun to flower, in recent years, that evangelical writers have tried to bring their faith to bear on mundane political matters. Much of the resultant literature still reflects the continuing controversy over social concern. Mainline evangelical political writers frequently still feel the need to justify the very enterprise in which they are engaged.

Paul B. Henry addressed this problem well in correspondence with this writer:

...there is next to nothing by way of systematic exploration of political questions from an evangelical perspective... The basic problem the evangelical community faces in politics is that it refuses to concede that politics is a prudential and applied art. While it rests on normative principles, its decisions need [to] be made on the basis of practical alternatives. We need people to bridge [the distance] from normative values to practical alternatives. But instead, we get theologians talking down to politicians or vice versa. Seldom do we get people fluent in both fields, [such] as Niebuhr. This is not just a theoretical problem, but a social problem reflecting the alienation of much of evangelical culture from society itself. Thus, behavioral practices mitigate against overcoming past theoretical failures.47

Among mainline evangelical thinkers, Monsma was one of the first and is still one of the very few to have attempted to bridge the gap noted by Henry.

John B. Anderson

Congressman John B. Anderson is widely admired both in and
out of evangelical circles. Indeed, Elizabeth Drew, a political writer for The New Yorker, termed Anderson "one of the most thoughtful members of Congress" in a recent article in that magazine. He is liked by the press for his penchant to answer questions directly and concisely rather than talking around them.

Anderson, a Republican who represents a very conservative constituency in upstate Illinois, has in recent years been making conscious efforts toward applying his evangelical religious faith to his governmental and political work.

When I asked him, during a private interview on February 3, 1977, how his evangelical perspective has most affected his politics, Anderson unequivocally responded, "It has made me more sensitive than I would have otherwise been to that broad area of rights that we describe as human rights or civil rights." He added,

In the area of human rights, and pushing to the outer limits the legitimate claims of government in protecting and preserving and enlarging them, I would proudly claim the banner of liberal because my understanding of Scripture, my interpretation of Scripture is that this is one area where Christ literally commands us to be liberal in our thoughts.

This issue came into practical focus for Anderson in 1968 on an open housing question. In that year, the House of Representatives had passed a mild civil rights bill to which the Senate had appended an open housing clause. (The bill was under consideration when Martin Luther King was slain on April 4 of that year.) The House Rules Committee was then faced with the choice of recommending passage of the Senate version or of sending the bill
to a conference committee where the open housing provision would probably have been deleted. Anderson, then a member of Rules, voted with seven Democrats to recommend passage. The eight-to-seven vote in Rules was followed by passage in the full House, and thus the Civil Rights Act of 1968 was enacted.

This open housing issue, Anderson said during our interview,

...really became a desperate matter of conscience with me. At that time, in relating to a very conservative constituency, it seemed almost instinctively that it would be the kind of issue on which I would vote "no"[as he had done two years before], vote against the federal government involving itself directly in prescribing what people could or could not do in the sale or leasing of private property and housing. But I became convinced that there was this transcendent value of human dignity and of human rights that had to take precedence over property rights...

And in his book Between Two Worlds, Anderson relates:

There came to bear in my thinking the realization that as a Christian --as one who believes that God created all men in His own Image, and of one blood; and as one who believes that the Son of God brought His message of salvation without regard to race, color, or ethnic background-- I had to be willing to give up old prejudices...49

But in applying his faith to his work, Anderson said that he does not feel that a Christian politician should impose his own morality on someone else's conscience through legislation. Freedom of conscience, Anderson says, is one of the basic human rights which must be protected. During our interview he cited his views on abortion as exemplary of his position on conscience. Abortion is an issue on which he thinks
...Christians can disagree. It's been painful, because I know some of my fellow evangelicals disagree violently with my not supporting a constitutional amendment to ban it.

Anderson tied his position to what he termed "the sanctity of the individual," and the individual's right to freedom of choice, to make even the wrong decision. I'm not suggesting that a decision to have an abortion is the right decision. I think it's unfortunate, I think it is probably even sinful in the eyes of God... But I believe so deeply that, when we once start to circumscribe the freedom of the individual in that delicate area of conscience, we set in motion things that can really be very weakening and debilitating to our whole democratic structure. I've come down on the side of individual right and freedom of choice and have decided that I would not support that [anti-abortion] amendment.

It would be well to note here that Anderson's antipathy against legislating morality into the public conscience is shared by others in the mainline evangelical political tradition.

Monsma intimates just this when, in another context, he approvingly quotes C.S. Lewis as asserting, "It may be better to live under robber barons than under omnipotent moral busybodies..." Richard Mouw states, "There is no value in restricting behavior just because it is sinful behavior. We are justified in promoting legislation only when it is aimed at a more equitable distribution of rights and opportunities." Such a view is also held by Kuyperian political thinkers, although they differ with Anderson on the abortion question.

In suggesting during our interview that "Christians ought to be sensitized to social issues above all," Anderson did not
limit his intent to abortion and human rights. When I asked him to suggest some manifestations of "institutional sin" other than some alluded to in his *Vision and Betrayal in America* (such as materialism and militarism), Anderson listed not only hunger and poverty as "prime examples," but also our "apparent indifference to those things." Noting that a large percentage of the world's four billion inhabitants live below a standard of basic subsistence, Anderson lamented the

...great complacency, even among Christians who fail to see that this has any relevance to the kind of compassion that Christ called on us to exhibit when he said, 'Unless you feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and visit he who is in prison, you do not really serve me and honor me...'. We ought to carry over these principles and address those problems not only in our own country but in the world.

Compromise and Political Participation

In discussing formulation of policy from a Christian viewpoint, Congressman Anderson warned several times during the interview against too narrowly stating the Christian view on each and every issue. One must avoid "doctrinal rigidity." This relates closely to Anderson's view, expressed in *Vision and Betrayal in America*, on the need for flexibility and compromise, a point developed by other mainline evangelicals as well. Anderson notes that refusal to compromise is an abdication of the political arena to the gain of "...those who do not share the ethical orientation and commitments in which one believes. When one has strong beliefs, this becomes an abandonment of moral responsibility."
Mainline evangelicals recognize the problem that compromise raises for evangelical Christians involved in politics. Robert Linder and Richard Pierard deal with the problem of compromise by distinguishing between compromise on "personal opinions," which is acceptable, and compromise on "Christian convictions about fundamental moral issues," which is unacceptable.54

Paul Henry, however, takes a less sanguine view.55 Given that conflict in integral to politics, Henry says that compromise is just as integral. Noting that no single man or party reflects the truth in a human situation ("While truth is not relative, man's grasp of it is."), Henry terms the ability to compromise "the mark of political maturity." But he acknowledges that "Politics, then, always demands compromise with evil." This, for Henry, is part of the "moral ambiguity of politics." It is an ambiguity which extends to other facets of human existence as well, even for the evangelical Christian who is dedicated to "an infallible and eternal Word which establishes absolute standards for human behavior."

However Henry concludes that other mitigating factors of human existence establish the legitimacy of Christian participation in politics: while God's truth is made known through the Scriptures, even evangelical Christians cannot hope to apply it perfectly; not only can evangelicals not apply these standards perfectly, but they also of necessity will have imperfect knowledge of the facts out of which they formulate their ethical decisions; and no one, including the evangelical, is able to perceive all the unanticipated consequences of a given act or proposal. Henry says that the Christian must acknowledge his or her own limitations; and he or she must also
recognize that others, even of a different moral background, may accurately perceive a course compatible with a Christian, biblical view. Thus, "Our inability to come to a perfect understanding of God's will does not serve as an excuse for silence. Rather it calls for humility and restraint."

A resolution of the problem of compromise is important to mainline evangelical political thought because it involves an implied backdrop to the mode of political participation which they advocate, i.e. involvement in regular American party politics. Most mainline evangelicals consider formation of a Christian political party to be an undesirable prospect. Rather, mainline evangelicals who advocate that Christians "get into politics" suggest the Republican and Democratic Parties as the appropriate channel. Indeed, Anderson suggests strengthening the present party system as a means of gaining more effective control over the government.

Civil Religion

One of the major themes of Congressman Anderson's Vision and Betrayal in America is his insistence on the need for America to rediscover "...that essential civic religion which helps to bond a contemporary society to its historic purpose... There has been a collapse of belief in and acceptance of some of those moral presuppositions which constitute the anchor of our democratic faith." Just what is this civic religion?

The civic religion consists of that body of national ideology and traditions that provide the 'glue' by
which the diverse religious, ethnic, and regional interests of the country are held in place... The point is that every nation has a civic religion... The problem is to insure that the civic religion is a good one.60

The nation needs a civic religion to foster societal cohesion, Anderson is saying, but it must be a "good one." Does this mean that it must be a biblically Christian one? Anderson is ambivalent. In his book, he attempts to trace American civic religion to "the Christian ethic as it has been passed down to the modern era from the Middle Ages;" but he can only do this by channeling that ethic through what he suggests are the at best partially-biblical theories of Locke and Jefferson. At one point he comes close to identifying "civic religion" and the "Christian ethic." But the relationship between his two "religions" is never clearly established in the book.

When I asked Anderson about this relationship during our interview, he remained ambivalent. On the one hand he indicated a sensitivity to the danger of civic religion imbuing America with a moral self-righteousness; but on the other hand, "I think there is a body of tradition that, as a Christian nation, is worth hanging onto."

The key to this difficulty lies in Anderson's usage "as a Christian nation." Anderson shares with other mainline evangelical political thinkers a tendency to view America as a Christian nation --if not now then at least in some more pristine past. Indeed, this tendency sometimes finds expression as a kind of yearning:
How long can one appeal to the Christian ethic as a morally unifying and inspiring force in a society which at the same time is repudiating the Christian religion?63

One senses that mainline evangelicals badly want America to have been a Christian nation. It is not coincidental that three volumes representing a broad spectrum of content and style in mainline evangelical political thought share a common word in each of their titles: Save America!; Vision and Betrayal in America; The Unraveling of America. America is being threatened and undermined — a Christian political response is demanded! Thus the mainline evangelicals of Christ offer their loyal response to the red, white and blue.

At the beginning of this chapter it was noted that of the three developments in evangelical thought to be considered in this paper, mainline evangelical political thought is the most "at-home" in America. As represented in this chapter, mainline evangelical politics is also "at-home" in America's political life. The political participation that Paul Henry urges in Democratic and Republican Party affairs readily fits these established American political molds. Outstanding differences are primarily in emphasis or in the non-traditional mix of the given historical elements because of a biblical starting point.

It would be misleading to suggest that mainline evangelical political thought as a whole is merely a manifestation of a quasi-Christian civil religion. But I would suggest that the affinity of this developing political thought with traditional American political
conceptions does raise a valid question: does mainline evangelical political thought offer a Christian justification of certain favored, comfortable aspects of the American political way more than it offers a distinctly Christian alternative to that American way?
Notes for Chapter III


5. See Hadden, The Growing Storm in the Churches.

6. For a sample of this mixture of religion and Americanism see McIntire's own Author of Liberty (2nd edition; 1963. No publisher or place of publication listed. "Distributed by" 20th Century Reformation Hour, Collingswood, N.J.)

7. For some political writings that are so severe that it is questionable whether they even belong on the extreme right end of the evangelical scale, see Billy James Hargis, Communist America: Must It Be? (Tulsa, Okla.: Christian Crusade, 1960); John Stormer, None Dare Call It Treason (Florissant, Missouri: Liberty Bell Press, 1964), especially chapter 7, pp. 124ff.


10. For a more complete discussion of this point, see pp. 50-52 below.

11. Monsma, Unraveling, pp. 12, 13, 17, 18. In the following lengthy discussion of Monsma, I will tend to group footnote citations at the end of paragraphs.

12. Ibid., pp. 19, 20.
13. Ibid., pp. 22, 23.
15. Ibid., p. 33.
17. Ibid., p. 35.
18. Ibid., pp. 35-36.
19. Ibid., p. 35.
20. Ibid., p. 38.
21. Ibid., pp. 39, 57.
22. Ibid., p. 42.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid., p. 44.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid., p. 45.
27. Ibid., pp. 45-48.
28. Ibid., p. 48.
46. Monsma concludes his work with a discussion of foreign policy similar in style to that of his domestic policy discussions: he delineates and critiques the various viewpoints he perceives as having held and continuing to hold hegemony in foreign policy thinking, and then offers a progressive realist alternative. Though I forsake discussion of this phase of Monsma's work because of space limitations, it is worthy of note because Monsma is one of the few evangelicals who has offered systematic discussion of foreign policy issues.

47. Paul B. Henry, in February 25, 1977, private correspondence with this writer.


50. Monsma, Unraveling, p. 132.


53. Ibid., p. 122.


55. P. Henry, Politics for Evangelicals, pp. 68-79 (for citations in this and the next paragraph).

56. See e.g., Linder and Pierard, Politics, p. 120; Carl F.H. Henry, Aspects of Christian Social Ethics, p. 145; and Congressman Anderson noted twice during our interview of 2/3/77 the undesirability of forming a Christian Party.

57. See e.g., P. Henry, Politics for Evangelicals, pp. 113ff.; Linder and Pierard, Politics, pp. 119-121. This "party model" of evangelical political involvement is discussed further in chapter 7 below.


59. Ibid., p. 6.

60. Ibid., pp. 55-56.
Anderson's mild criticism of John Locke is a theme that is repeated more strongly and more systematically by Monsma and Paul Henry who critique portions of Locke's political theory which they think fail to meet the biblical standard being sought by evangelicals. This points to a characteristic common to most evangelicals seriously engaged in political analysis: the "evangelical" or "Christian" character of a person's ideas is not primarily related to whether that person is himself or herself a Christian nor whether he or she writes on topics specifically relating to Christianity. The writings of any thinker under consideration --even a fellow contemporary evangelical-- are analyzed in the light of perceived biblical principles and are thereby judged as being Christian or non-Christian. So in the present instance, for example, John Locke's own personal religious condition (whether or not he was a Christian) is of no concern to Monsma or Henry --indeed, neither even bothers to address this phase of Locke's life. But both concentrate on his political writings, and there find elements of his thought which they feel represent influences other than those proceeding from biblical principles. See Monsma, Unraveling, pp. 80-81, and P. Henry, Politics for Evangelicals, pp. 29ff., especially p. 32. It will be seen in chapter 5 below that Kuyperian thinkers view Locke in a similar fashion.

63. Ibid., p. 49.
Anabaptists have always been different. Throughout the history of their religious tradition they have persistently maintained an identity both within Protestantism and have remained apart from its dominant elements. Distinctions of belief --especially an unadulterated pacifism-- and visible lifestyle have set them apart even in the modern period. Indeed, "plain dress," with its somber colors and austere cut, was still common earlier in this century, and remnants of this physical differentiation are not unknown today.

In recent years, as Mennonite scholars have begun to consider the implications of the anabaptist tradition for contemporary society, anabaptism's radical character has become more pronounced. And as the "recovery of the anabaptist vision" has expressed itself in concern for political matters, it has had a significant impact not only within the anabaptist community, but also among American political elements ranging from a U.S. Senator to former members of the New Left.

John Howard Yoder, who has been called the "dean of Mennonite scholars," has attempted to bring this anabaptist vision to bear on the political dimension. And his The Politics of Jesus is easily the single most comprehensive and representative statement of contemporary radical anabaptist political thought.
Yoder's style and approach are as reflective of his anabaptist religious tradition as Monsma's are of his Reformed-Calvinist heritage. As noted earlier, the propensity of the magisterial reformers to construct powerful intellectual super-structures was largely absent in sixteenth century anabaptism, which was more concerned with the Christian life. Writing in this tradition, Yoder's primary concern in The Politics of Jesus is not the development of a systematic political theory. Rather, he is concerned with the relation between the Christian life and politics. He approaches his topic by considering the examples set by biblical characters. And what better place to begin, in Christianity, than with Jesus Christ himself?

A Politics of Jesus?

This study...claims not only that Jesus is, according to the biblical witness, a model of radical political action, but that this issue is now generally visible throughout New Testament studies...

Yoder claims that the conclusions he draws from the biblical account do not represent a departure from existing biblical interpretations, but result instead from a reading of the gospel account with one question always at the fore:

'Is there here a social ethic?' I shall, in other words, be testing the hypothesis that runs counter to the prevalent assumptions [in most ethical circles]: the hypothesis that the ministry and claims of Jesus are best understood as presenting to men not the avoidance of political options, but one particular social-political-ethical option.

Before proceeding to state that "social-political-ethical
option," it will be of interest to note some examples of how Yoder's reading of the gospel results in his constant extraction of political meaning and consequence from it. (Yoder uses Luke's gospel --usually the RSV-- for his reading, but claims that either of the other synoptic gospels could be used as well.)

Yoder is impressed by the political terminology used throughout the gospels. For example at the beginning of Luke, after the annunciation to Mary by the angel Gabriel, the young woman responds to God in what has come to be known as "the Magnificat," which reads in part:

He has shown strength with his arm,
He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts,
He has put down the mighty from their thrones,
And exalted those of low degree;
He has filled the hungry with good things,
And the rich he has sent away empty.

(Luke 1:51-53)

And a few verses later, Zechariah, father of John the Baptist, is said to be filled with the Holy Spirit upon the birth of his son, and sings of God's promise:

That we should be saved from our enemies,
And from the hand of all who hate us,
...to grant that we,
Being delivered from the hand of our enemies,
Might serve him without fear.

(Luke 1:71, 74)

"Strength with his arm;" "the mighty from their thrones;" "filled the hungry;" "sent away" the rich; "delivered from the hand of our enemies." These, for Yoder, are all words fraught with political meaning and implications (especially, one might also
observe, as they were uttered within the political context of occupation by a hated Roman army).

Such language, Yoder indicates, is echoed by Jesus himself when, at the very beginning of his ministry, he went to the synagogue in Nazareth on the Sabbath and read from the prophet Isaiah:

> He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor;  
> He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives;  
> And recovering of sight to the blind;  
> To set at liberty those who are oppressed,  
> To proclaim the acceptable year of Jahweh.  
> (Luke 4:18-19)

"Good news to the poor;" "release of captives;" "set at liberty those who are oppressed." Again, language with a distinctive political ring.

Yoder takes these and other passages in Luke and weaves a tapestry that presents Jesus as cognizant of his political significance in his role as Messiah, the King who will free his people; shows Jewish and Roman authorities as recognizing the political threat and plotting to deal with it; and shows Jesus tempted throughout his ministry with the option of "messianic violence" as the means of establishing his Kingdom, a temptation he rejects to the bitter end.

Jesus' going to the cross rather than taking the violent route of establishing his Kingdom in ancient Israel does not therefore mean, says Yoder, that he thereby rejected a political option. Quite to the contrary,

...the suffering of the Messiah is the inauguration of the kingdom... The cross is not a detour or a hurdle on the way to the kingdom, nor is it even the way to the kingdom; it is the kingdom come.
Nor, he says, was this kingdom an ethereal, otherworldly promise:

Jesus was, in his divinely mandated (i.e. promised, anointed, messianic) prophethood, priesthood, and kingship, the bearer of a new possibility of human, social, and therefore political relationships.

The Politics of Jesus

What, in light of all this then, is the "one particular social-political-ethical option" which Yoder indicated in his hypothesis is critical to a social ethic of Jesus?

Only at one point, only on one subject --but then consistently, universally-- is Jesus our example: in his cross... The believer's cross must be, like his Lord's, the price of his social nonconformity. It is not, like sickness or catastrophe, an inexplicable, unpredictable suffering; it is the end of a path freely chosen after counting the cost... it is the social reality of representing in an unwilling world the Order to come.

What Yoder is saying is that for the Christian, the kingdom of Christ has come, and has come in all areas of life, including the political. Thus the biblical promises regarding the coming of the kingdom are for now and not for some future time. For the Christian in this kingdom, there is no more hunger, because Christians share and none go hungry. For the Christian in the kingdom there is no more war, because Christians individually and collectively refuse to war anymore. For the Christian in the kingdom there is no more oppression, because Christians refuse to enter into oppressive relationships with each other and with others. The
reality of the kingdom is now because Christians live it now, following the example of Jesus and his cross.

The Powers

Yoder gives considerable attention to the frequent references in the New Testament to "the powers," a conception he considers to be of major importance to an understanding of politics. Noting the ambiguity of the meaning of "powers" as used by St. Paul in his writings, Yoder suggests that in its broadest sense the usage points "...to some kind of capacity to make things happen." 14

Citing suggestions by Hendrik Berkhof, Yoder lists some "...concrete modern phenomena...[that Berkhof considers] structurally analogous to the Powers." Among these (and of especial interest to this paper) are "...the administration of justice and the ordering of the state," "the State, politics, class, social struggle, national interest,..." 15

The powers, says Yoder, were created by God, and were good; unfortunately, "...we have no access to the good creation of God. Man and his world are fallen, and in this the powers have their own share." Though "these structures which were supposed to be our servants have become our masters and guardians," their workings are, despite their fallenness, not "limitlessly evil" because they are still subject to God. 16

Inasmuch as these structures and forces provide for the existence of man, society and history, man cannot live without them. But as they enslave man and try to draw his loyalty to themselves,
man cannot live with them. Yoder says that Jesus broke the sovereignty of the powers in his life "...by living among men a genuinely free and human existence."^17

Here we have for the first time to do with a man who is not the slave of any power, of any law or custom, community or institution, value or theory. Not even to save his own life will he let himself be made a slave of these powers.18

What, then, is to be the present day Christian's relationship with these powers? It would seem that in answering this, we would get an insight into a crucial portion of Yoder's view of politics and the political; and we are not disappointed.

Yoder quotes Berkhof, saying that he represents his own view:

...since Christ a new force has made its entry on the stage of salvation history: the church... The very existence of the church...is itself a proclamation, a sign, a token to the Powers that their unbroken dominion has come to an end. Thus even this text [under discussion] says nothing of a positive or aggressive approach to the powers. Such an approach is superfluous because the very presence of the church in a world ruled by the Powers is a superlatively positive and aggressive fact... the church herself is resistance and attack... she demonstrates in her life how men can live freed from the Powers. [emphasis mine.]19

Thus the church --by which Yoder and Berkhof both mean the body of believers constituting the Christian community, not the institutionalized "Church" in its denominational and organizational manifestations-- is by its very example a statement to the world. It is the life of the church that is the Christian's means of relating to the powers, including government, politics, and the state. "The church does not attack the powers; this Christ has
done. The church concentrates upon not being seduced by them."\(^{20}\)

The church's task is stated even more specifically by Yoder in quoting J.H. Oldham. In addition to filling its "primary task of preaching the Word and being a worshipping community,

There is nothing greater that the church can do for society than to be a center in which small groups of persons are together entering into this experience of renewal and giving each other mutual support in Christian living and action in secular spheres.\(^{21}\)

The church then, in Yoder's conception, is itself in its own life and existence a political statement to the society at large. By example, or by witness, the church changes society in all aspects, including the political. "...the primary social structure through which the gospel works to change other structures is that of the Christian community."\(^{22}\)

What Yoder is proposing here is not simply a different viewpoint on political issues, but rather a virtual redefinition of politics, what might be termed an "anti-politics." The church as a community (a term which itself has political connotations) of believers is political by its example rather than by its participation in the political process as commonly defined.

Any doubt that this is Yoder's meaning is dispelled in his warning against "the temptation of the Sadducees,"\(^{23}\) that is ...

...the assumption that the forces that really determine the march of history are in the hands of the leaders of the armies and the markets, in such measure that if Christians are to contribute to the renewal of society they will need to seek, like everyone else -- in fact in competition with everyone else-- to become in their turn the lords
of the state and the economy, so as to use that power toward the ends they consider desirable.\textsuperscript{24}

Yoder states this even more emphatically later when he terms "inappropriate and preposterous" the until recently "prevailing assumption" that "...the fundamental responsibility of the church for society is to manage it."\textsuperscript{25}

No, the disciple of Jesus Christ does not, in Yoder's scheme, engage in politics in the traditional American sense. Rather,

He chooses not to exercise certain types of power because, in a given context, the rebellion of the structure of a given particular power is so incorrigible that at the time the most effective way to take responsibility is to refuse to collaborate, and by that refusal to take sides in favor of the men whom that power is oppressing. This refusal is not a withdrawal from society. It is rather a major negative intervention within the process of social change, a refusal to use unworthy means even for what seems to be a worthy end.\textsuperscript{26}

It is in this sense of "major negative intervention" and in the corresponding sense of "Christian witness"\textsuperscript{27} to the social order and the state that the crux of the Christian's relationship to politics can be found. Further, Yoder argues in other portions of The Politics of Jesus, this non-collaboration and non-participation must always take place within a non-violent context.\textsuperscript{28}

Pacifism has been a central tenet of anabaptist thought since the 1520's.\textsuperscript{29} It would be of interest to note here what Yoder does not mean by a non-violent stance.

One specifically does not use non-violent resistance as a political tool to coerce a certain course of action out of an historical situation. Rather, one gives up all forms of coercion,
including non-violent ones, if they lead men to violate other men's dignity. One does so even if it means foregoing a favorable social or political outcome.

...our readiness to renounce our legitimate ends whenever they cannot be attained by legitimate means itself constitutes our participation in the triumphant suffering of the Lamb.30

(This, according to early Quakerism, is how Christians participate in the "war of the lamb.")

What this pacifism does imply for Yoder is an acceptance of powerlessness on the part of the Christian community. The powerlessness of the church is the expression of Christ confronting the Powers of the world. Powerlessness involves the renunciation of efficacy as a criterion for action. Obedience to Christian principle, and possible defeat, are far preferable to complicity with evil, and success. Not only do the ends not justify the means, but the ends are beyond the scope of the Christian's concern: at the cross, Christ himself demonstrated and assured that simple obedience always serves his ends. Powerlessness is thus always victorious, even in the apparent defeat of death on a cross.

...the calculating link between our obedience and ultimate efficacy has been broken, since the triumph of God comes through resurrection and not through effective sovereignty or assured survival.31

Further, powerlessness means relinquishing any sense of responsibility for making history move in the right direction. Again, the need to dominate men and powers so that a proper course of affairs can be charted was obviated by Christ who, through his own obedience at
the cross, once and for all assured the final victory of the lamb. Having thus relinquished its responsibility for a course of affairs over which only Christ is the Lord, the church can now turn to matters less grand, though vital to the kingdom come:

A church once freed from compulsiveness and from the urge to manage the world might then find ways and words to suggest to men outside her bounds the invitation to a servant stance in society.32

A Politics of Jesus?

A question which arises in light of Yoder's insistence on non-participation in the powers is this: is his position truly a political one? Does radical anabaptism properly pertain to politics and political activity and thought?

Yoder himself addresses this question in a footnote where he objects to limiting the meaning of the term "political" to senses involving only coercive political participation.

...non-violence and non-nationalism are relevant to the polis, i.e. to the structuring of relationships among men in groups, and are therefore political in their own proper way.33

Elsewhere, in discussing a traditional disjunction between "the political" and "the sectarian," Yoder says that to consider any position --presumably including his own-- to be "a-political" is to

...deny the powerful (sometimes conservative, sometimes revolutionary) impact on society of the creation of an alternative social group and to overrate both the power and manageability of those particular social
structures identified as 'political.'

Yoder thus calls for Christian politics; but it is a politics of negative intervention, of non-collaboration, of witness to government and politics rather than direct participation in them. What is the witness? It is the demonstrated alternative being lived daily by a new peoplehood in Christ's kingdom that has come. As with their sixteenth century forebearers, the political stance of modern radical anabaptists is one of protest. It is a protest against "what is" by living, in space and time, "what ought to be."

Before concluding our discussion of Yoder, let us yet consider two more elements which he implies are essential to the "ought to be" of this contemporary age.

The Jubilee

In the Old Testament book of Leviticus, chapter 25, one finds Mosaic rules for the sabbatical year and the year of Jubilee. These deal primarily with four aspects of life among the ancient Hebrews: leaving the soil fallow, remission of debt, liberation of slaves, and the return of family property to its original owners. If followed, these two institutions would have had the effect of preventing perpetual poverty and perpetual slavery, and probably would have placed restraints on the vast accumulation of wealth.

Yoder contends that Jesus re-establishes for Christians the year of Jubilee. This is the "acceptable year of the Lord" that Jesus referred to at the opening of his ministry, Yoder suggests. And he argues that the word translated "debt/debtors" in the Lord's
Prayer refers precisely to monetary debt and is distinct from the term meaning "offenses" or "transgressions."^{36}

Debt, as thus conceived in the Lord's Prayer and in the Jubilee concept, is "the paradigmatic social evil." By beginning his ministry with a reading from the text of Isaiah 61, Yoder suggests that Jesus was announcing "...a new regime whose marks would be that rich would give to poor, the captives would be freed, and men would have a new mentality...if they believed this news."^{37}

What are the implications of the Jubilee for the life of the Christian community?

...it is a visible socio-political, economic restructuring of relations among the people of God, achieved by his intervention in the person of Jesus as the one Anointed and endued with the Spirit.^{38}

Yoder ventures little in the way of concrete suggestion on how this "restructuring of relations" might take place. He does dissociate himself from any view of Jesus as having prescribed a Christian communism.^{39} And he thinks that redistribution of capital every fifty years (the Jubilee requirement) "would today be nothing utopian," though he does not urge the implementation of such a measure.^{40}

**Revolutionary Subordination**

A final point of Yoder's which is particularly relevant to the political context is his conception of revolutionary subordination, or the radical servant.
He develops this conception in the context of those portions of the New Testament referred to as Haustafeln, variously translated "house tables," or "house tablets," but in effect meaning the rules of the house or home. These are portions of the Scriptures (e.g. Colossians 3 and 4, Ephesians 5 and 6, I Peter 2 and 3) in which relationships of authority are established between husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants.

Yoder makes numerous points about the Haustafeln; I abbreviate a few of them here that are especially relevant to political concerns:

1) The Haustafeln suggest that "...it is possible to ascertain one's duties by finding out who one is, what is one's role."

2) In each pairing of expressions of mutual obligation in the Haustafeln, it is always the subordinate party (wife, child, slave) who is first addressed, and who is addressed as a moral agent. "Here we have a faith that assigns personal moral responsibility to those who had no legal or moral status in their cultures, and makes of them decision-makers."

3) The call to subordination in the Haustafeln is for voluntary subordination, "...the acceptance of an order, as it exists, but with the new meaning given to it by the fact that one's acceptance of it is willing and meaningfully motivated."

4) After each call for subordination, the dominant party of the pair (husband, parent, master) is in turn called into a kind of reciprocal subordination. Thus rather than consecrating the existing order of domination the Haustafeln "...relativize and undercut this order by then immediately turning the imperative
5) When the Haustafeln call for subordination to human institutions, including government (especially in I Peter 2 but also in I Timothy 2 and Romans 13) there is no reciprocal admonition for government to behave in a subordinate manner toward its subjects.

Two observations pertaining to politics need to be drawn out here. First, point number five reinforces Yoder's contention that the powers of the world --in this instance, the government-- are so incorrigibly corrupted that direct participation in them is morally impermissible. For even as early as these New Testament delineations of the proper lines of societal obligations, there was no expectation that government could ever relate to the governed in any manner other than one of domination. So in stating mutual societal obligations, the New Testament writers did not even bother suggesting a reciprocal obligation that the government has to the governed. Government's corruption is, in effect, beyond redemption.

Secondly, the first four points establish voluntary mutual subordination as the factor that qualifies the nature of authority in all relationships. When members of the Christian community live together in this state of mutual non-domination, they are thereby making a statement to the world that the domination of the powers --including the power of domination itself-- is broken.

Politically, the existence of such a community not only liberates the Christian "from 'the way things are,'"43 (the "what is"), but it establishes a witness to the world of the "what ought to be." As Jesus' own revolutionary subordination and voluntary servanthood had political implications, and as the existence of the New Testament
church came to have political significance, so will the faithful "servant church within society" prove of political consequence in every age.

Yoder's search for political meaning in the New Testament truly involves a re-articulation of the "anabaptist vision." It maintains in a pure form the sixteenth century anabaptist refusal to be compromised by direct participation in the governmental and political enterprise. But the implications of Yoder's thought do provide the possibility of certain types of contemporary radical anabaptist political statement. Examples might be non-coercive public protest and demonstration, civil disobedience in some instances, and development of alternative social communities.

Of interest to this paper is how some of Yoder's radical anabaptist ideas might find expression in the participatory political context which he distains. This will be considered in chapter six below.
Notes for Chapter IV

1. The Mennonites trace their lineage directly back to the Swiss Brethren of Zurich in the 1520's, the first "anabaptists."
2. Durnbaugh, The Believers' Church, p. 66.
3. The Senator is Mark O. Hatfield, who is discussed in chapter six below. Art Gish, author of The New Left and Christian Radicalism, and Jim Wallis, co-editor of Sojourners magazine and author of Agenda for a Biblical People (New York: Harper and Row, 1976) are both veterans of the New Left movement of the 1960's.
6. Ibid., p. 12.
7. Ibid., pp. 22-23.
8. Ibid., pp. 26ff. See this section of his work for Yoder's discussion of the political implications of the early texts in Luke.
9. Ibid., see pp. 40, 43, 47, 53.
10. Ibid., p. 55.
11. Ibid., p. 61.
13. Ibid., p. 97.
15. Ibid., pp. 144-145. Yoder acknowledges the work of Hendrik Berkhof and others as being foundational to his thinking here. Yoder quotes extensively from Berkhof's Christ and the Powers (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1962) in this chapter. Berkhof's work on the subject of "the powers" has become a major resource for evangelicals considering the nature of politics and the political enterprise. Hatfield, Wallis, Gish, Mouw, and Yoder all give this work serious attention in their consideration of evangelical politics. Yoder's work with Berkhof appears to have prompted its consideration by some of the others. Yoder was the translator of Christ and the Powers for its 1962 American publication.
17. Ibid., pp. 145-146, 148.
18. Ibid., p. 148.
19. Ibid., pp. 150-151.
23. The Sadducees were the ancient Jewish party who, during the time of Christ, cooperated, as a political faction, with the Romans occupying Israel.
25. Ibid., p. 248.
26. Ibid., p. 158.
27. Ibid., p. 247.
28. Ibid., see especially chapter 4, "God Will Fight for Us," for
Yoder's view of non-violence.

29. Yoder's conclusions in this regard and throughout his study are of course in line with --and in some instances are more thoughtful and elaborate expressions of-- traditional anabaptist thinking. C.f. Gish, New Left, especially chapters 2 and 5 where the author's discussion of the traditional anabaptist view of government and its contemporary implications presage, in less sophisticated form, Yoder's presentation.

30. Yoder, Politics of Jesus, p. 244.
31. Ibid., p. 246.
32. Ibid., p. 248.
33. Ibid., p. 50; see note 36 at the foot of that page.
34. Ibid., p. 111.
36. Ibid., pp. 66-67.
37. Ibid., p. 39.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid., p. 76.
40. Ibid., p. 77. In fairness to Yoder, one must make the observation that it is not in any sense his purpose in The Politics of Jesus to suggest the contemporary applications of Jesus' ethic. Indeed, he himself does not suggest --nor deny-- that there is a "specific biblical ethical content for modern questions" (p. 192); that is not the point of his work. However some contemporary writers either influenced by or in the same tradition as Yoder do indeed offer some suggestions on how the ethics of Jesus might work out in some political fashion. For example, Wallis, in Agenda, not only critiques the present political situation from roughly this standpoint (see especially pp. 78-88), but he also argues that the church must identify with the world's poor (pp. 88ff.). The criticism of wealth and the identification of Christianity with the poor is a theme in Ronald J. Sider's Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger: A Biblical Study (published early in 1977 by InterVarsity Press; the author kindly made a pre-publication manuscript available to me). Sider also offers some specific suggestions for personal implementation of this ethic in economic life (see chapter 7: "The Graduated Tithe and Other Less Modest Proposals: Toward a Simpler Lifestyle"). Mouw too discusses "identifying with oppression" and "serving the poor" in Politics and the Biblical Drama (p. 70, 74ff.). It is of interest to note Mouw's view of the church as a model for society (p. 81), a conception similar in some respects to Yoder's view.

42. Ibid., see pp. 168, 174, 175, 181 and 188 for the citations in the following five paragraphs. Several of Yoder's points regarding the Haustafeln --points not detailed here-- are directed toward distinguishing the early Christians view from contemporaneous Stoic views.
43. Ibid., p. 189.
44. Ibid., p. 192.
CHAPTER V
KUYPERIAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

It was earlier suggested that mainline evangelical political thought is the "most American" of the political traditions under consideration in this study because it has been most influenced by and most influential upon the American experience.

In a similar sense, Kuyperian political thought is probably the least American of the viewpoints being considered. While significant elements of mainline evangelicalism are of the same Reformed-Calvinist heritage from which Kuyperian thought hails, the shape and direction of the latter were molded in the crucible of the nineteenth century European experience. In fact, it is only since the Second World War that this brand of Continental Calvinism has come to have an American following and a nascent influence on the American evangelical experience and its emerging political thought.

Basic to the Kuyperian political conception is the need for a genuinely pluralistic order. Such a political order would be one in which communities representing all the different Weltanschauungen in a society would have an opportunity to share in the exercise of formative political power. While the United States is seen as giving perfunctory allegiance to such a pluralistic political conception, Kuyperians suggest that the actual development of American political attitudes and institutions has discouraged meaningful political par-
ticipation by societal groups with differing basic perspectives on reality --especially as those perspectives entail alternate approaches to the political enterprise itself. Kuyperians see the American political system as requiring --as one of its terms for participation-- the renunciation of all significant political differences in favor of a general consensus into which all participants can be assimilated. For the Kuyperian pluralist political conception to be fully realized then, modifications in the structure of the American political system itself would be required. And here Kuyperians stand at significant variance with their mainline evangelical colleagues.

As a prelude to a more detailed consideration of the Kuyperian political stance, let us briefly turn to the tradition's Continental background.

The Dutch Backdrop

The "Kuyperian" tradition stems from Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920), a Dutch theologian, journalist and politician who attempted to apply the Calvinist world and life vision to many facets of human existence.

Kuyper, in turn, was part of a Dutch Protestant tradition set in motion earlier in the nineteenth century largely through the influence of Dutch historian and statesman G. Groen van Prinsterer (1801-1876). The substance of the latter's thought was largely conditioned by the great event of the age: the French Revolution and its aftermath in Europe. E.L. Hebden Taylor says that the Revolution marked for Groen...nothing less than a full scale religious revolt against Almighty God... According to Groen the Revolution is the consequence, application, and
outcome of the rationalistic philosophy of the eighteenth century...
The course of events that took place in 1789 was irresistible after apostasy had ascended to the throne of men's minds.

In one of his few works translated from the Dutch into English, Groen himself traced what he perceived as the modern philosophical apostasy to the seventeenth century, when the "blessing of the Reformation" went into eclipse and then degenerated into the philosophy of...

...the eighteenth century, that dark night of unbelief that succeeded in passing off its will-o'-the-wisp for light of the sun.

But while Groen deplored the Revolution, he found no comfort in the conservative alternative. American Calvinist philosopher H. Evan Runner observes in this regard,

Edmund Burke had already used religious language to describe the Revolution... But conservatism was unwilling to deal radically with the religious root of the Revolution... [It was Groen's prophetic insight and evangelical obedience... that... led him to break with conservatism. His act of evangelical obedience has given the Netherlands another political history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries than the Anglo-Saxon countries.

It is this "other political history" of which Abraham Kuyper was a major formulator. Kuyper founded the Free University of Amsterdam in 1880. He was for more than forty-five years the editor of The Herald, a Christian weekly newspaper; for the same period, he was also the editor of The Standard, a daily newspaper and the official organ of the Anti-Revolutionary Party, which represented Dutch Protestants. Kuyper was one of the founders of that party, served in the Dutch Parliament, and was the nation's Prime Minister under the ARP banner from 1901-1905.
He also authored more than 200 works, covering a wide range of topics. Kuyper's conception of Calvinism as a total world and life system were embodied in a modified and more elaborate form by Kuyperian disciple and Dutch legal philosopher Herman Dooyeweerd in his 1930's four-volume work, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*. It was through the thought of Dooyeweerd—who taught at the Free University of Amsterdam and who died in February of 1977—that Kuyperian thought came to have its entrance into American evangelicalism.

Most of the "first generation" American evangelical scholars of the Kuyperian-Dooyeweerdian persuasion did graduate work at the Free University where they studied under Dooyeweerd. These include H. Evan Runner, Hendrik Hart, and Bernard Zylstra (to name some dealing most directly with political thought) and are generally ensconced in professorial positions at the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto.

In the train of these "first generation" American Kuyperians, a "second generation," some of whom are young American political scientists, is beginning to have an influence in American evangelical political circles; the latter include William A. Harper, James W. Skillen, and Jerry Herbert.

**The Philosophical Style**

With its religious background in the Calvinist tradition of structures and superstructures of thought, with its modern origins in the intellectual and cultural ferment of nineteenth century Europe, and with its foremost contemporary *summa* embodied in a four-volume philosophical work, it comes as no surprise that a distinctive
feature of the Kuyperian tradition is a philosophical radicality. This stands in contrast to a mainline evangelicalism bred within the bounds of a more pragmatically-oriented American experience. It would be misleading to thus imply that mainline evangelicalism is anti-philosophical: the works of, for example, Carl F.H. Henry belie this, and Monsma too dealt with the philosophical backdrop to the current American political situation. The point is rather that all major Kuyperian-Dooyeweerdian discussions --whether in politics, education, sociology, economics, etc.-- are predicated upon an exposition and understanding of the most basic religious and philosophical underpinnings of the discipline at hand and of its historical-philosophical context.

Indeed, it is this search for religious and philosophical bases --what Runner referred to as the "religious root"-- that is a hallmark of Kuyperian-Dooyeweerdian thought. But what is meant by "religion" when used in this manner?

**Religion, the Bible, and Politics**

It was earlier noted that differences in evangelical political positions arise because of how the Bible is used and the cultural-historical perspective from which it is approached. This is as true of Kuyperian thought as of the other two viewpoints discussed in previous chapters. In discussing the relation of the Bible to politics, Runner reveals the general Kuyperian view of the place of the Scriptures and their use in intellectual pursuits:
When we understand what the Word of God itself witnesses as to its nature and the role it demands for itself in our human life, it is simply not possible to think of imitating the example of Christ, or of imitating specific situations, or of making a selection of specific 'political texts' out of the Scripture, in each case then adapting these as such as norms for our political attitudes and work. We understand what Jesus would do and what the following of Christ entails, and we understand so-called specific 'political texts' of Scripture or political situations encountered there in the truly scriptural sense only when we see all of these details in the light of Scripture as a whole,... The Bible is not a book of instructions for the various sides of our life. It does not give directions, but Direction... Scripture is not a collection of words, some of which have a political reference; it is one Word.

When Runner considers man in his totality, of which the political is a part, it is not his primary observation that man has fallen into sin. Rather, Runner concludes, that man's

...whole life is religion. And that not only for Christian believers (true religion), but also for unbelievers. For unbelief is not described in Scripture as absence of belief, but as mis-directed belief. Religion,... is man's ineradicable situation: he has been created 'before God'...and must render an account of his doings and ways.

And since for Runner all of life is religion,

Christian political life is therefore an aspect of our simple-hearted life-walk before God... Of course, all political action is religion,... Since all human life is lived out of the ineradicable and fundamental religious relation to God, all political life must express the belief of those who are engaged in it.

It is clear from this discussion that Kuyperians distinguish
the notion of "religious" from a strict association with "theological" or "ecclesiastical," and that they also distinguish "religious practice" from simply "worship" or "liturgical practice." Theological activity and worship are only two of the many religious activities in which men engage, according to the Kuyperian conception.

Runner's comments on religion also more fully illuminate the remark that the search for the religious root is a hallmark of Kuyperian thought. Since "all political action is religion," it becomes a basic task of the Kuyperian analyst to discover the religious root(s) of a given idea, movement, trend, etc. in politics.

What emerges from this conception is a critical tool that supposedly looks less to a label (Lutheran, Calvinist, liberal, conservative, or even "Christian") in considering political thought and action than to more basic underpinnings which, Kuyperians believe, more truly reflect the nature of the given thought or action. The following example, which is particularly relevant to this paper, illustrates how Kuyperians engage in this critical endeavor.

Kuyperians do not try to force John Locke's influence on the American Revolution into a partially-Christian mode, as is the tendency with some mainline evangelical political thinkers. Rather Runner, for example, traces the origin of Lockean political thought to a natural law base which he then links to a much older, basically religious (he contends) conception of man as an autonomous, rational being; and this he sees as incompatible with biblical Christianity. Runner then argues that it was the very spirit of anti-God Revolution (discussed earlier) that was channeled into American Revolutionary political thinking through the thought of Locke.
Bernard Zylstra carries this Lockean nexus one step further. Zylstra argues that Locke, in *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, gave religion a meaning which robbed it of its relevance to matters involving civil government. Locke reduced the concern of religion, Zylstra says, to the salvation of the individual's soul; this soul salvation is the interest of religion, just as matters involving the external man are the interests of civil society, or politics. Accordingly, says Zylstra,

> Having limited religion to soul salvation, having cut the body out of Christianity, Locke could easily propose toleration between the various sects of Christendom:...  

Zylstra goes on to suggest that this "confinement of Christian conviction," embodied in a "wall of partition between religion and the state," was so thoroughly established by Enlightenment rationalists that it even became an article of faith for Christian orthodoxy. And he perceives this Lockean conception still to be prevalent in the culture at large:

> The polite totalitarianism of liberal rationality was created at the expense of the catholicity of the gospel of Christ. The sweet reasonableness of this totalitarianism determines the decision-making process of contemporary culture in the schools, the universities, the trade unions, the political parties, and most professional organizations.

The contemporary political ramifications of Locke's separation of religion and state are of import for Kuyperian political analysis of the American situation. Not only are American political attitudes generally antithetical to the ideological-confessional-programmatic
politics which Kuyperians view as the logical expression of their political view, but the two party system and the American pattern of geographical representation provide institutional obstacles to such a politics. And to the degree that American political institutions at their present stage of development present impediments to substantive political participation by the Christian faith community --and other distinct communities as well-- to that degree the American political system is not fully pluralistic.

Brief mention of another Kuyperian critique is also instructive for this paper. It will be recalled that in chapter one, a basis for current evangelical social actions was sought, by Donald Dayton, in certain nineteenth century American political movements in which evangelicals had an impact (women's suffrage, abolition, etc.). However reflecting the Kuyperian emphasis, James W. Skillen sees these same movements in a different light. They are examples, he says, of an expression of Christian concern in "limited, ad hoc, moralistic movements" which is typical of how American evangelicals have always viewed politics.

The history of Christianity in America shows that, almost without exception, Christians have not tried to take politics as politics seriously in a systematic and integrally Christian way. Instead political life has been viewed as an external secular domain which may, from time to time, require ecclesiastical, moral and theological attention, control, or tampering with from the outside --from Christians and Christian institutions that see themselves as standing outside or above politics.

With this discussion of religion as background, let us now turn to a closer look at the Kuyperian conception of politics and the political
Politics, the Creation, and Order

Mainline evangelicals, it was noted earlier, conceive the origin of politics to be directly related to man's fall into sin; politics is a means of placing restraints on the evil within man subsequent to the fall. For radical anabaptists, the powers of this world, including politics, are so corrupted and sinful that believers are obligated to refrain from participation in them, except through negative intervention.

Kuyperians conceive of politics and all of man's other cultural tasks as having an origin and nature different from both of these other conceptions. Rather than looking to sin for the origin of politics, Kuyperians find the source in creation itself.

Bernard Zylstra, a professor of political science at the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto, lays out the scenario as follows. The "referential frame" in which the entire Bible is cast posits God as the Creator and the results of his work as the creation, of which man is a part. There is a "covenant" between Creator and creation, and the Word of God is the link between these two partners of the covenant. The creation is therefore the servant of its Creator.

Creatures simply are servants. This is true not only of man,... but social institutions are similarly ministers of the Lord.

At the center of this creation is man. Man's obligation in the
covenant is to do the Word. And this doing of the Word is summarized in the first and great commandment —to love God with all thy heart, soul and mind— and in the second commandment —to love thy neighbor as thyself. "On these two commandments rest all the law and the prophets," Jesus told his listeners (Matthew 22:37ff). And Zylstra says that it is in the context of these commandments that man harmoniously lives out his life within the context of the four basic relationships in which God has placed him: relations between God and man, man and himself, man and man, and man and the earth.

The two love commandments, says Zylstra, sum up all man must do in his four basic, irreducible relationships:

The many statutes and ordinances that one finds in Holy Writ are not additions to but explications of love. Hence we should not assume that besides love we also owe justice to our neighbors. Justice is a specific way of loving our neighbors.25

And Zylstra adds,

The central creation order of love embraces and gives meaning to all of the secondary orders directed to mankind in its task of unfolding creation in history. Justice, morality, economy, nurture: here are some of the derivative ways in which the central Word is to be realized... The Word of God for creation is a dynamic order for mankind, for it entails an historical task: the building of the Garden of Eden into the City of God.26

And the mandate of the covenant, God's first command to man on earth, is found in Genesis 1:28: "Be fruitful and increase, fill the earth and subdue it, rule over the fish in the sea, the birds of heaven, and every living thing that moves upon the earth." 27

Thus for Kuyperians, politics is a task which befalls man as a
result of his being the head of God's creation. And, it should be noted, all this is established prior to the Kuyperian consideration of sin.

Sin, says Zylstra, is man's refusal to serve God.

That is sin in its deepest, original sense. Sin is man's declaration of independence from God... Sin is radical; it affects the root of human existence and thus the direction of the entire creation... its disruption shatters the shalom-harmony in the entire covenantal setting of creation... It introduces a tension between man and the earth, which now produces thorns and thistles. Sin spreads alienation all around... Instead of creation serving man, so that man can serve God, man now begins to serve the creature, exchanging the truth for a lie.28

But despite the fact of sin, God's Word for creation remains intact. The Kingdom of God, understood as God's reign over creation, continues after the appearance of sin, according to Zylstra's view. However now there is an additional element involved: redemption through the incarnate Word, Jesus Christ. Whereas prior to the fall the creation was God-directed, it is now, after the fall, other-directed. The believer's labor, his service, must now be directed toward restoring the creation to its original purpose. "...there is no tension between God's intent in creation and His intent in redemption,"29 Zylstra avers.

Therefore man's task in politics and in all other areas of culture is to seek to re-establish the creation norms that originally held sway over creation and culture. And the guide man uses for this is the Word of God. "His Word for creation is the motor and meaning of history," is how Zylstra puts it.30
Politics for Kuyperians, then, is not a result of sin; it is not inherently tainted because of any "sinful" origin. Nor are the powers to be abandoned because of any inherently evil character they might possess. In contradistinction to such views, Kuyperians view politics as part of the original, positive task given to man by virtue of his having been created by God; it is one of the original modes of service to the Creator. While the fact of sin enormously complicates the effort, the task still stands, though now with a revealed, written Word of God to cast light on man's path of service.

Kuyperian thinker Albert Gedraitis says in his own discussion of the powers,

...Christ has 'spoiled principalities and powers,' making a 'shew of them openly, triumphing over them' (Colossians 2:15). What is true universally in principle, God, in Christ Jesus through those who are in Him, will work out concretely over the course of history to the 'overthrow' of 'the existing order' (I Corinthians 1:28).31

And Gedraitis goes on to argue, in decided contrast to the radical anabaptist view, that it is the task of the believer not to refrain from getting directly involved with the powers but rather to meet them, engage them, and to attempt to bring the restorative shalom of the Word of God over them.32

The Political Task

Zylstra, in another source but in stated continuity with his remarks above,33 discusses the Christian's social and political task by beginning with Christ's own relationship to these. Jesus, says
Zylstra, was not himself a social reformer. Rather, Zylstra defines Christ's work through use of that Calvinistic formulation, the concept of office.  

[Christ's task and office was much more basic and radical than that of social reformer]. His task was to get to the root of all ill, social ills included... For at the cross the basic disease disrupting human life and the social order is cured. Christ came to take away the sin, the disharmony and disintegration, from human life and the social order... Christ --that is the name of his office--is the redeemer of the universe and, by His Spirit, a renewer of hearts... ...the central task of His brief ministry [was] the proclamation of the Good News of the Kingdom (Luke 4:43). In that Kingdom lies our life, also of our social and political and economic life.  

Zylstra sees the political manifestation of Christ's redeeming work in the universe to find its meaning in justice, and his summary of this echoes Monsma's conception of freedom. Zylstra says the "norm of justice" requires "societal space" for human personality, for man's cultural task, and for the institutions that the fulfillment of that cultural task depends upon and calls into being. "In short, justice requires freedom for man's service."  

Zylstra suggests three "biblical pointers" which allude to what the implementation of justice might mean to man living out his political life within the contemporary context of the four basic relationships (noted above) within which he stands: 1) "the Bible rejects the modern notion of private property;" 2) God's blessings on one person are viewed in Scripture as "avenues of stewardship to others in need;" and 3) "The earth could not be exploited."  

Gedraitis, in a related formulation, is more explicit. Citing
the work of Paul Woolley, Gedraitis points to the role of government in promoting safety and social welfare. And this latter role is given flesh by Gedraitis when seen in light of the same Jubilee chapter discussed by Yoder and its most famous verse (also found on the Liberty Bell): "Proclaim liberty throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof." For, Gedraitis contends, the words in that chapter speak to political, economic, and social relationships that the Israelites were commanded to implement. And to the degree that these commands were to be enforced by civil authority, Gedraitis sees the establishment of the principle of modern social welfare legislation and its administration through the civil authority.

Zylstra continues his discussion of politics and justice by developing definitions and suggesting Christian configurations of relationships in society (as did Monsma in a similar phase of his work). To come to a conclusion of Zylstra's exposition and to attain a fuller sense of the mode of plural political expression he deems desirable, we will look at how he views two public issues: abortion, which he relates to a human rights discussion; and the freedom of industrial enterprise, which he relates to a conception of rights of communities and organizations.

True to his Kuyperian style and heritage, Zylstra develops his conception of "rights" within the overall modern philosophical context. And in his assertion as to what rights are, he approaches Monsma's position: they are founded in the dignity bestowed on man by his Creator; rights are never absolute but must be correlative to duties. But he differs with Monsma at one point:
The rights of one person may not violate the rights of others. And the pursuit of one right should not occur at the expense of other rights. There must be a kind of simultaneity in the realization of human rights.  

It is out of this position that he views the "unlimited right to abortion" as a violation of the publicly just order. The reason is that the unborn fetus is also a human life with human rights. Accordingly, he sees the only legal ground for abortion as the "...authoritatively ascertained conflict between one human life (the mother's) and another human life (that of the fetus)." Thus Zylstra says,

If it is the state's calling to protect the needs of the unprotected, its shield of justice should encompass the life of the unborn. In other words, unborn human life --in its distinct stages of growth-- also has human rights that cannot be privately dispensed with, even if the private persons involved have a morality that would allow such dispensation. Abortion is not a matter of laissez-faire liberalism.

In his discussion of the freedom of industrial enterprise, Zylstra makes reference to a broader Kuyperian-Dooyeweerdian conception elsewhere referred to as "sphere sovereignty." In its fullest expression it is a theory that considers the proper relationships between the various modes or "spheres" of reality (the state and the economic spheres, in the context of Zylstra's discussion). Zylstra's application of this sphere sovereignty principle to the economic and political spheres will serve as a sufficient statement of its meaning for the purposes of this paper.

...the state as the integrator of public justice must prevent the violation of the internal sphere of one societal structure by another; it must pre-
vent the development of one sector at the expense of the other. We can formulate this a bit more positively: The state must create and maintain conditions that lead to the meaningful and "open" development of all non-state social structures that contribute to human life in a particular culture.44

Within such a framework, then, Zylstra says that industrial enterprise should have the freedom --though never absolute-- to develop as a means of service. However, he suggests, through improper exercise of this freedom, industrial production has come to have a role in society that is so powerful that it prevents the other societal spheres from developing in their own proper ways.

The religion [recall the Kuyperian conception of this term] of production and consumption is the main cause of social disarray. For it permits the corporate industrial sector to encroach upon the legitimate social space of the family, marriage, education, the arts, and the media. As a matter of fact, the very integrity of the state itself is endangered by the nearly uninhibited growth of the economic sector.45

Zylstra suggests that when the freedom of the other spheres are threatened by the aggrandizement of a single one, "...the state must intervene, and do so if necessary with drastic measures."46

Kuyperian Pluralism

Let us now summarize the Kuyperian view to this point, and attempt to come to a better understanding of what is meant by Kuyperian "pluralism."

Kuypersians think that the most basic thing that can be said about the human condition is that it is a religious situation. All men, whether they acknowledge it or not, are religious beings (a condition
which has nothing to do with theological belief or church membership). All men conduct their lives according to some set of principles, whether or not these are consciously articulated. Accordingly, Kuyperians say, all human activity is an expression of religious principle.

Within society, Kuyperians see men as constituting different communities according to their different religious perspectives. Those not recognizing the God of the Bible are members of such religious communities as much as are Christians. If unbelievers' gods are economic gods, they might form labor unions and perceive economic factors as most critical to their lives; if their gods are racial or ethnic gods, they might perceive their racial or ethnic group identification to be the qualifying principle of their lives. The religious impulse is diverse in its manifestations.

A truly pluralistic political order for Kuyperians then is one in which the various religious communities (whatever their public form) within a society can express their basic religious commitment through a formal sharing of political power. Further, the truly pluralistic political order does not require (as a condition of participation) each of these communities to abandon those characteristics which make it religiously distinct from other communities (as does consensus or "melting pot" politics). Far from eroding this diversity, a pluralistic political order accommodates it and encourages it; and it provides a means whereby politically active members of each religious community can properly serve the distinctive needs of their constituencies.

It is this sort of pluralism, this possibility of the open development of all religious communities, which Kuyperians feel is
largely lacking in America. The American political system is not geared to serve all of the religious communities within society. Rather, that system has developed in such a way that it serves basically one religious perspective: the religion of production and consumption which Zylstra referred to earlier. "Pluralistic" participation in this political system is invited only when potential participants are willing to accept the political terms of this religion: politics is a religiously neutral enterprise, the purpose of politics is to determine how limited material resources will be allocated, ultimate material interest is the norm for political action, etc.

Zylstra sees this distortion of American culture (including its political aspect) by the elevation of the norm of free industrial production as a basically religious phenomenon with religious roots:

The origin of this extensively one-sided cultural development must be found in a specific notion of human progress that gained pre-eminence since the days of the eighteenth century Enlightenment. Simply put, that notion holds that progress consists in the unlimited fulfillment of man's material needs. That notion has the character of religious conviction and, since it has become the dominant force in our society, it is not readily dislodged.

**Political Implementation**

Where does this view of the contemporary political situation leave Kuyperians who are concerned with concrete political activity? The answer is that it leaves them in an ambiguous position.

On the one hand, Kuyperians feel the need for a meaningful and active political stance. This stems not only from their positive view of the origin of politics and the place in the Kingdom of God of the
political enterprise, but also from roots extending to an activist political past in the Dutch parliamentary context. But on the other hand, their critique of the American political situation shows them that meaningful participation which is faithful to their religious viewpoint faces serious obstacles in the American context.

Jerry Herbert states the problem well:

...the [American] party process operates on the basis of electing persons who most closely approximate the most common denominator in the population... The idea that a party should adopt a consistent program grounded in...a confession [of obedience to God] is foreign to American politics. There is no room at the present time for this kind of witness within the non-programmatic party process.

Nor are all the impediments to a Christian political movement found in the structure of the American political system. Not the least difficulty, Herbert suggests, is finding acceptance for such a movement even among American evangelicals.

...many, if not most evangelicals are a part of what has been called Middle America. There is every indication that they desire to maintain a traditional political outlook of moderation and individuality sanctioned within a religious context. Their desire is analogous, perhaps, to the outlook conservative Christians had when they formed the Know Nothing Party in an earlier period... Any organized Christian political action which seeks to challenge traditional American political values runs directly against the grain of sentiment held by the very constituency to which such action must appeal for support.

And Herbert concludes his assessment,

Frankly, the actual possibilities of a Christian
party-like formation even appearing on the American scene are next to zero, unless God does it.50

What is required, he says, is

...a radical break with the political process...
The scriptural vision of politics requires of Christians an organizational form radically different from those already observable in American politics.51

James W. Skillen, seeking to find a course of concrete political action within the present American setting, suggests a proposal that is more modest than party-formation, but which he feels might lead to a "Christian political movement,"52 even within the current American political context. Skillen advocates a three-pronged approach.

First...the development of a Christian political mind rooted in a biblical world and life view. Second, a program of critical historical evaluation must aim to uncover the roots and development of our contemporary political system...Thirdly, the implications of the emerging Christian political standpoint...must be worked out in terms of concrete, alternative programs and policies.53

And should a Christian political movement emerge from this process, it would have to aim, says Skillen,

...for a radical reformation of contemporary American politics, including reform of the present constitution, by elucidating the various problems, injustices, and causes of instability that grip our nation now.54

This chapter began with the observation that in terms of its Dutch origins, Kuyperian thought is the least American of the three evangelical political alternatives considered in this paper. In
another sense too, that assessment can now be affirmed.

Mainline evangelicalism evidences a basic satisfaction with the structures and institutional framework of the American political system. Its position does not demand basic alteration of these forms either prior to or as part of its evangelical political task. The two-party system is an appropriate vehicle for implementation of the mainline evangelical political conception.

The "negative interventionism" of radical anabaptism also represents an element that has had a traditional place in America and American politics: the role of radical protest, of political action by Christian (or other) witness, of standing over and against society and its forms. Indeed, as Senator Mark Hatfield pointed out to me in an interview, a whole body of Constitutional law has grown up in legitimization of such protest (allowances for conscientious objection, Amish social security and educational exemptions, etc.).

Thus Kuyperian political thought, with its radical critique of and objection to American political structures on the one hand, but its refusal to accept a role of non-participation on the other, represents a political stance which is new and unique to American evangelical political thought.

One might argue that, coming from a Dutch Parliamentary political tradition, Kuyperian thought has inherent deficiencies when attempting to assess and understand the political realities born of a distinctly American experience. Alternatively, one might argue that its origins in an extra-American context gives Kuyperian thought a vantage point for criticism to which its more culturally-American evangelical counterparts cannot ascend. Whatever the case, Kuyperian political thought has
carved for itself a small niche in the contemporary American evangelical political forum.
Notes for Chapter V


4. The biographical data for this paragraph was taken from "A Biographical Note" which serves as an introduction to Kuyper's Lectures on Calvinism (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1931), pp. i-vii. This book is a compendium of six lectures Kuyper gave in 1898 at Princeton University under the auspices of the L.P. Stone Foundation. The lectures deal with the relationship of Calvinism as a world and life view to religion, politics, science, art, and "the future," and they serve as a superb introduction to Kuyper's thought and the broad Kuyperian political and cultural conception.


6. In this one instance, I extend "American" evangelical political thought to include these Canadian neighbors; while they represent native American, Canadian and Dutch nationalities, their work is extensively directed toward the American political scene.

7. The English translation of Dooyeweerd's New Critique has long been criticized as a laborious, ponderous, and at times nearly inscrutable rendition, all of which it is. A less inscrutable though not altogether satisfactory introduction to Dooyeweerd is J.M. Spier, An Introduction to Christian Philosophy, translated by David H. Freeman, University Series: Philosophical Studies (Nutley, N.J.: Craig Press, 1966). However a more recent, intelligible and lucid exposition of Dooyeweerd's thought is L.Kalsbeek, Contours of a Christian Philosophy: An Introduction to Herman Dooyeweerd's Thought (Toronto: Wedge Publishing Foundation, 1975). One might observe that the history of publication of introductions to Dooyeweerd's thought in America --1953, 1966, 1975-- not surprisingly reflects the history of a correspondent increase in the familiarity with and serious consideration afforded to his thought in American evangelical circles.

8. See Monsma, The Unraveling of America, esp. pp. 75-114.


11. Ibid., pp. 162-163.

12. See, e.g., Rowe, Save America!, p. 71, and Anderson, Vision and Betrayal in America, p. 48.


16. Ibid., p. 199.
17. Ibid., pp. 200, 201.
18. Ibid., p. 200.
22. Skillen, Ibid., p. 3.
24. Ibid., p. 156.
25. Ibid., p. 159.
26. Ibid., p. 160.
27. Ibid., p. 175.
28. Ibid., pp. 161-162.
29. Ibid., p. 163.
30. Ibid., p. 165.
32. Ibid., pp. 68, 70, 74, etc.
34. Zylstra, "Bible, Justice, State," pp. 3, 5. Interestingly enough Zylstra's device here is not unlike that used by Yoder in The Politics of Jesus, p. 168, in discussing a person's "role." Yoder does not directly apply this conception to Jesus, though one might argue that in at least the instance of the cross he assumes its use.
36. Ibid., p. 9.
37. Ibid., pp. 9-10.
38. Gedraitis, Worship and Politics, pp. 72-73.
39. Ibid., p. 73.
41. Ibid., p. 16.
42. Ibid.
45. Ibid., p. 17.
46. Ibid., pp. 16-17.
47. Ibid., p. 17.
49. Ibid., p. 32.
50. Ibid., p. 35.
51. Ibid., pp. 33-34.
53. Ibid., p. 11.
54. Ibid., p. 13.
CHAPTER VI

MARK HATFIELD: EVANGELICAL ECLECTIC

Radical allegiance to Jesus Christ transforms one's entire perspective on political reality.

--Mark Hatfield

The emerging evangelical political thought of U.S. Senator Mark Hatfield is not completely at home in any one of the three major evangelical political traditions discussed in this paper. Elements of all three can be discerned in Hatfield's thinking. And while the radical anabaptist influence is the most marked of the three in certain phases of his thought, Hatfield is by no means a radical anabaptist.

The diversity of resources he uses in his books and the wide-ranging views he has developed on a host of issues make it clear that Hatfield's emerging evangelical political position is truly an eclectic one. And the changes of emphasis, understanding, and concern between earlier and later books indicate that this "emergence" is a continuing process. Moreover, several times during an interview that Senator Hatfield kindly afforded me on February 3, 1977, he noted that his thinking on given issues is still "evolving." Understandably, the title of Robert Eells' previously cited dissertation refers to Mark Hatfield and the search for evangelical politics.

Hatfield's is a unique search in contemporary America. His writings reveal a keen sense of awareness of where his biblical view-
point might take him in his political thinking, and of how radical commitment can propel one to previously alien conclusions. (One senses that Congressman John Anderson is at an earlier stage of this process, and that he might or might not move in Hatfield's direction—regardless of whether one considers the latter's motion as advancement or retrogression.)

It is this uniqueness which makes it difficult to "classify" Hatfield's thought within a single evangelical tradition. Robert Eells argues that in addition to evangelical influences, "neo-Hooverism"—a belief that what is needed is a government sufficiently strong to be compassionate but that is, at the same time, decentralized—has also had a major impact on the development of Hatfield's thinking.

In contrast with the direction of intellectual development of some political theorists discussed in this paper—who move from principles, to theory, to action—Hatfield's theoretical development has frequently come in the reverse of that order, i.e. facing an issue at the political level has forced him to develop a way of thinking about it from an evangelical standpoint. Thus, for example, his views on representation and conscience (discussed below) were significantly affected by a capital punishment matter which he had to resolve while serving as Governor of Oregon.

So at least for the present, Hatfield does not typify any traditional American evangelical political strain. Nor do I mean to suggest that Senator Hatfield will at some point in the future necessarily come to one of the three positions herein discussed. To the contrary, he might make these categories obsolete. His search for
an evangelical politics could help alter the face of American evangelicalism.

"The Central Question of Violence"

For Hatfield, the "central question of violence" conceptually preceded considerations such as the relationship between conscience and law, the style of a legislator's representation, etc.

Such considerations were at the fore in 1958 when, as Governor of Oregon, Hatfield was faced with the decision of whether or not to commute the sentence of a man condemned to execution. Though he himself opposed capital punishment, the people, through their voices in the state legislature, clearly favored it.

As Governor, I possessed the legal power to commute the man's sentence. Yet, I had taken an oath of office which bound me to uphold the state's Constitution and its laws. And in this case, there seemed little doubt about what faithfulness to the intent and spirit of laws recently upheld would dictate.

Hatfield agonized over the decision, but in the end allowed the execution to proceed as ordered. In Between a Rock and a Hard Place, Hatfield questioned whether he would have made the same choice when he wrote in 1976. And during my interview with him in early 1977, he said unequivocally that he would not then have allowed the execution to take place. Hatfield said during the interview, "I ascribe that exclusively to the evolution of my attitude toward the instrumentality of violence."

Hatfield's rethinking of "the instrumentality of violence" was largely prompted by American involvement in Vietnam, a policy concern
which consumed nearly half of his 1968 book, *Not Quite So Simple*. Indeed, it is to his problems with Vietnam that Hatfield traces much of the impetus for his evangelical political development. Noting a previous deficiency of study in the areas of philosophy, theology, history and church history, Hatfield said during the interview:

I became a voracious reader, as I was forced into the Vietnam issue by conscience. I had to do far more extensive reading than I had at anytime before, not only on the history of that war, but as it inter-related with many other parts of the globe and other issues.

In *Between a Rock and a Hard Place* Hatfield develops a position on war that gives prominent place to Christ's Sermon on the Mount, a passage regularly used by those in the anabaptist tradition to justify a pacifist stance. Hatfield does not positively endorse a pacifistic position, but he comes close. When I made this observation during our talk, he acknowledged both points. But how does this then affect the position of a public official who must responsibly deal with defense and military matters?

I think that first of all I'm in a setting where I can afford certain luxuries of viewpoints. To wit: I've voted traditionally against the military budget, basically for the size of it, not because I feel there is not a requirement to have a military defense program,...even within a Christian framework.

But acknowledging the continuing evolution of his thinking in this area, the Senator added,

I'm not foreclosing the possibility that I could reach a point...where I could not find myself compatible with any military instrumentality...
I do not eliminate that possibility; I have not reached that place.

But even should he reach such a conclusion regarding the military, Hatfield still feels he could function as a legislator. An executive capacity would be an entirely different matter however.

I do feel that if one is in an executive role, as contrasted to a multi-bodied legislative role, he does not have that same range of choices and options that I have. Therefore Harold Hughes, former Senator from Iowa, found himself reaching a point where, even after he had made a short-lived bid for the Presidential nomination of his [Democratic] party [in 1972, he] came to believe that he could not perhaps execute the duties of that office as prescribed by the Constitution and statute and be true to his Christian convictions.

The Vietnam War and the underlying question of violence also prompted a chain of thought that led to a volte-face in Hatfield's thinking on civil disobedience. In 1968 he wrote in Not Quite So Simple:

But I part company with those practitioners of civil disobedience who take action in deliberate, studied and knowing violation of the law, even when it's a bad law, or a bad law at least in the eyes of those participating in the act of civil disobedience.

In contradistinction to this, Hatfield wrote in 1976:

...the Christian is called to responsible disobedience of the government if and when obedience would entail disobeying God, a principle set forth clearly by both teaching and example in the Bible.

As suggested by the biblical reference, this turnabout in Hatfield's thinking came as a result of his emerging evangelical position.
It became a critical question for him when a young man named Smitty Flynn turned in his draft card in opposition to the Vietnam War. As a result of his action, a violation of the law, Flynn was released from a staff position with Young Life, an evangelical organization for teenagers. Final action on making the dismissal permanent was postponed until the organization's national board of directors, of which Hatfield was a member, could review the matter.

Hatfield, who supported Flynn in his action, offers two qualifiers to his position favoring "responsible disobedience:" the evangelical must stand accountable for his or her illegal action; and (as stated during our interview), for "civil disobedience that would be in harmony with Christian responsibility, non-violence would have to be a characteristic." (This position is very similar to Yoder's.)

Critical to the whole question of civil disobedience from Hatfield's standpoint is the "principle set forth clearly by both teaching and example in the Bible" requiring obedience to God rather than to Caesar when the two come into conflict. The classic biblical passage in this regard is the place where the Pharisees, trying to trap Jesus, ask if it is right to pay tribute to Caesar. Taking a coin, Jesus asked whose inscription was on it. The Pharisees replied, "Caesar's." And Jesus responded, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22).

Hatfield says that central to this passage is the "...notion that what is due to Caesar, and only what is due to him, should be rendered back to him." (This interpretation is shared with Hatfield by both radical anabaptist Yoder and Kuyperian Albert Gedraitis.)
However Hatfield specifically parts company with Yoder on a related point. Yoder pointedly asserts that the reciprocal relationships of subordination, as typified in the Haustafeln, break down when the believer's relationship to government is at issue. Hatfield disagrees, and bases his judgement on a biblical passage also discussed by Yoder, Romans 13.

I have indicated previously that differences in interpretation of Scripture are a major cause for the development of different political viewpoints within the evangelical camp: the present instance is a good example of this divergence. Hatfield, from his position in government and as one who believes in the possibilities of government as a positive tool, discusses the same passage as Yoder, also uses Berkhof in his analysis of "the powers," but concludes that there is indeed a sense in which the passage in Romans implies a reciprocal relationship between the state and the Christian believer.

I do not pretend, in any way, to be a theologian; yet it seems obvious to me that Christians who, on the basis of Romans 13, look to government as a divinely instituted source of God's authority are making a grave biblical mistake, misinterpreting Scripture and harming their Christian witness. Rather, we must never lose sight of the responsibility to call government into judgment and account to see that it nurtures justice, as defined biblically... The full thrust of Paul's teaching in Romans 12:17 to 13:10 is that the mandate of love transcends that of conditional obedience to other earthly authority; our unqualified obligation is to love.

Radical Servanthood

If his evolving attitudes on violence have been crucial to the
development of Hatfield's political thought in recent years, of no less importance has been accompanying movement in his views on the role of the governmental leader. Hatfield's own increasing frustrations and dissatisfactions with traditional notions of power and leadership, with what he considers all the sham and pretense that accompany them in Washington, D.C., is catalogued in the first two chapters of Between a Rock and a Hard Place. In chapter two, "Power as Servanthood," Hatfield tells of the change in his viewpoint:

No longer could I define leadership in terms of holding positions of power. Further, power in its truest sense was not political muscle, influence, and public prestige. I was coming to a whole new perspective of what power truly is from a spiritual perspective. Service to others, solely for their own behalf and even entailing deep sacrifice, is the true essence of leadership and the ultimate form of power. There is a power in servanthood which transcends all notions of power sought after so avidly in the secular political sphere of life.18

The influence of the radical anabaptist conception of "revolutionary subordination" is apparent in this phase of Hatfield's thinking. But perhaps less apparent is that this conception of radical servanthood is coming to have influence on all phases of Hatfield's political thought. The extent of its influence is evident in Hatfield's response to two final questions I asked him at the close of our interview. What, I asked, is the number one obligation for him as an evangelical qua politician?

To me, the single most important issue I face --I can't ascribe it to everyone else-- is that I have a gift of life this day. And what I do with that gift relates to the whole eternity ahead of us. And I see that as a gift for which I'm accountable and
for which I have stewardship. That means that within that gift of life, I have a mind, a heart, I have a position of responsibility; that [in] all these things, first with my family, my friends, and my job, [the most important thing] is how I handle that gift.

Hatfield answered the second question --What is the number one obligation facing the nation?-- in a similar vein:

The public policy issue is the same issue I confront, that is, the gifts that God has given this nation: the gifts of power, the gifts of resources, the gifts of human resources, of natural resources, and how we utilize them in the stewardship role that we have really been granted, for not only our own need and for our own utilization, but for all humankind.

The implications of what Hatfield is saying here are enormous. Not only does the individual evangelical Christian stand in a relationship of radical servanthood with his fellow believers, not only does the evangelical politician stand in a relationship of radical servanthood with those he serves in his office, but this value is also translated to the nation as a totality. The nation --especially the powerful and liberally endowed United States-- stands in a relationship of radical servanthood with the rest of humanity!

Further, the question of style of representation as it relates to conscience becomes moot through resolution: a Senator does indeed serve the best interests of his constituency by obeying his conscience. But that constituency is no longer simply the people of Oregon, or even the people of the United States. One's constituency becomes all of humanity; and loving service to this constituency becomes the norm for conscience, for obedience to God.

The implications of such a perspective are of even greater con-
sequence when conceived within the context of a broader norm for action — the Bible — and are not thought of only in an idealistic ethereality.

That this is not over-conjecture is made clear by another response Senator Hatfield gave to a question during our interview. When I asked him about the legitimacy of the American tendency to establish a dichotomy between domestic and foreign policy, he said that while precedent lends strict legitimacy to the traditional separation, from a moral and ethical point of view it is not a valid distinction.

I don't think we can compartmentalize our individual lives, and I don't think we can compartmentalize our national life between national and international, a different morality or a different set of values ascribed to one as compared with the other.

Hatfield went on to relate this, in the Christian context, to a concern for all mankind brought about by a common creatureliness:

Therefore we have to catch that vision of universality, we have to see it in terms of global relationships. If God created humankind, then all of humankind is related. And policies that set certain values to this part of humankind as different from this humankind, based upon the geographical distinctions, or the political-ideological distinctions, or the economic-ideological distinctions, just isn't Christian, it isn't Scriptural... I wrestle with it. There are not easy answers. It's still not quite so simple. And it thrusts us into tension...

This problem with which Hatfield "wrestles" is part of a broader one that goes back at least as far as Machiavelli: the ethics of the public man as compared with the ethics of the private man.
...the rigid dichotomy between personal ethics and political ethics... leaves me uncomfortable. How can I heed Christ's words when relating individually to others, but ignore them when dealing with social and political problems, including corporate sin in society? It is as if I am asked to adopt one set of convictions when I walk into my church, and another when I walk into the chamber of the U.S. Senate. All this can lead to a troubling theological schizophrenia which seems contradictory to the wholeness of the gospel's truth.19

Despite his tendency to come down on the side of a single biblical ethic for all of life, including the political, this problem of private and public ethics clearly troubles Hatfield. And it is a problem that he does not successfully resolve in his writings. Unlike the evangelical purist who can posit a uni-ethical solution from outside the fray, Hatfield, the political man searching for an evangelical politics from the inside, finds this a problem the solution of which is "not quite so simple."

Four Foreboding Realities

Hatfield also attempts to consider, from an evangelical standpoint and in light of the ethical outlook delineated above, some of the more pressing issues which he feels are facing the United States. In the final four chapters of Between a Rock and a Hard Place, he discusses four of the "foreboding realities" that he sees facing this and the next generations. For the sake of brevity, I summarize each of Hatfield's positions in his own words. But the scope and nature of Hatfield's perception of these issues comes through clearly:

--the rampant pace of escalating nuclear power, accompanied with a blind trust in technological
expansion;... Dazzled by material success, we have developed a new religion: the worship of progress itself.20

--the inexorable centralization of political and economic power, especially in the industrialized countries;... We must not ignore, after all, the ongoing structural violence of a world in which the rich few control a monopoly of the world's wealth, leaving the impoverished masses to suffer. That is violence; the deaths it causes are not from bullets and bombs, but from empty stomachs and hopeless hearts.21

--the deterioration of our environmental milieu, with the ecological and environmental dangers which result;... As a nation, we must strengthen the capacity of local communities and states to develop plans for our land use which anticipate these future needs rather than merely bringing the greatest return for the developer.22

--the monopoly of the world's food and wealth by a few, with hunger and impoverishment for masses, in light of real limitations to the world's resources... I believe that the problem of hunger will shape the destiny of more nations and their political philosophies than any other force in the world today.23

Virtually all evangelical political theorists would agree with Hatfield on one score: there are no easy answers to questions such as these, even for Christians claiming to have in the Bible an authoritative source from which to work in seeking solutions.

American Civil Religion

Any discussion of Mark Hatfield's political thought would be incomplete without some mention of his views on American civil religion. Hatfield has come especially to be associated with this particular concern since his 1973 comments at the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, D.C.
Before an assembly that included Billy Graham and Richard Nixon, Hatfield warned,

...let us beware of the real danger of misplaced allegiance, if not outright idolatry, to the extent we fail to distinguish between the god of American civil religion and the God who reveals Himself in the Holy Scriptures and in Jesus Christ... If we as leaders appeal to the god of civil religion, our faith is in a small and exclusive deity, a loyal spiritual Advisor to power and prestige, a Defender of only the American nation, the object of a national folk religion devoid of moral content.24

The news media (CBS and the New York Times) reported his remarks, and his tie with the issue of civil religion was established.

As indicated earlier, the propensity toward civil religion is problematic in American evangelicalism. As one moves to the "right" among this group, the tendency becomes more pronounced. Hatfield's comments regarding a "theological 'silent majority'" (cited in chapter three above) are right on the mark.

A comment he made in Between a Rock and a Hard Place is richly illustrative of what civil religion is through its implication of what it is not: "...[God's] Word to our nation and our structures of government is in no way allied to their perpetuation."25 Such a stance is precisely at variance with the view of the civil religionist. For the latter must in some sense and to some degree establish a nexus between God and America's preservation, lest a whole host of nationally-justifying attitudes and policies be revealed as reflecting a Social Darwinistic self-interest rather than worthy credos of a people chosen and blessed of God.

In urging a distinction between biblical and civil religion, Hatfield acknowledges America's rich religious heritage, embodied in
documents such as the Mayflower Compact; but yet

...civil religion distorts the relationship between the State and our faith. It enshrines our political order, and fails to speak of repentance, salvation, and God's standard of justice... ...we are given a sense of righteous mission to the world. America's actions become spiritually ordained.26

Contrary to Congressman John Anderson's thrust, Hatfield questions the view that "civil religion is better than no religion at all." The problem, he says, is civil religion's capacity to become only a self-serving "...tool of national self-righteousness."27 (Anderson also expressed this fear, but felt the need to retain the "civic religion" conception despite it.)

An example of the dangers of civil religion to evangelical Christian attitudes is revealed in a February 9, 1973 letter which Hatfield received a few days after his Prayer Breakfast speech. Though voicing his own agreement with Hatfield's concern for the trend toward civil religion, the writer goes on to lament the fact that the Senator's remarks were interpreted to be critical of President Nixon and his Vietnam policy (though the speech did not mention Vietnam.) The writer goes on,

As you know I have an affection for President Nixon as a man and as a personal friend. I believe him to be one of the most sincere, dedicated and able men to occupy the White House... He has set an example in self-discipline, family life, church attendance, etcetera, that is helping the Country through a great spiritual crisis --and despite differences in certain political areas, he deserves to be commended, especially by Christians.28

These remarks were made to Hatfield in a letter from Billy
Graham. Graham also suggested in the letter that if Hatfield had commended Nixon for his efforts at getting a cease-fire in Vietnam, "This would have had a unifying effect that the Country definitely needs at this time."

It is just such a primary concern for the condition of "the Country" that was indicted by implication in a 1970 Christianity Today article on "Billy Graham and 'Civil religion':"

Perhaps the most serious indictment in the civil religion theory is that chaplains to the establishment preach only those things that tend to support the status quo.29

Hatfield urges just the opposite of such "chaplaincy:"

Presenting to the nation the claims of God's justice and his compassion for all people is a legitimate and urgently needed task for the Church... But telling America, and ourselves that she is a nation with a distinctive spirituality, or a special relationship with God, is a betrayal of the biblical witness.30

In the introduction to this paper, I suggested that the emerging political thought of Mark Hatfield has the possibility of developing into a major political alternative within American evangelicalism. His thought, at this point, possesses salient characteristics of each of the three traditions discussed earlier: if Kuyperians have been able to avoid the cultural limitations of the American context, Hatfield has demonstrated a willingness to try to transcend some of those limitations in bringing a biblical critique to bear on the American experience; if radical anabaptists insist on the renunciation of the norm of self-and-group-interest as a requirement for living within renewed human rela-
tionships (including political ones), Hatfield's rejection of civil religion and "America first" evidence his attempt to reify this principle; and if mainline evangelicals insist that evangelical politics be realistic and speak to concrete, historical situations, Hatfield's is undoubtedly the pre-eminent example of such application.

Just as Hatfield has learned from the rich body of political theory recently developed in the several evangelical traditions, so are thinkers in those traditions also beginning to look to his experience as they seek guidelines in translating their own theories into practical proposals. In 1977, Mark Hatfield is perhaps one of American evangelicalism's brightest hopes for bridging the gap between theory and practice, a gap which Paul Henry cites as the critical obstacle facing evangelical political development. Hatfield's penchant for theoretical consistency, combined with the insights he gains from his daily political experiences, provide a matrix for the development of political thought that is accessible to only a minute number of evangelical political thinkers. Whether he can successfully mold an acceptable evangelical alternative from this cauldron of political ideas remains yet to be seen.
Notes for Chapter VI


5. Ibid., p. 110.


10. Ibid., pp. 31ff.


15. See p. 78 above.


19. Ibid., p. 149.


21. Ibid., p. 151, 147.

22. Ibid., pp. 151, 192-193.

23. Ibid., p. 151; Hatfield, *Conflict and Conscience*, p. 57.

24. Hatfield, *Rock*, p. 94.

25. Ibid., pp. 43-44.

26. Ibid., p. 91.

27. Ibid., p. 101.

28. Ibid., pp. 99-100.


31. See pp. 52-53 above.
CHAPTER VII

MODES AND CONCEPTIONS OF EVANGELICAL
POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICA

In the preceding chapters we have extensively considered the currents that presently dominate American evangelical political thought. During the course of those considerations, mention was occasionally made of a particular means of political involvement advocated or practiced by groups or individuals. We will now turn to a more systematic discussion of these and other modes and conceptions of political involvement on the part of evangelical Christians.

The dual reference to "modes" and "conceptions" is used to draw a distinction here. "Modes" of involvement suggest models of political action actually being implemented by evangelicals at the present; for example, Paul Henry's own participation in a party model which he advocates. "Conceptions" of involvement point to types of political involvement suggested by evangelicals although not necessarily now being implemented.

The seven modes and conceptions of involvement to be considered are 1) radical servanthood, 2) infiltration, 3) direct action, 4) the party model, 5) the interest group, 6) the multi-ministry-social-activism model, and 7) the local model.

This categorization is not presented as a formal taxonomy with exhaustive and mutually exclusive classifications. Indeed, some of
the "involvements" discussed will be seen as overlapping. Nor should the selection of listings suggest that the evangelical political activities in that mode are limited to those discussed. In each instance, several --and in some instances, many-- other examples of involvement could have been considered. Rather, the scheme is designed to point up the nature and the diversity of representative ways in which evangelical Christians conceive and practice their political roles in contemporary America.

Radical Servanthood

As a political model, radical servanthood most appropriately describes the participatory role of Mark Hatfield. Hatfield's parallel conceptions of his own primary duty and that of the nation's, as well as his distinctions between his own legislative functions and those of the executive, indicate a self-perception of the political man-as-radical servant on Hatfield's part.

Radical servanthood as a mode of political participation fits well with an anabaptist-type of conception of the "powers." Indeed, it is probably the only mode of personal involvement in the powers themselves that can in any sense be construed as approximating the anabaptist "over and against-ness" stance. The person who is already in public office and gradually grows into a sense of radical disaffiliation with the political process (Hatfield), or the person who runs for office as "his own man" and on his own Christian evangelical convictions (Hatfield in 1978?), can, by adopting the role of radical servant, take a position "above the dirt" but still offer criticism, propose legislative alter-
natives, perform constituent service, etc.

Such a role tends to make him an "evangelical lone ranger:" he seeks to develop more fully the implications of his own evangelical convictions, but he lacks a substantial like-minded constituency or a cadre of fellow evangelical officeholders who can offer empathetic comfort and suggestions in his struggle.

The logic of what I am suggesting here leads me to add that the political model of radical servant would become less serviceable if Hatfield were joined in the Senate by, for example, forty-five other Senators similarly seeking to work out evangelical Christian convictions in their work. Then, a party or movement model would be more functional as they collectively would seek to effect strategically their commonly devised policies, even if those policies were based on a notion of radical servanthood.

In short, radical servanthood provides an alternative political style for the lone evangelical who is in a legislative body and who is disenchanted with the commonly accepted political style he sees about him. It allows him to be in the "powers" structure, but of it to the least possible degree.

Infiltration

During my interview with Congressman John Anderson, he suggested infiltrating public organizations as one means for Christians to participate politically in America. Citing groups like Common Cause and environmental organizations, Anderson suggested that evangelicals might become "more catholic" in their interests by
...infiltrating...some of these other organizations that otherwise are going to be wholly secular in their approach. I think that some religious leavening in the various interest groups that make up our society would be a very desirable thing.

During my interview with Mark Hatfield, he too suggested that Christians might infiltrate political structures, and he implied that the bureaucracy would be a good place to begin. He cited this as an alternative to attempting structural reform within the American system.

Wesley Pippert, a Washington UPI correspondent during the early 1970's (covering such stories as the 1972 McGovern campaign and the Watergate affair), also urges infiltration as a political ploy for gaining influence.

Here the Christian concedes that in all likelihood the government is ungodly, but, like Joseph, Mordecai and Daniel, the Christian can influence it through infiltration at key levels. This approach demands excellence, determination and spiritual vitality.¹

Included in the areas open to infiltration, Pippert suggests journalism, the bureaucracy, lobbying, and "getting into" politics itself.

In Washington: Christians in the Corridors of Power,² Hefley and Plowman present extensive surveys of evangelical Christians who are part of the Washington scene. While they don't actually use the word infiltrate, the phenomenon they describe seems somewhat within the spirit of the Anderson and Pippert suggestions.

Examples of the "Christians in the corridors of power" include evangelicals who have organized prayer and Bible study groups within
the Environmental Protection Agency, the State Department, the Pentagon, NASA, the Federal Aviation Agency, the General Services Administration, etc. Among those attending, according to Hefley and Plowman, are high officials in several of the departments. These groups commonly meet weekly either in the early morning or over lunch for prayer, Bible study, mutual support, etc. One is even regularly held by the White House staff. As a result of one of these, the story of Charles Colson's conversion came to light.

In addition, Hefley and Plowman discuss:

--twenty or more prayer groups on Capitol Hill, organized by evangelicals on legislative staffs;

--evangelicals who serve as aids to Congressmen or Senators;

--and a handful of evangelicals who are members of the two national legislative bodies.

One of the more interesting phenomena described by Hefley and Plowman is Fellowship House, a private organization in downtown Washington in which such notables as Colson and Harold Hughes are currently involved. Established in Washington by Abram Vereide in the late-1940's, a major purpose of Fellowship House has been to provide Washington lawmakers with a place to go and with people to turn to on a one-to-one basis for spiritual counsel, without having to be at all concerned about their confidants seeking anything from them politically.

There are, however, clearly two separate conceptions of "infiltration" that should be distinguished from each other. The one views infiltration as a positive political maneuver which enables evangelicals to bring their own distinctive influence to bear on political affairs.
It is in this sense, I think, that Hatfield used the term, as did Pippert and Anderson to a lesser degree.

But there is a sense of infiltration that, while not tenaciously held by serious evangelical political thinkers, is quite prevalent among evangelical clergy and the laity at large. The distinction also casts light from a different source on the issue of social concern.

At the base of the social concern issue is disagreement over whether evangelicals are required, from a biblical standpoint, to address "social" matters with the same urgency that they address the task of evangelization, i.e. to proselytize for Christ. Many evangelicals hold that evangelization is the primary task of the church and of Christians in general; and many of these still think "social gospel" when they hear "social concern."

For those on this side of the social concern dispute any political task that evangelicals may have can be summed up with evangelist Bill Bright's importuning, "Help select and elect men and women of God to public office." The corollary to this is that there is an inherent political desirability for Christians to acquire public administrative positions. The assumption underlying such sentiments is that the presence of evangelicals obedient to the demands of biblical morality will somehow "leaven" the loaf of government as their numbers increase in public positions. Thus if an entire government were ultimately composed of "born again" believers, it would be, ipso facto, a "Christian" government.

Most mainline evangelical, radical anabaptist, and Kuyperian political thinkers reject the simplicity of this approach. While acknowledging that Christians in public positions could have such a
Christianizing influence, they emphasize instead that the historical-philosophical-religious nature of government gives it a meaning and force that is greater than the sum of its individual participants at any given moment. Merely changing the "spiritual condition" of an institution's members does not necessarily imply that any existing "institutional sin" inherent within the structure will thereby be eradicated.

It is this deeper level of political and governmental involvement that mainline evangelicals and Kuyperians seek to address and which they feel is glossed over by those advocating getting "Godly people into public life" or making converts among public administrators.

In this light, then, one would consider bureaucratic prayer and Bible study groups a form of infiltration that is different in kind from, for example, a Hatfield or an Anderson attempting to bring governmental policy into conformity with his religious beliefs.

Direct Action

In early April of 1977, (during Holy Week), some 250 evangelicals from two urban communities converged on Washington to conduct "torture tableaux" in support of human rights around the world.

Combining techniques of non-violent demonstration with aspects of street theatre, the participants were attempting, according to planners, to bring the impact of torture home by presenting scenes from torture situations --for example, a hooded individual "wired" to a generator for purposes of electrical torture; hence "torture tableaux."

The torture tableaux-human rights demonstrations were sponsored
by Liberty to the Captives, a Philadelphia-based human rights group, by Sojourners Fellowship, an evangelical community with an ecumenical thrust located in Washington (and publishers of Sojourners magazine), and by The Other Side, a magazine of "Christian discipleship" published by evangelicals in Philadelphia.

One of the leaders of Liberty to the Captives and a mover behind the Washington torture tableaux demonstrations was Dick Taylor, whom I had an opportunity to interview in his Philadelphia home on January 31, 1977.

Taylor is from a liberal Quaker background but has, over a period of years, come to an evangelical religious position. With him has come the traditional non-violence of the "peace church" of his birth.

The torture tableaux-human rights protest is, for Taylor, only the most recent effort in an adulthood largely directed toward non-violent protest. He worked with Martin Luther King in the civil rights movement as a member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's National Board, and is a veteran of Selma and the Poor People's Campaign; he was active in the anti-war movement, and engaged in demonstrations ranging from blocking ammunition trains to reading off lists of names of the Vietnam War dead at the U.S. Capitol (for which he was arrested).

It is the expertise at non-violent direct action techniques which Taylor developed through these experiences that he is now channeling into his efforts on behalf of human rights, an issue he considers of prime Christian concern. (One might recall Congressman John Anderson's listing of this as a priority issue for evangelical concern.)

In January, Taylor told me that the strategy for the April demon-
strations was to put on the torture tableaux at the White House if President Carter had not lived up to his campaign promises on human rights. If he had, the plan called for demonstrations of support for Carter's policies at the White House with the torture tableaux being conducted simultaneously at the Capitol. It was thereby hoped to influence the government to cut off aid to countries which receive U.S. financial support and which also engage in torture.

Direct political action in Washington, D.C. is not entirely new to American evangelicals. There was some evangelical support for various civil rights marches in the 1960's, and Carl McIntire led his much-publicized "Victory in Vietnam" rallies there in the late-1960's and early-1970's. (The latter should be viewed, though, as blending elements of right-wing anti-communism and civil religion with certain facets of the evangelical persuasion; accordingly, McIntire's efforts had more of a "pro-America" thrust than a distinctly evangelical Christian flavor.)

Interest Group/Lobbying

Interest group lobbying activity is not new to evangelicals. During the mid-1960's, International Christian Youth, the youth arm of McIntire's International Council of Christian Churches, waged a (successful) campaign to acquire one million petition signatures in an (unsuccessful) effort to return "prayer and Bible reading to the public schools." The effort involved congressional "lobbying" of a sort, and testimony before a congressional committee by the president of International Christian Youth.
The National Association of Evangelicals has a Committee on Religious Broadcasting which goes back to the 1940's and which has served the interest group function for its constituent members.

Of more recent origin is the Christian Action Council, formed to help develop and promote "a pro-life solution to the abortion problem." With an office in The National Press Building in Washington and listing on its letterhead a host of evangelical luminaries sponsoring its effort (Christianity Today editor Harold Lindsell, Billy Graham's wife Ruth Bell Graham, Philadelphia surgeon D. Everett Koop, etc.), the Christian Action Council's approach and techniques reflect the general sophistication that has come to mark the American interest group organization.

Abortion is and has been a major concern for another evangelical interest group, the National Association for Christian Political Action (NACPA). Organized in the 1960's by persons in the Kuyperian tradition, NACPA has also given considerable attention to the public/private education question. (NACPA basically argues that the American educational system discriminates against parents who desire to educate their children in any fashion other than that which is in keeping with the "secular humanist" public philosophy that predominates in the educational culture.)

As of this writing, NACPA is undergoing a period of self-evaluation and is considering changing its emphases. As noted in Chapter Five, Kuyperians are not optimistic about the prospects for Christian Party formation in the U.S. at this time; and they are now seeking alternatives in keeping with their view of the need for integrally Christian structures for political action. It now appears likely
that a renamed and revamped "NACPA" will emerge in the near future, with an emphasis on extending its reach beyond the fairly limited Kuyperian clientele it has heretofore geared itself to serve.

A newly formed Christian political organization also can perhaps be most appropriately listed under the present "interest group" classification. Christians for Urban Justice (CUJ) has recently been formed out of another organization, the Evangelical Committee for Urban Ministries in Boston. The latter has coordinated a host of Boston evangelical ministries since 1968 and has published Inside magazine, a journal geared toward the urban evangelical task. Former ECUMB director and Inside editor Roger Dewey will head up the newly organized CUJ. One of the organization's major efforts will be the publication of a monthly political newsletter, which could represent a unique breakthrough for American evangelicals.

Dewey kindly afforded me a preliminary look at a tentative "rough draft" introduction to the newsletter. The idea for a newsletter resulted from talks with evangelicals in Washington (Charles Colson, Representative Al Quie, representatives from Hatfield's office) who indicated the need for a regular political forum into which the entire American evangelical community can channel its contributions on political thought and action. Accordingly, the political newsletter will attempt to solicit a breadth of writing and readership which will encompass all evangelical political persuasions. The newsletter will attempt to keep tabs on legislation of significance to evangelicals, provide notice of upcoming votes in the Congress, and suggest some biblical ways of looking at public policy issues.

The political newsletter will be backed up by a "supporting
magazine" representing a major revision of the *Inside* publication.

Of final note in this section on interest groups are some comments of Paul B. Henry on the futility of church organizations (i.e. the nation-level bodies) attempting to lobby for their memberships. Henry, a former aide to Congressman John Anderson, lists six separate reasons suggesting why such efforts are not taken seriously by national legislators. The reasons basically come down to the lack of political expertise and sophistication usually reflected in the content of statements made by such organizations, as well as the legislators' recognition that the more liberal views of the activist clergy do not represent their national constituencies' attitudes.

The real meaning of this effort by clerical activists to influence national legislators is incisively summed up by Franklin Littell when he discusses similar efforts in the past directed against prohibition and anti-evolution laws:

...Politicians in the churches attempted to secure by public legislation what they were unable to persuade many of their own members was either wise or desirable.15

Party Model

As noted in chapter three, mainline evangelical political thinkers advocate participation in the American party process as a viable means of exerting evangelical political influence. Indeed, Paul B. Henry's final chapter in *Politics for Evangelicals* is entitled "Strategies for Political Action," and at times reads like a "how to" pamphlet for evangelicals interested in getting involved in politics,
beginning at the local level.

Paul Henry himself is an example of his own suggested model. In addition to his former service with Congressman Anderson, Henry is involved in the local politics of the Grand Rapids area in which he lives and where he teaches at Calvin College. His activity in local Republican politics resulted in his replacing Gerald Ford as chairman of the Kent County, Michigan, Republican Organization when Ford gave up his House seat to become Vice President.

Henry does not advocate participation in one or the other of the two parties, but simply urges that evangelicals get involved in some form of politics. He wryly observes in a word to his evangelical readership,

Political parties are usually like most churches --they'll welcome with open arms any warm body! Achieving a position of responsibility within the party is again usually just as simple as achieving a position of responsibility in the church --volunteer and you've got it!17

Congressman John Anderson, also an example of the party politics model, is a staunch defender of the American party system. He goes so far as to lament the loss of party-enforced discipline that came in the wake of Progressive Movement reforms:

The Progressive Movement erred in believing that the cure for the ills of democracy was simply more democracy. But what it did was to destroy the ability of the parties to exercise some reasonable degree of control on the nomination of its candidates, and it deprived the regular and faithful party workers of playing a weighted role in the selection of candidates in the parties in which they had invested their labors.18
As a corrective to this situation, Anderson advocates a revision of the primary system to conform to a New York State model in which party control over nominating procedures is strengthened. 19

Multi-Ministry Social Activism Model

A traditional institution in American evangelicalism has been the urban mission, a place where derelicts can get a meal, drunkards can dry out, the poor can get a coat, and everybody can get a Gospel message. Archetypical of this effort is the Pacific Garden Mission in Chicago, which has "ministries" to homeless and indigent men and women, mothers and their small children, servicemen, etc.

In a few instances, this evangelical thrust has expressed itself in diverse social ministries. 20 And in at least one case, that of the Voice of Calvary in Mendenhall, Mississippi, the diversity and nature of the social ministry has become sufficiently extensive to have political ramifications.

Voice of Calvary (VOC) was founded by John Perkins, a black man who, after his conversion to Christianity, left a prosperous condition of upward mobility in California (the first member of his family to achieve such status since slavery) to return to his native Mississippi to work with the people there. What began in 1960 as a basically evangelistic ministry broadened within a few years into a social ministry that perceived parishioners' human material needs as being inseparable from their "spiritual" needs.

In his book Let Justice Roll Down 21, Perkins records the ongoing confrontation with the white Mendenhall establishment brought on by
early VOC social activity -- including voter registration. And he also outlines the way in which a variety of socio-economic programs also developed as part of the VOC work.

The list of this multiple-ministry's current programs is long and impressive and includes: a variety of training programs (in the business, secretarial, health and "leadership" area); instruction for children and adults in church related and non-church related subjects; health, food, housing and farm cooperatives; a clinic and health center; a thrift store serving between 800 and 900 families each month; and a full range of church activities.

Local Model

Under this rubric, we will briefly discuss several means of political and quasi-political expression advocated or practiced by evangelicals at the "local" level.

Both Paul Henry and Richard Mouw suggest in a limited and cautious fashion that the minister of a local church could use his pulpit to address political matters. Each offers careful consideration to the problems and dangers inherent in such an approach, but each insists that it could have some value. Henry says,

While the pulpit must never be allowed to degenerate into simply a political forum, it must nonetheless be supported as a place to speak courageously on social and political issues.

As noted in Chapter Three, Congressman John Anderson strongly urges evangelicals to take it upon themselves to become more fully
informed about social, political and economic (especially the latter) issues facing them in the U.S. A similar call for such "informedness" also comes from the evangelical right. In his "Your Five Duties..." tract referred to earlier, evangelist Bill Bright lists as duty number three:

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Become Informed. Organize and lead or participate in a study group to inform yourself and others concerning the structure of government, current problems and issues, and how to serve God effectively in the arena of politics at your own level of influence... Knowledge is essential to effective action.26
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H. Edward Rowe in Save America! (for which Bright wrote a laudatory "forward") urges somewhat a similar course on the local level: he urges the formation of many local "Christian action groups," each paralleling a specific local agency or local issue.27

Both Richard Mouw28 and John Howard Yoder29 suggest (the latter with greater emphasis) that Christianity can be a political force only if the Christian community itself reflects the present reality of God's justice in its own life.

In just this spirit evangelicals in several areas of the United States have begun attempts to develop and live in communities so constructed. The Jubilee Community in Philadelphia and the Sojourners Fellowship in Washington, D.C. are two examples. Each emphasizes a degree of commonality in living (worship, recreation, some household situations); each is concerned with the maintenance of lifestyles conceived as being consistent with and appropriate to an over-taxed earth; and the members of each are concerned with some sharing of their goods, household facilities, incomes, etc. While they are far
from being mini-communist societies, each is concerned with establishing community (κοινωνία) in its New Testament sense.30

Within the past few years there has been a trend, as mentioned, among some portions of American evangelicalism to emphasize the importance of personal lifestyle as an element that is integral to a Christian political witness. In Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger,31 Ronald J. Sider discusses the impact of personal habit and lifestyle in the overall context of the world hunger situation. Sider and other authors emphasize this same point in a 1976 issue of Christianity Today in which several feature articles are devoted to the hunger problem, how American consumption habits aggravate that problem, the biblically-mandated response required of evangelicals, etc.32 And Kuyperian Tom Malcolm, arguing from a slightly different perspective, reached similar conclusions and prescriptions for a simpler lifestyle in a 1976 lecture entitled "A Change in Time to Live With Change."33

The listing in this chapter of political and politically-related activities being conducted or suggested by American evangelicals is not intended to be a complete one; and there are probably other "modes and conceptions" of political action than the seven just discussed. However my purpose has not been to exhaust the subject, but to suggest the broad diversity of styles and approaches which evangelicals are assuming with respect to the political enterprise. Some of these "involvements" represent the final stage of a process that began with basic, formal political theorizing; others are simply the efforts of people trying to deal in a biblically faithful manner with the workaday situations in which they find themselves. But to the degree that all of these modes
and conceptions of involvement represent conscious efforts by evan-
gelicals to bring their faith to bear on concrete, practical, life
situations, they reflect in part the struggle to bridge the gap between
theory and praxis to which Paul Henry has referred.

Each of these involvements in its own way is producing empirical
"grist" which can in turn be used for the further refinement and soph-
istication of theory. Each is getting its participants --and those
with whom they interact-- used to the idea of evangelical political
activity (still a fairly new notion in twentieth century America, one
should remember). And taken in the aggregate, they represent a new
political timbre emanating from the American evangelical community.
Notes for Chapter VII

3. Ibid., pp. 69ff.
5. Bill Bright, "Your Five Duties As a Christian Citizen," a tract made available through Christians Concerned for More Responsible Citizenship, a San Bernadino organization. Bright, founder and director of Campus Crusade for Christ, is an immensely influential American evangelical leader who has, of late, been accused of using his vast network of evangelical contacts to foster right-wing politics and politicians. Bright, a longtime associate of Billy Graham, denies the charge. See Jim Wallis and Wes Michaelson, "The Plan to Save America: A Disclosure of an Alarming Political Initiative by the Evangelical Far Right," Sojourners, April, 1976, pp. 4-12. See also, "Politics from the Pulpit," Newsweek, September 6, 1976, pp. 49 and 51.
6. Isaiah 61:1 reads, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound." (KJV)
7. A book of Taylor's, Blockade! (Maryknoll, New York: Orbus, 1977), records the symbolic efforts (in which he was a leader) which tried to block shipping to Pakistan during the Bangladesh War. The "symbolic" action involved manning rowboats and kayaks and blocking shipping channels in four major east coast harbors.
8. Taken from the organization's letterhead, from a Christmas, 1976, letter --kindly made available to me by Dr. Carl F.H. Henry--introducing readers to the organization and its purposes.
9. For information on NACPA and some other evangelical political action groups see Bernard Zylstra, "Do Christians Have A Political Future? (part II)," Vanguard, August/September, 1972, pp. 13ff.
10. See pp. 103-104 above.
12. NACPA national board member James W. Skillen kindly provided me with a tentative (third draft) constitution for a revamped NACPA. A name under consideration for the new group is The Association for Public Justice.
19. Ibid., pp. 102-103.
20. For a summary of such ministries in the United States, see the May/June, 1974, issue of Inside magazine, which has as its theme, "Models of Ministry."
26. See fn. five above.
27. Rowe, Save America!, pp. 148-151.
30. A large portion of the January, 1977, Sojourners is devoted to a "self-portrait" of the Sojourners Fellowship which publishes the magazine.
31. See chapter four, fn. 40, p. 82 above.
33. Malcolm, formerly Director of Educational Services with the Toronto-based Association for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship, gave his prepared lecture several times in 1976. The present writer heard it in Harvey Cedars, N.J., on November 6, 1976.
CONCLUSION

Do we really live in the 'day of the evangelical?'
In some evangelical circles it is considered spiritually unpatriotic to voice doubt. Those not given to evangelical puffery are often considered cynics and personally out of touch with the remarkable spiritual breakthroughs that supposedly attest that an evangelical awakening is under way in America.

Carl F.H. Henry, 1977

Since the 1947 publication of The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism, Dr. Carl Henry has been one of the leading prophets of American evangelical social concern. However just as evangelical activity has attained a new plateau of prominence in the mid-1970's, Henry has begun to assume a new role: the prophet of caution.

Acknowledging that "the reemergence of evangelical Christianity...is among the striking religious developments of the last quarter century," Henry is also struck by the "overarching" trend toward increased secularization in American life. And one of the recurrent themes in his Evangelicals in Search of Identity (1976) is that while the decade of 1965 through 1975 was one of evangelical gain, it was also one of evangelical loss. In my interview with him earlier this year, Henry expressed the opinion, for example, that the opportunity to establish a Christian university in the United States --an opportunity that was ripe only a few years ago-- has now been lost.

What has propelled Henry to this position of doubt? It is that
longtime evangelical weakness --historically institutionalized, in the first place, by a decentralized ecclesiastical structure-- disunity in the ranks.

Will maneuvering on both the right and the left politicize and institutionalize the polemical differences that have recently been revived? Will we see an emerging era of evangelical controversy, or will evangelicals unite for spiritual awakening in our needy land?4

Henry's reference here is essentially to the same forces struggling within evangelicalism that I discussed in Chapter One. Henry does not project an answer to the question raised in the quotation immediately above; nor shall I. But it would be of value for this paper to try to relate the current uncertainty in American evangelicalism to the future of evangelical politics.

In the introduction to this paper, I stated the contention that recent developments in evangelical thought offer the possibility for a viable and distinctly evangelical political option to emerge on the American political scene. In the thought of Monsma, Paul Henry, Yoder, Zylstra, Skillen, and others, a strong theoretical foundation for such a political option has begun to be established; in the experience of Mark Hatfield, Paul Henry, John Anderson, and others, the practical implications of this foundation are beginning to find some expressions.

But while they seek a common goal --a biblically-based politics that effectively addresses conditions of the modern West-- these participants in recent evangelical political development represent a disparity of viewpoint and tradition. It would therefore seem that
evangelical political thinkers and practitioners face the same problem as the American evangelical community at large: how to overcome historic disunity and current disagreements.

A solution to this difficulty is certainly a precondition to the emergence of a viable evangelical political option. And it is to this problem that many evangelicals concerned with political matters have turned their attention.

Some approaches to the problem have been indicated in the body of this paper: the current self-evaluation and critique taking place within the National Association for Christian Political Action, as it seeks a broader evangelical audience; the transformation of the Evangelical Committee for Urban Ministries in Boston into the Christians for Urban Justice organization, along with its stated goal of publishing a trans-evangelical political newsletter and supporting magazine. A de facto approach to the problem is the eclectic approach to the political enterprise being taken by Mark Hatfield, who is willing to draw on any tradition that will aid him in his efforts to be biblically faithful in his governmental and political work.

Other efforts toward achieving a common evangelical political ground are also underway. In April of 1977, for example, the fourth Calvin College Conference on Christianity and Politics was convened in Grand Rapids, drawing conferees from all major evangelical political persuasions. Also in the spring of 1977, a steering committee of Evangelicals for Social Action met with the expressed intent of reviving that flagging organization, which has fallen into some disarray since it issued the Chicago Declaration in 1973. In August of 1977, a Dordt College/NACPA Political Conference is planned in Sioux Center, Iowa. Main-
line evangelical and Kuyperian political thinkers will gather there for seminars and lectures by Hatfield, former Iowa Senator Harold Hughes, and others.

Where evangelical political thought itself is concerned, the propensity to the eclectic is not a characteristic exclusive to Mark Hatfield. Richard Mouw, especially in his 1976 work *Politics and the Biblical Drama*, has also evidenced a debt to the several evangelical political stances discussed in this paper. Though from a basically mainline evangelical background, his positive view of the origin of government is similar to the Kuyperian position (as are other threads of his argument); and from his professed Calvinist standpoint, he shows several points of agreement with Yoder's critique of "the powers."

The point of noting these attempts to reach across traditional ideological boundaries is not to suggest that adherents to the different views are hastening to divest themselves of their culturally distinctive and (they feel) biblical positions in favor of a hybrid developed solely for the sake of unity. Rather, I am suggesting that, aware of their differences, aware (by virtue of painful evangelical experience) of what exacerbation of those differences could mean to the common cause of Christ which they all profess to serve, and aware of their own personal and group limitations, participants from all sides of the evangelical political enterprise are making efforts to exchange views, to be self-critical, and to open their theoretical horizons to unique concepts. Through this cross-fertilization process, ideas and concepts --such as several of Hatfield's-- are beginning to emerge which do not properly belong to any single evangelical political school of thought.

In Hatfield in particular and, in a more nascent form, in the
community of evangelical political thinkers in general, a broader evangelical political ethic is beginning to emerge. It has the character of an evangelical eclecticism that is willing to draw on all major evangelical and non-evangelical Christian traditions in devising its positions. And it is even willing to look beyond traditionally Christian sources, using perceived biblical criteria as a measure for political thought and action rather than traditional formulae alone.

It would thus seem that those active in evangelical political endeavors are taking important steps to mitigate --or at least to understand and fully appreciate-- their differences, and thus maybe overcome the disorienting stresses prevalent in the larger American evangelical context.

If splintering of efforts can accordingly be avoided, there could emerge a viable evangelical political option in America. In its critique of political issues and cultural ills, such a politics could gain a serious hearing in the court of political opinion. In its substance and its style, it could offer an alternative to the prevalent American political way, which, though predominant, elicits scant enthusiasm from large numbers of Americans.

While the specific contours of such an evangelical political alternative can only be speculated upon at present, its various elements probably already exist in one form or another within the opuses of the several evangelical political theories discussed herein, especially that of Hatfield. If such an alternative can be specifically described at some point in the future, its emergence, which I now see only as a possibility, will have become a reality. And as indicated by the variety of evangelical political involvements discussed above,
such a politics could have practical ramifications for American life. But whether or not such an evangelical political alternative emerges depends not only on the success of the growing dialogue among evangelical political thinkers. It is also contingent upon the development of political thought from that dialogue which both can and will speak to the specific problems which are counted critical to the life of modern culture. If evangelicals revert to offering answers to questions which no one is asking --as they did during much of this century-- even the most provocative and original political thinking will come to nought.

To remain biblically faithful while seeking more catholic political positions; to express politically an ancient faith while maintaining a relevant voice in the modern world: these are the goals toward which American evangelical political thinkers and practitioners appear to be setting their sights. If they attain them, there could be a new song in the cacophony of American politics.
Notes for Conclusion

2. Ibid.
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Introduction

This bibliography is divided into three classifications: 1) a general background category containing sources I have found useful in approaching the subject of evangelical politics, in formulating the study's broad outlines, and in considering the overall Christian historical context within which American evangelicalism has developed; 2) a category of sources primarily related to the American evangelical background; and 3) a list of works which either deal primarily with evangelical political thought or praxis or contain significant statements on that subject. I further subdivide each category (where appropriate) into a listing of books, periodicals, and miscellaneous sources. In some instances, the listing of a book or article under one or the other major category headings is admittedly a somewhat arbitrary choice; my criterion has been the purpose for which the source has been most useful to me in this study.

General Background: Books


Bock, Paul. *In Search of a Responsible World Society*. Philadelphia:


Smith, H. Sheldon, Handy, Robert T., and Loetscher, Lefferts A. *American Christianity: An Historical Interpretation with

Spener, Philip Jacob. Pia Desideria. Edited and translated by
Theodore G. Tappert. Seminar Editions. Philadelphia:

Evangelical Background: Books

Bloesch, Donald G. The Evangelical Renaissance. Grand Rapids:


Dayton, Donald W. Discovering an Evangelical Heritage. (An
uncorrected proof copy was used in this study.) New

Durnbaugh, Donald F. The Believers' Church. Macmillan Paperback.

Ellison, Craig, ed. The Urban Mission. Grand Rapids: William B.

Henry, Carl F.H. A Plea for Evangelical Demonstration. Grand

———. Evangelicals at the Brink of Crisis. Waco, Texas:

———. God, Revelation and Authority, Vol. I. Waco, Texas:

———. The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism.


Kelley, Dean. Why Conservative Churches Are Growing: A Study in

Kucharsky, David. The Man from Plains: The Mind and Spirit of

Marty, Martin E. A Nation of Behavers. Chicago: University of


Evangelical Background: Periodicals


**Evangelical Background: Miscellaneous Sources**


Evangelical Politics: Books


**Evangelical Politics: Periodicals**


Evangelical Politics: Miscellaneous Sources


Bright, Bill. "Your Five Duties as a Christian Citizen." Tract distributed by Christians Concerned for More Responsible Citizenship, P.O. Box 3009, San Bernadino, Calif. 92413.


Sider, Ronald J. Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger: A Biblical Study. I used a pre-publication manuscript made available to me by the author. The work was published in early 1977 by Intervarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois.


VITA

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