

FUNDAMENTALISM AND ECONOMICS IN THE U.S.*

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* I have benefited from many people's comments and suggestions, particularly those of E. Calvin Beisner, Otto Bremmer, Craig Gay, John Mason, Robert Mateer, Carrie Miles, and Dan Olson. I have benefited also from the support of the Hoover Institution's National Fellows Program.

1. INTRODUCTION

If one were to have the average American describe the economic views of fundamentalists in a single word, that word would undoubtedly be "conservative." If one were to elicit a more elaborate description it would probably read as follows: "Theological and economic conservatism go hand in hand. Theologically conservative Protestants are staunch defenders of market capitalism. They denounce every form of socialism, reject paternalistic government spending programs, and advocate free enterprise as the solution to virtually every economic problem." The truth, however, is both different and more complex. Theologically conservative Protestant leaders espouse a variety of economic positions. A free market consensus is at best a prospect for the future, and an unlikely prospect at that. Most rank and file fundamentalists and evangelicals are not economic conservatives and would probably reject any free market consensus that did emerge from their leaders. And, despite well-publicized and extensive lobbying of social and moral issues, even such avowedly conservative groups as the Moral Majority have never seriously attempted to implement an *economic* agenda. This essay attempts to document and explain this surprising state of affairs.

THE SCOPE OF THIS STUDY

The word "economics" has many meanings in everyday speech. This study concerns what might be termed "formal economics." It investigates what theologically conservative Protestants have to say about the production of commodities, the nature of markets, the economic impact of government, and the growth and distribution of a society's income. The informal aspects of everyday financial activity, the specific problems associated with running a business or managing one's money, are of secondary concern. Hence, this study does *not* review sermons and writings that counsel Christians against personal indebtedness, or admonish them to contribute liberally, or instruct them on spiritual guidelines for money management.¹ These are omitted, not because they are insignificant, but simply because they are, in the words of one Christian economist, "light years from the mainstream" of formal economic thinking.²

The word "fundamentalism," like the word "economics," means different things to different people. Studies that presume one meaning arrive at conclusions inapplicable to the other meanings. To avoid confusion, I must therefore explain how the term fundamentalism is used, and why it is often avoided, throughout this study.

Theologians and religious historians typically define "fundamentalism" as a specific religious movement that emerged from the controversies raging within mainstream American Protestantism around the turn of the century. In the face of attempts to adapt and modernize traditional Christian beliefs, the members of this movement fought to defend what they viewed as "the fundamentals" of the Christian faith and so styled themselves "fundamentalists." The origins of historical fundamentalism, the thought and actions of its leaders, and the development of its churches and institutions have been chronicled by Sandeen, Marsden, Ammerman, and others³ and need not be repeated here. It suffices to note that historical fundamentalists share not only a common past, but also a particular theology and social orientation. As one scholar observes:

Fundamentalist ... Christians [are those] who believe in the total errorlessness -- inerrancy -- of the Bible in all its assertions, of whatever kind; who believe that the present penultimate dispensation of history will end in utter disaster, as have all of its predecessors; who expect the imminent, public return of Christ in a second advent that will usher in the final dispensation of history; and who feel bound by faithfulness in an inerrant scripture to anathematize, and to separate themselves from, those who take a different view, whether they be Christians or others.⁴

Despite its value to theologians and religious historians, this definition of fundamentalism proves unsuited to many social scientific investigations. Sociologists, political scientists, and economists -- particularly those who employ population surveys and large-scale data analysis -- adopt broader definitions which subsume "fundamentalism" under the heading of "evangelicalism." ("Evangelicalism" here refers to the many churches and denominations that affirm that salvation comes only through personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, that stress the need to proselytize, and that accept the Bible as the inerrant Word of God.) For example, in a recent book entitled *The Fundamentalist Phenomenon*, the noted political scientist James Reichley concludes that "for political analysis, the older and more inclusive term, 'evangelical' in many ways works better" than the narrower "fundamentalist" term.⁵ In a similar manner, Susan Rose analyzes the educational impact of fundamentalism entirely within the context of evangelicalism. She does so, not because she chooses to ignore the fundamentalist/evangelical distinction, but rather because maintaining that distinction is impractical. She finds it "difficult to assess how many of the Christian schools are 'strictly' fundamentalist, for fundamentalist and charismatic schools may belong to the same Christian school associations and the distinction among types is not necessarily made."⁶

Similar difficulties plague economic studies of fundamentalism. Three of these deserve special mention: (1) A substantial fraction of all self-styled "fundamentalists," those belonging to the more strict and separatist wing of the historical movement, have expressed no real interest in economic issues. A study of their economic thought would be brief indeed, but also misleading, since it is their very lack of attention to economic issues that is most noteworthy. (2) Those self-styled fundamentalists who *are* interested in economic issues have developed their ideas and pursued their goals jointly with other evangelicals. As a practical matter, neither their orientation nor their impact can be separated from that of the other evangelicals with whom they routinely interact. (3) There is no way to reliably isolate the economic attitudes or behavior of rank and file fundamentalists. It is simply impossible to survey a representative sample of fundamentalists as distinct from other theologically conservative Protestants.⁷

In light of these problems, this study explores the attitudes and actions of fundamentalists within the larger context of evangelicalism. It surveys the economic attitudes of a broad, "evangelical-fundamentalist" population, and it investigates the economic teachings of a variety of theologically conservative Protestant leaders. Some of these leaders call themselves "fundamentalists," some "evangelicals." Some, though by no means all, have been associated with Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority or other organizations of the so-called "New Christian Right." Despite these differences, however, all share a distinctive outlook on economics and religion. They not only accept the Bible as the inerrant word of God, but also look to it for specific solutions to economic problems. Most have considered the economic implications of scripture at length and have emerged with something substantive to say about *economics* not just personal finances or material rewards. In other words, they have seriously considered the kind of issues that economists actually address and in so doing have arrived at conclusions which they insist are consistent with Biblical principles and which they justify in terms of specific Biblical texts. Though they are by no means in complete agreement, most are aware of each other's work and take it seriously. Many have interacted face to face, and most acknowledge the others as co-contributors to a growing body of thought that they often call "Christian economics."

2. THE SPECTRUM OF EVANGELICAL ECONOMIC THOUGHT

Evangelical economic attitudes are anything but unanimous. Though it is fair to characterize the typical evangelical as supportive of capitalism and opposed to communism -- a view that they share with most other Americans -- there is wide variation of thought within the movement's religious and intellectual leadership. At one extreme, Christians Reconstructionists and the so-called New Christian Right enthusiastically embrace free

markets and decry virtually all forms of government intervention. At the opposite extreme, self-styled "radical evangelicals" brand capitalism as hopelessly decadent and espouse a quasi-Marxist theology of liberation. The majority fall between these extremes, some calling for greater government intervention and larger social welfare programs and others advocating more free enterprise and a smaller government sector.

STRICT, SELF-STYLED FUNDAMENTALISTS

Historic fundamentalism always has advocated separation from the corrupting influences of secularism and liberal Christianity. Even so, the *degree* of separatism been a subject of frequent dispute. The original fundamentalist movement split in the 1940s and 1950s, with Billy Graham and others leading the more accommodating wing that came to call itself "evangelical" and Carl McIntire leading the strict separatists who retained the "fundamentalist" label.⁸ Today's self-styled fundamentalists are similarly divided, with a more accommodating or "open" wing epitomized by Jerry Falwell and his associates at Liberty Baptist Church and Liberty University and a more strictly separatist wing epitomized by institutions like Bob Jones University.

Strict fundamentalists exist within the American economy, and in that sense cannot help but participate in it, but they have never sought to understand or critique its workings from a religious perspective. Their major periodical, *Sword of the Lord*, has little to say about economics, only occasional praise for capitalism (typically within the context of attacks on communism).⁹ Their largest colleges, Bob Jones University, Tennessee Temple, Baptist Bible College of Missouri, and Baptist Bible College of Pennsylvania, devote no resources to economic studies. None has a department of economics, none offers an economics major, and with just one exception none even offers courses in economics.¹⁰ Indeed, it appears that there is not a single member of the American Economic Association among the ranks of strict fundamentalists.¹¹ Not surprisingly, therefore, strict fundamentalists have not participated in the economic discussions and debates that have occurred in other theologically conservative circles, nor have they generated their own body of economic teachings. It is this very lack of attention to economic issues that best characterizes their economic orientation. Extreme separatists appear suspicious of *all* economic systems, rejecting the possibility of any truly Godly outcomes from any secular institution, political or economic. The attitudes of the fundamentalist congregation studied by Nancy Ammerman are probably typical: "They accept the division of the world into sacred and secular, private and public. The structures of the economy are not expected to run by God's rules... When profit comes first, ahead of God, corruption and dishonesty are only to be expected."¹² Such fundamentalists are as likely to view themselves as victims of the marketplace as its beneficiaries.¹³

THE NEW CHRISTIAN RIGHT

In contrast to their strictly separatist brethren, members of fundamentalism's more accommodating wing *have* expressed interest in economic issues. Falwell, for example, has often praised the virtues of free enterprise while also condemning state control of the economy and social welfare programs. Falwell's Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia, has a department of economics, offers a major in economics, and teaches a full range of undergraduate economics courses. Its four person economics department ranks as one of the largest in any Christian college, fundamentalist or evangelical.¹⁴ Liberty University is also the site of an economics think tank, the "Contemporary Economics and Business Association," established in 1987. However, as CEBA's own president, Robert Mateer, has emphasized, none of these activities should be viewed as distinctly fundamentalist. Most of the people featured in CEBA's conferences and publications label themselves "evangelical" rather than "fundamentalist." Moreover, many of them contribute to economic discussion and debate occurring in mainstream evangelical circles, at universities such as Wheaton, organizations such as the "Coalition on Revival," and activities such as the "Oxford Conference."¹⁵ It is therefore impossible to isolate the economic thought and economic activities of fundamentalist leaders, such as Falwell and Mateer, from

those of other evangelicals who share their political and social agenda. The natural unit of analysis is the entire group of leaders that promotes this agenda, both evangelical and fundamentalist, a group known as the "New Christian Right."

The "New Christian Right" or NCR is a generic term applied by social scientists and the media to the collection of theologically and socially conservative Christian organizations that gained prominence in American politics in the late 1970's and early 1980's.¹⁶ In the popular press and public sentiment, the NCR always has been epitomized by Jerry Falwell and his now disbanded Moral Majority.¹⁷ The "fundamentalist" label, which Falwell embraced and certainly deserved, therefore is often applied to the entire NCR, and many Americans now routinely equate fundamentalism with religiously motivated conservative political action. The equation is erroneous, however. The NCR should not be viewed as the embodiment of fundamentalism, but rather as a broad coalition of evangelicals drawn together by their conservative social and political agenda. The NCR has always included nonfundamentalists -- moderate evangelicals, charismatics, and even some mainline Protestants and Catholics. Moreover, many self-styled fundamentalists, those I have called strict separatists, utterly reject the goals and methods of the NCR. They remain firmly isolationist and repudiate political activism. Their position is epitomized by Bob Jones, Jr. who denounced Falwell as "the most dangerous man in America today as far as Biblical Christianity is concerned."¹⁸

Leaders of NCR organizations share a conservative economic outlook that they have often voiced in sermons, newspaper interviews, popular books, and journal and newspaper articles. As regards the economy as a whole, they applaud the free market system, criticize the welfare state, and oppose any form of socialism. The following passage from "The Christian World View of Economics," a position paper published by an evangelical association called the "Coalition on Revival," is representative:

We affirm that a free market economy is the closest approximation man has yet devised in this fallen world to the economy set forth in the Bible, and that, of all the economies known to man, it is the most conducive to producing a free, just, and prosperous society for all people. (p 19)
We deny that central planning and other coercive interferences with personal choice can increase the productivity of society; that the civil government has authority to set the value of property; and that the Bible teaches any "just" price other than that resulting from the interaction of supply and demand in a marketplace of free people." (p 15)

Although statements like this have characterized the New Christian Right since its inception in the late 1970's,¹⁹ serious attempts to defend them are relatively recent.

The intellectual and biblical defense of free-enterprise, "Christian economics" is the primary goal of Liberty University's Contemporary Economics and Business Association. CEBA publishes a journal called *Christian Perspectives: A Journal of Free Enterprise*, sponsors conferences featuring noted conservative Christian economists and free-market apologists, and has produced a video-taped series along the lines of Milton Friedman's "Free To Choose" television series.²⁰ Through the energetic efforts of its president, CEBA has financed its continually expanding activities with private industry donations and has aimed for professional respectability by building its conferences, publications, and video tapes around respected authors, economists, and businessmen.²¹ The cover page of a recent issue of CEBA's *Christian Perspectives* journal states:

The economic faculty of the school [of Business and Government at Liberty University] and the staff of CEBA ... believe:

1. that the combination of democracy and our capitalistic economy (free-enterprise) is the philosophical foundation upon which the practical solutions to almost all political-economy problems and issues must be based,
2. that the economic development and progress of nations is directly related to the extent to which they have applied, in practice, the principles of free-enterprise economics,
3. that even a free-enterprise-based system of political economy can only be successful in Western civilization if it has the underpinning of the Judeo-Christian moral value system, the value system which has been the basis for most of our great achievements.²²

The Christian Right has been influenced by libertarian ideology associated with the "Chicago" and "Austrian" schools of economic thought. Libertarians like Milton Friedman and Friedrich Hayek provide Christian economists with a body of carefully worked, highly respectable research that defends free markets, private property, and minimal government on theoretical and empirical grounds. Thus, in an extended discussion of economic issues, Jerry Falwell cites Friedman repeatedly²³ and Robert Mateer recommends Friedman's *Capitalism and Freedom* as one of three books "virtually essential to an understanding of capitalism, freedom, and the role of government."²⁴

Although the proponents of conservative Christian economics freely acknowledge their debt to secular conservatives like Friedman, they also emphasize that their views remain grounded in God's Word. They argue that free enterprise and respect for private property is advocated throughout the Bible. Moreover, they insist that free enterprise yields its benefits only when coupled with ethical structures that maintain and promote the Bible's moral principles. The CEBA statement quoted above is in this respect completely typical. It is echoed by Pat Robertson's observation that "communism and capitalism in their most extreme, secular manifestations are equally doomed to failure ... When greed and materialism displace all spiritual and moral values, capitalism breaks down into ugliness."²⁵ The Christian Right's economic agenda thus links the rehabilitation of American capitalism to the restoration of traditional American values. James Kennedy, one of the Moral Majority's founders, argues that America's economic problems will be solved "only when we get back to the Protestant or Biblical work ethic."²⁶

THE CHRISTIAN RECONSTRUCTIONISTS

No group of theologically conservative Protestants has spelled out its view of the economy in as much detail as the Christian Reconstructionists. Its two most prolific leaders, Rousas Rushdoony and Gary North, have written numerous books and articles defending a free market as the only economic system compatible with God's Word. The following statements, from Rushdoony's *Politics of Guilt and Pity*, are typical of their overall economic views:

Social progress comes with the accumulation and development of *wealth*. Wealth comes, in free economy, as a product of *work and thrift* – in short, of character. Capital is often accumulated by inheritance, a God-given right which is strongly stressed in the Bible... In a free economy, *property* is freed from restrictions of the state because it is under the restrictions of the family and of a religiously oriented community... The security of a man in his property, and in his inheritance, means a stability in the social order which is productive progress."²⁷

Reconstructionist policy recommendations are in many cases identical to those of the Austrian school of economic thought. And there is no doubt that North, at least, has been directly influenced by Austrian writings.²⁸ Nevertheless, it is Biblical texts that the Reconstructionists use to justify their positions. The

Biblical tithing is said to demand a flat tax; God's authority as the world's creator and ultimate owner prohibits centralized planning; the Old Testament's metallic currencies illustrates that "honest money" is based on tangible commodities, not government fiat; and the eighth commandment ("thou shall not steal") condemns income redistribution as nothing more than institutionalized theft.

As these examples illustrate, the Reconstructionists reject any distinction between secular and religious truth. Rushdoony claims that "[t]he roots of the free market ... rest in the doctrine of God"²⁹ "[E]conomics cannot be seen in isolation from ethics, theology, and much, much more.... Economics does not exist in a vacuum, nor is it separate from morality, the family, and vocation."³⁰ Economic revival and spiritual renewal are ultimately inseparable. "The battle for the free market is but one facet of a battle against idolatry."³¹

Outsiders sometimes refer to the Reconstructionists as "fundamentalists," but the Reconstructionists themselves reject the label on both historical and theological grounds. The movement grew out of the Calvinist, Dutch Reform wing of Protestant evangelicalism, which is historically distinct from that which gave rise to traditional fundamentalism. Reconstructionists also reject the critical fundamentalist doctrine known as "premillennialism," the belief that Christ must return *before* God's Kingdom (the "millennium") can be established. True to their Calvinist roots, Reconstructionists are "postmillennialists," believing that Christ will return only *after* Christian efforts help to bring about God's millennial Kingdom. The practical significance of this apparently esoteric distinction is great. Premillennial theology sees the world going from bad to worse, only to be redeemed through God's sudden intervention at the second coming of Christ. Any efforts, including those of Christians, to reform secular society are therefore ultimately futile. The logical Christian response to the evils of the world is therefore defensive isolationism, holding the fort until God's cavalry arrives. Premillennial theology thus tends to undermine arguments for political activism, and so is something of an albatross about the NCR's neck. In contrast, Postmillennial theology calls Christians out of isolation. A Christian society can and will be achieved. It is incumbent upon Christians to dig in and fight, since Christ is literally waiting for them to finish the job that He began.

Dominion theology is increasingly filtering into the mainstream of the Christian Right. It has, for example, shaped some of Pat Robertson's economic positions³³ and underpins many of the economic views and goals of at least one major NCR organization, the Coalition On Revival.³⁴ Put off by the Reconstructionists' militant rhetoric and occasional ad hominem attacks, most members of the Christian Right hesitate to be openly associated with them. But as one interviewee said "though we hide their books under the bed, we read them just the same."

THE EVANGELICAL LEFT

The Christian Right has garnered so much attention in recent years that its positions are sometimes taken as typical of all evangelicals. To do so, however, is a mistake. There are other evangelicals whose economic positions are as far to the left as the NCR and Reconstructionists are to the right. Moreover, the Right's economics can not be fully appreciated apart from the contrasting views of Ron Sider, Jim Wallis, and other leaders of the "evangelical Left." When Gary North named his series of books "Biblical Blueprints" he was self-consciously rejecting Ronald Sider's claim that "We do not find a comprehensive blueprint for a new economic order in Scripture."³⁵ When another Reconstructionist, David Chilton wrote a book on economics, it was framed as a refutation of Sider's *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* and titled *Productive Christians in an Age of Guilt Manipulators*. In a recent review of Beisner's *Prosperity and Poverty*, Liberty University's Mark Clauson makes a point of noting that "Beisner responds to the Siderian interpretations of Scripture" and espouses "a concept of justice that is directly opposed to the ideas of many evangelicals in the mold of Ronald Sider."³⁶ This fascination with Sider and his associates is revealing. The evangelical Right has made no analogous attempt to refute Catholic and mainline Protestant teachings, which are at least as liberal as those of

Sider and which have received far more attention in the secular press. Leaders of the evangelical Right are well aware that both they and their counterparts on the Left contend for the same evangelical Christian audience.

Ronald Sider is a philosopher at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary and probably the most influential leader of the evangelical Left.³⁷ Sider sees issues of poverty, inequality, and economic justice as central to Biblical morality. He condemns fellow evangelicals for "ignoring the central Biblical teaching that God is on the side of the poor"³⁸ and repeatedly draws attention to the vast disparities in wealth and living standards that exist in the modern world. The scriptural solution, according to Sider, is basically one of redistribution. Christians in the world's developed countries must consume less, contribute more to the poor, and demand that their countries enact trade policies that benefit less developed countries. Although Sider and other evangelicals of the Left concede the Biblical "legitimacy of private property," they are quick to add that "the right of private property is not absolute."³⁹ It is not surprising, therefore, that market intervention is implicit in many of their specific proposals, such as the call for a "national food policy," increased foreign aid (channeled through organizations like the United Nations), "just" international trade, and guaranteed wages.⁴⁰

A handful of evangelical leaders flatly reject capitalism in favor of socialism. Most of these are self-styled "radical evangelicals" whose thinking has been influenced by the secular Left, the 1960's counter-culture, and by communitarian Christian groups such as the Hutterites, Mennonites, and Amish. Adopting a Marxist formulation of society's problems, they argue that "the system which creates and sustains much of the hunger, underdevelopment, and other social ills in the world today is capitalism. Capitalism is by its very nature a system which promotes individualism, competition, and profit-making with little or no regard for social costs. It puts profits and private gain before social service and human needs. As such it is an unjust system which should be replaced."⁴¹ These sentiments find their strongest expression in the writings of Jim Wallis, the Radical Left's most influential leader. His *Agenda for Biblical People*,⁴² insists that American "overconsumption is theft from the poor" and that "the people of the non-industrialized world are poor *because* we are rich; the poverty of the masses is maintained and perpetuated by our [economic, political, and military] systems and institutions and by the way we live our lives." He calls for the rejection of consumerism and the "redistribution of wealth and power on a global scale."⁴³

FUNDAMENTALIST ATTRIBUTES AND ECONOMIC ORIENTATIONS

Our overview of a variety of theologically conservative Protestants -- strict fundamentalists, the NCR, Christian Reconstructionists, and the evangelical Left -- illustrates why right-to-left variation in religious economic thought can not be linked to corresponding variation in theological beliefs or social attributes. It is simply not true that "conservative" economic views are the consequence of "conservative" theology or other "fundamentalist-like" attributes. Premillennialism, a characteristically fundamentalist doctrine, is not the key to economic conservatism, since the most radically right-wing group of evangelicals, the Reconstructionists, utterly reject that doctrine. Separatism also fails to predict economic conservatism -- the strict separatists associated with Bob Jones University appear suspicious of *all* economic systems and utterly repudiate the goals of the Christian Right. Belief in Biblical inerrancy likewise fails to predict economic outlook. Ronald Sider and other economic liberals of the evangelical left are defenders of Biblical inerrancy, and Sider's writings are packed with scriptural quotations interpreted literally. Yet Sider embraces government intervention and argues that "laissez-faire economics...reflects a modern, secularized outlook rather than a biblical perspective."⁴⁴

This record of unpredictable diversity underscores a crucial fact: there is no generally accepted, Biblical standard for economic conduct. Different evangelical leaders with similar theologies and similar views of scripture have little trouble finding Biblical justification for radically different economic teachings. Some emphasize that the early Christian church "had everything in common" (Acts 4:32); others invoke the eighth and tenth commandments, which prohibit stealing or coveting another's property, as mandating respect for

private property; and yet others justify income redistribution and poverty programs with reference to the Jubilee laws (Leviticus 25:8-55) which mandate the periodic freeing of slaves and return of land to its original owners.⁴⁵ In fact, different people sometimes defend radically different economic policies with exactly the same scriptures. The founders of virtually every Christian commune quote Acts 4:32 as proof that private property is contrary to the Christian ideal. Sider and Wallis likewise see in this text a "model" for Christian's "common use and consumption" of economic resources.⁴⁶ But, others use the same passage as evidence that communism proved unworkable even in the golden age of the Apostles. They claim that the experiment was short lived and was never repeated "because it obviously didn't work." They even interpret Paul's subsequent efforts to collect funds for the Jerusalem church as proof that "the poor saints at Jerusalem ... bankrupted themselves though their experiment in communal living."^{47,48} Most evangelicals say that the Biblical tithe requires Christians to contribute a tenth of their income to the church. But the Reconstructionism also interpret the tithe as limiting government revenue to a flat, ten percent tax.⁴⁹ Christians on all sides agree that the Bible commands charity toward the poor. But those on the left invoke these scriptures to justify income redistribution and social welfare programs, whereas those on the right argue that Biblical charity and mandated redistribution are in fact antithetical, since true "charity" must be freely given.

Statistical data provide further proof that economic thinking often varies independent of theological beliefs. Consider, for example, a 1981 survey of over a thousand faculty members at 198 seminaries and theological schools drawn from the full range of Christian denominations. The faculty were asked numerous questions about their religious, political, and economic beliefs. The results showed that conservative theology -- belief in Biblical inerrancy, the divinity of Jesus, the promise of immortality, and the threat of Hell -- did *not* lead to economic conservatism. Theologically conservative professors displayed tremendous variation in their attitudes toward social welfare programs. Whereas theologically liberal professors seem to have attained a liberal consensus on such issues as welfare spending, income redistribution, reducing the role of government, and aid to poor countries, theologically conservative professors range all over the map. There was no evidence of an economic consensus, conservative or otherwise, among the professors in this latter category. Likewise, when analyzing results by school type, the economic views of professors at evangelical and fundamentalist schools showed substantially greater variation than those of professors at mainline Protestant schools. Interestingly, the situation was reversed on issues of sexual conduct. Professors at fundamentalist and evangelical schools responded far more consistently and conservatively to questions about abortion, homosexuality, and premarital sex than did professors at mainline Protestant schools. Hence, it is incorrect to attribute the economic results to some greater underlying diversity in the evangelical/fundamentalist (as opposed to mainline) population. Evangelicals and fundamentalists *are* capable of consensus. But that consensus is moral rather than economic.⁵⁰

In short, there is little relationship between standard fundamentalist attributes and economic orientation. Unless one plays with tautologies, for example by equating fundamentalism with Falwell and the New Christian Right, it is impossible to argue that all fundamentalists, much less all evangelicals, are ardent supporters of laissez-faire capitalism or other conservative economic policies. Rather, one must acknowledge that fundamentalist and evangelical leaders with similar theological beliefs and similar social traits subscribe to a wide range of diverse and competing economic views.

3. IMPACT

The economic teachings of evangelical leaders appear to have had little impact on rank and file members or on national debate, economic policies, and economic institutions. Moreover, the evidence below gives no indication that this situation will change anytime soon.

THE RANK AND FILE

If one were to compare the economic views of the typical evangelical or fundamentalist to those of the typical American and then summarize the comparison in a single phrase, the phrase would be "no difference worth mentioning." This fact so contradicts the conventional wisdom that it demands both evidence and explanation.

As already noted, the widespread image of fundamentalists and evangelicals as economic conservatives is partly due to the media's extensive coverage of Falwell and the New Christian Right throughout the 1980s. But it is also due to the fallacious notion that all forms of conservatism -- religious, moral, economic, and so forth -- go hand in hand. Rank and file fundamentalists and evangelicals do indeed stand out as religious and moral conservatives, but their economic views are largely indistinguishable from those of other Americans. In this respect they are much like their theology school counterparts, whose diverse economic views but consistent moral views have already been noted.

Consider, for example, a recent study by Ted Jelen comparing the attitudes of more than a thousand Catholics, mainline Protestants, and evangelical Protestants on issues concerning sexual morality, abortion, feminism, school prayer, communism, arms spending, and government welfare programs.⁵¹ On all issues except the last, evangelicals proved significantly more conservative than Catholics and Mainline Protestants. But their attitude toward welfare spending was virtually the same (and indeed slightly more liberal) than other Christians'.

Although Jelen's study addressed only one economic issue and employed a very loose, denominational definition of evangelicalism, the same result holds for stricter definitions and many other issues. We see this in tables 1 and 2, which summarize the moral and economic attitudes of white Protestants in the 1987, 1988, and 1989 General Social Surveys. In these tables, I have classified more than 4000 respondents on the basis of their denomination *and* their personal religious beliefs. Respondents have been labeled "evangelical-fundamentalist" if (1) they belong to an evangelical or fundamentalist denomination⁵² and (2) they also accept the Bible as God's Word "to be taken literally, word for word."⁵³

Table 1 shows that evangelical-fundamentalists are far more likely to espouse traditional moral standards than are other white Protestants. Eighty-two percent of them (but only 57% of other Protestants) oppose laws that "permit abortion for any reason." Ninety-five percent of them (but only 78% of others) believe that "extramarital sex is always wrong." Sixty-three percent of them (but only 23% of others) believe that "premarital sex is always wrong." Their condemnation of pornography and homosexuality is no less emphatic. On each of these moral issues, the differences between evangelical-fundamentalists and other Protestants is strong, striking, and statistically significant. Moreover, these differences remain after controlling for background characteristics.⁵⁴ The distinctive attitudes cannot be traced to income, education, age, gender, or marital status. Fundamentalists and evangelicals truly are moral conservatives.

Even so, they are *not* economic conservatives. Table 2 shows this quite clearly. When asked about government spending on health, poverty, education, the environment, and the problems of blacks and large cities, evangelical-fundamentalists are nearly as likely as others to advocate increased expenditures. For virtually every economic item, the difference between them and non-evangelical Protestants is small, on the order of a few percentage points, and statistically insignificant.⁵⁵ The Christian Right notwithstanding, fundamentalists and evangelicals seem just as comfortable with big government as everyone else.

This last statement can be taken even farther. Recent research by Tamney, Burton, and Johnson indicates that when it comes to "economic restructuring" (income redistribution and job guarantees), fundamentalists are

actually *more* liberal than others. Viewing fundamentalism as a matter of degree, Burton, Johnson, and Tamney surveyed people to determine the extent to which they believed in strict biblical inerrancy, the second coming of Christ, human sinfulness, and God's control over every aspect of life.⁵⁶ Their surveys also investigated political, sexual, and economic attitudes.⁵⁷ The results show that although fundamentalism correlates positively with conservative political attitudes and traditional sexual attitudes, it also correlates positively with support for economic restructuring.⁵⁸ Indeed, even focusing on supporters of the Moral Majority, they could find no evidence of a conservative economic orientation.⁵⁹ Tamney, Button, and Johnson attribute their results to continuing influence of values embodied in the Populist and Prohibitionist parties of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, two movements closely associated with traditional, conservative Protestantism. They conclude that William Jennings "Bryan seems a more apt personification of Protestant Fundamentalism than does Jerry Falwell."⁶⁰

It is difficult to know whether the economic views of fundamentalists and evangelicals really derive from populism. Other explanations certainly are possible. (For example, one might attribute the rank and file's lack of economic conservatism to their leaders' lack of consensus. Or one might argue that there really is nothing to explain since their economic attitudes are not much different from anyone else's.) Nevertheless, the legacy of populism is cited by both leaders on the inside and researchers on the outside. Gary North has blamed Bryan for turning fundamentalist Christians against the gold-standard, free trade, and free markets: "Bryan radicalized a substantial segment of Christian voters in the United States . . . Thus American Christian thinking on economics is muddled. Christian's 'populist' instincts are anti-bank, yet pro-paper money. Christians are patriotic, but with this has come a suspicion of foreigners and foreign imports."⁶¹ Political scientist, James Reichley, raises the same points while discussing evangelicals' historic allegiance to the Democratic party. He observes that

evangelicals, while for the most part socially conservative . . . have by no means given up all the other attitudes and dispositions that for many years kept them loyal to the Democrats . . . [A]s the evangelicals have begun to acquire political confidence, some have shown signs of doubting that there is a necessary connection between traditional morality and, say, supply-side economics or an aggressively interventionist foreign policy. Older themes of economic populism and foreign policy non-interventionism, even isolationism, have begun to reappear.⁶²

In any case, whether or not populism is the key, most evangelicals are neither libertarians nor free-market ideologues at heart. In the final analysis, they seem more at home with a "Christian" government that fosters and even imposes "Christian" values than a truly non-intrusive, minimal state. Just as conservative Protestants supported prohibition around the turn of the century, contemporary evangelicals have sought a constitutional ban on abortion, restrictions on drugs, pornography, and sexual conduct, and laws that require school texts to teach "creation science" as an alternative to evolutionary theory. The majority of evangelicals likewise look to the state for relief from poverty, reductions in economic inequality, and solutions to racial conflict, urban decay, and environmental pollution. They fear the growth of government insofar as it serves the interests "secular humanists," but by no means do they oppose all restrictions on personal liberty. One suspects that when rank and file evangelicals claim to support "free" and "open" markets, they mean markets free of communism and open to the influence of Christian values. Though it might come as a surprise, their middle-of-the-road sentiments were aptly summarized by Falwell himself:

I believe in the free enterprise system . . . I look on socialism as mutually shared poverty. But I also believe that we must continue to struggle to bring justice, equality and a fuller measure of mercy and generosity through our free enterprise system. The exploitation of

workers, the misuse and abuse of power and wealth, the unequal and discriminatory distribution of profits should have no place in America's practice of capitalism."⁶³

IMPACT ON PUBLIC POLICY

If evangelical leaders have failed to impress their members with a distinctive economic ethic, they have had even less effect on governmental policies. Indeed, it appears that for all practical purposes they have never even tried to change current economic policy.

Consider, for example, the track record of the New Christian Right. If any group of evangelicals was in the position to have policy impact in the 1980s it was the NCR. Yet for all its pro-capitalist rhetoric, the NCR never lobbied seriously for or against any economic bills. One searches in vain for instances in which NCR leaders and organizations directed significant time or money toward the passage of specific, "free market" legislation -- such as laws to reduce agricultural price supports, eliminate quotas and tariffs, scale back the minimum wage, or cut social spending and poverty programs.

The NCR's lack of support for economic legislation contrasts sharply with its approach to moral and educational issues such as abortion, school prayer, the teaching of creationism, tuition tax credits, and gay rights.⁶⁴ On abortion, for example, the NCR actively supported constitutional amendments designed to overturn the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court ruling. It also supported statutory proposals to "strip" the Court of its jurisdiction over the abortion issue. The NCR's approach to school prayer was likewise characterized by support for constitutional amendments, statutory restrictions, and special legislation aimed at getting around the Court's rulings. Bills mandating the teaching of "creation science" were introduced and in some cases passed in state legislatures.⁶⁵ The NCR also supported tuition tax credits, but for educational rather than strictly economic reasons. Tuition tax credits would simply reduce the cost of private Christian education, thereby facilitating the inculcation of fundamentalist values.

The NCR's political effectiveness was debated throughout the 1980s, and it continues to be debated today. Some have noted that despite tremendous media coverage, extensive lobbying, and eight years of a president committed publicly to much of its agenda, virtually none of its policy objectives were realized.⁶⁶ While conceding the lack of legislative victories, others contend that it was a major achievement merely to get Congress to debate school prayer, abortion, and tuition tax credits.⁶⁷ By either standard, however, the NCR's *economic* impact must be judged as virtually nonexistent. For all intents, economic issues were never even on the NCR agenda. In this respect, Falwell's 1981 "Agenda for the Eighties" was entirely typical. Its ten item list of the Moral Majority's "vital issues" included abortion, homosexuality, drugs, pornography, women's rights, ERA, national defense, support for Israel, church-state separation, and the autonomy of the Moral Majority state organizations.⁶⁸ Economics was never even mentioned. Falwell's 1980 "Biblical Plan Of Action" likewise lists abortion, homosexuality, pornography, humanism, and the fractured family as the five major moral-political problems "that moral Americans need to be ready to face."⁶⁹

The NCR's failure to pursue, let alone attain, specific economic goals is easy to understand given the statistical evidence described above. Rank and file evangelicals are no more enamored of free markets than are other Americans, nor are they any more opposed to government intervention. The NCR's legislative activities, which attacked moral issues but avoided economic ones, accurately reflected the interests of its constituency and thus accord with standard political theory. What needs to be explained therefore is not why the NCR's failed to lobby for economic change, but rather why it even raised the issue of free markets.

BEYOND RHETORIC

The economic rhetoric of Falwell and company defies explanation only as long as we focus on the NCR's own constituency. The paradox is resolved when we broaden our perspective and recognize that the Christian Right was from its inception just one side of a new right-wing political coalition. This fact, though often ignored by the press and the public, has been documented by both political scientists and sociologists. Recounting the history of the New Right, Richard Peirard notes that the coalition got its start in the mid-1970s, when *secular* conservative activists, most notably Richard Viguerie, Howard Phillips, and Paul Weyrich,

... set out to build a broad coalition that would be autonomous from the political parties and possess a comprehensive set of political organizations ... The leaders of the so-called New Right were careful to emphasize the vital nature of the social issues that interested the evangelical conservatives. In 1979, they assisted in creating the three groups the media most closely identified with the New Christian Right: the Moral Majority, (Religious) Roundtable, and Christian Voice.⁷⁰

Peirard's interpretation is echoed by other scholars, such as Riechley:⁷¹

"In its early stages, the religious new right was tutored and even to some extent created⁷² by a cadre of secular conservative organizers and publicists who for some years had been seeking to mobilize a right-wing coalition in national politics . . . Up to 1976, the chief preoccupations of the far right had been resistance against the growth of the welfare state and hardline opposition to the Soviet Union. After the 1976 election, Weyrich in particular spotted the social agenda of the religious right, with which he was in personal sympathy, as a new source of major electoral strength for a broad right-wing coalition."⁷³

The Christian Right would probably never have arisen, much less captured public attention, had it not from the start allied itself with secular conservatives. In turn, that alliance would never have formed had not both sides conceded the issues most cherished by the other. The secular conservatives embraced the fundamentalist/evangelical moral agenda, and the NCR in turn embraced the secular conservatives economic agenda. However, for many leaders, and perhaps most followers, that embrace was less than loving. In the words of one scholar, "[m]any traditional Republicans are uncomfortable with the emotionally charged moral agenda of the Christian right." Hence, as the fundamentalists and evangelicals loudly lamented, the very conservatives that they worked to elect, most notably Ronald Reagan, failed to pursue their moral agenda with the vigor that they had anticipated.⁷⁴ For their part, the Christian Right gave only nominal support to the economic goals of the secular conservatives. The NCR's apparently paradoxical failure to lobby for their economic goals is thus explained by the fact that the goals were never really "theirs" in the first place.

The politics of coalitions helps to explain not only why evangelicals and fundamentalists have done so little to affect economic policies directly but also how they might have had some *indirect* impact. Insofar as the New Right coalition succeeded, it helped elect Republicans whose economic orientation was relatively conservative. The economic effect of the NCR in the 1980s thus hinges on the answers to two questions: Was the support of fundamentalists and evangelicals critical for the election of conservatives, and did the election of these conservatives lead to conservative economic outcomes? The future must be the judge of these questions. To dare, scholars remain deeply divided over the political impact of Falwell, the Moral Majority, and the rest of the Christian Right. On the one hand, it seems clear that the 1980s saw a substantial increase in the political activity of evangelicals and fundamentalists.⁷⁵ On the other hand, the NCR often antagonized many more people than it attracted, and thus may have mobilized more opposition than support.⁷⁶

The future political effectiveness of evangelicals is also unclear. On the one hand, evangelical support for Republican

candidates continues to coalesce. The evangelical vote for Republican Presidential candidates has risen from 55% in 1976, to 63% in 1980, to 76% in 1984, and 81% in 1988. As Hadden observes "evangelical Christians seem to be moving toward a consensus that their best chance for achieving [their] goals is through the Republican party. Their allegiance to the Republican party is now approaching the strength of blacks' allegiance to the Democratic party."⁷⁷ The Republican party likewise recognizes that "they need evangelical Christians if they are to build a majority party Thus from a pragmatic perspective, the moralist Christians and the traditional pro-business Republicans are a likely alliance."⁷⁸ On the other hand, this coalition remains "an uncomfortable . . . marriage of convenience."⁷⁹ According to Reichley, the religious right is now showing less enthusiasm for Republican economics and foreign policy than it did when it first joined the Reagan coalition of the early 1980s.⁸⁰ And as evangelical leaders have gained more political clout, they have also displayed a greater tendency to fragment, as they did in the 1988 Republican primary when some supported Robertson, others (including Falwell) supported Bush, and still others backed Dole or Kemp. All in all, there is little doubt that the Christian Right will continue to make some contribution to political conservatism. But the magnitude of that contribution and its relevance to specific policy areas, particularly economics, remain open questions.

Interestingly, the most ardent evangelical proponents of economic conservatism -- Reconstructionists like Gary North, Calvin Beisner, and Liberty University's Robert Mateer -- set their sights well beyond the Republican party and the immediate future. They disavow lobbying for legislative change on both practical and theoretical grounds. They know full well that most evangelicals do not share their positions. Striving for immediate change is therefore premature. They also recognize the hazards of coalition politics. Gary North, who once worked for the libertarian presidential candidate Ron Paul, is said to have remarked that "anyone who goes to Washington expecting to change things is in for disillusionment." Rather than enter into the process of compromise and concession that inevitably characterizes political activity, they have instead chosen to embark on a long term program of education. The Reconstructionists in particular emphasize that theirs is an educational movement with a "bottom up" rather than "top down" plan of action. For North, Beisner, Mateer and many others, the immediate goal is to teach fellow Christians the Biblical mandate for free markets founded on Christian moral values. They express confidence that their "grass roots" methods will eventually affect economic policies, but they anticipate waiting decades or longer for tangible results. Though not always articulated, their plan of action really has four distinct steps: (1) developing a systematic, Christian view of economics; (2) converting other evangelical educators and leaders to this view; (3) teaching this new economic orthodoxy to rank and file Christians; and finally (4) democratically altering America's economic system, bringing it into line with Biblical principles. By their own admission, they have yet to go past the first two steps.⁸¹ Still, in religion as in politics, progress and consensus have been known to come unexpectedly. And as the Bible itself states "with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26).

4. CONCLUSIONS

This essay has reviewed the economic positions of evangelical leaders and has investigated the impact that these positions have had upon the attitudes of rank and file evangelicals and national economic policies. The positions espoused by evangelical leaders were found to be far more diverse than the platforms of specific groups, such as the Moral Majority, would suggest. A strong, free-market consensus remains at best a prospect for the future. Moreover, rank and file evangelicals show no signs whatsoever of embracing a distinctive, religiously motivated, economic ethic. They are just as open to income redistribution as other Americans and just as supportive of government programs to promote health, education, and urban renewal, and to alleviate the problems of race, poverty, and the environment. This contrasts sharply with their attitudes toward many moral issues, which are indeed different from and more conservative than those of other Americans. Thus, the conservative economic rhetoric of the New Christian Right appears to be a concession to its secular, political allies, not an expression of its rank and file members' concerns. This in turn helps to explain why Falwell and other leaders of the NCR never attempted to move from "free enterprise" talk to specific, free market legislation.. The only immediate impact that fundamentalists are likely to have on the economy is via their support for conservative Republicans. The importance of that support remains a subject of debate. Moreover, even where their support may have been or may yet become decisive, its primary economic effect will have been to promote an economic agenda that is not really theirs. Evangelical leaders with a serious, religiously-oriented commitment to conservative economic principles remain few, their best hopes a distant prospect.

Some tentative conclusions emerge from this study that may apply to fundamentalism as a generic phenomenon. The first is that the diversity of economic thought within Protestant fundamentalism and the even greater diversity within Protestant evangelicalism may not be exceptional. This study has found no evidence that the logic of fundamentalism drives people toward a particular view of the economy, much less particular economic policies. Rather we observed examples of the "selective retrieval" that Martin Marty describes as common to all fundamentalisms.⁸² Selective retrieval, "picking and choosing ...from some earlier ... stages in ones own sacred history," aptly describe the way in which fundamentalists and evangelicals have arrived at Biblical justifications for everything from a flat tax to communal living, from income redistribution to the gold standard. Fundamentalists and evangelicals have no difficulty advocating virtually any reasonable economic orientation, as well as many unreasonable ones, with reference to their traditions and written authorities. Hence, where consensus does ever emerge among fundamentalists and evangelicals on the relative merits of capitalism versus socialism or economic efficiency versus equity it more than likely reflects the working of external forces, such as the dictates of political coalitions or the perceived failure of communist economies. Such an externally induced consensus may indeed have impact upon both rank and file members and the society in which they live, but it is an impact that is no less shaped by secular circumstances than it is by the internal logic of a particular religious form or tradition.

This leads to a second point. Fundamentalism may ultimately relate to economics in much the same way that it relates to technology. Observers are always surprised to see how quickly the so-called "antiscientific" fundamentalists embrace new technology, and how readily they adapt it to their own purposes. The secular medium of television becomes the basis for televangelism; the notebook computer gives rise to the "on-line" Bible. Fundamentalists appear to appropriate economic concepts in much the same way: picking and choosing, paying little attention to an item's original source, and above all using everything they can as instruments to further their religious (and perhaps ultimately social) agenda." From time to time, academics must pinch themselves to recall that most people are not terribly concerned with nor constrained by logical consistency. In the final analysis, a fundamentalist "world view" may indeed limit one's attitudes toward technology, education, economics, and politics. But more often than not a fundamentalist's primary concern with each of these is the

same as everyone else's: using them as effectively as possible to pursue their larger goals. This could well be the most important lesson that emerges from the messy world of evangelical-fundamentalist economics.

[Warning: These notes and citations still need a lot of work.]

NOTES

1. So too, this study does not concern itself with promises of material gain as God's reward for personal piety, such as those embodied in the teachings that have come to be called "prosperity theology."
2. Kenneth Elzinga, "What Is Christian Economics," p 9, in *Christian Perspectives on Economics*, edited by Robert N. Mateer, Christian Economics and Business Association, 1989.
3. Sandeen, Marsden, Ammerman.
4. Lloyd J. Averill, *Religious Right, Religious Wrong* (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1989), 178-179.
5. A. James Reichley, "Pietist Politics," p 76 - 79, in *The Fundamentalist Phenomenon: A View From Within, A Response From Without*, edited by Norman J. Cohen. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1990.)
6. Susan Rose, "The Impact of Fundamentalism on North American Education," p. XX in this volume.
7. Population surveys provide researchers their best tool for determining the economic, political, and social attitudes of religious groups in America. Unfortunately, such surveys fail to distinguish between fundamentalists and evangelicals. This failure stems not from inadequate survey design, but rather from the nature of fundamentalism itself. Surveys can not separate fundamentalists from evangelicals on the basis of denominational affiliation, since many fundamentalists belong to independent congregations not affiliated with any denomination and most others belong to denominations like the Southern Baptist Convention that also house many non-fundamentalists. Nor can the distinction be made on the basis of theological beliefs, since these are shared by many evangelicals. (Any esoteric theological distinctions that can be made, such as the difference between "dispensational premillennialism" and "historic premillennialism" are certain to be lost on the typical survey taker. For example, Ted Jelen finds that survey takers do not discriminate between Biblical literalism and Biblical inerrancy. [Ted Jelen, "Biblical Literalism and Inerrancy: Does the Difference Make a Difference?," *Sociological Analysis* 49 (4) 421-429, 1989.]) Nor can a distinction be made on the basis of social characteristics such as separatism or militancy, since these are shared by evangelicals in the Holiness and Pentecostal traditions. (Marsden makes this point in "Defining American Fundamentalism," p 26, in *The Fundamentalist Phenomenon: A View From Within, A Response From Without*, edited by Norman J. Cohen. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1990.) Finally, the distinction can not be made on the basis of responses to questions like "Are you a fundamentalist?" since the negative connotations of the term are so great that many people hesitate to publicly identify themselves as fundamentalists. In short, a survey researcher has little choice but to accept Reichley's conclusion that "there is ... no reliable statistical tool for distinguishing within evangelical ranks between fundamentalists and nonfundamentalists."
8. For details on this split see Ammerman, p. 58-60.
9. See, for example, "Communism: Corruption of a Dream of Freedom," *Sword of the Lord*, May 25, 1990, p 11, which states that "Soviet Republics must have the freedom to solve their own ethnic and economic problems a chance at free enterprise".
10. The exception is Tennessee Temple, which teaches a standard two-course introduction to economics. For catalog information on all these schools see *College Catalog Index: 1990-1991*, Career Guidance Foundation, Vol 17, 1990.

11. According to the latest AEA directory, no association member is currently affiliated with any of the previously noted fundamentalist colleges. See *The American Economic Review*, Vol 79, no. 6, December 1989, p. xx - xx..

12. Nancy T. Ammerman, *Bible Believers* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1987), 207.

13. This view appears to be shared by the Jehovah's Witnesses, a Christian sect which manifests many "fundamentalist-like" attributes including strict separatism, belief in Biblical inerrancy, emphasis on evangelism, belief in the Lord's immanent return. See, for example, "Big Business - What it does for you ... and to you" in the Jehovah's Witness newsletter *Awake!*, January 22, 1984 (vol 65, no. 2): 3 -10.

14. One must note, however, that a four person economics department is minuscule by the standards of most secular universities and thus serves to underscore the relative lack of attention that all evangelical schools have given to the subject.

15. The "Oxford Conference," a group of more than a hundred evangelical leaders from all over the globe, met January 1990 in Oxford, England to draft a formal statement on Christian faith and economics. The statement, entitled the "Oxford Declaration on Christian Faith and Economics," is reprinted and reviewed in *The Bulletin of the Association of Christian Economists* ...

16. For extended definition and discussion of the NCR see, Steve Bruce, *The Rise and Fall of the New Christian Right* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988) and Richard V. Pierard, "Religion and the New Right in the 1980's," in *Religion and the State*, edited by James E. Wood, Jr. (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 1985), 392-417.

17. Falwell officially dissolved the Moral Majority in August of 1989. For the most part, however, the organization ceased its activities upon being absorbed into Falwell's Liberty Federation in 1986. See "Falwell Claims Victory, Dissolves Moral Majority," *Christianity Today*, July 14, 1989: 58-59.

18. The Baptist pastor James E. Singleton published two booklets of statements from fundamentalists around the country condemning Falwell and the Moral Majority for their alleged compromises. See *The Moral Majority: An Assessment of a Movement by Leading Fundamentalists*, and *The Fundamentalist Phenomenon or Fundamentalist Betrayal?* (Tempe, Ariz.: Fundamentalist Baptist Press, n.d.).

19. See for example the chapter entitled "A Look At Our Government Today", p 69 Jerry Falwell's *Listen America!*, New York: Doubleday, 1980.

20. The series, entitled "Perspectives: A Judeo-Christian View of Economic Issues" includes programs entitled "Collapsing Socialism," "The Creation of Wealth," "The Immorality of Our Welfare State," and "Economics – Values."

21. These include Michael Novak, Paul Craig Roberts, and Walter Williams.

22. *Christian Perspectives: A Journal of Free Enterprise* 2, no. 3: 1 (Winter 1989).

23. Jerry Falwell, "A Look At Our Government Today", p 69-81 in Jerry Falwell's *Listen America!*, New York: Doubleday- 1980.

24. *Christian Perspectives on Economics*, p. 152, edited by Robert N. Mateer- Chris

Economics and Business Association, 1989.

25. Pat Robertson. *The Secret Kingdom*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982, p 151.
26. D. James Kennedy. "The Spiritual State of the Union - 1989," p. 7. in *Christian Perspectives*, vol. 3, no. 1, Fall 1989.
27. Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Politics of Guilt and Pity*. (Fairfax, Virginia: Thoburn Press, 1978)
28. For example, in *Honest Money* and *Inherit the Earth* North cites Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom*, von Mises' *The Theory of Money and Credit*, and Dolan's *The Foundation's of Modern Austrian Economics*.
29. Rushdonny, p. 35
30. Rushdoony, p. 41
31. Rushdoony, p.38
32. Ammerman. "North American Protestant Fundamentalism" discusses the pre/post-millennial distinction in greater detail.
33. Robertson's *Secret Kingdom* contains repeated references to "dominion."
34. North, Rushdoony, and several other prominent Reconstructionists are members COR's steering committee.
35. *Honest*, p. 161 North asks his readers "How many times have you heard ... 'The Bible doesn't provide blueprints ..'" "... The odd fact is that some of the people who assure you of this are Christians."; Rich, p. 205.
36. CEBA, 1989, vol. 2, no. 4, p. 11
37. Other intellectual leaders include Samuel Escobar of Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Robert Goudzwaard of Free University of Amsterdam, Andrew Kirk, C. Rene Padilla, Waldron Scott, and Jim Wallis, editor of *Sojourners* magazine and member of the *Sojourners* Christian community.
38. Sider, in Neuhaus p 158
39. *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*, Ronald Sider, Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1977, p ..
40. Sider's discussion of trade policies is especially noteworthy. Though it begins with a call for the "sweeping elimination of tariff barriers," it quickly moves to alternative restrictions on free trade:

As developed nations eliminate trade barriers to products from developing countries, two things will be necessary. Developed nations will need to grant trade preference to developing nations and also permit them to protect their infant industries with tariffs for a time. Developed nations will also need to have some mechanism (such as a guaranteed job or guaranteed annual income for all) so that the small

number of U.S. citizens thrown out of work by cheaper foreign imports do not bear this burden alone Commodity agreements may be another way to increase the export earnings of poor nations by stabilizing prices [above their market levels]. (Sider, *Rich Christians*, p 212)

Statements like these underscore the Left's deep distrust of unregulated markets. The evangelical Right accepts classical economic argument, dating back to Adam Smith, that voluntary trade is mutually advantageous in practice no less than in theory and that "the wealth of nations" therefore derives from free trade and free markets. Evangelicals on the Left adopt a more Marxian view. They take it as axiomatic that real markets tend to exploit the disadvantaged. Free trade favors the wealthy and the powerful. Economic activity is often a zero sum game, taking from the poor and giving to the rich. Biblically mandated solutions reverse this process: "More just international trade patterns will cost affluent consumers a good deal." Christians must therefore "inform their elected officials that they are willing to pay the cost of international justice" (Sider, *Rich Christians*, p. 213-214).

41. Toland, Fenton, and McCulloch 1976, quoted in Gay 1989: 62

42. Neuhaus, 189-1202

43. Neuhaus, p 189

44. Sider, Rich.. 114-115

45. *The Encyclopedia of the Jewish Religion* describes the Jubilee as follows: "According to the bible every fiftieth year is to be proclaimed a Jubilee All slaves were released and all land reverted to the original owner [Thus,] only such possession of land as has been obtained through inheritance is permanent in Jewish law. Land obtained in any other way (including land mortgaged for debt) reverts to its original owner with the advent of the J. This institution prevents the alienation of an inherited share of the land and converts all sales or gifts (*Bek. 52b*) of land into leases for a known, fixed, and limited period (*Lev. 25:28*)." Werblowsky and Wigoder, *The Encyclopedia of the Jewish Religion* 1966, p 216. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

46. Wallis in Neuhaus 200-202oSider describes several of these communes in *Rich Christians*, p. 180-181, 200-202., cites book on p 239

47. D. James Kennedy, "The Spiritual State of the Union -1989," p. 6, in *Christian Perspectives*, vol. 3, no. 1, Fall 1989.

48. These brief comments do not do justice to the extensive and serious treatment that evangelicals have given to Acts 4 and 5. They do, however, convey the extremely divergent interpretations that have been drawn from it.

49. Gary North, *Inherit the Earth, Biblical Principles for Economics* (Fort Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1987), 46

50. The statements in this paragraph are based on Daniel Olson and Jackson Carroll's, "Theological and Political Orthodoxy among American Theological Faculty," working paper, 1989.

51. Jelen's data are taken from the 1988 General Social Survey. He classifies Protestant respondents as either "Mainline" or "evangelical" based on their denominational affiliation. Ted Jelen, "Religious Belief and Attitude Constraint," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 29, no. 1: 118-125 (March 1990).

52. The evangelical/fundamentalist denominations include Southern Baptists, Missouri Synod Lutherans, Churches of Christ, Nazarenes, Pentecostal and Holiness, Assemblies of God, and Churches of God. The non-evangelical/non-fundamentalist Protestant denominations include Episcopalians, United Church of Christ, Presbyterians, Methodists, Non-Southern Baptists, Non-Missouri Synod Lutherans, Disciples of Christ, and Reformed. Several empirical studies, most notably Rodney Stark and Charles Glock's *American Piety* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1968) and Wade Clark Roof and William McKinney's *American Mainline Religion* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1987), have demonstrated the validity of this categorization.

53. Researchers and fundamentalists both agree that belief in strict Biblical inerrancy is a critical, and perhaps even *the* critical, fundamentalist doctrine. See Ronald Burton, Stephen Johnson, and Joseph Tamney, "Education and Fundamentalism," *Review of Religious Research* 30, no. 4 (June 1989).

54. In regressions that take account of respondents' age, gender, marital status, income, and education, the evangelical-fundamentalists effect remains statistically significant at the .001 level.

55. The differences between fundamentalist/evangelicals and other Protestants become even smaller after controlling for respondents background characteristics.

56. See Ronald Burton, Stephen Johnson, and Joseph Tamney, "Education and Fundamentalism," *Review of Religious Research* 30, no. 4 (June 1989). See also Joseph B. Tamney, Ronald Burton, and Stephen D. Johnson, "Fundamentalism and Economic Restructuring," in *Religion and Political Behavior in the United States*, edited by Ted Jelen (New York: Praeger, 1989).

57. The economic questions asked respondents how strongly they agreed with statements like "the government should guarantee a job to everyone willing to work," "we must create a society in which goods and services are distribute more or less equally among all people," "employers have an obligation to provide jobs that people enjoy doing," and "personal income should not be determined solely by one's work; rather, every should get what he or she needs." Burton, Johnson, and Tamney, "Education and Fundamentalism," 349.

58. My analysis of data from the 1987 through 1989 General Social Surveys produced a similar finding. Fundamentalists, whether defined in terms of denominational affiliation or religious belief or both, were significantly more likely than other Protestants to agree that "government in Washington ought to reduce income differences between rich and poor."

59. See Joseph Tamney and Stephen Johnson, "Explaining Support for the Moral Majority," *Sociological Forum* 3, no. 2 (1988). A similar finding emerged in Clyde Wilcox's analysis of a 1982 survey of Ohio Moral Majority members. Wilcox found that whereas the vast majority of Moral Majority members attributed their position on abortion and the ERA to their religious beliefs, only half felt that their religious beliefs strongly influenced their position on a balanced budget or social service spending. See Clyde Wilcox, "Seeing the Connection: Religion and Politics in the Ohio Moral Majority," *Review of Religious Research* 30, no. 1: 50 (1988).

60. Joseph Tamney and Stephen Johnson, "Explaining Support for the Moral Majority," *Sociological Forum* 3, no. 2: 92 (1988).

61. Gary North, pp. 133-134, *Honest Money*, Ft. Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1986).

62. Reichley, Fund, p 75-76.

63. Jerry Falwell, *Strength for the Journey*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987, p 372.

64. The NCR's program is discussed by Matthew C. Moen, *The Christian Right and Congress*, (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1989), 83-92, and Steve Bruce, *The Rise and Fall of the New Christian Right* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), chap 5.

65. The Louisiana and Arkansas state legislatures passed bills requiring that creation science be taught as an alternative to evolution. Both laws were ultimately struck down federal courts. See Bruce, *The Rise and Fall of the New Christian Right*, 114-123, for a discussion of creationist legislation in the 1980s.

66. Steve Bruce, *The Rise and Fall of the New Christian Right*, 1989

67. Moen, *The Christian Right and Congress*, 1989

68. Fund Phenom, 1981, p 189-190

69. *Listen America*, p. 252-254

70. Richard V. Pierard, Richard V. "Religion and the New Right in the 1980s," 396-397.

71. See also Steve Bruce, *The Rise and Fall of the New Christian Right* and Jeffrey Hadden, Jeffrey K. "Conservative Christians, Televangelism, and Politics: Taking Stock a Decade after the Founding of the Moral Majority," in *In Gods We Trust*, second edition, edited by Thomas Robbins and Dick Anthony (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1990) 463-472. Falwell himself traces the founding of the Moral Majority to a 1979 meeting with "a group of conservative leaders," and he attributes the phrase "moral majority" to Paul Weyrich. (*Strength for the Journey*, p. 358-359)

72. For an example of this creative process, see Pierard's description of how "New Christian Rightist Howard Phillips ... was placed in contact with Jerry Falwell ... [and] meeting in 1979... persuaded Falwell to form a religious-political movement called the Moral Majority." (Richard V. Pierard, "Religion and the 1984 Election Campaign," *Review of Religious Research* 27, no. 2 (December 1985) 99.

73. James A. Reichley, "Religion and the Future of American Politics," *Political Science Quarterly* 101, no. 1 (1986)" 25-26

74. Steve Bruce, *The Rise and Fall of the New Christian Right*.

75. James A. Reichley, "Religion and the Future of American Politics."

76. Steve Bruce, *The Rise and Fall of the New Christian Right*. Clyde Wilcox, "The New Christian Right and the Mobilization of Evangelicals," 139-155, *Religion and Political Behavior in the United States*, edited by Ted Jelen.

77. Hadden, "Conservative Christians, Televangelism, and Politics: Taking Stock a Decade after the Founding of the Moral Majority," 467.

78. Hadden, p. 468-9.

79. Hadden, p 468

80. Reichley, Fund, p 75

81. This paragraph is based on Gary North's essay, "What are Biblical Blueprints?", in *Honest Money*, E. Calvin Beisner's "Christian Economics: A System Whose Time Has Come," in *Christian Perspectives on Economics*, and telephone interviews with Robert Mateer, E. Calvin Beisner, and Bruce Barron in March of 1990.

82. Marty, "Fundamentalism as a Social Phenomenon," 1988, p 20.

83. Marty, "Fundamentalism as a Social Phenomenon," 1984, 1988.

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Table 1
MORAL ISSUES

	EVANGELICAL- FUNDAMENTALISTS:	OTHER PROTESTANTS:
Opposes laws that permit abortion for any reason.	82%	57%
Favors laws prohibiting the distribution of pornography to persons of any age.	63%	43%
Believes that homosexual sex is always wrong.	95%	72%
Believes that premarital sex is always wrong.	62%	23%
Believes that extramarital - sex is always wrong.	94%	78%

Source: General Social Surveys, 1987 through 1989.

Table 2
ECONOMIC ISSUES

	EVANGELICAL, FUNDAMENTALISTS:	OTHER PROTESTANT'S:
Believes that we currently spend too little on solving the problems of the big cities.	24%	27%
Believes that we currently spend too little on welfare.	41%	43%
Believes that we currently spend too little on improving the condition of blacks.	22%	19%
Believes that we currently spend too little on improving and protecting the nation's health.	64%	66%
Believes that we currently spend too little on improving the nation's education system.	59%	64%
Believes that we currently spend too little on improving and protecting the environment.	54%	66%
Believes that we currently spend too little on foreign aid.	4%	4%
Believes that we currently spend too little on the military, armaments, and defense.	16%	16%
Believes that we currently spend too little on halting the rising crime rate.	65%	61%

Source: General Social Surveys, 1987 through 1989.

FUNDAMENTALISM AND ECONOMICS IN THE U.S.*

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Source: General Social Surveys, 1987 through 1989.

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Source: General Social Surveys, 1987 through 1989.

Table 3
MORAL ISSUES:
CATHOLICS AND PROTESTANTS

	CATH- OLIC	LIB. PROT.	MOD. PROT.	CONS. PROT.	SECTS
Opposes laws that permit abortion for any reason.	63%	46%	63%	75%	86%
Favors laws prohibiting the distribution of pornography to persons of any age.	40%	39%	46%	50%	62%
Believes that homosexual sex is always wrong.	70%	64%	75%	85%	93%
Believes that premarital sex is always wrong.	19%	20%	31%	38%	55%
Believes that extramarital sex is always wrong.	76%	69%	78%	87%	90%

Source: General Social Surveys, 1987 through 1989, whites only.

Protestant classifications: "Liberal" = Episcopalian, UCC, Presbyterian; "Moderate" = Methodist, Lutheran (except Mo. Synod), Baptist (except So. Baptist), Disciples of Christ, Reformed; "Conservative" = Missouri Synod Lutheran, Southern Baptist; "Sect" = Assemblies of God and other Pentecostal/Charismatic groups, Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Nazarenes.

Table 4
ECONOMIC ISSUES:
CATHOLICS AND PROTESTANTS

	CATH- OLIC	LIB. PROT.	MOD. PROT.	CONS. PROT.	SECTS
Believes that we currently spend too little on solving the problems of the big cities.	30%	30%	22%	21%	23%
Believes that we currently spend too little on welfare.	47%	44%	39%	42%	51%
Believes that we currently spend too little on improving the condition of blacks.	26%	23%	19%	18%	20%
Believes that we currently spend too little on improving and protecting the nation's health.	67%	67%	61%	64%	67%
Believes that we currently spend too little on improving the nation's education system.	67%	63%	60%	66%	65%
Believes that we currently spend too little on improving and protecting the environment.	66%	70%	62%	61%	60%
Believes that we currently spend too little on foreign aid.	4%	3%	3%	4%	5%
Believes that we currently spend too little on the military, armaments, and defense.	17%	18%	15%	15%	13%
Believes that we currently spend too little on halting the rising crime rate.	61%	60%	58%	66%	61%

Source: General Social Surveys, 1987 through 1989, whites only.