

THE BLESSINGS OF BUSINESS:
CORPORATE AMERICA AND CONSERVATIVE EVANGELICALISM
IN THE SUNBELT AGE, 1945-2000

by

DARREN ELLIOTT GREM
(Under the Direction of James C. Cobb)

ABSTRACT

Scholars and pundits have often cast postwar conservative evangelicalism as a kind of doppelganger of liberal activism, as a grassroots expression of populist will against the social revolutions of the 1960s. In contrast, this dissertation argues that the rise of culturally and politically-engaged, conservative evangelicals first began in the midst of the New Deal state in the 1940s and 1950s and depended heavily on another will—the will of corporations and corporate actors, especially those working out of the economic and social context of an emergent, postwar “Sunbelt.” There, in the midst of a burgeoning regional economy that stretched from Georgia to Texas to California, a postwar generation of business leaders worked with evangelical leaders to resurrect the cause of religious, economic, and political conservatism in the midst of the early Cold War. In the 1960s and 1970s, as the Culture Wars heated up, they brought their faith, free market policies, and “family values” to the forefront of American public life.

The blessings of business were everywhere—in the ministries of celebrity evangelists like Billy Graham and lay evangelists like R.G. LeTourneau; in corporate-funded missionary

groups like Young Life, Campus Crusade for Christ, The Navigators, and Wycliffe Bible Translators; in independent evangelical colleges strung throughout the South and West; in everyday operations at thousands of small businesses and dozens of mass-market corporations; in evangelical-inspired “biblical success” books and in a cottage industry of evangelical-led entrepreneurial seminars; in evangelical culture industries and megachurches; and, most especially, in the careers of evangelical political leaders from Jerry Falwell to George W. Bush. In documenting both the successes and failures of these corporate-evangelical alliances, this dissertation explains why conservative evangelicalism reemerged *when* and *where* it did. But it also shows how corporate power has shaped—and continues to shape—religious culture and politics in modern America.

INDEX WORDS: Evangelicalism, Corporations, Conservatism, New Evangelical Right, Post-World War II U.S., Sunbelt

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DEDICATION

For my family

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to think hard about religious culture and the broader ramifications of everyday life. She also gave me some solid advice about raising kids as an academic, which I won't soon forget. Bethany Moreton and I met one another as the dissertation was underway, but she quickly became a kindred spirit in figuring out the complexities of religious, political, and cultural life in modern America. Her energy and encouragement was appreciated time and again, as well as her unsolicited endorsements of my work to publishers and intellectual "partners in crime" alike. I also want to thank our departmental chair, Bob Pratt, for somehow finding the funds to support my research and the research of many a needy graduate student. The staff in our department has also been wonderful, and I thank Laurie Kane for making all the bureaucratic aspects of graduate school a breeze. I also thank Sheila Barnett and Brenda Luke for letting me photocopy way more than my allowance and for Vici Payne's lifesaving "coffee club." In addition, I extend my sincere thanks to Karl Friday and Paul Sutter for assigning me classes that paid the bills and offered the opportunity to interact with students—especially in my Religion in American History course and Post-1945 U.S. History course—who pushed me to rethink certain parts of my research.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1976 journalist Kenneth Woodward penned an article for *Newsweek* magazine that deemed the nation's bicentennial to be "The Year of the Evangelicals." Mostly focused on popular revivalists and political figureheads, Woodward's article highlighted the rising influence of conservative evangelicals in American public life. Buried on the fifth page was one of Woodward's more important observations. The "bond between revivalism and social conservatism" had created "some interesting alliances" throughout American history. One of these alliances—between "private wealth" and anti-statist "private Protestants"—had contributed to a contemporary revival in evangelistic campaigns and politics, one that had a long pre-history but had recently come to the attention of journalists like Woodward. "[D.L.] Moody had his John Wanamaker and J.P. Morgan," Woodward wrote, "[Billy] Sunday had his John D. Rockefeller Jr. and S.S. Kresge, and Billy Graham has had business executives J. Howard Pew and W. Maxey Jarman." Such patronage continued in the mid-1970s. As David Hubbard, president of the conservative Fuller Seminary, told Woodward, "Whenever I go and meet a wealthy person, I find that Bill Bright [of Campus Crusade for Christ] has been there first."¹

This dissertation tells the untold story of how and why such "interesting alliances" developed between corporate America and conservative evangelicals from the 1940s to the 1990s. In short, it argues that conservative evangelicals actively recruited the help of corporate actors and organizations in forwarding their religious, cultural, and political missions to postwar America. Not only that, corporate actors and organizations willingly offered their financial

¹ Kenneth L. Woodward, with John Barnes and Laurie Lisle, "Born Again!" *Newsweek* (October 25, 1976), 76, 78.

resources, organizational expertise, personal endorsement, and professional connections to various evangelical leaders and groups. Indeed, conservative evangelicalism would not have moved from the margins to the mainstream of postwar public life if not for the blessings of business.

In telling this story, this dissertation challenges a dominant interpretation of modern American conservative evangelicalism. Historians, sociologists, and other scholars have seriously studied postwar conservative evangelicalism for the past thirty years.² However, most of their assessments of its origins and development have tended to overlook the historic relationship between postwar forms of corporate power and modern expressions of conservative evangelicalism.³ Why has this been the case? In short, the interpretive framework that many

² The available literature on postwar conservative evangelicalism is expansive. Representative works include the following: Gary K. Clabaugh, *Thunder on the Right: The Protestant Fundamentalists* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1974); Peggy L. Shriver, *The Bible Vote: Religion and the New Right* (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1981); Carol Flake, *Redemptorama: Culture, Politics, and the New Evangelicalism* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1984); Stephen Bruce, *The Rise and Fall of the Christian Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare: The Politics of the Christian Right* (Boston: South End Press, 1989); Walter Capps, *The New Religious Right: Piety, Patriotism, and Politics* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1990); John C. Green and James L. Guth, eds., *The Bible and Ballot Box: Religion and Politics in the 1988 Election*; Matthew C. Moen, *The Transformation of the Christian Right* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1992); Clyde Wilcox, *God's Warriors: The Christian Right in Twentieth Century America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); Michael Lienesch, *Redeeming America: Piety and Politics in the New Christian Right* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993); Mark J. Rozell and Clyde Wilcox, eds., *God at the Grassroots: The Christian Right in the 1994 Elections* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1995) and its follow-up, *God at the Grassroots: The Christian Right in the American Elections* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997); William Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America* (New York: Broadway, 1996); Duane Murray Oldfield, *The Right and the Righteous: The Christian Right Confronts the Republican Party* (New York: Rowan and Littlefield, 1996); Christian Smith, *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998) and *Christian America? What Evangelicals Really Want* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Ruth Murray Brown, *For a "Christian America": A History of the Religious Right* (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2002); John Green, Mark Rozell, and Clyde Wilcox, eds., *The Christian Right in American Politics: Marching to the Millennium* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2003). The field remains an active one. The most provocative of more recent works include Jason C. Bivins, *Religion of Fear: The Politics of Horror in Conservative Evangelicalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008) and Jon A. Shields, *The Democratic Virtues of the Christian Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009). Important forthcoming studies of conservative evangelicalism include one centered in the postwar South, David W. Williams, *Republican Faith: The Making of America's Christian Right* (forthcoming), and a transnational interpretation of postwar evangelical missions and politics, Melani McAlister, *Our God in the World: The Global Visions of American Evangelicals* (forthcoming). Kevin M. Kruse is also working on a study of the Cold War origins of the Christian Right.

³ One exception is D. Michael Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power: How Evangelicals Joined the American Elite* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). More of a sociological study than a historical inquiry, Lindsay's

historians have used to understand conservative evangelicalism—and modern conservatism in general—overemphasizes its grassroots nature, assuming that conservative evangelicals have operated in a political world devoid of corporate interests and influences.⁴ As a result, modern conservative evangelicalism appears in most historical accounts as a kind of *doppelgänger* of twentieth century liberal activism, as a grassroots political movement solely created of, by, and for the people (albeit people of a decidedly conservative bent).⁵

The language used by historians to describe the rise of postwar conservative evangelicalism says it all. Conservative evangelicals were part of a grassroots “backlash” movement or “counter-revolution,” supposedly reacting to movements on the left, whether the

work focuses mostly on contemporary evangelicals in corporate America, with little documentation of conservative evangelicalism’s long-standing relationship with corporate actors, evangelical or otherwise. Another exception is John G. Turner, *Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ: The Renewal of Evangelicalism in Postwar America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), which focuses mostly on Bright and his youth organization, but ably documents Campus Crusade for Christ’s past and present dependence on corporate dollars and support. Jeff Sharlet’s recent history of the Fellowship Foundation also stands out. See Sharlet, *The Family: The Secret Fundamentalism at the Heart of American Power* (New York: Harper, 2008). Though somewhat inattentive to the limits of the Fellowship Foundation’s influence, Sharlet still offers an insightful look at this secretive, inside-the-beltway organization, which that has worked to unite free-market businessmen, conservative politicians, military officials, and evangelical activists since the mid-1930s.

⁴ Exceptions to this overall trend include studies of conservative evangelicalism that highlight its commercial qualities and its proclivity for commercialization in a mass consumer culture. See Colleen McDannell, *Material Christianity: Religion and Popular Culture in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), Douglas Carl Adams, *Selling the Old Time Religion: American Fundamentalists and Mass Culture, 1920-1940* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001) Heather Hendershot, *Shaking the World for Jesus: Media and Conservative Evangelical Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), Matthew Avery Sutton, *Aimee Semple McPherson and the Resurrection of Christian America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007); Jay R. Howard and Jon M. Streck, *Apostles of Rock: The Splintered World of Contemporary Christian Music* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1999), Amy Johnson Frykholm, *Rapture Culture: Left Behind in Evangelical America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), Anne L. Borden, “Making Money, Saving Souls: Christian Bookstores and the Commodification of Christianity,” in Lynn Schofield Clark, ed., *Religion, Media, and the Marketplace* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 67-89; Eileen Luhr, *Witnessing Suburbia: Conservatives and Christian Youth Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009). Still, all of these studies focus on how conservative evangelicals have borrowed modern business techniques or marketing techniques to “sell” their religious and political views to themselves and potential converts. Given that large-scale corporations and corporate leaders are often absent in these studies, they can and should be classified as studies of grassroots or popular forms of political engagement and cultural consumption.

⁵ The leading grassroots histories of “new conservatism” include the following: Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Donald T. Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Matthew D. Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Joseph Crespino, *In Search of Another Country: Mississippi and the Conservative Counterrevolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

postwar civil rights movement, antiwar movement, women's movement, or gay rights movement. Of course, to a point, this characterization is accurate. Countless pastors, churches, seminaries, publishing outlets, and parachurch ministries organized for political purposes in response to the events of the 1960s. But overlooking the historic role played by corporate interests in the political and cultural life of conservative evangelicals both *before* and *after* the 1960s presents several major problems for historians hoping to make sense of the contours of postwar conservative life and politics.

First, the literature on conservative evangelicalism remains imbalanced and, thus, inaccurate in its portrayal of its subject. This problem is a problem for the fields of postwar political and cultural history in general. According to historian David L. Chappell, "More work needs to be done on how corporate money organized the production and consumption of political opinion after World War II." "Money, and the organization and self-confidence it helped to buy," Chappell rightly asserts, "were keys to the right's increasing prominence in American culture." Jason Stahl agrees, but has extrapolated a more pressing set of problems caused by the "near exclusive focus on grassroots activism" in the current literature on postwar conservative politics and culture. "The problem with the field now is not that it is not studied, or not centralized, or not studied at the grassroots," he continues, "but that the 'high power' of the [conservative] movement is still ignored by historians." By overemphasizing the grassroots nature of postwar conservatism—of which conservative evangelicalism is a major part—historians have "helped reify the half-true notion that conservatives 'won out' in the end because they were better organized and because their ideas were more powerful and persuasive." In addition, "[t]his focus . . . gives a false aura of equality to political movements on the left and right—thus implicitly denying the huge monetary advantage conservatives had when

organizing.” To add both balance and accuracy to the field, concludes Stahl, historians should examine the complex connections between the grassroots and “the happenings in the high echelons of power.” Only by undertaking this dual approach might historians better understand the origins and development of modern conservatism and why “it has been [conservative] economic policies which have been the most triumphant” rather than “the social policies which tend to animate the conservative grassroots.”⁶

This dissertation seeks to address these problems by reinterpreting postwar conservative evangelicalism as a product of the combined will of corporate and grassroots actors.⁷ Given the relative anonymity enjoyed by corporate leaders today and the obscurity of their exact influence on past and present forms of public life, bringing their actions to light constitutes a sort of “social history” of the American corporate elite. Like social histories of other groups presumably hidden in the historical record, this dissertation examines those whom historians have regularly overlooked—corporate leaders and the organizations and movements they have helped to build.

⁶ Chappell also rightly notes that being a corporate leader or working for a large-scale corporate entity did not necessarily mean one was an automatic supporter of conservatism. “The Ford and Carnegie foundations were consistent targets of right-wing attack,” Chappell observes, “. . . and the heirs of [General Motors] and Weyerhaeuser have long been financial underwriters of left-wing opinion.” For the sake of topical focus, this dissertation makes no attempt to do so, but future work on corporate activism in postwar America should document the importance of corporate actors in the framing of modern liberalism. David L. Chappell, “The Triumph of Conservatives in a Liberal Age,” in Jean-Christophe Agnew and Roy Rosenzweig, eds., *A Companion to Post-1945 America* (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 310-312; Jason M. Stahl, “Grassroots Conservatism: Natural or Fertilized?” Review of David Farber and Jeff Roche, eds., *The Conservative Sixties* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003), H-1960s Discussion Network, available online at: <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=10524>.

⁷ There is not a wholesale dearth of studies that recognize the importance of corporate actors in the making of modern conservatism. Even as histories of conservatism became more commonplace after Michael Kazin, Leo Ribuffo, and Alan Brinkley’s various calls for renewed interest in “the problem of American conservatism,” historian Elizabeth Fones-Wolf was already showing the way toward a “social history” of corporate actors in conservative America. See Elizabeth Fones-Wolf, *Selling Free Enterprise: The Business Assault on Labor and Liberalism, 1945-1960* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995). The field went the direction of typical “social histories” of grassroots activity in the late 1990s and early 2000s, although more recent contributions by Alice O’Connor, Kimberly Phillips-Fein, and Bethany E. Moreton have better documented how postwar business leaders used their corporate influence and finances to build personal and professional networks, forward conservative political agendas, and mainstream conservative economic values instead of social values. See Alice O’Connor, “Financing the Counterrevolution,” in Bruce J. Schulman and Julian E. Zelizer, *Rightward Bound: Making America Conservative in the 1970s* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), Kimberly Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Making of the Conservative Movement from the New Deal to Reagan* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2009), and Bethany E. Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart: The Making of Christian Free Enterprise* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009). Also see Moreton, “The Soul of Neoliberalism,” *Social Text* 25:3 (Fall 2007): 103-123.

In doing so, this dissertation does not attribute undue influence to corporate actors; neither does it offer a celebratory tale of corporate beneficence or conspiratorial tale of well-planned and well-coordinated corporate empowerment.⁸ Rather, it shows how the mechanisms of corporate power in politics and popular culture were often complicated and unintended.⁹

Contingency defined the collaborative, complicated, and often contentious partnership between conservative evangelicals and their big business backers. There were numerous negotiations and concessions made by both sides during the postwar era. By understanding how corporate power was often channeled, circumscribed, or challenged—and, conversely, how the power of conservative evangelical leaders and followers was channeled, circumscribed, or challenged by corporate actors—a nuanced view of their mutual successes and failures begins to emerge. Not only that, historians might come to a fuller understanding of how these successes and failures shaped the course of conservative evangelical influence and why, to cite Stahl again, “it has been [conservative] economic policies which have been the most triumphant.”

The contingent role played by corporations and corporate actors appeared in three spheres of public life: 1) the “sacred sphere” 2) the “secular sphere” and 3) the “political sphere.”

Concerning the first sphere, this dissertation writes the corporation into modern American religious history, challenging historians and other observers to consider—to borrow a phrase from religious sociologist Robert Wuthnow—who actually “produces the sacred” in modern

⁸ Numerous books convey such a conspiratorial take, casting conservative evangelicals as engaged in a quest to overtake American public life, one that—if successful—would turn the nation into a theocracy. For two recent examples, see Chris Hedges, *American Fascists: The Christian Right and the War on America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006) and Kevin Phillips, *American Theocracy: The Peril and Politics of Radical Religion, Oil, and Borrowed Money in the 21st Century* (New York: Viking Press, 2006).

⁹ What historian Mark A. Noll has written about economic and religious commitments in an earlier period of American history certainly applies to the relationship between this dissertation’s subjects: “Single-cause explanations . . . simply do not work as a satisfying covering explanation for religious-economic connections. What does work is an integrated perspective that recognizes the fully connected relationship of religious faith and economic forces, . . . highlights the multiplied negotiations between religious principle and economic practice (as well as religious practice and economic principle), and . . . stresses the contingent nature of historical development.” Mark A. Noll, ed., *God and Mammon: Protestants, Money, and the Market, 1790-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 8.

America.¹⁰ Much like political sentiments, religious sentiments have all too often been treated as the sole products of ordinary people instead of as products of large-scale corporations. This dissertation challenges this point of view, showing how corporate Americans influenced the religious sensibilities of conservative evangelicals and supported their historic, but rejuvenated, mission to edify the faithful and evangelize the “lost.” Concerning the second sphere, this dissertation shows that the relationship between business leaders and conservative evangelicalism was never a one-way street. As much as corporate leaders and operations shaped the “sacred sphere,” conservative evangelicalism informed the “secular sphere,” or the companies run by these businessmen and the workaday culture of corporate America.¹¹ Of course, the religious devotion of these businessmen varied widely, and so did the ways they incorporated the tenets of conservative evangelicalism into their business practices and public engagements. Still, these businessmen made use of conservative evangelicalism, legitimizing and popularizing the notion that corporations could and should be trusted in their pursuit of the bottom line, both in America and elsewhere. Concerning the third sphere, this dissertation examines the impact of the corporate-conservative evangelical alliance on postwar politics, explaining how the rise of the “New Evangelical Right” was long in coming from the 1940s to the 1990s. Indeed, contrary to many popular and scholarly accounts, this dissertation places the

¹⁰ Robert Wuthnow, *Producing the Sacred: An Essay on Public Religion* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994). Though large-scale economic transitions and religious expression has received a goodly bit of study, the role of specific economic actors—corporations, fundraisers, business leaders, financiers, entrepreneurs, economic bureaucrats, or business counselors—has received less attention than it should from American religious historians. This is something of an odd omission, especially since the field of religious studies and religious sociology, as well as religious history, owes much to theorists like Max Weber, who certainly understood religion as a product of complex interactions between specific religious and commercial agents. Still, as a starting point for fresh reflections on such matters, see James D. Hudnut-Beumler, *In Pursuit of the Almighty's Dollar: A History of Money and American Protestantism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007) and Michael S. Hamilton, “More Money, More Ministry: The Financing of American Evangelicalism Since 1945,” in Larry Eskridge and Mark A. Noll, eds., *More Money, More Ministry: Money and Evangelicals in Recent North American History* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 104-138.

¹¹ See David M. Miller, *God at Work: The History and Promise of the Faith at Work Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007) for a good overview of the broader move among American business leaders to integrate faith into modern corporate culture.

emergence of a politically engaged set of conservative evangelicals several decades *before* the social and sexual revolutions of the 1960s. Thus, conservative evangelicalism was hardly a “backlash” against the 1960s, but rather a product of collusions that first emerged between grassroots activists and corporate sponsors in the early decades of the Cold War. Corporate influence was evident at that early date and continued as conservative evangelicals launched the first salvos in the so-called “culture wars” of the 1970s and 1980s. With various corporate actors on their side, their political and cultural activism did not end with the election of any one candidate to office but continued well into the 1990s and, in both overt and covert ways, still continues among various evangelical organizations and communities.

Examining the collusions between corporate actors and evangelicals in all of these distinct, yet interrelated, spheres of postwar life should likewise push historians to rethink the presumed divisions between conservative groups and ideologies. In general, historians have tended to exaggerate the differences between conservative evangelicals and other conservatives, casting the former as only interested in social or sexual matters and the latter as more often interested in economic matters or welfare state policy. To be sure, the two camps had their differences. But this dissertation avoids simplistic dichotomies to highlight the historical blending of economic and social conservatism in postwar America. Corporate actors—many economic conservatives first and foremost—often pushed conservative religious views. Conservative evangelicals—many social conservatives first and foremost—often pushed conservative economic views. Each did so to different degrees at different times for different reasons. In short, economic and social conservatism intermingled among the subjects of this dissertation.

All of these interactions between corporate power and conservative evangelicalism took place at not only a specific time but also in a specific place. As such, this dissertation focuses its energies on the part of the nation where the corporate will manifested itself in highest relief among postwar conservative evangelicals—the economic and social context of the so-called “Sunbelt” or “Southern Rim.”¹² There, in the midst of a burgeoning regional economy that stretched from Virginia to Georgia to Texas to California, postwar business leaders and corporate interests worked with a wide variety of conservative evangelicals to take their religious sensibilities from the margins of American public life into the mainstream.¹³

Historians have only just begun to understand the social, political, and economic revolutions of what might best be termed the Sunbelt Age. In contrast to the Gilded Age, a period where the center of economic, political, and cultural power seemed to take up permanent residence in the industrial northeast, the Sunbelt Age witnessed the rising influence of the

¹² On the term “Sunbelt” and its multiple uses as a description of a geographic place, as shorthand for a specific set of postwar socio-economic transitions, and as a marketing term for Southern Rim boosters, see Carl Abbott, “New West, New South, New Region: The Discovery of the Sunbelt,” in Raymond A. Mohl, ed., *Searching for the Sunbelt: Historical Perspectives on a Region* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993), 7-24.

¹³ Defining the “Sunbelt” in terms of exact borders can be as difficult as other regional concepts like “the South” or “the West” or “the North.” Most often, historians, economists, journalists, and social scientists have conflated the “Sunbelt” with “the South.” However, the postwar West—especially the West—exhibited many of the same macro-economic pressures and changes as the postwar American South, especially in terms of federal largesse, economic development, socio-economic diversification, demographic in-migration, and political empowerment. Hence, for the purposes of this dissertation, the term “Sunbelt”—used interchangeably with the “Southern Rim”—means a broad swath of southern and western states below the 38th parallel, north latitude. At times, this dissertation includes certain Midwestern and Rocky Mountain states like Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, Utah, and Colorado in the Sunbelt, since many of the postwar transitions in some of these Midwestern or mountain states mirror development schemes in other “Southern Rim” states. Such a state-based approach to defining “Sunbelt” still comes up short as a methodological tool. Hence, this dissertation utilizes a broader definition of “Sunbelt,” casting it as not only a setting where most of the action happens but also as a historical process that stretched across well-defined geographic boundaries. For instance, conservative evangelicals in Sunbelt states certainly benefited most from the way that corporate capitalism after World War II re-centered in the Southern Rim, but corporate help came from both business leaders inside and outside Sunbelt states. Likewise, not all the conservative evangelicals that benefited from corporate largesse lived or worked in the Sunbelt; many came from or went to areas outside the Southern Rim, including places in foreign countries. This is all to say that the relationships detailed in this study both developed in a place and transcended place. In other words, intra-regional, inter-regional, intra-national, and transnational dynamics will orient this study’s use of the term “Sunbelt.”

American South and West over national affairs.¹⁴ Determining the exact starting date of this new era in American history has been a matter of debate, but historians like Bruce Schulman have argued convincingly that the emergence of a notable South-by-West economy can be traced to the political and economic transformations ushered forward by the New Deal state and Cold War security state of the 1940s and 1950s.¹⁵ In those decades, as the Sunbelt Age dawned, corporate interests both inside and outside the American South and West circulated around a number of important evangelical groups and leaders.

As Chapter 1 shows, what is surprising is that these “interesting alliances” happened at all. Whereas in the Gilded Age, conservative forms of evangelicalism enjoyed corporate support in various parts of the country, this close, seemingly natural connection between evangelical Protestantism and corporate capitalism had been seriously challenged—if not severed—by the rise of progressive politics, the regulatory state, and the Great Depression. In the 1940s and 1950s, however, this relationship was gradually restored via the coming of the Cold War, the threat of Soviet communism, and, ironically, state-sponsored development of the Southern Rim’s economy. As Chapter 2 details, business leaders nationwide reaped the benefits of the Cold War spirit of anti-communism, and they entered into partnerships with a growing body of conservative evangelicals in the South and West who were committed to fighting communism via missionary efforts throughout the nation and abroad. Chapter 3 extends this examination of the early exploits between corporate America and conservative evangelicals with a brief history of their joint missionary endeavors in the 1950s and 1960s. Texas industrialist R.G. LeTourneau receives special attention in this chapter. As one of the most important businessmen in the

¹⁴ Early analyses of the Sunbelt’s rising influence over national affairs include Kevin Phillips, *The Emerging Republican Majority* (New Rochelle: Arlington House, 1969) and Kirkpatrick Sale, *Power Shift: The Rise of the Southern Rim and Its Challenge to the Eastern Establishment* (New York: Random House, 1975).

¹⁵ Bruce J. Schulman, *From Cotton Belt to Sunbelt: Federal Policy, Economic Development, and the Transformation of the South, 1938-1980* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

Sunbelt economy and a fixture in the world of evangelical missions after World War II, LeTourneau's missionary work both inside and outside the U.S. not only exemplified the connections between corporate figureheads and evangelical missions but also revealed the limits of this relationship in spreading their gospel throughout the Cold War world. At the same time that businessmen like LeTourneau backed evangelical missions abroad, other evangelicals courted corporate money and support to engage in domestic missions to American businesses. Chapter 4 looks at the first attempts to integrate evangelicalism into the corporate cultures of numerous businesses in the South and West. Since many of these organizations were recent start-ups in the region or recent transplants into the region, the religious culture of conservative evangelicalism became a cultural pool from which corporate figureheads repeatedly drew to legitimize their business endeavors and operations. In the social turmoil of the 1950s and 1960s, the collaborations between business elites and grassroots evangelicals took on a special import as both wrestled with the appropriate response to the social and sexual revolutions happening around them. Chapter 5 follows this historical development into the 1970s and 1980s, showing how the emergent "culture wars" of those decades encouraged yet another rallying of corporate actors and conservative evangelicals. Together, they worked to garner additional, grassroots support for their conservative platform, an endeavor that resulted in real gains for conservative evangelicals in terms of creating broader influence and sub-cultural solidarity. Chapter 6 ends this dissertation with a case study of the most important corporate, conservative evangelical in the nation's recent history—George W. Bush. Though the collaborations between corporate America and conservative evangelicals had played a role in regional and national politics for some time—and had helped put Sunbelt politicians like Ronald Reagan in office—Bush turned

the economic values of conservatives in the corporate and evangelical world into formal state policy, both while in Texas politics and during his time in the White House.

The legacy of the Bush administration and the history detailed here has not been simply the mainstreaming of conservative economic policies. It has also been the further tightening of a union between corporate America and many conservative evangelicals, one that makes the latter's religious views, social stances, and political beliefs beholden to the former. In tracing out the origins and development of this union, then, this analysis explains why right-wing evangelicals not only express near unequivocal faith in the Bible, but, like American conservatives in general, believe fervently in the blessings of business, despite the allegiances, compromises, and costs that this faith ultimately demands.

CHAPTER 1

THE GOSPEL OF WEALTH RISES AGAIN

The emergence of a politically engaged and powerful set of conservative evangelicals in the 1970s and 1980s stunned many in the liberal establishment. Inexplicably, it seemed, conservatives were rushing back into American public life, “backlashing” against the social transformations of the previous few decades. Conservative evangelicals were a notable and vital component of this revolt. Their activism on behalf of conservative politicians and organizations puzzled many pundits and political observers. Had not conservative evangelicalism faded from public life since the Scopes Monkey Trial of the mid-1920s? Had not the sweeping changes that came to American society and culture since World War II further marginalized their views about God and society? Had not the liberal state chipped away at the social standing of all religious entities, sequestering the power of religion generally—and conservative forms of it especially—to the individual soul and no further? Had not *Time* magazine covered “the death of God” only a decade before *Newsweek* proclaimed the “Year of the Evangelicals?”

Responses to the reemergence of conservative evangelicalism as a religious, political, and public force varied. Some observers picked up where liberal intellectuals like Richard Hofstadter had left off in the 1950s and 1960s, describing them as people laden with “status anxiety” or all-too-easily misled by the “paranoid style” in American politics. Others, like writer Tom Wolfe, dismissed their growing power in public life as a part of the “Me Decade” of the 1970s. Resurgent evangelicalism was like ESP or Scientology, yet another faddish, narcissistic, spiritual pursuit for self-consciousness and self-expressiveness. More insightful observers—

historians like Ernest Sandeen and George Marsden in the 1970s, followed by Mark Noll and Nathan Hatch in the 1980s—looked for the deepest roots of conservative evangelicalism, noting that the nation’s history had been demonstrably shaped by the style and substance of evangelical actors.¹⁶

Few, however, noted that the emergence of conservative evangelicalism in the 1970s and 1980s was tied to the historical ebbs and flows of corporate involvement and influence. National and regional transformations in corporate America—stretching back into the nineteenth century—had laid the groundwork for both the death and resurrection of conservative evangelicalism in public life. Indeed, before, during, and after the 1930s crisis of capitalism, the fate of corporate America’s gospel of wealth was intertwined with the public power of the conservative gospel itself.

Corporate America and the Gilded Age Evangelical Empire

In historian George Marsden’s estimation, nineteenth century America was an “evangelical empire” in the making. By the eve of the Civil War, most American Protestants could broadly be termed “evangelicals,” meaning that they asserted the verity of biblical history and revelation, the transcendence of God through the life and ministry of Jesus, the saving and substitutionary work of Jesus on the cross, the necessity of individual conversion, the importance of personal piety, and the hope for a world transformed by evangelical belief and practice. Promoting these beliefs with tactics and strategies well suited for the political culture and market revolutions of antebellum America, the century’s evangelical denominations—Methodists,

¹⁶ It is no coincidence that American historians began to take seriously the history of evangelicalism at around the same time. The public “reappearance” of conservative evangelicalism spurred on a new round of historical inquiries into its origins and impact on American public life. On the contributions and controversies surrounding their early careers, see Maxie B. Burch, *The Evangelical Historians: The Historiography of George Marsden, Nathan Hatch, and Mark Noll* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2002).

Baptists, Presbyterians, Disciples of Christ, Congregationalists—experienced dramatic growth. As just one measure of their collective importance, approximately 70 percent of American Protestants belonged to a Baptist or Methodist denomination in the 1850s. In addition, evangelicals dominated voluntary religious organizations, leading all other Christian groups in domestic and foreign missions work, Sunday school ministries, Bible distribution, and religious publishing. Though generally conservative in their theology (meaning that most agreed with the beliefs listed above), antebellum evangelicals were by no means automatic defenders of any political or social platform. To be sure, large numbers worked to forward the tenets of acquisitive market capitalism, popularize anti-Semitic and anti-Catholic nativism, or—especially in the South—defend the practice of slavery. But others strongly informed nearly every major reform movement of the early nineteenth century, from prison reform to poor relief to temperance to abolitionism.¹⁷

The rise of the city and the emergence of industrial, corporate capitalism after the Civil War created new dynamics between evangelicalism and American public life. Especially in the urban North, various barons of business created large-scale corporations and ushered forward the evangelical enterprise through selective forms of charity. Almost all of these captains of industry were beholden to what Sean McCloud has deemed a “Calvinist” strain in the Protestant work ethic, meaning that they believed differentiations between rich and poor were part of God’s eternal and unchangeable plan, intended to ensure a moral, just, and productive order. In

¹⁷ George M. Marsden, *Understanding Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1991), 4-5, 10-12; Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 125-189; Jon Butler, Grant Wacker, and Randall Balmer, *Religion in American Life: A Short History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 194-195. My characterization of evangelicalism draws from David Bebbington’s widely accepted definition. According to Bebbington, evangelical Protestants have—at the most general level—agreed on four basic doctrines: “*conversionism*, the belief that lives need to be changed; *activism*, the expression of the gospel in effort; *biblicism*, a particular regard for the Bible; and what may be called *crucicentrism*, a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.” See David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 2-17.

emphasizing such “divine hierarchies,” big businessmen could posit “that the machinations of class inequality lay outside of individual human agency.” For these reasons, Baptist businessman John D. Rockefeller was dead serious when he claimed that “God gave me my money,” asserting along with other Gilded Age barons that a decidedly Protestant God had chosen to bless them with the noble obligation to garner and give away their fortunes as they saw fit. Ironically, it was nominal atheist and steel tycoon Andrew Carnegie who most famously summarized such views with a memorable, pithy phrase: “The Gospel of Wealth.”¹⁸

If this was a common belief among corporate elites, evangelical revivalists, pastors, and pundits nevertheless preached a type of “economic Arminianism” in the late nineteenth century. In short, they asserted that “[o]ne’s poverty or wealth, like one’s damnation or salvation, was a matter of individual free will.” In other words, capitalism’s “divine hierarchies” were not fixed but fluid. Though at first glance this perspective should have conflicted with the economic Calvinism of many corporate figureheads, it actually complemented it. Because economic Arminianism usually cast big businessmen as role models for a nation of strivers, the corporate elite encouraged its proliferation even as they worked to exploit the work of millions. For these reasons, popular revivalists like Chicago’s D. L. Moody received support from powerful corporate figures like John Wanamaker, George H. Stuart, John V. Farwell, Cyrus McCormick, George Armour, and others, as did any other institution or individual that, by the corporate elite’s judgment, legitimized and popularized their religious and economic views.¹⁹

¹⁸ Sean McCloud, *Divine Hierarchies: Class in American Religion and Religious Studies* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 111.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 112-118; On early interactions between revivalism and business culture, see Kathryn Teresa Long, *The Revival of 1857-58: Interpreting an American Religious Awakening* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998). On the intents and effects of corporate philanthropies, as well as precedence set by Christian philanthropists for later state involvement, see Emily S. Rosenberg, “Missions to the World: Philanthropy Abroad” in Lawrence J. Friedman and Mark D. McGarvie, eds., *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 241-257; On the efficient businessman as the cultural and religious ideal of Gilded Age whiteness and masculinity, see Charles Lippy, *Do Real Men Pray?: Images of the Christian Man and Male*

Regardless of whether they emphasized top-down administration or bottom-up agency, the barons agreed on one thing. God wanted government to stay out of economic affairs. Laissez-faire, corporate capitalism was as divinely inspired as their dominance over its markets. This position, however, was challenged from the start. The economic destabilization, social inequality, rampant poverty, gross political corruption, and public immorality that accompanied the rise of corporate capitalism pricked the consciences and fired the tempers of many Americans. Thus, throughout the late nineteenth century, various political movements condemned the symbiotic relationship between God and Mammon.

Evangelical tenets were often cited in their protests. Farmers in the nation's heartland harnessed the language and democratic overtones of evangelical Protestantism to push a "people's" agenda of state regulation and equitable redistribution. Industrial workers regularly cited various religious traditions—including evangelicalism—in crafting political demands for everything from regulatory reforms to socialist revolution. Progressives, troubled by the social disturbances that urban capitalism created, likewise called for reform and national renewal via a double-sided program of personal self-control and state regulation. Theological reconsiderations of evangelicalism's overemphasis on individual conversion—best articulated by the advocates of a "Social Gospel" like Richard T. Ely, Washington Gladden, Walter Rauschenbusch, and Charles Sheldon—criticized corporate elites and their benefactors as blissfully ignorant (or capriciously approving) of corporate capitalism's numerous inequalities. Redemption of political systems and

Spirituality in White Protestant America (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2005), 113-142; On industrialization, urbanization, corporate capitalism, and evangelicalism, also see Robert A. Wauzzinski, *Between God and Gold; Protestant Evangelicalism and the Industrial Revolution, 1820-1914* (London: Associated University Presses, 1992) and Bruce J. Evensen, *God's Man for the Gilded Age: D.L. Moody and the Rise of Mass Evangelism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003). James F. Findlay, Jr., *Dwight L. Moody: American Evangelist, 1837-1899* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 201-202; Thekla Ellen Joiner, *Sin in the City: Chicago and Revivalism, 1880-1920* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2007), 21-62.

economic structures, Social Gospelers argued, were just as necessary, if not more important, than the salvation of individual souls.²⁰

Since industrial, corporate capitalism was centered in the North, evangelical conflicts over such matters were most acute and vitriolic there. From the 1890s to the 1910s, as some northern evangelicals argued for state intervention and regulation, others retained a conservative theological orientation, preferring to emphasize individual conversion as the cure for all of society's ills. As a result, many evangelicals broke with their history as they recast soul-saving as an acceptable alternative to social reform, rather than as a necessary precedent or complement for it.²¹ Intellectual controversies among northern evangelicals further encouraged this rearranging of theological and social views. In general, "modernist" evangelicals from Henry Ward Beecher in the 1860s and 1870s to Harry Emerson Fosdick in the 1920s and 1930s viewed Darwinism, higher criticism, and other new intellectual currents as offering the potential for a necessary updating of Protestant beliefs, one that would make the faith more relevant to contemporary times. The "conservative" evangelicals—who are central to this study—viewed such intellectual currents as a threat and responded by squaring off against modernists inside churches, denominations, universities, and seminaries.²² In general, conservatives also looked

²⁰ For recent work on the connections between Populism and evangelical Protestantism, see Joe Creech, *Righteous Indignation: Religion and the Populist Revolution* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006) and Michael Kazin, *A Godly Hero: The Life of Williams Jennings Bryan* (New York: Knopf, 2007). For a short review of evangelicalism's impact on certain worker politics, see McCloud, *Divine Hierarchies*, 123-128. The literature on the Social Gospel is too expansive to summarize here. The most recent and original treatment is Susan Curtis, *Consuming Faith: The Social Gospel and Modern American Culture* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2001), which shows how Social Gospel discourse and sensibilities affected religious politics well into the 1920s. On the Social Gospel and its impact on turn of the century conflicts among evangelical Protestants, see Marsden, *Understanding Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism*, 28-30.

²¹ Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 85-93.

²² A point of clarification should be inserted here about the terms "conservative evangelical" and "fundamentalist." For many popular writers, journalists, and many evangelicals themselves, a "conservative evangelical" and "fundamentalist" are one in the same. Most historians have followed George Marsden's lead and stressed their differences, viewing the latter as a subcategory of the former. As Marsden puts it, "an American fundamentalist is an evangelical who is militant in opposition to liberal theology in the churches or to changes in cultural values or mores." "Militancy," Marsden notes, "is crucial to their outlook." See Marsden, *Understanding*

askance at the cultural and political changes that modernists advocated, which often included views on the state's potential role in reorienting American society around pragmatic reform. Drastic shifts in the nation's religious and social demography, encouraged by successive waves of immigration, also affected American evangelicals generally and conservatives specifically. Successive waves of immigration seemed to portend that Anglo Protestants would soon be outnumbered by Catholics, Jews, Orthodox Christians, non-Anglo Protestants, and other non-Protestant religious groups. Numerous Protestants, whether theological conservatives or not, attempted to address the "problem" of immigration through law, education, and missions. Still, conservative evangelicals reacted most strongly to the changing social scene, believing that immigration—particularly of non-English speaking Catholics—was yet another sign of the end of their evangelical empire, if not a harbinger of the end of days.²³

With the devastation of the First World War and the Pyrrhic victory of ardent conservatives at the 1925 Scopes Trial, conservative theology largely fell out of favor among northern Protestant scholars, pastors, and laity who wished to maintain an air of respectability, erudition, and social authority. Journalists like H.L. Mencken—who castigated fundamentalists as ignorant, uncouth, cowardly, and "*Homo boobians* . . . for the precise reason [they are] uneducable" —joined with novelists like Sinclair Lewis—whose *Elmer Gantry* (1927) cemented the image of the unscrupulous evangelist in American popular mythology—in lamenting the

Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism, 1. Militancy, however, often took various forms. For some, militancy came as a militant rejection of and separation from all vestiges of modern life, whether through the founding of separate seminaries, denominations, churches, communities, or other organizations. For others, militancy implied a militant engagement with modern life, and their activities ranged from ardent missionary work to political organizing. Given its focus on public life and politics, this dissertation mostly concerns the latter form of militancy, and it uses the term "conservative evangelical" as a shorthand for these socially and politically engaged "fundamentalists." The term "fundamentalist" will be reserved for those conservative evangelicals who either self-identified as "fundamentalists" or sustained a high degree of separatism toward public life.

²³ Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 11-85; Marsden, *Understanding Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism*, 14, 44-46. Ironically, for as much as conservative evangelicals worried about immigration, many immigrant Protestants and Catholics maintained relatively traditionalist theological views. Some, after a generation, added to the conservative ranks of northern Christianity.

presence of evangelicals in American public life. As a result, “conservative,” “fundamentalist,” or (more broadly) “evangelical” became convenient synonyms for backwardness, rigidity, psychological instability, and genetic inferiority in the popular press (roughly the same characteristics used to describe non-Anglo groups flooding into northern cities). Not only that, evangelicalism’s long history in the halls of American power and prestige faded into obscurity, as pundit after pundit followed Mencken’s lead in placing conservative evangelicalism’s origins and contemporary influence squarely in an imagined “Bible Belt” roughly equivalent to the economically underdeveloped and impoverished parts of the South and Midwest.²⁴

Interneccine wars between conservative and modernist evangelicals ultimately pushed members of the corporate elite to choose sides, with many backing away from their former endorsement of conservative views of God, humanity, church, and society. To be sure, a slow abandonment of conservative evangelicalism by corporate figureheads would continue into the 1920s and 1930s. But more conservative members of the northern corporate establishment—whether conservative only in their economics, politics, or theology, or in some combination thereof—would continue to contribute to defending what they saw as the “fundamentals” of their capitalist, Christian faith.

Division and Depression

As the denominational bastions of nineteenth century Protestantism moved away from conservative theological or social tenets, many of the leading families in northern business

²⁴ Mencken quoted in S. T. Joshi, ed., *H.L. Mencken on Religion* (Amhurst: Prometheus Books, 2002), 120; Ferenc Morton Szasz, *The Divided Mind of Protestant America, 1880-1930* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1982); Barry Hankins, *American Evangelicals: A Contemporary History of a Mainstream Religious Movement* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2008), 19-35. The practice of casting the South as a hotspot of fundamentalism stretched back to the last decades of the nineteenth century. By the 1920s, however, this characterization of the South was fixed firmly in the popular press and more broadly in American popular culture. Mary Beth Swetnam Mathews, *Rethinking Zion: How the Print Media Placed Fundamentalism in the South* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2006).

retained membership in Protestant churches (now termed “mainstream” or “institutional” to differentiate them from “conservative” or “fundamentalist” bodies). Some remained for the prominence, professional connections, prestige, and progressive credentials conferred by membership—or, as one biographer of John D. Rockefeller put it in 1932, “the odor of prosperity mingled with the odor of sanctity.” Others affirmed—in part or in full—the modernist theological orientation or reformist politics of their denominational bodies, seeing both as having a great deal in common with their views about the inevitable march of economic, moral, or scientific “progress.” Others saw overlaps between changing ecclesiastical culture and corporate culture, especially as corporate managers and business leaders transitioned from earlier capitalist theory (best symbolized by “the public be damned” sentiments of William Vanderbilt) to the managerial, public servant theories of the 1910s and 1920s (best symbolized by Alfred P. Sloan’s view of General Motors as “a good employer, a good neighbor, and a good citizen”).²⁵

Regardless of their exact reasons for staying in their respective folds, the continuing prominence of business leaders like John D. Rockefeller, Jr. and John Mott in “institutional” or “mainline” Protestant churches and denominations was undeniable. Contrary to their usual characterization by their conservative opponents as “liberals”—meaning that they were unthinkingly affirmative of theological modernism and progressive reform—most “establishment leaders and people, if forced to use limiting terms, were likely to designate their own positions as evangelical, confessional, progressive or . . . moderate.” In keeping with their continuing sense of noble obligation and enduring economic Calvinism, the business elite generally saw their white, Protestant identity as a call for mandating continual philanthropic activity, not as a substitute for state reform but as a complement to it. Likewise, their status as wealthy, well-

²⁵ John T. Flynn, *God’s Gold: The Story of Rockefeller and His Times* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1932), 396; Sloan quote from Rolf Lundén, *Business and Religion in the American 1920s* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 7.

established white men reaffirmed their belief that philanthropy—whether toward social relief or evangelistic missions—would continue to solidify the authority of white Protestants over immigrant and non-white groups and, ideally, usher ethnic, religious, and political “Americanization” forward. These racial and social views roughly overlapped with social class and political party. Hence, the moderate conservatism of the northern Republican Party mirrored the religious stance of many corporate figureheads who sat in the pews of many northern Protestant congregations, populated the boards of “mainline” philanthropic organizations, and sent their children to most prestigious schools and universities in the Protestant establishment.²⁶

Due to these restructurings in northern society and Protestantism, by the mid-1920s conservative evangelicals no longer directed the affairs of many Protestant bodies or organizations in the North. As a result, conservative evangelicals increasingly gave up hope of retaining a prominent role in broader American culture and politics. Doubly informed by an premillennial view of the end times (which emphasized the immediacy of Christ’s Second Coming and thus treated social reform as superfluous), many conservative evangelicals withdrew to create a subculture of institutions, seminaries, schools, publishing houses, and radio stations based around defending the “fundamentals of the faith” and their standards of social or cultural purity. Few in the halls of northern corporate power showed a willingness to follow their retreat with their checkbooks. To be sure, conservative seminaries like Moody Bible Institute (MBI) in Chicago might enjoy the private patronage of a few sympathetic elites, but this was decidedly out of step with common practice. Though corporate boosters might be in shorter supply than in the years past, conservatives were hardly out of step with the currents of American modernity. Rather, by appropriating the techniques and tactics of modern marketing and technology, many

²⁶ For more on the presence of business leaders in the “institutional” churches of the interwar years, see William R. Hutchison, “Protestantism as Establishment,” in Hutchinson, *Between the Times: The Travail of the Protestant Establishment in America, 1900-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 3-18.

conservatives continued to gather adherents even as they receded from public power and public notice in interwar America.²⁷

As the nation moved into the ballyhoo days of the 1920s, most northern business elites held religious views more in line with the respectability conferred by membership in mainstream Protestant churches and denominations. Though they accepted the progressive, regulatory state as a fact of life and oversaw reforms in their own business practices, many corporate leaders still imagined themselves as having a God-given right to direct the American economy and body politic. Most northern, mainstream Protestant elites also envisioned the practices and interests of business as one and the same with those of other progress-minded, moral Christians. Shailer Mathews, a Social Gospeler and dean of the increasingly liberal Chicago Divinity School, certainly did so, writing that, “Business cannot continue to be successful where human welfare is ignored. Every great change in the ways of producing and using wealth has evolved a new appreciation of the human element. . . . When business men talk of rendering service they are not hypocrites, for they do serve their day. . . . For business does more than make money.—It makes morals.” Though undeniably elitist, such a perspective was hardly an unpopular one. As Rolf Lundén has shown, during the 1920s the businessman reemerged as a kind of “Christian hero,” a forward-looking, progressive, Protestant figure who not only redeemed society via philanthropic endeavors but also through operating his business according to the Golden Rule, inspiring others to follow in his path to earthly success.²⁸

²⁷ George M. Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); Joel Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Douglas Carl Abrams, *Selling the Old Time Religion: American Fundamentalists and Mass Culture, 1920-1940* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001); Timothy Gloege, “Consumed: Reuben A. Torrey and the Creation of Corporate Fundamentalism, 1880-1930” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 2007).

²⁸ Lundén, *Business and Religion in the American 1920s*, 5-25, 36.

Popularized by innumerable preachers and denominational publications, best-sellers like Bruce Barton's *The Man Nobody Knows*, businessmen themselves, and northern Republican politicians, this myth squared with reality about as much as it did throughout the Gilded Age. The rising economic tide of the 1920s did not lift all ships. Standards of living remained poor or declining for many Americans. Farmers, for instance, saw their incomes decline rapidly over the 1920s; in 1920, farm families received 15 percent of the national income, while in 1928, farm families accounted for merely 9 percent of national income, while their per capita income was approximately 1/3 of the average for all Americans. Though urban workers bought mass produced goods and contributed to a mass consumer economy, the specter of unemployment and uncertain work remained a fact of life for many industrial workers. Estimates of national unemployment—presumably in farm and non-farm work—at the apex of “Coolidge Prosperity” ranged from 5.2 to 13 percent. Hours worked in industry likewise fell by 7 percent between 1920 and 1929. A persistent labor surplus nevertheless made organizing difficult, and as a result, industrial unions lost over 1.5 million members between 1920 and 1923, a decline of almost 30 percent that preceded another decade of stagnation. Overall in the American economy, the discrepancy between rich and poor also expanded during the decade. Representing “the highest concentration of wealth at any time in American history,” the share of disposable income among the top 1 percent of Americans jumped from 12 percent in 1920 to 19 percent in 1929. At the presumed height of 1920s' prosperity—1929—71 percent of all American families held incomes under \$2500 while the 24,000 richest families held incomes over \$1000,000 and 513 families reported incomes of above \$1 million. The highest 20 percent of American families in terms of

income, held 54.4 percent of money income in the nation, while the top 5 percent held 30 percent of total money income.²⁹

Still, despite these facts to the contrary, many among the richest members of the northern institutional churches felt that corporate Protestants had successfully ushered in a golden age of continual prosperity tempered by moderate and practical religious belief. The Great Depression more decisively undercut the notion that moral, progressive, Protestant businessmen had the nation's best interests in mind. If, as Elizabeth Fones-Wolf has suggested, "the emphasis on social reform gave way to the task of the moral regeneration of individuals in the business-dominated cultural climate of [the 1920s]," then the Great Depression revived the reform-minded Social Gospel and drove "a wedge between business and the churches." This was especially true in the North and among institutional evangelical churches and denominations. For instance, the Federal Council of Churches—a bellwether organization of northern institutional Protestants—strongly supported the New Deal state, the rights of workers to organize, social control of credit, and farm relief through price controls.³⁰ Indeed, by the time that many institutional Protestants emerged from the Great Depression, they were no longer willing to adopt or endorse the pro-business spirit of the previous generation. Accordingly, institutional churches would continue to be bastions of northern Protestantism, moderate social views, and Republican Party politics after World War II. But, they would not serve as willing collaborators with the purposes of corporate America. Many of their wealthiest members accepted these terms, but not all. After the Depression, contrarian members of the northern Protestant establishment would develop new alliances with conservative evangelicals and a postwar cadre of *nouveau riche* capitalists in the

²⁹ Robert S. McElvaine, *The Great Depression: America, 1929-1941* (New York: Times Books, 1984), 21-23, 38-39 331.

³⁰ Elizabeth Fones-Wolf, *Selling Free Enterprise: The Business Assault on Labor and Liberalism, 1945-1960* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 219.

Southern Rim. Together, they would resurrect a gospel of wealth that the Great Depression had supposedly buried for good.

Alliances in the Gilded Age Southern Rim

Corporate-conservative evangelical alliances also appeared in other corners of the Gilded Age evangelical empire. In the South, the rise of “New South” modes of industrial enterprise informed the majority culture of conservative evangelicalism according to the racial and economic contours of the region. In the West, corporate interests were almost non-existent, although those present worked to legitimize a minority subculture of conservative evangelicals. In both of these locales, the aims of corporate figureheads overlapped with evangelical belief and practice, although it would not be until after the Great Depression that the Southern Rim would emerge as the setting for renewed collusions between corporate America and conservative evangelicalism.

Corporate barons were not nearly as numerous in the South as in the North, although wealthy urban southerners nevertheless directed industries ranging from textiles to timber to tobacco. Given that most of the New South’s industrial magnates were closely connected to northern capital or northern capital investors themselves, they often differed little in their impressions about the role of religion in ensuring ordered economic development. “In their desire for a clean, efficient, and moral urban environment,” writes historian Don Doyle, “southern business leaders shared the values and goals advanced by their northern counterparts.” Most southern capitalists thus affirmed the gospel of northern capitalists, casting themselves as pious Protestant stewards with a noble obligation to save the region from the burdens of its past. They even had counterparts on the revival trail. The itinerant evangelist Sam P. Jones—known

popularly as the “[D.L.] Moody of the South”—praised the efforts of southern capitalists and their commitment to economic progress, all the while encouraging his followers to commit themselves to the pursuit of material gain, as well as the moral principles, “work, perseverance, and suffering” needed to achieve a new station in the New South.³¹

As in the North, the influence of big businessmen was evident in nearly all of the South’s major denominations. Though predominantly a rural body, the Southern Baptist Convention certainly attracted its share of businessmen to city churches and urban-based organizations. Baptist leaders regularly worked with southern businessmen to connect the Baptist mission of individual conversion to an expansive social program that included the establishment and maintenance of orphanages, rural churches and schools, and dozens of regional colleges.³² Businessmen also joined prominent southern Methodist and Presbyterian churches, especially in prominent “New South” cities like Nashville and Atlanta. (This was a distinct break from the preference of elites in “Old South” cities like Mobile and Charleston for the Episcopalian church). In Nashville, 55 percent of businessmen were Methodists and 21 percent were Presbyterian; in Atlanta, 29 percent were Methodist and 21 percent were Presbyterian. Across the South, Methodist schools—such as Emory University, Duke University, and Vanderbilt University—enjoyed the support of wealthy Methodists like Atlanta’s Candler brothers (of Coca-Cola), North Carolina’s James B. Duke (of American Tobacco Company) and Nashville’s Edmund Cole (of the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad). As in the North, revivalists who supported the views of southern boosters and businessmen enjoyed their generous backing. In

³¹ Don Harrison Doyle, *New Men, New Cities, New South: Atlanta, Nashville, Charleston, Mobile, 1860-1910* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 261; Sam P. Jones, *Sam Jones’ Own Book*, Randall J. Stephens, ed. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2009), *xiv*; James C. Cobb, *Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 75-76.

³² Keith Barber, *The Quality of Mercy: Southern Baptists and Social Christianity, 1890-1920* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1996); Paul Harvey, *Redeeming the South: Religious Cultures and Racial Identities Among Southern Baptists, 1865-1925* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 197-226.

addition, southern capitalists oversaw missionary endeavors outside the region, aiming for the conversion of non-evangelicals at home and abroad.³³

Though similarities certainly abounded, it would be inaccurate to cast the southern corporate elite as northern facsimiles. In keeping with the political atmosphere of the post-bellum, one party New South, the southern business elite's political affiliations tended toward the Democratic Party. If their political identity was wrapped up with the region's majority party, then their religious identity was likewise informed by the region's majority religion. Whereas the evangelical empire of the North experienced a series of theological and political civil wars, the evangelical empire of the South did not. The controversies over modernism barely affected southern churches, denominations, and seminaries. Few southern evangelicals warmed to modern intellectual trends, preferring to defend the ramparts of conservative theology and, by extension, the economic and racial orders developing in the midst of the "New South."

Along with these unique aspects of southern evangelicalism, elites' blending of economic and religious views faced stern opposition for reasons particular to the South's history of military defeat and severe economic underdevelopment. Through the popular religion of the Lost Cause, some white southerners memorialized and idealized the dead Confederacy—along with its social relations and military defenders—as a endeavor (in the words of one southern Baptist pastor) “to win the victory over dollar-lust and the machine.”³⁴ If the Lost Cause religion allowed white, nostalgic southerners to question the applicability of the gospel of wealth, southern class relations also limited its appeal. Rural poverty, coupled with low-wage industrialization, made socio-economic strata relatively fixed in the New South. Religion thus served as a marker of

³³ Doyle, *New Men, New Cities, New South*, 96-99, 121-122; On one such foreign missions endeavor, see Bob Hall, “Case Study: Coca-Cola and Methodism,” in Samuel S. Hill, Jr., ed., *On Jordan's Stormy Banks: Religion in the South* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1983), 147-150.

³⁴ Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980), 79-99.

social and economic station throughout the region. Whereas owners and operators of urban businesses and industries might affiliate with Protestant churches and denominations corresponding to their counterparts in the North, the mass of southern miners, industrial workers and farm laborers tended toward a “low church” evangelicalism that was more revivalistic, emotional, and suspicious of material wealth and acquisition. Stuck in cycles of southern poverty, many white and black Protestants believed in a God that did not affirm material wealth or the notion that work, diligence, and self-denial automatically brought immediate and guaranteed earthly rewards. In short, the gospel of wealth—both its Calvinist and Arminian varieties—seemed a false gospel to the vast swath of southern whites and blacks, a heresy that not only sought to justify the submission of the southern poor but also did not square with everyday experience. As such, some of the South’s most important grassroots political movements, farmer populism and union organizing particularly, drew strength from religious sensibilities and symbols that southern elites disdained: the suffering Jesus, the activist church, and the eventual judgment of the rich. Similarly, the rich musical culture of poor blacks and whites—whether gospel, the blues, or country music—reiterated themes of everyday struggle and limitation instead of earthly success and self-actualization.³⁵

Black-white relations also informed New South corporate actors’ interpretation of evangelicalism’s social mission. Given their paternalistic racial views and (at times) political connections to black community leaders, southern business leaders held an evangelical worldview that most historians have labeled as relatively “progressive” or “moderate” for the

³⁵ William A. Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 58-92; Paul Harvey, *Freedom’s Coming: Religious Culture and the Shaping of the South from the Civil War through the Civil Rights Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2005), 114-126; 146-168. Also see Wayne Flynt, “Religion for the Blues: Evangelicalism, Poor Whites, and the Great Depression,” *Journal of Southern History* vol. 71, no. 1 (February, 2005): 3-38. For an expansive study of the “folk religion” of the southern poor, see John Herbert Hayes, “Hard, Hard Religion: Faith and Class in the New South,” (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Georgia, 2007).

region. This characterization has a certain saliency since collaborations between poor whites and blacks often faltered as prominent southern whites used their evangelicalism to defend Jim Crow's racial orders instead of transcend them. Yet, the moderate evangelicalism of the southern business classes did not necessarily drive them toward crusades against Jim Crow either. Rather, their views about the roles of blacks in the New South approximated views in the Gilded Age North about how blacks or other non-Anglo groups should adjust to the new world that industrial capitalism created. As a consequence, southern corporate evangelicals did little to halt the construction of legal and spatial segregation. In fact, like church leaders and churchgoers in the region's upstanding, in-town Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian bodies, they often viewed a combination of missions or relief work among blacks and the passage of Jim Crow laws as fitting solutions to the dual threats of social disorder and racial intermixing. Evangelicalism in the higher orders of southern society, then, was much like its counterpart in the North, a curious mix of conservatism and progressivism concerning matters of religion's relationship to public life and politics. Nevertheless, like all things cultural and political in the South, the southern elite's evangelicalism had southern accents.³⁶

Unlike business interests in the South and North, those in the West worked to support a minority subculture of evangelicalism that tended to be decidedly more conservative in theological and social sentiment. In their endeavors, these sympathetic elites worked against the grain of the region's history. Since the western states had joined the union, evangelicals had been outnumbered and relatively marginalized. With Mormons holding an establishment of their own in Utah and Catholics making up between approximately 60 to 90 percent of the population in states like New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, and California, evangelicals—whether of the

³⁶ Doyle, *New Men, New Cities, New South*, 260-312; Also see Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 276-283.

mainline or conservative variety—had relatively little impact on private religious affections or public culture in the West. The controversies over modernism were thus filtered through the dominant Catholic culture of the region, if at all. In addition, the antipathy of conservative evangelicals elsewhere toward the Social Gospel did not spread to many western religious leaders and groups. “Faced with the virtual absence of *any* social institutions,” notes historian Ferenc Szasz, “pioneer ministers, priests, and rabbis all became ‘social gospellers’ well before the term was created.” Western clerics maintained a vigorous spirit of reform and regulation well into the early twentieth century, ranging from allocating public funds for schools, orphanages, and hospitals to legal restrictions on alcohol, lawlessness, prostitution, political corruption, and even Sabbath breaking.³⁷ In short, conservative evangelicals were hardly a natural fit for the region’s political or economic context; rather, they were outsiders at the crest of the twentieth century, a status they would attempt to overcome throughout the coming decades.

Though few parts of the West accommodated conservative evangelical groups or their views, the growing metropolis of Los Angeles nevertheless offered as an important habitat for evangelical experimentation and growth.³⁸ From the 1900s to the 1920s, churches, pundits, seminaries, and publications championed the cause of conservative evangelicalism and attempted to make their mark on the city’s increasingly pluralistic religious marketplace.³⁹ When they

³⁷ Ferenc Morton Szasz, *Religion in the Modern American West* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2000), 4-7.

³⁸ Michael E. Engh, “‘Practically Every Religion Being Represented,’” in Tom Sitton and William F. Deverell, *Metropolis in the Making: Los Angeles in the 1920s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 201-219. In 1900, Los Angeles’s Anglo-Protestant homogeneity was strikingly out of step with other U.S. cities, which had been significantly diversified by Gilded Age immigration. Commentators only half-jokingly dubbed it “Iowa by the Sea” and “Double Dubuque.” By the mid-1930s, however, Los Angeles was the second most diverse metropolis in the United States, fueled by a series of post-World War I in-migrations. Along with a wide variety of white, mainline Protestants, the city increasingly featured growing collections of African-Americans, Asians, and Mexicans that practiced their own faith traditions.

³⁹ It might be best to think of southern California as a religious context similar to that detailed in Christian Smith, *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998). Smith notes that evangelicals in contemporary America have grown “very much because of and not in spite of its

succeeded in drawing in wealthy sponsors, the money often came from back east. Therefore, conservative evangelicalism in the early twentieth century West was, more or less, an extension of northern interests and conflicts.

The crafting of *The Fundamentals*—one of the landmark documents in evangelical history—serves as a fitting example of such early collusions between corporate America and conservative evangelicalism in the West. In 1908, along with Thomas C. “Big Daddy” Horton, Union Oil tycoon Lyman Stewart founded the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (BIOLA) to be a West Coast version of the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago (MBI). After Reuben A. Torrey, the noted conservative theologian and former dean at MBI, came on board in 1911, BIOLA grew into one of the most prominent institutions in Los Angeles. Stewart’s interests expanded in these years as well, as he became primary benefactor for the publication of *The Fundamentals*. A twelve-volume pamphlet series written between 1910 and 1915, *The Fundamentals* was mailed, free of cost, to between 175,000 and 250,000 laypersons and clergy around the nation and world. *The Fundamentals* was a seminal work in defining and marketing anti-modernist evangelicalism to Protestant America, and it was matched only by BIOLA’s commitment to publicizing conservative theology after World War I. In 1917 alone, BIOLA conducted 6,417 evangelistic meetings, offered 9,912 religious classes, handed out over 17,000 devotionals, distributed 213,000 tracts, and witnessed to over 50,000 people. In the 1920s, BIOLA also distributed nearly 42,000 copies per month of the West Coast’s leading fundamentalist journal, *The King’s*

confrontation with modern pluralism.” In addition, evangelicals have benefitted in terms of sheer numbers and public appeal because of a paradoxical relationship with the broader culture, what Smith describes as evangelicalism’s “high tension and high integration into mainstream society.” Since “[c]ontemporary pluralism creates a situation in which evangelicals can perpetually maintain but never resolve their struggle with the non-evangelical world,” they remain “embattled” yet “thriving.” Such descriptions of the contemporary religious landscape in America certainly apply to Western cities like Los Angeles in the first few decades of the twentieth century and, to a point, help to explain the past public appeal and political impact of conservative evangelicals in areas of high religious competition and variety.

Business, and ran KJS, one of the first radio stations in the country fully devoted to conservative evangelical broadcasting.⁴⁰

Though BIOLA and *The Fundamentals* were vital to the early history of western evangelicalism, such collaborations between corporate America and conservative evangelicals were still few and far between in the pre-World War II West. The public presence of conservative evangelicals, however, became increasingly hard to overlook as the Great Depression pushed westward millions of migrants from the Midwest and South, the very heartland of conservative evangelicalism. Proof for this migration's importance lay in the survey data. In terms of church members, only 14 percent of Protestants in Los Angeles were deemed by historian Gregory H. Singleton's survey of the city to be "fundamentalist" in 1926, although another 21 percent were "sympathetic" to conservative doctrine and practice. Ten years later, the number of Protestants classified as "fundamentalist" had dropped to roughly 10 percent, but those deemed "sympathetic" had grown to a third of the city's Protestant population. Generally conservative in theology and social outlook, their widely varying denominational affiliations included Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Adventists. Representatives from the Church of Christ were also among the migrants, along with Pentecostals. Despite the importance of these westward migrations, the West did not break fully from its past. Religious pluralism defined the region into the 1930s and afterwards.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Ernest Sandeen, "Toward a Historical Interpretation of the Origins of Fundamentalism," *Church History*, 36: 1 (March, 1967), 77-80; "The Fundamentals" in Brenda Brasher, ed., *Encyclopedia of Fundamentalism* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 186-188. Douglas Firth Anderson, "Toward an Established Mysticism: Judeo-Christian Traditions in Post-World War II California and Nevada," in Wade Clark Roof and Mark Silk, eds., *Religion and Public Life in the Pacific Region: Fluid Identities* (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 2005), 71; Phillip Goff, "Fighting Like the Devil in the City of Angels: The Rise of Fundamentalist Charles E. Fuller," in Tom Sisson and William F. Deverell, eds., *Metropolis in the Making: Los Angeles in the 1920s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 223-225.

⁴¹ Gregory M. Singleton, "Fundamentalism and Urbanization: A Quantitative Critique of Impressionistic Interpretations" in Leo F. Schnore, ed., *The New Urban History: Quantitative Explorations by American Historians* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 205-227; James N. Gregory, *American Exodus: The Dust Bowl*

In this complicated religious setting, class and matters of respectability nevertheless mattered for both more settled evangelical communities and fresh arrivals. As among northern Protestants, theological modernism and progressive political views became markers of high social standing, respectability, and political inclusion in most pre-World War II western cities. Although hardly a determining factor in religious identification, conservatives in the middle class and working classes tended to join conservative churches and organizations and grant support to local evangelical celebrities like Aimee Semple McPherson, Robert “Fighting Bob” Shuler, and Charles E. Fuller. These social divisions mattered, mirroring very real theological and ecclesiastical rifts. Thus, as elsewhere in the evangelical empire, there was little demonstrable unity in the political realm of the West, as Protestants there could rarely agree on either common friends or foes in the public sphere—or even whether the faithful should be involved in the public sphere.⁴² Therefore, by the late 1930s, evangelicals in the West were like their counterparts in the North and South in some ways, but not in others. Unlike in the South, they were not in the majority, even after the great westward migrations of the Great Depression. Compared to their brethren in the North, they were decidedly more conservative in theological

Migration and Okie Culture in California (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 191-221; See also Darren Dochuk, “From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Southernization of Southern California, 1939-1969” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 2006). Pentecostalism, of course, had a long history in Los Angeles, emerging after the Azusa Street Revival in 1906 as a distinct form of evangelical restorationism, emphasizing the charismatic “second baptism” of the Spirit, faith healing, and speaking in tongues. It increasingly attracted adherents, particularly in the working class, African-American, and migrant communities in and around Los Angeles and, by the early 1910s, was growing quickly in the West and across the Southern Rim. See Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001); Szasz, *Religion in the Modern America West*, 82-84.

⁴² Singleton, “Fundamentalism and Urbanization,” 218; Matthew Avery Sutton, *Aimee Semple McPherson and the Resurrection of Christian America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007); Kevin Starr, *Material Dreams: Southern California Through the 1920s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 136-139; James N. Gregory, *The Southern Diaspora: How the Great Migrations of Black and White Southerners Transformed America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 225-226; Goff, “Fighting Like the Devil in the City of Angels,” 223-225; On the making of “post-Protestant” Los Angeles generally, and how voluntarism and social standing led to fragmentation among evangelicals noted above, also see Gregory H. Singleton, *Religion in the City of Angels: American Protestant Culture and Urbanization, Los Angeles, 1850-1930* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1979), 119-185; Gregory, *American Exodus*, 211.

outlook and, to some extent, antagonistic to progressive social policy. Corporate support for western evangelicals was less noticeable in the West, as it was in the South. Indeed, if they retained any firm attachments to western conservatives at all, America's corporate leaders did so selectively and sparingly.

This would all change after World War II. The rejuvenation of corporate America in the 1940s and 1950s reestablished old ties and established new links between corporate capitalists and conservative evangelicalism. Corporate capitalism itself after World War II soon proved notably different from its former self. It was not only increasingly oriented toward the Southern Rim, it was going through a long-term transition toward new modes of production, consumption, and spatial organization. As the Sunbelt Age dawned, evangelicalism in America would also be reshaped by the postwar federal state, as well as by the businesses, business models, and business leaders who collaborated with the state to remake American capitalism itself. In the wake of these large-scale changes and the emergence of new, postwar enemies and causes, many evangelicals in the Southern Rim would move away from the policies and religious lessons of the Gilded Age and toward a renewed faith in a Sunbelt-baptized gospel of wealth.

The Dawn of the Sunbelt Age

By 1975, journalist and cultural critic Kirkpatrick Sale was arguing that the nation had undergone a revolutionary shift in regional power since World War II. "Almost all of the general trends in the American economy," wrote Sale, "have been more to the benefit of the Southern Rim than any other section of the country." From Virginia to Texas to southern California, the "Southern Rim"—or "Sunbelt," as Sale's contemporary, Republican strategist Kevin Phillips had termed the region in 1969—had become a "world power on the scale of the

present superpowers,” producing a “gross national product bigger than any foreign country in the world except the Soviet Union.” In tandem with this economic expansion a distinct “economic morality” had appeared in the Southeast and West, a “growth culture” that was “heedless . . . of social trappings, wrapped up in material showiness, with all of the I’m-all-right-Jack arrogance of those who see themselves as ‘self-made’ and heaven-blessed.” Together, the southward restructuring of the nation’s economy and its new economic morality challenged the northeastern establishment’s hold over the nation’s economic, cultural, and political affairs.⁴³

To understand this new “economic morality” and the role of conservative evangelicals in crafting it, the large-scale transformations that re-centered corporate America in the South and West must be taken into account. For all of the journalistic ink spilled by Sale and his contemporaries about the Sunbelt’s rising status in the 1970s, the dawn of the Sunbelt Age came much earlier. Due to huge federal expenditures and the militarization of the American economy during World War II, social and economic standards across the Southern Rim had slowly begun to change in the 1940s and 1950s. For instance, low-wage industries still predominated in Georgia, but per capita income also reached nearly 70 percent of the national average by 1950. In Atlanta particularly, income levels actually surpassed national figures as new industries—particularly defense-related manufacturing—flourished. Wartime federal spending in Texas reoriented the state’s economy around aircraft manufacturing and petrochemicals, prompting one observer to report in 1947 that the “region between Houston and Beaumont seems, in fact, to be a single throbbing factory.” In southern California, the wartime funds that poured into the state created, in the words of historian Lisa McGirr, “the nation’s largest urban military-industrial

⁴³ Kirkpatrick Sale, *Power Shift: The Rise of the Southern Rim and Its Challenge to the Eastern Establishment* (New York: Random Books, 1975), 15, 17-53, 72-73, 310.

complex.” Job growth in defense, electronics, manufacturing, and retail continued into the 1960s, drawing millions to “the new frontier West of the second half of the twentieth century.”⁴⁴

With the burgeoning of the Cold War state, federal officials continued to send billions of dollars southward and westward after World War II. Federal payments made up a significant portion of state and local government revenue. In the South, only Florida had less than 12 percent of its general revenue coming from federal sources by 1959. No western state had less than 12 percent of its revenue coming from Washington, D.C. and, in the case of Texas, Oklahoma, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, and Arizona, federal contributions made up over 15 percent of each state’s revenues. Of course, this was a regional iteration of a national trend, but federal spending flooded into sectors particular to the South-by-West economy. This was especially true in the South, where military contracts became a vital part of the postwar economy. According to Bruce Schulman, “As overall military expenditures surged upward [after World War II], the South’s share of prime contracts doubled during the 1950s from roughly 7 percent to approximately 15 percent of the total.”⁴⁵

As a result of such forms of federal involvement, the South and the Southern Rim’s regional economy differed strikingly from those that grounded the North’s economic growth and dominance in the Gilded Age. Whereas various forms of heavy manufacturing provided the foundation for the northern economy, the Southern Rim’s economic power rested in agribusiness, defense-related industries, hi-tech research and development, oil extraction and chemical production, real estate, and leisure services. A wide variety of other sub-sectors—chemicals, electronics, construction, insurance, aerospace, banking, synthetics, shipping, utilities,

⁴⁴ James C. Cobb, *Georgia Odyssey* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997), 59-60; Numan V. Bartley, *The New South, 1945-1980: The Story of the South’s Modernization* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994), 10, 139; Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 25-29.

⁴⁵ Schulman, *From Cotton Belt to Sunbelt*, 119, 139-140.

retail, and, indeed, heavy and light manufacturing—also experienced remarkable growth. Courted by urban boosters (and their wide range of tax, property, and labor enticements), many northern corporations—big and small—moved offices and production facilities to cities big and small in the Southern Rim. Countless other Southern Rim businessmen started up enterprises of their own.⁴⁶

Since most of this economic activity centered in cities, urban and suburban areas expanded across the Southern Rim, making the region's metropolises into the very symbols of Sunbelt development. Another round of urbanization occurred after World War II, although for the first time in both the South and West's history, a distinctive, "new middle class" accompanied metropolitan population growth. In 1940, just over two in ten southerners lived in metropolitan districts; by 1960 approximately 43.5 percent of southerners had lived in metropolitan areas like Charlotte, Atlanta, Houston, and Dallas-Ft. Worth. According to historian Numan V. Bartley, this urban expansion facilitated "a vast increase in the labor employed in retail and wholesale trade, insurance, finance, government, the professions, and similar predominantly white-collar occupations." After World War II, such occupations became "the fastest growing sector of the southern labor market," expanding from 25 percent of the southern work force in 1940 to 40 percent in 1960 and more than 50 percent in 1980. Similar trends emerged in the postwar West. There, the federally-supported defense, manufacturing, and hi-tech economy encouraged massive in-migrations from the North, South, and Midwest. Los Angeles transformed in the twenty years after World War II into an American economic center rivaling New York City and Chicago. In its expansive suburbs, especially in Orange County to the south, a ballooning residential population worked in a wide and expanding variety of the

⁴⁶ Sale, *Power Shift*, 17-53; Carl Abbott, *The New Urban America: Growth and Politics in Sunbelt Cities* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), 34-56.

industrial, hi-tech, R&D, and service industries. Similar economic centers sprouted and grew in and around Charlotte, Houston, Dallas-Fort Worth, San Antonio, San Diego, San Francisco, Denver, and Phoenix.⁴⁷

It should not be a surprise that the large-scale dynamics behind Sunbelt development brought shifts in religious values. Broad and diffuse socio-economic change, however, does not affect specific beliefs and practices without specific agents. As in the Gilded Age, corporate leaders—many from inside the Southern Rim, others from outside the region—were vital for mainstreaming religious perspectives and politics that, as they saw it, fit the business-driven future they wanted for their respective companies and host communities. As such, the roles of corporate actors in the resurrection and reshaping of regional conservative evangelicalism were varied and multi-faceted. Likewise, the manner in which evangelical pastors, congregations, seminaries, and lay leaders incorporated the techniques of their corporate friends mattered greatly for the shape of religion and politics in the Sunbelt Age. The first evidence of such new alliances between corporate America and conservative evangelicals emerged during the early Cold War, as both worked together to fight global communism through a resurgent, worldwide evangelical crusade for Christ.

⁴⁷ Bartley, *The New South*, 134, 262-263; McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 20-53.

CHAPTER 2

CRUSADING FOR THE COLD WAR CHRIST

J. Howard Pew hated many things, but he liked Billy Graham. Graham, it seemed to Pew, understood the threats facing postwar America. The regulatory state, labor unions, and political liberals seemed to be undermining the nation in the 1940s and 1950s, driving it away from its Christian and capitalist heritage. As a result, communism was on the rise not just on the international stage but inside America itself. Though he was a member in good standing with a mainline Presbyterian church in Pittsburgh, Pew's religious and economic affections approximated the southern Baptist Graham. Both viewed evangelical-style conversion as more than a spiritual transformation; it was also a powerful method for anchoring the soul in the presumably bedrock American values of meritocratic uplift and free enterprise. For these reasons, Pew contributed to Graham's career in terms of finances and friendship. His efforts did not go unnoticed by the evangelist. As Graham later reflected in his 1997 autobiography, "I came to have great affection and admiration for [Pew] . . . not because he had a great deal of money but because he was a man of God and a man of wisdom who wanted to see his wealth used wisely for the cause of Christ."⁴⁸

Pew was one of dozens of important backers of conservative evangelicals who—like Graham—shared the anti-communist concerns of their corporate benefactors, even if they did not share exact denominational memberships or agree on all aspects of formal theology. Indeed, the first postwar alliances between corporate Americans—mainline or not—and conservative

⁴⁸ Billy Graham, *Just As I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1997), 288.

evangelicals emerged over communism's presumed influence in postwar public life via the New Deal state. These alliances exhibited remarkable variety. Conservative evangelicals did not engage in a singular, unified crusade as they attempted to counter communism with Christ. Neither did their corporate backers throw their support behind evangelical leaders and groups in a predictable or comprehensive fashion. Such contingencies, ironically, made their mutual crusades against communism a mish-mash of religious, political and cultural endeavors, one with many points of origin and degrees of relative impact.

Many of these endeavors overlapped with the Southern Rim's early economic development. Inspired by the economic development exploding around them, conservative evangelicals in the South and West saw their fight against communism as one that began and ended with the individual soul. Hence, they used whatever support they received from corporate figureheads to impress the importance of conversion on a postwar public, not only for the assurance of salvation in the sweet by-and-by but also for the salvation of themselves, their children, and their nation from the clear and present danger of communism. Corporate support for Billy Graham's crusades certainly operated off this logic, but so did the business-backed endeavors of conservative evangelicals elsewhere. Other institutions—such as independent evangelical colleges and privately-run parachurch ministries—likewise showed the impact of corporate support for the renewal of conservative evangelicalism in Cold War America. Defined more by failure in redefining the political and cultural context of the developing Cold War, their efforts nevertheless laid the groundwork for a more comprehensive and successful crusade to popularize conservative evangelicalism throughout the postwar nation and world.

New Deal Heresy, Cold War Crusade

Concerns about insurgent communism intensified in the 1930s as the Great Depression devastated American capitalism and summoned forth the New Deal state. Many business leaders backed Franklin D. Roosevelt's push for relief and recovery and certainly influenced the shape of many public policies during the Depression. A select group of business elites, however, viewed Roosevelt as a crypto-communist and saw his policies as contributing to the rise of a centralized bureaucracy that would eventually result in state control over the economy.

Historians have only begun to document both the dismay of such businessmen during the Depression and how they acted on their determination to challenge the New Deal's intellectual and political underpinnings.⁴⁹ In the 1930s, business activism tended to collect around a number of political organizations, such as the American Liberty League, the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce (USCC). The biggest of big businessmen either founded these organizations (the Liberty League received heavy financial support and initial direction from the DuPont family) or oversaw their political endeavors (a slew of industrial leaders, most concentrated in northern companies, held membership in the NAM and the USCC). The political dominance of the Democratic Party, the popular support behind Roosevelt, and the general distrust of the American voting public toward business elites prevented such organizations from drastically changing the political climate of the country during the 1930s. Still, where their efforts certainly held sway was among a group of equally outspoken anti-New Dealers in various evangelical institutions. Finding common ground in opposing what they deemed a spiritual, political, and economic heresy, contrarian business leaders in the mainline and evangelical North backed contrarians across the Protestant landscape.

⁴⁹ See, for instance, Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands*.

Though proceeding in fits and starts, their mutual efforts nevertheless forwarded the banner of anti-New Deal conservatism.

Corporate monies and support went into various coffers during the 1930s and early 1940s. This support came in various forms and spread nationwide, but during those decades generally came from sources headquartered in the North, where anti-New Deal businessmen wanted to portray themselves and those they supported as a kind of Depression-era “silent majority,” representing the views of all but a small, liberal elite. In reality, they often either supported those who worked on or from the fringes of both the conservative evangelical community and right-wing America. As such, their efforts had only mixed success.

In the North, George Washington Robnett’s National Laymen’s Council of the Church League of America and Carl McIntire’s American Council of Christian Churches (ACC) certainly stood out for their ties to corporate interests and their radical blending of conservative evangelicalism with anti-statist politics. Founded in 1937, the Church League of America (CLA)—as it was later renamed—served as the personal outlet for Robnett’s religious politics. An advertising executive in Chicago, Robnett was deeply invested in that city’s community of conservative evangelicals, as well as their connections to corporate power. As such, Frank J. Loesch, a corporation lawyer and former head of the Chicago Crime Commission, joined with Henry P. Crowell, the President of Quaker Oats and a longtime friend of socially-engaged, fundamentalist organizations, to support its mission, aiming to “rekindle the spirit of valiant Christian Americanism” and challenge “destructive, organized radicalism.” To that end, the CLA published a monthly newspaper—*News and Views*—that tried to convince Protestant ministers of

the threat of communism. By 1940, the group boasted a hundred thousand members, although its influence outside hard-line fundamentalist circles was somewhat limited.⁵⁰

Like the CLA, Carl McIntire also disliked the New Deal and deemed American Protestantism in danger of liberal theology and politics. In 1929, McIntire's fundamentalism had encouraged him to withdraw from Princeton University with his colleague J. Gresham Machen to found Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. After a series of disagreements with Machen over eschatology and Christian moral liberties, McIntire broke away again, founding his own church in 1937 and using it as a soapbox for his fundamentalist views. (This very church removed him from the pulpit in 1955 because of his dictatorial leadership style).⁵¹ In 1941, McIntire oversaw the establishment of the ACC and worked just as quickly to establish a lobbying and public relations wing largely funded by the National Economic Council's Merwin Hart. The ACC acted as a conservative alternative to the pro-New Deal politics and theological liberalism of the Federal Council of Churches. Casting the Federal Council's pacifism and social doctrine as "hardly to be distinguished from Communism," McIntire stood for the biblical "presuppositions of capitalism" and swore that "when the Federal Council issues its socialist pronouncements on Labor Day, we will issue one telling Labor to get saved, to put its faith in Christ."⁵²

McIntire's contemporary—the Alabama-born fundamentalist J. Frank Norris—ran in similar circles and, as labor strikes spiked in the nation in the late 1930s, likewise castigated Roosevelt as a communist tool and the labor movement as rife with communists. A southerner

⁵⁰ Gary K. Clabaugh, *Thunder on the Right: The Protestant Fundamentalists* (Chicago: Nelson Hall, 1974), 111; Allan J. Lichtman, *White Protestant Nation: The Rise of the American Conservative Movement* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2008), 96-97.

⁵¹ Heather Hendershot, "God's Angriest Man: Carl McIntire, Cold War Fundamentalism, and Right-Wing Broadcasting," *American Quarterly* 59:2 (June 2007), 375.

⁵² Lichtman, *White Protestant Nation*, 123.

with a pastorate in Fort Worth, Texas, Norris also retained a second pastorate in Detroit, Michigan, where he befriended the heads of General Motors, Chrysler, and Ford. A fundamentalist “populist” in every sense of the word, Norris nevertheless held correspondence with any number of Detroit auto executives and, according to his biographer Barry Hankins, “could rub shoulders with the rich and powerful without losing his place as leader of a popular movement.” Terms between Detroit manufacturers and Norris were so good that each granted him a free car to use to carry out his various traveling crusades. Though Norris initially liked FDR and briefly supported the New Deal, he turned to defend the rights of big business and encouraged Christian conversion and decorum—instead of state intervention or labor organizing—as the key to smooth industrial relations and economic prosperity. Such views brought the approval and endorsement of executives in Detroit, while at the same time drawing Norris into alignment with various other religious critics of Roosevelt, ranging from fellow Detroiters Father Charles Coughlin to more radical and explicitly anti-Semitic preachers like Gerald L.K. Smith. Though Norris came behind Roosevelt’s mobilization for war, he continued his assaults on presumed communism elements until his death in 1952 cut short his career and his crusade.⁵³

Similar organizations in the Southern Rim ranged across the religious and rhetorical spectrum. For instance, the Christian American Association (CAA) was a southern and more secular equivalent to William Dudley Pelley’s Silver Shirts or Gerald Winrod’s Defenders of the Christian Faith, both anti-Semitic, pro-fascist organizations that had gained a small but loyal number of adherents during the 1930s and early 1940s—yet no real backing from business bigwigs. Founded in 1936 and headquartered in Houston, the CAA received early support from

⁵³ Barry Hankins, *God’s Rascal: J. Frank Norris and the Beginnings of Southern Fundamentalism* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 8, 90-117, 138-160.

ardently anti-New Deal Texas oil men like Maco Stewart and the John Henry Kirby and northern industrialists, including the DuPont family. It was headed up by Vance Muse, a virulent and flamboyant racist who became famous for proliferating photographs of black ROTC officers escorting Eleanor Roosevelt, implying a sexual relationship between them. Muse also held similar views toward Jews and Catholics and believed both were behind the New Deal's insidious plans. "That crazy man in the White House will Sovietize America," he once wrote, "with the federal hand-outs of the Bum Deal—sorry, New Deal. Or is it the Jew Deal?"

Though Vance himself posited no clear religious affiliations and held no church membership, the CAA nevertheless tried to place itself within the southern culture of evangelicalism and used fiery, evangelistic rhetoric in its many publications, which at the organization's heyday during World War II numbered in the thousands of recipients, mostly at state legislative and the offices of oil and defense-related corporations dotting the Texas landscape. Its mission statement certainly included such blends of religious and political rhetoric, declaring that the CAA aimed "to publish and distribute Christian American literature of a nonpartisan and nonsectarian nature for the promotion of Americanism, religion, and righteousness and to conduct a program of education and organization to combat Communism, Fascism, Nazism, Socialism, atheism and other alien 'isms' designed to destroy faith in God and Jesus Christ, the church, the home, and the American system of one's own conscience." The CAA also held the particular distinction of being the first organization to champion "Right-to-Work" as a political slogan, using it to fight against the strengthening of labor laws at both the state and federal levels. In Texas and several other southern states, the CAA led a vigorous campaign to get "right-to-work" laws on the state books. Its exact contributions to these efforts remain unclear, but the CAA was, in one observer's estimation, "the primary organization

campaigning for, and generating interest in, this particular approach to unionism.” Only in Louisiana did the CAA elicit a powerful backlash from pro-labor activists in the Catholic Church and Catholic legislators angered by Vance’s outspoken anti-Catholicism (Their request that the FBI investigate CAA activities prompted it to label Louisiana the “red spot” on the Gulf Coast.) Outside Texas, the CAA pushed what it termed the “God-Given Right-to-Work Amendment,” which it hoped its political representative in Congress—a former state governor and junior senator from Texas named “Pappy” Wilbert Lee O’Daniel—would presumably see through to passage. O’Daniel was an unpopular and ineffective senator and Vance died in 1950 before he could develop the popular, grassroots support for such a federal amendment, but the impact of the CAA was already apparent at the state level, even in the early 1940s. Versions of CAA’s right-to-work legislation appeared in eight business-friendly states during World War II, including Kansas, Idaho, South Dakota, Arkansas, Colorado, Mississippi, Florida, and Muse’s native Texas.⁵⁴

If Muse and the CAA felt at home with radical and racist rhetoric, others in the Southern Rim did not. In fact, the most prominent and popular organizations tended to blend moderate evangelicalism with free market politics, eschewing fundamentalist calls for separatism and theological purity but calling for social engagement through conservative modes. Spiritual Mobilization was one of these types of organizations. In 1935, Congregationalist minister Dr. James W. Fifield collaborated with various northern industrialists to found Spiritual Mobilization in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Shortly thereafter, Fifield moved to Southern California to accept the pulpit at First Congregational Church of Los Angeles. In no way a fundamentalist, Fifield

⁵⁴ “Black on Blacks,” *Time* (April 27, 1936), 10-11; Quote about Roosevelt from Elna C. Green, “From Antisuffragism to Anti-Communism: The Conservative Career of Ida M. Darden,” *The Journal of Southern History*, 65:2 (May, 1999), 307; Walter Davenport, “Savior from Texas,” *Collier’s* (August 18, 1945), 13, 79-81; Victor Riesel, “How to Choke Unions,” *The Nation* (July 31, 1943), 124-126; Marc Dizon, “Limiting Labor: Business Political Mobilization and Union Setback in the States,” *The Journal of Policy History* 19:3 (2007), 313-344.

was still an adamant opponent of the ecumenism of the Federal Council of Churches and its later iteration, the National Council of Churches. Fifield also operated on the conservative end of California Protestantism and overlapped in his political views with non-separatist, conservative evangelicals there. In one scholar's estimation, Spiritual Mobilization was thus the "religious equivalent of the American Liberty League in its program and in its membership," not fundamentalist in its theological affiliations but strongly conservative-libertarian in its politics. Fifield "successfully appealed to the corporate and educational elite who opposed the New Deal and its successors, and for more than two decades his Advisory Committee read like a who's who list of the conservative establishment."⁵⁵

As "the apostle to millionaires," as one friendly writer called Fifield, his church and organization drew in heavy support from various corporate figureheads. Dozens of businessmen and their families joined his downtown congregation during his tenure there, which by the late 1940s benefited from families moving to the bustling Los Angeles area. Fifield's church also looked and operated like a late twentieth century megachurch, offering dozens of programs and ministerial options to its upwardly-mobile congregation and visitors. Strongly opposed to the welfare state and New Deal, Spiritual Mobilization also served as a bridge between the corporate-backed fights of the 1930s and the anti-communist activism of the 1940s and 1950s. It lambasted theological liberals in American churches and seminaries not on their theology, but on their politics, namely their presumed antagonism toward free market capitalism. Likewise, it sought to empower all "Christian businessmen" to fight against incipient communism in all walks of life, whether in the churches, on the shop floor, or in the halls of political power. To Fifield, "the free market economy, informed with the moral and spiritual self-disciplines of

⁵⁵ Eckard V. Toy, "Faith and Freedom" in Ronald Lora and William Henry Longton, eds., *The Conservative Press in Twentieth-Century America* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1999), 154-161; Toy, "Spiritual Mobilization: The Failure of an Ultraconservative Ideal in the 1950's," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 61:2 (April 1970), 77-86.

stewardship, was the only known economic system consistent with Christian principles.” As such, it needed a phalanx of new corporate crusaders to defend it from presumably godless liberals and their equally godless state.

Such views attracted the support of James C. Ingebretsen, a lawyer and Congregational layman, who became Spiritual Mobilization’s president in the 1950s, and was instrumental in drawing financial support from various corporate outlets. James W. Clise, a Seattle businessman, was one of its first supporters and maintained an important fundraising role throughout the decade. Both small firms and large industrial corporations sent money. J. Howard Pew wrote checks, but so did various executives from Chrysler, Colgate-Palmolive-Peet, General Motors, Gulf Oil, Sears, Roebuck, and U.S. Steel. With their support, Spiritual Mobilization founded and ran a spiritual retreat in San Jacinto, California for business leaders and laymen. It also published *Faith and Freedom*, “a monthly magazine for individual liberty,” which Ingebretsen oversaw. By the late 1950s, Spiritual Mobilization was running into harder times, as more popular conservative groups in Southern California—such as Robert Welch’s secular-libertarian John Birch Society, Dr. Fred C. Schwarz’s ecumenical Christian Anti-Communist Crusade, and Billy James Hargis’s fundamentalist Christian Crusade—siphoned off support. Institutional direction over Spiritual Mobilization also fell apart as Ingebretsen befriended an experimental, libertarian mystic named Gerald Heard. With Fifield’s resignation in 1959 and Ingebretsen’s waffling about reigning in Heard’s explorations of psychological experience—which included experimentation with illicit drugs like LSD—funding dried up. Folding in the early 1960s, Spiritual Mobilization entered the dustbin of conservative history. Still, it served as an early example of business activism on behalf of conservative—if not quite

evangelical—forms of Protestantism in the Southern Rim.⁵⁶ So too did another of Spiritual Mobilization’s major contemporaries and competitors, the Christian Freedom Foundation (CFF).

CFF was the joint creation of industrialist ideologue J. Howard Pew, the positive thinking, liberal-in-theology Protestant Rev. Norman Vincent Peale, and conservative, mainstream Protestant businessman Howard E. Kershner. A Quaker and migrant from the rural Midwest to the northeast, Kershner became a successful businessman in the 1920s before shifting gears to write various diatribes against the New Deal. His view of Roosevelt was no less critical, citing him in one 1936 book as a “menace” who had prolonged the Depression with his policies. Together, Roosevelt and the New Deal were dual threats to democracy and free religious expression, both of which depended on “economic freedom.”⁵⁷ After fully retiring from business in 1939, Kershner spent nearly a decade in humanitarian work with refugees, serving on various wartime and postwar boards overseeing relief in Europe and elsewhere. In 1950, however, Kershner moved into politics, setting up the CFF to encourage and influence “as large a number of ministers as possible who will subscribe to the general concept of freedom in all its parts, which of course comprehends economic freedom as well as the others.” Religious freedom and economic freedom went hand in hand for Kershner, which made his statements on religion theologically vague, if affirmative of conservative Protestant views that generally endorsed—as stated on the masthead for CFF’s magazine *Christian Economics*—“the economic system with the least amount of government and the greatest amount of Christianity.” Mostly white, anti-pluralist, mainline Protestant clergymen held board positions on the CFF, and few in

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*; Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands*, 75-77.

⁵⁷ Howard E. Kershner, *The Menace of Roosevelt and His Policies* (New York: Greenberg, 1936). Kershner expanded on his free market ideas in the 1950s and 1960s, applying most of his same observations about the New Deal toward statist policies in general, particularly those in the Soviet Union and other communist states. In those decades, however, he added more explicit appeals to the religious sensibilities of his readers. See, for instance, both booklets like Kershner, *Socialism: Reversal of God’s Design* (Christian Freedom Foundation, 1960) and longer works like Kershner, *God, Gold, and Government: The Interrelationship of Christianity, Freedom, Self-Government, and Economic Well-being* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1957).

administrative roles were from the South and West. Likewise, most of the money for CFF and *Christian Economics* came from J. Howard Pew and his collaborators, most holding memberships in mainstream northern churches while adamantly opposing their theological modernism or ecumenism. Annual donations to Kershner's organization and magazine during the 1950s and early 1960s averaged \$300,000. Between 1958 and 1962, at CFF's highpoint, Kershner received well over one million dollars in donations from J. Howard Pew and his wife. Still, despite Kershner's northern and eastern ties, he was also personally and professionally linked to the conservative evangelical subculture of Southern California. Contributors to *Christian Economics* also came from there and, in the early 1960s, he served on the board of the conservative Fuller Theological Seminary. When Pew began to lose interest in *Christian Economics*, Kershner found a welcoming environment in California. James W. Fifield secured him an appointment at his church as a minister of "applied Christianity." In 1967, the editorial offices of *Christian Economics* moved permanently to Los Angeles and, in the early 1970s, it became a trend setter in attempting to address the concerns of conservative high school and college-age youth through a spin-off publication entitled *For Real*. Kershner stepped down as editor in 1972 to take a position as a visiting professor at the Texas branch of the conservative, free market Northwood Institute in Cedar Hill, Texas, which received heavy funding from evangelical Richard DeVos of Amway Corporation. Under the direction of Edward Rowe, *Christian Economics* was phased out, even while the CFF continued to receive new funding from DeVos and Ed McAteer, two important corporate backers of the emergent evangelical right of the 1970s.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Lichtman, *White Protestant Nation*, 173-174; Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, 206-207; Arnold Forster and Benjamin R. Epstein, *Danger on the Right: The Attitudes, Personnel, and Influence of the Radical Right and Extreme Conservatives* (New York: Random House, 1963), 276; Toy, "Christian Economics, 1950-1972," in Lora and Longton, *The Conservative Press in Twentieth-Century America*, 163-169.

The CAA, Spiritual Mobilization, and the CFF were not the only groups that blended evangelical or evangelically tinged forms of anti-New Deal politics. Still, they were the most prominent recipients of corporate help and certainly represented the various streams into which corporate dollars might flow. They were also hit-and-miss in their results. In fact, when viewed in retrospect, they did little to forward the cause of their corporate supporters on matters of state and economy in the early Cold War. Where these early organizations failed in stemming the New Deal heresy, however, other operatives and organizations would have more demonstrable success. The most notable of these groups were the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) and its foremost representative, a fiery anti-communist revivalist named Billy Graham.

Billy's Boosters

One of the most notable beneficiaries of corporate largesse was the postwar era's most prominent and important conservative evangelical—Billy Graham. Though certainly a national and international celebrity, Graham was a Southern Rim evangelist through and through, holding deep connections to its socio-economic context. Born in North Carolina and reared in the southern culture of conservative evangelicalism, Graham built most of his early career off crusades held in the South and West. Indeed, of the thirty-two urban revivals he conducted in the United States between 1949 and 1958, nineteen (59.4 percent) were in either South or West.⁵⁹ Many of Graham's backers for these crusades were either northern capitalists with economic links to the Southern Rim—businessmen like Pew—or Southern Rim boosters and businessmen.

⁵⁹ William G. McLoughlin, Jr., *Billy Graham: Revivalist in a Secular Age* (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1960), 147. According to McLoughlin, Graham also conducted “one [revival] in Toronto, Canada, and eight abroad. Several of these were tours covering wide areas, not centered in any one city. Such for example were his tour of New England in 1950 and his tours of Europe, Asia, Australia, and the Caribbean. Of his thirty-two revivals in the United States, nineteen took place in the South or West, six in the Far West, four in the East and three in the Midwest.”

Graham's appeal certainly related to his imitation of the Southern Rim's emergent corporate and political culture in organizing his evangelical mission and his celebration of the free enterprise system. But his appeal also came from what business leaders hoped to gain from an association with Graham. For corporate actors hoping to link the New Deal state with communism, Graham's evangelical emphasis on religious individualism approximated their own views about the proper relationship between faith, free enterprise, and personal freedom. Unlike others who trumpeted similar views but expressed distasteful personal politics or a tendency toward blatant racism or anti-Semitism, Graham sold himself as a respectable conservative—an evangelist for middle Americans. Though the goals of Graham and his boosters sometimes went unrealized, they nevertheless established a pattern. Well into the Sunbelt Age, corporate dollars would not be far from his evangelical enterprise.

Graham fit into a broad and dynamic network of corporate support for his brand of evangelicalism. In the late 1930s, a number of non-sectarian and non-separatist evangelical leaders collected around Harold John Ockenga, pastor of Boston's Park Street Church, and J. Elwin Wright, director of a New England association of evangelicals. Calling themselves the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) after first organizing in 1943, they generally endorsed Carl McIntire's fundamentalist theology while criticizing his aggressive rhetoric and emphasis on separatism. As the organizational center of "neo-evangelicalism," the NAE hoped to represent "a great unvoiced multitude of Christian people" who disliked the Federal Council of Churches' theological stance and its political support for the New Deal, but also did not agree with what they termed "contentious radicals" like McIntire. Helped by prominent radio preachers like Charles E. Fuller and Walter Maier, the NAE solicited members "regardless of race or nationality," even though only white evangelicals were allowed membership. Though

initially taking an apolitical stance, by 1950 the NAE had strong support from a network of conservative businessmen and began to call for “participation by Christians in political affairs and training of Christian young people for government.” It publicly opposed “all forms of communism, regardless of the name it masquerades under” and endorsed “competitive free enterprise and private ownership.” In a direct jab at both liberal forms of theology and statist modes of social reform or change, the NAE advocated that “Good things come out of a man’s heart only when cleansed (regenerated) by the saving faith in Christ and not out of a good council, a good planning board, nor a good tax.” Hence, the NAE opposed national health insurance, civil rights laws, and federal aid to education, while endorsing a balanced budget, anti-liquor laws, control over textbooks in public schools, and the regulation of television programming. Such collaborations between conservative business leaders and concerned evangelicals also helped initiate other attempts at swaying public opinion.⁶⁰

Graham kickstarted his career as an in-demand speaker for Youth for Christ (YFC), an organization which the NAE and its corporate backers strongly supported. In 1949, however, he burst out of the fundamentalist subculture and onto the national religious scene with a successful revival in the burgeoning metropolis of Los Angeles. Although he already stood on corporate scaffolding through his work with YFC, Graham’s close relationship with corporate figureheads began at that point.

A small group of Los Angeles businessmen, led by Clifford Smith, the president of Hollywood Togs, Inc., a California-based sportswear manufacturing company, laid the groundwork for Graham’s first crusade in the City of Angels. Smith and his associates had collaborated with local fundamentalist pastors for years, sponsoring annual tent revivals via their “Christ for Greater Los Angeles” committee. As the previous chapter noted, the religious

⁶⁰ Lichtman, *White Protestant Nation*, 123-127.

marketplace of Los Angeles was a crowded and pluralistic one in the late 1940s and, as such, Smith's revival meetings were generally lost in the crowd, attracting little publicity or public patronage. To address this problem, Smith pushed for a massive revival to be held in the fall of 1949 and attempted to garner support from the city's 1,000 Protestant congregations. Less than two hundred Protestant churches lent Smith their support, but a number of evangelical "country preacher" migrants from Oklahoma, Texas, and Arkansas drummed up support for Graham. Texas-born fundamentalist "Fighting" Bob Schuler, used his popular radio show to broadcast news about the revival on KGER, a Long Beach station owned by John Brown, a prominent fundamentalist and Arkansas businessman. A local YFC unit agreed to pray for Smith's revival, provide organizational support, and make arrangements for Graham's time in Los Angeles. From late September to late November, Smith's committee of business leaders worked along with local church leaders, YFC officials, Christian celebrities, Graham's revival "team," and other local evangelistic organizations to provide facilities, publicity, and financial support for the event. By revival's end, 350,000 people had attended or re-attended Graham's revival, 2,703 had made "decisions for Christ" and 1,475 had rededicated themselves to the tenets of ol' time religion.⁶¹

Though Smith was crucial for the initial shape of the Los Angeles revival, the explicit sponsorship of that city's most powerful and reclusive newspaper tycoon, William Randolph Hearst, helped make Graham's efforts in the City of Angels a turning point in twentieth-century evangelicalism. Hearst's involvement has entered the realm of legend, generally retold as an abrupt and unexpected decision made by Hearst to support the Los Angeles revival, summarized

⁶¹ William Martin, *A Prophet With Honor: The Billy Graham Story* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1991), 45-48, 51; Steven P. Miller, *Billy Graham and the Rise of the Republican South* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 15.

best by the pithy, to-the-point phrase he presumably wired to his editors: “Puff Graham.” In reality, Hearst’s support for Graham’s career had a back story.

Though not an evangelical himself, Hearst had shown interest in YFC for years, most likely because of its work fighting juvenile delinquency and emphasis on patriotism. In 1946, Hearst had instructed twenty-two of his newspapers to “Puff YFC” via full-page stories of the organization’s rallies in the nation’s largest cities. (That these rallies attracted nearly a million people complemented Hearst’s goals to sell newspapers as well.) Later, when Graham set his sights on Los Angeles, Hearst provided support through banner headlines in his *Los Angeles Examiner* and *Herald*, as well as in twelve other newspapers. The arrangements for this publicity had come through YFC leader Roy McKeown and R. A. Carrington, the *Examiner*’s publisher, who had gained permission from Hearst to cover and publicize the revival’s events. Within a few days, the Associated Press, the United Press, and the International News Service followed with stories of their own. Shortly thereafter, national news magazines *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *Life* printed in-depth features on Graham’s revivals. Ironically, Graham never met Hearst in person and, well after the conclusion of the L.A. revival, remained unsure why Hearst had granted his early career such coverage. “I suppose I could have met him,” he told an interviewer in 1987, “but I never thought he would see a person like me at that time.” Hearst’s popularization of Graham nevertheless catapulted the revivalist on the national and international stage.⁶²

Hearst’s support for Graham was neither uncommon nor inexplicable. With Hearst and other business leaders, Graham enjoyed a reciprocal relationship, one that served to advance the interests of both parties, especially in the dawning years of the Cold War and in the midst of the

⁶² Martin, *A Prophet With Honor*, 94-95, 117-118, n636.

Southern Rim's economic surge. As William McLoughlin, an early biographer of Graham, noted in 1960:

Billy Graham is equally committed to the belief that Christianity and capitalism, like conversion and success, are inseparably linked and that one cannot exist without the other. When Graham speaks of "the American way of life" he has in mind the same combination of political and economic freedom that the National Association of Manufacturers, the United States Chamber of Commerce, and the *Wall Street Journal* do when they use the phrase. And because the Democratic party has, since the 1890's, attacked Big Business and Wall Street and called for government regulation of the economic system in the interests of the general welfare, Graham, like the majority of American Protestant ministers, has cast his influence upon the side of the Republicans (or, in the South, the conservative Democrats).

But Graham's gospel appealed to businessmen and business-friendly conservatives alike for more specific reasons as well. Though a Democrat, a political affiliation he would maintain throughout his career, Graham was not quite a New Dealer. He attacked labor unions and strikers, arguing that both unnecessarily undercut productivity and upset the social order. He argued against "government restrictions," which destroyed "the God-given 'freedom of opportunity'" that the business-built "American way of life" afforded. He conflated unionism, socialism, atheism, and communism, arguing that one was the same as another. In short, Graham affirmed the entrepreneurial ethos of free enterprise, tempered by an evangelical appreciation for the influence of the Bible on daily life. As he noted in an essay he wrote for *Nation's Business* in 1954, "We have the suggestion from the Scripture itself that faith and business, properly blended, can be a happy, wholesome and even profitable mixture." Challenging both common business practice and evangelical trepidation toward mixing sacred and secular, Graham argued that, "Too long have many helped the idea that religion should be detached from life, something aloof and apart. . . . Thousands of businessmen have discovered the satisfaction of having God as a working partner. It puts integrity into their organizations, sincerity into their sales, and

spiritual and monetary profits into their hearts and pockets.” These views were not coincidental. “More than anything else,” McLoughlin believed, “his close association with some of the conservative Christian businessmen who supported his campaigns . . . crystallized his views on politics and economics.”⁶³

Most importantly, Graham’s strident anti-communism helped him to build alliances with evangelical and non-evangelical business leaders alike, while simultaneously tying his religious, political, and economic sentiments together and granting his message and ministry a sense of immediacy. Attuned to the public and political concerns of a nation living in the shadow of the Soviet bomb and in the midst of McCarthy-era suspicions, Graham regularly injected his views about communism in the midst of his sermons. “Scarcely one of his Sunday afternoon sermons over a nine-year period has failed to touch on communism[,]” noted an early biographer, “and in his regular revival sermons he constantly refers to it to illustrate his doctrinal points.”⁶⁴ In an emotionally-charged revival atmosphere, his treatment of the subject could be particularly aggressive. Under the tent in Los Angeles, Graham declared that “Communism is not only an economic interpretation of life—Communism is a religion that is inspired, directed, and motivated by the Devil himself who has declared war against Almighty God.” He reiterated such alarmist messages throughout the 1950s, calling Americans in general, and the American business community in particular, to consider evangelicalism as a powerful weapon against

⁶³ McLoughlin, *Billy Graham*, 97-102, 109; Billy Graham, “God Before Gold,” *Nation’s Business*, (September, 1954)34-35, 55-56. Graham’s views on the mixture of free enterprise and faith changed little over his career. In 1969, *Nation’s Business* printed another essay by Graham on such matters. Although Graham had changed his mind on matters of civil rights, foreign policy, and youth delinquency, his views on the religious underpinnings of economic success remained firm. As he wrote: “For the best blueprint of government or business ethics, go to your New Testament. . . . Call it what you will, a divine policy paper, a memo from the Big Boss, a heaven-sent management manual, every citizen can use it.” See Graham, “The Answer to Corruption,” *Nation’s Business* (September, 1969), 49.

⁶⁴ This is according to an “early biographer” of Graham, quoted in Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 79. This biographer was most likely William McLoughlin.

international communism. As he averred in the conservative magazine *The American Mercury* in 1954, the postwar era would be defined by “a battle to the death” between communism and Christ, with the nation in need of defense by a citizenry devoted to “old-fashioned Americanism, . . . conservative and Evangelical Christianity, . . . prayer, . . . genuine spiritual revival, . . . [and] personal Christian experience.”⁶⁵ Everyday Americans, through conversion to new forms of conservative evangelicalism and renewed appreciation for the entrepreneurial spirit of American business, might secure the future of the nation.

With both his central message of personal salvation and attendant endorsements of a national mission against communism, Graham developed a particular appeal among both American business leaders and those most attracted to his form of respectable fundamentalism, the burgeoning middle-class, white collar workers that flocked to his revivals both inside and outside the Southern Rim. In some ways, this appeal was cultivated by the person of Billy Graham himself. As Herbert Weiner, writing in *Commentary* magazine in 1957, observed, Graham was a symbol of “a peculiarly American brand of evangelism . . . It seeks the friendship of all political parties, supports all churches, bids for the good will of intellectuals and refuses to have anything to do with bigotry.” A British member of one crusade team was more direct, describing Graham as “evangelism become respectable.” Graham cultivated this aura of respectability through both his style of dress, grooming, and presentation and his personal, professional, and political affixations. He intentionally downplayed the cultural trappings of previous generations of sawdust trail revivalists. As a writer for *Time* noted about Graham shortly after the Los Angeles revival, “Graham and his enthusiasm looked disturbingly like something out of Hollywood. His sharply-cut, double-breasted suits and high-decibel ties . . .

⁶⁵ Martin, *A Prophet With Honor*, 115; Billy Graham, “Satan’s Religion,” *The American Mercury* (August, 1954), 41, 45-46.

were a smooth contrast to the rumpled homespun approach of the old school.”⁶⁶ Of course, Graham worked in the spirit of revivalists D. L. Moody and Billy Sunday, both of whom added business acumen and corporate cool to the world of evangelical revivalism. Working in the postwar context, however, Graham’s efforts were more than historical repetition. They were necessary for appealing to the businessmen and women who attended his revivals, served on ministerial boards with him, and provided the financial network of support for his national and international crusades. Looking, sounding, and working like a businessman made Graham the business world’s evangelist.

Graham’s self-made, feature-length evangelical films also illustrated his tendency to affirm those who affirmed him. For instance, after making Graham’s acquaintance in 1951, Russell Maguire, the holder of the Thompson machine gun fortune and financier for the right-wing magazine *The American Mercury*, also helped get Graham’s film industry off the ground. Initially, Maguire offered Graham a blank check for his film ministry. Graham rejected the offer, reportedly telling Maguire that he could not accept it on the grounds that his “ministry [would] take a nosedive” if his contributors knew “there’s a rich man underwriting my work.” Still, Graham agreed to a limited donation of \$75,000 from Maguire, which he put towards funding his blossoming film business and two films in particular—*Mr. Texas* (1951) and *Oiltown, U.S.A* (1953).⁶⁷

Both films were conversion narratives situated in the mythical counterpart to the developing Sunbelt—a frontier West of rugged individualists who embodied the risk-taking, cowboy capitalism of both eras. Graham described the former film as “the first Christian

⁶⁶ Herbert Weiner, “Billy Graham: Respectable Evangelism,” *Commentary* (September, 1957), 262; “Heaven, Hell & Judgment Day,” *Time* (March 20, 1950), 72-73.

⁶⁷ Marshall Frady, *Billy Graham: A Parable of American Righteousness* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1979), 230-231; “Trouble for the Mercury,” *Time* (December 8, 1952), 42; Roger Bruns, *Billy Graham: A Biography* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2003), 46; Martin, *A Prophet With Honor*, 139-140.

Western,” a melodramatic tale of rancher Jim Tyler, who *Time* magazine described as “a pleasure-loving lad, overfond of broncho-riding [*sic*], cattle, land and oil”—who accepts Christ after being hospitalized from a “bad spill from a broncho [*sic*].” Shot on location in Fort Worth, Texas and premiered at the Hollywood Bowl before an audience of 25,000 and a collection of directors and studio executives that included Cecil B. DeMille, *Mr. Texas* was cinematically amateurish. Reviewers panned it. Searching for a compliment after Graham asked for his honest opinion, British filmmaker J. Arthur Rank deemed it “not a technically good film but the message comes across.” The message was one of evangelical conversion, to be sure. But it also reinterpreted a seminal icon in Cold War culture: the rugged, do-it-yourself cowboy. In Graham’s re-imagining, the cowboy was not like most early Cold War cowboys depicted onscreen. Tyler was not the melodramatic, brooding, conflicted cowboy depicted in such postwar Hollywood blockbusters as *Duel in the Sun*, *High Noon*, *Broken Arrow*, and *Shane*. Neither was he a copy-cat of cowboys presented in films like *My Darling Clementine* and *Red River*—a rugged individualist driven into “open markets subject to penetration by the swashbuckling entrepreneur.” Rather, Tyler navigated his West with God as his sidekick, exuding optimism as he proclaimed, “All my life . . . I been ridin’ the wrong trail. I’m turnin’ back. I’m goin’ God’s way—I think it’s goin’ to be a wonderful ride.”⁶⁸ Tyler’s conversion saved him from both fear and anxiety and reassured him in his quest to conquer the West. In Christ, both cowboys of the early Cold War found redemption.

⁶⁸ *Mr. Texas* (1951); “First Christian Western,” *Time* (October 8, 1951) 107; Sam Kashner and Jennifer MacNair, *The Bad and the Beautiful: Hollywood in the Fifties* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2003), 123-124. That the cowboy experienced both a revised identity and renewed popularity in American film and fiction in the decade after World War II is indisputable. Nearly twenty-five percent of all films made between 1946 and 1956 were Westerns. On the anxious cowboy of the early Cold War, see Thomas H. Pauly, “The Cold War Western,” *Western Humanities Review* 33:3 (Summer, 1979), 256-273; On the “free market” ethos and the cowboy film after World War II, see Stanley Corkin, *Cowboys as Cold Warriors: The Western and U.S. History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004), 4, 19-50; James Gilbert, *Men in the Middle: Searching for Masculinity in the 1950s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 130-132.

If *Mr. Texas* was an oblique salute to forms of Cold War redemption via moral know-how and manly entrepreneurialism, then *Oiltown, U.S.A.* was, according to Peter W. Williams, “an undisguised celebration of Texas-style capitalism.” In *Oiltown, U.S.A.*, a ruthless oil millionaire from Houston named Les Channing converts to evangelical Christianity and decides to rededicate himself to God’s work. Ads promoted it as “the story of the free-enterprise system of America, the story of the development and use of God-given natural resources by men who have built a great new empire.” As with *Mr. Texas*, critics panned the film. Local churches, however, used *Oiltown, U.S.A.*, along with *Mr. Texas*, as tools for evangelism. “Amateurish as they were,” noted Graham biographer William Martin, “those first films proved so popular with church audiences that Graham used them to launch a reasonably successful series of films.” Indeed, throughout the 1950s and 1960s, successive contributions went toward Graham’s film production studio—World Wide Productions, headquartered in Burbank, California—and other creative efforts. Sid Richardson, a wildcat Texas oil baron and nominal evangelical who some speculated was another inspiration for *Oiltown, U.S.A.*’s lead character, contributed undetermined amounts to Graham, for use in various outlets. The televised version of Graham’s *Hour of Decision* depended on a \$50,000 gift from two wealthy, anonymous Texas supporters. Overall, however, such financial contributions rarely turned into money well spent since most of Graham’s early experiments with mass media had limited appeal outside of evangelical circles. Still, they put Graham in close proximity with powerful and well-connected individuals, allowing him access to the halls of corporate and political power in ways he might not have otherwise enjoyed. Plus, they illustrated another common aspect of Graham’s ministerial model in the 1950s, one that he would more fully develop in the 1960s and afterwards. Graham did not generally refuse support when he could get it, regardless of whether it came from evangelical or

non-evangelical elites. As Graham remarked during a 1952 crusade, “I’m appealing to a higher-type social strata.”⁶⁹

In tandem with the NAE, endeavors like the non-profit Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) and Graham’s evangelical news magazine, *Christianity Today* (CT), also evidenced such appeals. The BGEA started in 1950 to handle a problem unintentionally created by two Texas businessmen and their fervor for Graham’s ministry. Accounts vary, but most affirm that, while Graham raised funds for a radio ministry, Bill Mead—a wealthy Lubbock bakery owner—and Howard Butt, Jr.—a supermarket tycoon known as “God’s Groceryman” who spoke at several revivals—donated an undetermined amount of money to Graham, stuffed in a shoebox and given to him during a crusade in Portland, Oregon. To handle such contributions, Graham consulted with George Wilson, a friend and revival associate, and set up the BGEA as a clearing house for future donations.

During the 1950s and afterwards, the BGEA became one of the most well-organized and efficiently run non-profit corporations in the nation. Millions of dollars went through BGEA’s offices and out to various parts of Graham’s ministry, from revivals to mass media to foreign missions. Graham believed that the BGEA needed the oversight of natural managers; as such, businessmen regularly sat on the BGEA’s board along with prominent evangelical figureheads and preachers. In 1959, for instance, several corporate figureheads—Roger Hull (the executive V.P. of Mutual Life Insurance), E. O. Spencer (a Mississippi oilman and hotel owner), Charles Pitts (a Canadian contractor)—doubled their time between their own boardrooms and BGEA’s offices in Minneapolis. Managers in the BGEA home office interlinked with Christian businessmen serving on local BGEA boards. These local boards most often consisted of local

⁶⁹ *Oiltown, U.S.A* (1953); William Martin, *A Prophet with Honor*, 140, 306; Peter W. Williams, *Popular Religion in America: Symbolic Change and the Modernization Process in Historical Perspective* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 202; Frady, *Billy Graham*, 231-232.

businessmen or members of businessmen's clubs such as the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, or Lions Clubs. Most local businessmen, as the *Houston Post* noted in 1952, "became interested because of its importance as a civic function." But they could also consist of big-time business leaders who were not merely big fish in a small pond but big fish in general. This continued into the 1960s and 1970s, as Graham's revivals became spectacular events. As an example, consider the men serving on the board for his 1969 crusade at Madison Square Garden. Several "pillars of the business establishment" worked to bring Graham to save the city of New York from what they saw as its "spiritual poverty." Led by Roger Hull, a coalition of New York business and ecclesiastical leaders served on the recruitment board, including George Champion (chairman of Chase Manhattan Bank), Elmer W. Engstrom (president of RCA), and W. Maxey Jarman (head of Genesco). Then as in years prior, the BGEA worked much like a typical corporation, specializing labor, maximizing efficiency, streamlining money flows, and ensuring a steady supply of both contributors and customers.⁷⁰

Perhaps no other Graham-related organization or outlet for conservative evangelicalism, however, depended on corporate largesse like *Christianity Today* (*CT*). In 1953, Graham began considering the possibility of a "strong, hard-hitting intellectual magazine" that would challenge the more liberal theological and social message of *The Christian Century*, then the most popular Christian magazine in print and one of the only Protestant magazines quoted by secular writers and journalists. The board of trustees was a veritable who's who of major players in postwar evangelical America, including preachers and writers like Graham, Dr. L. Nelson Bell, Paul Rees, and Harold Ockenga, with businessmen like J. Howard Pew, Howard E. Butt, Jr., and W. Maxey Jarman. Together, the board appointed Carl F. H. Henry as *CT*'s first editor. A

⁷⁰ "God's Groceryman," *Time* (April 26, 1954), 86; Martin, *A Prophet With Honor*, 135-136; McLoughlin, *Billy Graham*, 160, 163-164; Joe E. Barnhart, *The Billy Graham Religion* (Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1972), 182.

prominent evangelical writer, theologian, professor, and co-founder of Fuller Theological Seminary, Henry wanted to marry conservative evangelicalism and intellectualism through *CT*, envisioning it as an outlet for “apply[ing] the Biblical revelation vigorously to the contemporary social crisis, by presenting the implications of the Gospel message in every area of life.” Pew and Jarman’s money backed Henry and the rest of *CT*’s editorial staff up in the late 1950s and early 1960s.⁷¹

Graham’s magazine benefited from Pew’s contributions and involvement and, in turn, mirrored Pew’s take on matters of public religion and policy. Already a backer of Spiritual Mobilization and CFF, Pew had a history of backing like-minded spiritual organizations. Graham actively recruited Pew’s help, writing him in 1955 to consider supporting *CT* because “[it] could change the entire course of the American Protestant Church. . . . Instead of being liberal, like so many are, it will be conservative, evangelical, and anti-Communist.” “I sincerely believe [*CT*],” Graham continued, “is the greatest possible investment an American businessman can make in the Kingdom of God at this moment.” Apparently convinced by Graham’s hard sell, Pew pledged \$150,000 and assured Graham and other members of the founding committee that he was “prepared to underwrite the costs for the first year—so that in any event there will be no problem as to the organization expenses.” To keep up impressions that *CT* was a popular magazine disconnected from corporate interests, Pew funneled the money through Harold Ockenga’s church fund and the BGEA, both of which then made a direct donation to *CT*. Other

⁷¹ Douglas A. Sweeney, “*Christianity Today*,” in P. Mark Fackler and Charles H. Lippy, eds., *Popular Religious Magazines of the United States* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1995), 144-151; John Pollack, *Billy Graham: The Authorized Biography* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 171; Garth M. Rosell, *The Surprising Work of God: Harold John Ockenga, Billy Graham, and the Rebirth of Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 208; Philip Jenkins, *The Cold War at Home: The Red Scare in Pennsylvania, 1945-1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 179; J. Philip Wogaman, “Truth and Power: Reflections on the Graham Enigma,” in Michael G. Long, ed., *The Legacy of Billy Graham: Critical Reflections on America’s Greatest Evangelist* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2008), 94-95.

backers—such as the free market Volker Fund of Missouri and W. Maxey Jarman, an evangelical and shoe manufacturing magnate from Nashville—contributed in similar ways.⁷²

CT quickly met its goal to become the most prominent Protestant publication of its day. Under Henry's editorial lead *CT* easily eclipsed *The Christian Century's* circulation within a year. By 1957, it reported paid subscriptions of 43,000 and an estimated circulation of 120,000 to 130,000, a number that continued to grow to more than 170,000 by the time of Henry's departure in 1968.⁷³ Coinciding with its rising popularity during the 1960s, *CT* also expanded its intellectual inquiries toward new forms of "the contemporary social crisis," serving as both a religious publication and political mouthpiece. Social and economic conservatism blended in many of *CT's* articles. This was in keeping with both Pew's take on such matters ("You cannot take life and divide it into separate compartments—one for your Christianity, another for your economics, another for your social relations, etc.") and Graham's opinion ("Faith in the Scriptures and the centrality of the cross . . . also affects the political and social outlook tremendously."). Thus, Graham assured Pew that neither Henry nor any other *CT* editor would "allow anything to appear in the magazine [on theology] that will conflict with our views on economics and socialism." Still, Henry balked at granting Pew absolute control over *CT's* published material, refusing to allow Pew to review proofs of the magazine's issues. Despite this hot-blooded debate between Pew and Henry (one that left both suspicious of the other for years), *CT* more or less catered to Graham's religious views and Pew's political sensibilities until the industrialist soured on the publication and withdrew his support from it in 1964. Articles

⁷² Lichtman, *White Protestant Nation*, 215-216

⁷³ Estimates on exact subscriptions in the late 1950s and 1960s vary, although most fall somewhere around the numbers cited above. Frank W. Price, "Christianity Today: An Appraisal," *Christianity and Crisis* (October 27, 1958), 148-151; Phyllis E. Alsdurf, "Evangelicalism and the Presidential Election of 1960: The 'Catholic Question' in *Christianity Today* Magazine," in Lynn Schofield Clark, ed., *Religion, Media, and the Marketplace* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 194, n5; Timothy George, "Henry, Carl Ferdinand Howard (1913—)," in Timothy Larsen, ed., *Biographical Dictionary of Evangelicals* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2003), 198.

regularly supported conservative religious and political positions throughout the 1960s and early 1970s. Like Graham, *CT*'s contributors also placed their faith in the political character of conservative Republican Richard M. Nixon during both the 1968 and 1972 Presidential elections, a decision that both Graham and *CT*'s staff came to regret.⁷⁴

On matters of religion proper, most contributors also criticized liberal or critical perspectives, reiterating conservative views on personal salvation, biblical inerrancy and authority, the Virgin Birth and incarnation, atonement, and the bodily resurrection of Christ. *CT* fused these theologies to a sense of American exceptionalism, patriotism, anti-communism, and militarism. In addition, various articles lambasted liberal clergy for intermixing liberal politics and religion, lauded Austrian economists like Friedrich von Hayek and monetarist economists like Milton Friedman, insisted on “voluntarism and [the limitation of] government to a police function,” criticized the “pay-offs, threats, black-mail, violence and disruptions” of labor unions, pushed for the replacement of “inherently anti-Christian” forms of “welfare-statism” with voluntary charity and personal philanthropy, and warned that public welfare programs “saps individual initiative, increases the size and cost of sustaining bureaucracy [and] . . . at least assures some form of totalitarian control that spells the death of democracy.” To be sure, by the late 1970s and early 1980s, *CT*'s primary message diversified as its older founders gave way to a newer group of editors and a wider variety of evangelical thinkers. Less ardently conservative writers—such as Ron Sider—gained space in *CT* for their own reflections on the structural underpinnings of social problems like poverty, environmental decline, and economic inequality. Still, its most vocal constituency—and most common customers—remained generally right-

⁷⁴ For more on the personal and professional disagreements between Pew and Henry, see Carl F. H. Henry, *Confessions of a Theologian: An Autobiography* (Waco: Word Books, 1986), 160-163; Lichtman, *White Protestant Nation*, 216-217.

wing, a direct after-effect of its long history of bringing together the mutual interests of publicly-engaged religious and business conservatives.⁷⁵

As Graham crisscrossed the nation with his stadium-filling crusades, he demonstrated the emerging centrality of religio-economic formulations. Though a trendsetter in more ways than one, he was hardly the only conservative evangelical who demonstrated the importance of corporate leaders and organizations for defending the “American way of life” against communism. Business leaders were also active—and enthusiastic—about fighting for the souls of Cold War youth via two important postwar evangelical institutions: the independent evangelical college and the “parachurch” ministry. Both emerged as models for social and political engagement because of the business leaders who took an interest in them. Likewise, they demonstrated distinct collusions between grassroots evangelical drives to fight the Cold War on evangelical terms and draw in corporate support for that endeavor.

The Right Education

Independent colleges had been a growing part of the evangelical subculture since the late nineteenth century. As American universities and colleges moved away from religious curricula and embraced what historian George Marsden has called “established nonbelief,” conservative evangelicals founded dozens of small colleges devoted to training students in an environment that blended religious training with formal education in the humanities, sciences, or other disciplines common at their secular counterparts.

⁷⁵ Kenneth W. Shipps, “*Christianity Today* (1956—)” in Lora and Longton, eds., *The Conservative Press in Twentieth-Century America*, 171-180; Increasingly frustrated that *CT* acted more like a “forum” instead of a “organ” for his conservative views, Pew decided to pull out support for it in 1964. He did not fully get out of the religious education business, however. Three years later, he provided support for the founding of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, with Harold Ockenga acting as President. It began operations as a relatively conservative Presbyterian seminary in 1969. See Mary Sennholz, *Faith and Freedom: A Biographical Sketch of a Great American, John Howard Pew* (Grove City: Grove City College, 1975), 154-156.

The exact degree of engagement between these schools and the secular world varied. Some, such as BIOLA in Los Angeles or Bob Jones University in eastern Tennessee (relocated to Greenville, South Carolina in 1947 at the behest of the local Chamber of Commerce, no less) retained a fundamentalist suspicion of outside influences, and thus limited student exposure to the broader social or political world, deeming it too sinful to be redeemed or too dangerous for student morality. Others, such as Wheaton College outside Chicago, fit into another strand of modern evangelicalism, training students primarily in evangelical theological principles and encouraging them to mimic the NAE and BGEA, engaging with broader American culture as neo-evangelicals.

Other independent evangelical colleges also acted as institutional centers for the anti-communist alliance between corporate actors and conservative evangelicals, but united theological training to a pragmatic, public curriculum intended to transform students into individual crusaders for evangelicalism and capitalism. Not only that, they aimed at duplicating their programs for personal, practical, and political transformation among the American public. In short, they had a “do it all” approach toward fighting the Cold War: bring in big money and use it in any way feasible to forward public education about the conservative evangelical response to the communist threat.

Since they were often recent start-ups with a distinct, right-wing bent to either their theological or political orientation, these evangelical colleges depended heavily upon regular donations from sympathetic private interests. Though donors from inside various denominations or churches certainly contributed to their coffers, more often than not support came disproportionately from corporate sources as big business found common ground with the anti-communist programs and evangelistic crusades originating at Southern Rim schools like Harding

College and George Pepperdine College. These two institutions had small enrollments of only a few thousand students. But they were remarkably important, not only because of their ability to attract corporate contributions but also because of their disproportionate impact on uniting evangelical and economic conservatism during the early Cold War.

Founded in Searcy, Arkansas in 1924 as a denominational school for the relatively conservative Churches of Christ, Harding College became an important center for postwar anti-communism and corporate support for evangelical operations. It moved towards this new standing after George S. Benson, a former missionary to China and ardent anti-New Dealer, became the college's president in 1936. Benson collected financial support and big business support for the school and its conservative educational platform throughout his presidency, which lasted until 1965. His connections to corporate America started early. In 1939, business executives in Arkansas provided the first backing for a series of lectures held at Harding that promoted free market ideology and "Christian Americanism." The next year, speakers were a who's who list of American business leaders: Sterling Morton, director the U.S. Chamber of Commerce; Colonel Robert S. Henry, an associate to J.J. Pelly, president of the American Association of Railroads; Montgomery Ward's Raymond H. Fogler, and James L. Kraft, president of Kraft-Pheonix Cheese Corporation.

A year later, in 1941, Benson developed the National Education Program (NEP) to promote among Americans young and old the importance of "faith in God, Constitutional government and the private ownership of the tools of production." Through NEP, Benson decisively moved the college's beyond its previously narrow focus on theological training. In addition, the NEP attracted the attention and support of numerous business elites who, like Benson, envisioned the alliance of the Christian faith with the tenets of free market enterprise as

the solution to America's Cold War challenges. During World War II, Benson kept up a grueling national tour of speaking engagements, drumming up support for Harding and the NEP from sympathetic business leaders. Sterling Morton, president of Morton Salt Corporation, gave money to Harding for the purchase of a farm adjacent to the campus, while undetermined amounts also came in from representatives at DuPont, General Motors, Standard Oil, U.S. Steel, Bethlehem Steel, Republic Steel, Armco Steel, International Harvester, and Quaker Oats. Their contributions granted Benson a financial foundation to transform NEP into a fixture in postwar conservative culture. By the early 1960s, observed Benson biographer L. Edward Hicks, "Harding College and NEP had become almost synonymous with free-enterprise education and anti-Communist propaganda in America."⁷⁶

In the 1950s, Harding and NEP added another program for the cause of religious and economic conservatism—the Freedom Forums. These forums held goals similar to the NEP, namely to legitimize and spread "Americanism," an evangelical-inflected version of Christian morality that reaffirmed limited government and free market capitalism as sacrosanct. Ironically, for all their antagonism toward government, the Freedom Forums grew out of a wartime government program called the Advertising Council. A coalition of advertising agencies, the Advertising Council drummed up support for the war effort in Europe and the Pacific. After war's end, its chairman, advertising tycoon Don Belding, wanted a peacetime version to continue "a nationwide seminar to attract business, industrial and professional leaders to discuss the basic internal problems of America," with the goal of "plan[ning] an educational campaign to reach the public." Knowledgeable and supportive of the NEP, Belding met with Benson in Los Angeles in 1948 to pitch the idea. With Benson's endorsement, the first Freedom Forum

⁷⁶ Previous two paragraphs from L. Edward Hicks, *"Sometimes in the Wrong, but Never in Doubt": George S. Benson and the Education of the New Religious Right* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1994), 21-22, 30, 45-46, 72.

occurred at the Harding campus the next year. Though open to the public and attended by labor leaders, leading educators, and clergymen from various denominations, the Freedom Forums tended to attract corporate executives and middle managers—along with their generous donations. Over the next fifteen years, over 3,600 executives from over one thousand companies and organizations attended Benson’s Freedom Forums.⁷⁷

With the money brought in by the Freedom Forums and Benson’s fundraising, the NEP expanded its outreach in the 1950s. A wide array of anti-communist printed material and films flooded the public sphere, making Harding College “perhaps the most prolific center of aggressive anti-Communist propaganda in the United States.” Benson’s films were particularly effective, primarily because of their high quality. With funding from the Sloan Foundation, the philanthropic outlet of former GM chairman Alfred P. Sloan, and Pittsburgh’s Falk Foundation, Benson produced ten animated cartoons, all created under the direction of John Southerland, a former Disney Studios executive. Via an agreement with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, they were distributed in more than 15,000 movie houses and seen by an estimated thirty-five million people. The titles of these films were illustrative. Most seemed best-fitted for a civics or economics class:

Make Mine Freedom. Or, Curing Political Ills
Going Places—Profit Motive and Free Enterprise
Meet King Joe—King of the World’s Workers
Why Play Leap Frog?—When Wages and Prices Rise
Albert in Blunderland—Free America vs. the Police State
Living Under Economic Controls
Dear Uncle—Taxes, Taxes, Taxes

One, however, did blend Benson’s evangelical conservatism with his economic conservatism. Entitled *The Devil and John Q*, according to the film’s description, the story went as follows: “Lucifer joins forces with the international conspiracy of Communism in order to destroy the

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 52-54.

United States. The strategy recommended by Lucifer is for the Communists to keep trouble brewing in Asia and Europe and for the Devil to go to work on the United States from the inside.” Lucifer’s key weapon is inflation, and “He is reasonably successful until John Q. Public sets out on a crusade to explain the fallacies of sky-rocketing prices, unlimited credit and ever diminishing purchasing power.” As with other films, this one called for a vigorous, engaged citizenry, committed to fighting the religio-economic war that conservatives intended to wage against the heresies of the state. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, such films gained play on over half the nation’s television stations, with over 6.7 million receiving instruction in their anti-communist message. By 1964, the NEP had produced over fifty high-quality films, most costing millions of dollars garnered from Benson’s widespread network of corporate supporters. One film—*Communism on the Map*—became a staple in American schools, service, clubs, industrial, plants and political forums. A journalist at the time estimated that over fifteen million Americans had seen this single production, a testament to Benson’s broad reach.⁷⁸

Both the NEP films and Benson’s writings on the topic of faith and free enterprise attracted widespread interest. Benson’s materials could be found among 1,500 industrial organizational newspapers and in 40,000 homes by 1952. The NEP even sold thousands of its films and printed materials to the U.S. armed forces. Benson also wanted junior high and high school civics teachers to gain from the NEP’s materials. Accordingly, he pushed a standardized education program in “Americanism.” Millions of high school students watched or read Benson’s anti-communist materials as a part of their weekly routines in the early 1950s as thousands of school districts used NEP services. In Los Angeles, over 750,000 high school

⁷⁸ Previous two paragraphs from *Ibid.*, 57, 65-68, 77; Harold V. Knight, “Whooping It Up for Adam Smith,” *The Nation* (August 2, 1952), 87-89; Mark Sherwin, *The Extremists* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1963), 96-99; Also see Lori Lyn Bogle, *The Pentagon’s Battle for the American Mind: The Early Cold War* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004), 150-152.

students received Americanism education, while the NEP developed custom-made programs for schools throughout Texas and in metropolitan San Francisco. Through the Extension Service Film Library of the University of California, approximately 200,000 used Benson's films in six western states. To supplement these mass media crusades against communism, Benson and the NEP began the Summer Youth Seminars in 1955. Operating like a microcosm of Harding College's curriculum, these seminars chose students "because of their ability," according to NEP guidelines. "At Harding," the guidelines continued, "they engage in a concentrated study and discussion of the American way of life contrasted to other political systems of the world." Along with similar "Citizenship Seminars" at Oklahoma Christian College in Oklahoma City, the summer program attracted 100 to 250 students each year. The goal was similar to all of Benson's programs for youth: training students to consider how faith and free enterprise were powerful weapons for the crusade against communism at home and encouraging them to engage in this crusade with the training that NEP offered.⁷⁹

Another independent evangelical college that affiliated and sponsored the NEP, as well as exemplified the confluence of corporate support, conservative evangelicalism, and anti-communism was Harding's sister institution in Southern California, George Pepperdine College (also known as Pepperdine College and, later, Pepperdine University). Located in the south-central Los Angeles community of Watts, the school was the pinnacle of its namesake's career. In 1909, just a few years after the world's first automobiles hit the road, George Pepperdine founded the Western Auto Supply Company. After enjoying early success as a mail-order supplier based in Pepperdine's native Kansas City in the 1910s and 1920s, Western Auto had expanded into over two hundred stores by the early 1930s, growing into a \$35 million per year enterprise by 1936. By then, Pepperdine had moved his base of operations to Los Angeles and

⁷⁹ Hicks, *Sometimes in the Wrong, but Never in Doubt*, 65-68.

there, he decided to open a Christian college.⁸⁰ During the university's dedication address, Pepperdine expressed his ardent belief that his gift of one million dollars to the college would not be wasted. "I believe the greatest contribution I can possible make to the coming generation," he averred, "is to establish and endow an institution of higher learning where Christian living . . . is stressed." Via investments in securities and upscale Hollywood real estate, Pepperdine promised to assign the university further income from his philanthropic organization, the George Pepperdine Foundation. In doing so, Pepperdine believed he would be helping "young men and women to prepare themselves for a life of usefulness in this competitive world, and to help them build a foundation of Christian character and faith which will survive the storms of life."⁸¹

After 1939, Pepperdine's fortune began to dry up due to significant downturns in the automobile market in the 1940s and a series of poor business decisions. By 1950, Pepperdine gave court testimony that he was bankrupt, with personal assets worth less than one dollar.⁸² This created a crisis for the college's administration. Batsell Baxter, a former president of the conservative Abilene Christian College and Pepperdine's first president, had used the original million-dollar endowment to keep Pepperdine operating through the latter years of the Depression and his successor, Hugh Tiner, continued to do the same through the 1940s. In addition to the endowment, high enrollments and G.I. tuition payments helped the school survive into the early 1950s. Still, alternative sources of revenue became necessary for keeping the doors open. A new president—M. Norvel Young—would oversee the pursuit of such funding after his appointment in 1957. Young had solid credentials as a conservative in matters of

⁸⁰ "New Colleges," *Time* (June 14, 1937), 48, 50; "George Pepperdine" in Richard Thomas Hughes and R.L. Roberts, eds., *The Churches of Christ* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001), 278-279.

⁸¹ George Pepperdine, "The Original Founder's Day Address, September 21, 1937," available online at: <http://www.pepperdine.edu/pr/speeches/events/gpfounders.htm>, accessed 01/09/08; "New College Has Dedication," *Los Angeles Times* (September 22, 1937), 6.

⁸² "George Pepperdine, Founder of College," *The New York Times* (August 1, 1962), 31.

religion and politics, overseeing the establishment of the conservative Lubbock Christian College in Texas in 1956 and collaborating on the building of one of the largest Church of Christ congregations in the nation.⁸³ During his tenure from 1957 to 1972, Young would more fully connect the mission of Pepperdine to both the politics of conservatives inside and outside Southern California, with corporate figureheads backing him most of the way.

In the political culture of postwar Southern California, Pepperdine College quickly became the home to any number of corporate benefactors, known colloquially as “friends” of the school. The chairman of Young’s President’s Council was J.H. Smith, a Seven-Up executive who, according to an alumni newspaper, had been “in business in California since the 1920s,” and “prominent in Southland affairs.” Henry Salvatori, the founder and head of Western Geophysical Company, the nation’s largest geophysical contracting company in the 1950s and early 1960s, maintained a close relationship with Young and Pepperdine, repeatedly making contributions ranging from a few thousand dollars to tens of thousands of dollars in the 1960s.⁸⁴ Another important contributor to Pepperdine was Frank R. Seaver and his wife, Blanche, both secretive but significant conservatives in Southern California. The Seavers made numerous gifts to various educational institutions, including but not limited to Pomona College, Loyola University, and the University of Southern California. Personal friends to George Pepperdine before his death in 1962, the Seavers’ most impressive contribution to Pepperdine came as the school moved from Watts to Malibu in the aftermath of the 1965 riots. During this geographic transition, Blanche Seaver reportedly “contributed over \$50,000,000 toward the construction of Pepperdine University’s Malibu campus.” Though a relatively radical right-winger who later

⁸³ Audrey Gardner, “A Brief History of Pepperdine College,” (M.A. thesis, Pepperdine College, 1968), 34-45; Candace Denise Jones, “White Flight?: George Pepperdine College’s Move to Malibu, 1965-1972” (M.A. thesis, Pepperdine University, 2003), 17; “The Pepperdine Story,” *Alumni Voice* (March-April, 1963).

⁸⁴ “Alumni Award,” *Alumni Voice* (October, 1958); Letter, Young to Henry Salvatori, unprocessed correspondence, Box 26, Norvel Young Collection, Payson Library, Pepperdine University (hereafter NY-PLPU).

administrators attempted to downplay as a contributor to Pepperdine's affairs, Seaver nevertheless played a vital role in putting Pepperdine on the conservative map as a place where corporate influence was not only welcomed but encouraged.⁸⁵

Due to such private support, Pepperdine's administrators could proudly proclaim as early as 1960 a "Declaration of Independence" from "government aid in preparing for the College's expanding enrollment." In keeping with the university's intent of blending notions of evangelical individualism with anti-statism, an alumni publication couched this financial freedom of "the fundamentals of personal initiative, decentralization of government, personal integrity, and in opposition to the growing trends toward collectivism." By depending on private financing from "97 men and women who invested in this program in amounts of \$100 to \$50,000," Pepperdine reaffirmed its advocacy of "the conservative economic principles of private ownership of property, an open market, and the total freedom which was envisioned by our founding leaders and which is guaranteed in the Constitution of the United States." Such help buoyed Pepperdine well into the 1970s, even if it never fully cleared the financial storms that often surrounded it in terms of debt and institutional underfunding. Various reports from the 1970s identified several multi-million dollar benefactors, ranging from big name contributors in conservative circles like Richard Mellon Scaife to Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, the Shah of Iran, who in 1977 gave Pepperdine "the largest academic grant it has ever received: \$1 million for the university's school of education." By 1980, one assessment of the college revealed that over two hundred corporations had provided direct gifts to Pepperdine. Though not the source of all the

⁸⁵ "Malibu College Named for Seavers," *Alumni Voice*, (Spring 1975); Letter, William Banowsky to George Strake, State Chairman of Texas GOP, June 14, 1985, Series 3, Box 3, File 2, William Banowsky Papers Collection, Payson Library, Pepperdine University (hereafter WB-PLPU).

college's revenue, such contributions certainly assured that "Pepperdine led the nation in fund-raising among schools of its size, with gifts totaling \$12,900,000."⁸⁶

Much like at Harding College, corporate dollars and donations watered the growth of Pepperdine. Not surprisingly, the school's fruit was often the same. Pepperdine's own version of the Freedom Forums became the pride of the school's administration and student body. First held in June of 1959, the Freedom Forums were designed by Norvel Young to bring together leaders to discuss and reaffirm the American system of individual freedoms and to study current threats to national liberties." Approximately two hundred business and civic leaders attended the first forum (including George Benson), which resulted in a financial boon for the university. As Young wrote to Benson after the 1959 forum, "You will be glad to know that we were able to balance our budget and have a small surplus [for] the first time since 1951." This set a trend that continued into the 1960s. Pitched as public forums to reaffirm commitments to anti-communism, the Freedom Forums were the first of their kind to be held on the West Coast and continued to draw in interested corporate backers and up-and-coming conservative stars. Jack K. Horton, president of the California Edison Company, served on the President's Board at Pepperdine and took up responsibility for planning numerous Freedom Forums on campus and various business leaders financed them. Rising stars in the conservative culture of the West missed attending them at the peril, for they offered unique opportunities to bring together like-

⁸⁶ "Declaration of Independence," *Alumni Voice*, (January/February, 1960); Letter, Norvel Young to Richard Mellon Scaife, September 5, 1973, Series 2, Box 3, File 1, and Letter, Banowsky to Lubbock Christian College Board, September 17, 1973, Series 2, Box 3, File 1, WB-PLPU; For a comment on Pepperdine's continuing financial challenges, see Notes, William Banowsky to Norvel Young (September, 1973), Series 2, Box 2, File 6, WB-PLPU; "Petrogrants," *Newsweek*, (July 4, 1977), 75-76. "Declaration of Independence," *Alumni Voice*, (January/February, 1960); Letter, Norvel Young to Richard Mellon Scaife, September 5, 1973, Series 2, Box 3, File 1, and Letter, Banowsky to Lubbock Christian College Board, September 17, 1973, Series 2, Box 3, File 1, WB-PLPU; For a comment on Pepperdine's continuing financial challenges, see Notes, William Banowsky to Norvel Young (September, 1973), Series 2, Box 2, File 6, WB-PLPU; "Petrogrants," *Newsweek*, (July 4, 1977), 75-76; James R. Wilborn, "The Importance of Corporate Support," *Pepperdine People Magazine* (Winter, 1981); Jerry Rushford, ed., *Crest of a Golden Wave: Pepperdine University, 1937-1987* (Los Angeles: Pepperdine University Press, 1987), 213.

mindful evangelicals, business leaders, and celebrities. Senator Barry Goldwater spoke at one in 1961, as did Morrie Ryskind, a nationally syndicated conservative columnist. Additional conservative stars, ranging from Richard F. Starr, Dean Russell, and Russell Kirk also gave talks.⁸⁷

Thus, by the early 1960s, Harding was a prominent node on an anti-communist, evangelical, conservative network that stretched across the Southern Rim. The NEP's influence created copycat programs in "Americanism" at numerous colleges, particularly those supported by the Churches of Christ. Kings College in New York and Columbia Christian College in Portland were the only ones outside the Southern Rim. Lubbock Christian College, Alabama Christian College in Montgomery, and Abilene Christian College in Texas also ran programs based on Harding's NEP. Though mostly affiliated with the Churches of Christ, wealthy non-church donors—especially those from American corporations—likewise funded this network of conservative programs.⁸⁸

From the American Campus to the Global Mission Field

In the 1950s and 1960s, Billy Graham worked in one direction, popularizing his evangelical gospel alongside economic conservatism. Private evangelical colleges worked in another direction, creating an environment for youth who eventually would move into business, politics, and other modes of public life. Numerous privately-run "parachurch" ministries—or

⁸⁷ "Pepperdine Slates Freedom Forum," *Los Angeles Times* (May 26, 1959), 1-21; "Freedom Forum" and "The 1959 Award Winners," *Alumni Voice* (June, 1959); "Tale With a Happy Ending," *Ibid.* (September/October, 1960); Letter, Young to George S. Benson, September 5, 1959, Correspondence Box 26, Folder 2, NY-PLPU; "Three Given Talk Spots for Forum," *The Graphic* (January 11, 1963). After attending, Ryskind had kind words for Pepperdine, calling the school "an oasis of non-conformity in an academic desert of monolithic liberalism." He continued, "The faculty believes strongly in both the eternal verities exemplified by the Ten Commandments, and the basic concepts of individual freedom as proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence and our Constitution."

⁸⁸ Hicks, "*Sometimes in the Wrong, but Never in Doubt*," 68-69.

ministries that operated without specific denominational or ecclesiastical sponsorship—worked in yet another direction.

Unlike Graham, Benson, and Pepperdine, these ministries did not explicitly integrate lessons about free market enterprise in their religious appeals, even though corporate backers were just as vital for their growth and influence. Rather, parachurch ministries focused almost solely on the edification and evangelization of Americans, particularly young Americans, as a bulwark against the communist threat. In doing so, they often took up the models of efficiency, marketing, and duplication of the very businessmen who supported either their on-campus crusades or their work on various mission fields.

Texas-based Young Life was one of the first Sunbelt-centered parachurch ministries that benefited from the generosity of corporate leaders. Founded in 1938 by James Rayburn while he was enrolled at conservative Dallas Theological Seminary, Young Life mirrored high school special interest clubs, serving as a type of “evangelical club” for evangelical and non-evangelical teenagers. Designed to complement—rather than compete with—local church youth ministries, Young Life met on weeknights via small group meetings. Led by a local Young Life staff member, meetings combined serious Bible study with age-appropriate entertainment that fit Rayburn’s belief that “it’s a sin to bore a kid with the Gospel.” Rayburn pushed his ministerial staff to exhibit a relational approach towards youth ministry. “Win the right to be heard” he urged, “and go where the kids are” through relevant, entertaining ministry.⁸⁹

Donations from sympathetic businessmen proved vital for Young Life’s ministerial endeavors. Herbert J. Taylor, in particular, was an important source of income. A mainstream

⁸⁹ Robert H. Kraphol and Charles Lippy, *The Evangelicals: A Historical, Thematic, and Biographical Guide* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Company, 1999), 162; Char Meredith, *It’s a Sin to Bore a Kid: The Story of Young Life* (Word Books, 1978), 53; “Rayburn, James C.” in Randall Balmer, ed., *Encyclopedia of Evangelicalism* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 476.

Protestant and northern businessman, Taylor himself had few business connections to the Sunbelt, other than early investments in the Oklahoma and Texas oil and real estate business during the 1920s. Rather, Taylor's circle of influence was primarily in Chicago. Indeed, by the 1940s and 1950s, Taylor was well known as the head of Chicago's Club Aluminum Company and the author of the "Four-Way Test," a Christian-tinged model for "ethical business" that he used as the central philosophy of his philanthropy, the Christian Workers Foundation (founded in 1939), and that he proliferated as chairman of Rotary International. Though his financial reach was nationwide, his philanthropic efforts certainly had a southern tilt. He supported Fuller Theological Seminary in California throughout his career and maintained a connection, sometimes contentious, with fundamentalist Bob Jones University, then in Tennessee. He also supported, either as a director or donator, Arkansas-based American Institute of Holy Land Studies, and the Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF), an evangelistic organization started at BIOLA in the mid-1930s. (CEF headquarters moved to Illinois and came under Taylor's more direct influence until it later relocated to Warrenton, Missouri.) Reflecting on his own contributions toward youth evangelism, Taylor wrote that "With God's help, . . . we intended to help pioneer and finance the nondenominational organizations we felt would do the best job of reaching these young people with the Lord's word."⁹⁰

Young Life, in particular, received Taylor's earnest support and direction. Though a growing organization in Texas circles by 1941, Taylor encouraged—if not strong-armed—Rayburn into expanding its reach, urging him "to go national, Rayburn . . . or I'll not give you another dime." With such a financial commitment to Young Life, Taylor served on its board of directors in the 1940s and 1950s, along with Dallas businessman John E. Mitchell, Rayburn's

⁹⁰ "Taylor, Herbert J(ohn)," in Balmer, *Encyclopedia of Evangelicalism*, 674; Taylor quotation from Bruce Shelley, "The Rise of Evangelical Youth Movements," *Fides et Historia* vol. 18, no. 1 (1986), 47.

friend and colleague Ted Benson, and Dallas Seminary's Louis Sperry Chafer. While on the board, Taylor oversaw the transformation of Young Life from a regional to national evangelical organization, starting in 1946 with purchase of a site near Pike's Peak in Colorado for Young Life's use. Acting alone, Taylor talked the seller's \$100,000 price down to \$50,000 and put \$1,000 down to secure the site. To pay for it, Taylor sold stock in Club Aluminum and provided Rayburn with a generous lease agreement of only one dollar per year. Known as "Star Ranch," the Colorado site became a "nerve center" for Young Life. In keeping with Rayburn's intent to use recreational retreats and entrepreneurial solutions to re-attract youth to his gospel, Star Ranch also became one of the first of four Young Life retreat centers built in the late 1940s and early 1950s by Rayburn. Taylor's contribution also served to support Rayburn's mission to present evangelicalism as a respectable option for postwar youth, challenging notions that evangelicals had arrived and no longer had "patches in our pants." As Rayburn reportedly said about Star Ranch, "We talk about the King of Kings; let's act like He's the one in charge! We're [going to] get the classiest camps in the country." Building on the initial help from Taylor and additional donations from evangelistic agencies and sympathetic businessmen, Young Life expanded its offerings from the 1950s onward with the construction of equally respectable, all-inclusive, recreational retreats intended to fortify the Christianity of evangelical youth and introduce the faith to their friends and classmates. By 1986, Young Life had 500 full-time staff members working with nearly 200,000 teenagers per year.⁹¹

Other evangelical leaders mirrored Rayburn's organization throughout the postwar period by courting corporate money for their ministerial work with American youth. Bill Bright, who founded Campus Crusade for Christ (CCFC) at UCLA in 1951, became famous in evangelical

⁹¹ Jim Rayburn III, *From Bondage to Liberty: Dance, Children, Dance* (Colorado Springs: Morning Side Press, 2000), 60-61, 64; Toni Morse, "No Patches in Our Pants," *Relationships* (Fall, 2003), n.p.; Shelley, "The Rise of Evangelical Youth Movements," 48, 54-55.

circles for his ability to get business leaders—evangelical or otherwise—to dig deep for the sake of youth evangelism. Jon Braun, who joined CCFC in 1960, remembered that “Bright tended to surround himself with guys who were wealthy. . . [and] most of them tended to be Republican conservatives.” Bright’s appeal to businessmen—whether right-wing evangelicals or merely right-wingers—was straight-forward. “A careful examination,” he once wrote to a business supporter, “of the Communist strategy to capture the college campuses of American reveals that it *is* happening here.” University faculty was especially suspect, claimed Bright, as “[h]undreds of professors are known to be Communists while thousands of their colleagues are known sympathizers.” By contributing to CCFC, then, businessmen were ensuring the extension of evangelicalism onto college campuses, thus undercutting the appeal of communism among American youth. As a result of this appeal, notes historian John G. Turner, “Bright found that his strongest base of financial support was located in Texas—ranchers and oilmen were major contributors—and the Sunbelt, particularly Arizona and Southern California.”⁹²

Though casting itself as a strictly religious organization, CCFC fit into a larger Sunbelt-centered network of right-wing money and politics, receiving support from business leaders who supported fringe groups like the John Birch Society, the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade, or Christian Crusade. Peter Gillquist, a CCFC staffer in the 1960s, remembered that Bright “had a lot of John Birchers supporting [Campus] Crusade [for Christ], a lot of men that were very politically conservative, like the Hunt brothers and others that really saw [Campus] Crusade [for Christ] as the answer to the spreading threat of communism on the campus.”⁹³ By 1981, Bright’s fundraising had secured \$220 million in contributions, along with the endorsements of ex-president Gerald Ford, Watergate prosecutor Leon Jaworski, Dallas Cowboys owner Clint

⁹² John G. Turner, *Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ: The Renewal of Evangelicalism in Postwar America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 107-112.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

Murchison, and football celebrities Roger Staubach and Terry Bradshaw. In addition, CCFC enjoyed the financial support and administrative lead of restaurateur Roy Rogers, businessman and motivational writer W. Clement Stone, and Holiday Inn's chair Wallace E. Johnson, all of whom served on the International Executive Committee for "Here's Life," CCFC's most ambitious evangelistic campaign.

Started up in 1976, "Here's Life" was a billion-dollar plan for evangelizing hundreds of small communities, every major American metropolis, and a wide variety of peoples around the world. Nelson Bunker Hunt, son of H.L. Hunt, acted as chairman of the "Here's Life" board and became CCFC's most active financial contributor. In the spring of 1980, Hunt reportedly raised \$20 million for CCFC during one weekend retreat in Dallas with business colleagues.⁹⁴ During the next year, Hunt proclaimed that he had raised \$225 million for CCFC's "Here's Life" campaign.⁹⁵ Nelson Bunker Hunt also funneled millions of dollars toward the production and distribution of *Jesus*, a feature-film biography of Jesus's life produced by CCFC and intended to convert non-Christians. Opening in theatres in October 1979, the film had a year-long run that reached about four million viewers in the United States. Though panned by most critics, it became a centerpiece of evangelical media missions abroad. By 1988, CCFC had dubbed *Jesus* into 110 languages and, by Bright's count, 285 million people had viewed the film, leading to 30 million "salvation decisions." By 2003, the year of Bright's death, *The New York Times* deemed the *Jesus* film to be "the most watched movie of all time." Available in over 800 languages, the

⁹⁴ Carol Flake, *Redemptorama: Culture, Politics, and the New Evangelicalism* (New York: Penguin Books, 1984), 127-128.

⁹⁵ David Harrington Watt, *A Transforming Faith: Explorations of Twentieth-Century American Evangelicalism* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1991), 19.

film continues to depend on the financial support of a new generation of evangelical business leaders, such as Interstate Batteries' CEO Norman Miller.⁹⁶

Although a distinctly evangelical organization, CCFC also illustrated through its dependence on business philanthropy a growing trend among conservative parachurch groups after World War II. At times, the potential for corporate support could encourage cross-denominational collusions, as conservative evangelicals welcomed support from businessmen outside the evangelical fold. For instance, Arizona-born and Southern California-raised Dawson Trotman attended the Los Angeles Baptist Theological Seminary and Bible Institute of Los Angeles (BIOLA), both fundamentalist seminaries with a long histories of separatist suspicion of other groups.⁹⁷ In 1933, Trotman had started a ministry he termed "The Navigators" for sailors stationed in Long Beach. By the time of World War II, Trotman's Navigators was a full-fledged ministerial organization involving several hundred members. During the war, over 1,000 Navigators led discipleship groups on U.S. ships and on base at Navy stations worldwide. In 1944, Trotman legally incorporated the Navigators and worked during the late 1940s to expand its dual emphasis on "spiritual multiplication"—training new disciples by having them teach others—and "routinized spirituality"—Bible memorization, prayer, personal evangelism, and conservative living—onto college campuses and into China. The goals of such techniques,

⁹⁶ Estimates on Hunt's contribution vary widely, from \$3 million to \$5 million to \$6 million. For instance, see Bill Bright, *Come Help Change the World* (New Life Publications, 1999), 144-145, "NACLA Report on the Americas" vol. 17-18 (1983-1984): 24, and Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare: The Politics of the Christian Right* (Cambridge: South End Press, 1989), 53. Thomas R. Lindof, *Hollywood Under Siege: Martin Scorsese, the Religious Right, and the Culture Wars* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2008), 175-176; Dan McGraw, "The Christian Capitalists," *U.S. News and Report* (March 13, 1995), 53; "1979 Film is the Most-Watched Movie of All Time," *The New York Times* (July 22, 2003), 1-AR. Evangelical missionary Vinay Samuel disputes these numbers since they have not been "gathered in a social-scientific way." See Franklin Foer, "Baptism by Celluloid," *The New York Times*, available online at: <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9402E7D8153BF93BA35751C0A9629C8B63>. Still, the film's popularity is indisputable, as is its distribution to over 100 countries since the early 1980s.

⁹⁷ Nancy Calvert, "Dawson Trotman" in James Dixon Douglas, ed., *Twentieth-Century Dictionary of Christian Biography* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1995), 394.

according to Rod Sargent, a thirty-year old business manager for the Navigators, were to create “craftsmen for God.” Their methods, he noted, were also decidedly informed by the Navigators’ imitation of the business world and the respectability it offered. “We feel the Lord’s work,” Sargent told *The Los Angeles Times* in 1954, “should be conducted on a businesslike basis.”⁹⁸

Given its affinity for imitating the cultural standards of the business world, it was little surprise that private money emboldened the organization in the 1950s, especially after Billy Graham brought Trotman into his fold as a consultant for the BGEA’s crusades. Small-dollar donations helped the Navigators meet its budget goals in the early 1950s, but it was a non-evangelical businessman from Texas that proved its most important contributor. In 1951, George Strake, a Houston oilman and devout Catholic who supported Graham’s evangelistic crusades, supplied the Navigators with an unexpected opportunity to upgrade its facilities and administrative capabilities. Strake planned to sell Glen Eyrie, a 1,140 acre, 22-building, 750,000 square foot estate in Colorado Springs, Colorado he had bought in 1938 for use as a summer home. Although appraised at \$1,670,000, Strake lowered the price from \$500,000 to \$300,000 (plus \$40,000 for furnishings) when he discovered that Billy Graham was interested in buying the property and using it as a headquarters “for religious purposes.” When Graham decided to back out of the negotiations, Strake still sold his estate to Trotman at the same cut rate, accepting a down-payment of \$100,000 raised via an intensive, six-week fund-raising campaign.⁹⁹ As a result, Glen Eyrie became the world headquarters for Trotman’s Navigators, as well as a conference center used by conservative evangelicals from the 1950s onward. The Navigators

⁹⁸ Martin I. Klauber and Scott M. Manetsch, *The Great Commission: Evangelicals and the History of World Missions* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2008), 123; Krapohl and Lippy, *The Evangelicals*, 308-309; “The Navigator,” *Time* (July 2, 1956) 58-59; Dan L. Thrapp, “Faith Navigators Founded by Sailor,” *The Los Angeles Times* (May 30, 1954), I-13.

⁹⁹ Marshall Sprague, *Newport in the Rockies: The Life and Good Times of Colorado Springs* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1980), 339; *The Glen Eyrie Story* (Colorado Springs: Navigators Press, 1961), 3, 5-16; Thrapp, “Faith Navigators Founded by Sailor,” I-13.

opened the grounds to the public as a tourist spot and, by the latter years of the twentieth century, an estimated 80,000 used visited Glen Eyrie each year.¹⁰⁰

Trotman's personal connections to Graham and cross-denominational affiliations also brought him into the orbit of another important missionary organization flush with corporate money—the Wycliffe Bible Translators (WBT) and their subsidiary, the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL). SIL was founded in Arkansas in 1934 and headed by Cameron Townsend, a Southern Californian, Occidental College dropout, and evangelical missionary who had worked in Guatemala with Central American Mission (CAM) from 1917 to 1932.¹⁰¹ According to his biographer William L. Svelmoe, Townsend “was the classic American evangelical entrepreneur.” Though devoted to the expansion of traditionalist evangelicalism, “Townsend was no fundamentalist. . . . He had no patience for quibbles over theology, the ‘non-essentials,’ as he put it. He preferred the company of businessmen to that of pastors for just this reason. He admired ‘go-getters,’ men who built something, more than thinkers and pietists.”¹⁰²

Through WBT/SIL's work in Mexico, Peru, Guatemala, Ecuador, and other South American countries, Townsend applied his entrepreneurial sensibilities, diplomatic skills, and business connections toward the tripartite goal of documenting South American languages, translating the Bible into said languages, and converting “unreached” peoples in the continental interior. In the late 1940s, along with Billy Graham and Torrey Johnson, director of Youth for Christ, Trotman became involved in the Jungle Aviation and Radio Service (JAARS), one of WBT/SIL's subsidiaries. Trotman had connections to SIL stretching back to 1940 and became a

¹⁰⁰ Michael Leccese, “Navigating Change,” *Landscape Architecture*, vol. 89 (April, 1999), 52.

¹⁰¹ For a brief biography of Townsend, see Todd Hartch, *Missionaries of the State: The Summer Institute for Linguistics, State Formation, and Indigenous Mexico, 1935-1985* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2006), xv.

¹⁰² William Lawrence Svelmoe, *A New Vision for Missions: William Cameron Townsend, the Wycliffe Bible Translators, and the Culture of Early Evangelical Faith Missions, 1896-1945* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2008), 213.

member of Wycliffe's board of directors at around the same time. But JAARS offered Trotman's organization a direct pipeline to missionary work in South America and, until he died in 1956, Trotman regularly sent recruits from the Navigators's ranks southward to forward Townsend's evangelistic campaigns. Again, corporate benefactors underwrote the Navigators' work in South America. Through a complex financial network Townsend developed to fund JAARS, Trotman's Navigators—as well as other missionaries associated with WBT/SIL—enjoyed the financial support of numerous East Coast and Sunbelt elites. The most important, however, was Henry Coleman Crowell, the son of renowned “breakfast table autocrat,” Henry P. Crowell, the founder of Quaker Oats. The vice president of Chicago's fundamentalist Moody Bible Institute, the younger Crowell supplied the monies necessary to keep Townsend and Trotman's endeavors going after 1945, regularly contributing checks for \$10,000 to JAARS. In addition, Crowell arranged the donation of surplus equipment from the U.S. armed forces and other government agencies via his personal contacts in Washington, D.C. Given the technical experience they had garnered while in the military, Trotman's Navigators ensured that this so-called “government-subsidy program of surplus equipment” were put to use at JAARS.

Crowell was not the only business leader interested in Townsend's work; indeed, WBT/SIL cultivated alliances between corporate money and evangelical campaigns in other ways. Indeed, J. Howard Pew was also a contributor along with industrialist Samuel Milbank of New York. Pittsburgh's plate glass barons, the Pitcairn family, also bankrolled Townsend, as did David Weyerhauser, who had affiliations with the Washington-based timbering company of the same name. Given Townsend's personal connections to Southern California, Oklahoma, and Texas (where WBT was headquartered), the majority of his contributors came from the Southern Rim: Amos Baker of Oklahoma; Maxey Jarman, of Tennessee; Robert Welch, Herbert Rankin,

and Earl Miller of California; Trammel Crow, Clark Breeding, James Ezell, and Nelson Bunker Hunt of Texas; Frank Sherrill, Hamilton Belk, and Lawrence Routh of North Carolina. The religious affiliations of each contributor varied widely; most were conservative evangelicals, although business-friendly mainline Protestants and Catholics also funded WBT/SIL.¹⁰³

Each saw a common goal in Townsend's organization, namely the evangelization of South Americans under the presumed threat of communist conversion and the "economic development" of the region. Their goals also overlapped with another of the Southern Rim's most important evangelicals—Texas industrialist R. G. LeTourneau. Often, LeTourneau's experiments worked out as planned and enjoyed the high levels of success that the corporate-evangelical alliance had brought to his contemporaries inside and outside the Southern Rim. At other times, however, the business of evangelism did not always unfold as expected for LeTourneau. Despite his best laid plans, the business of evangelism did not always advance either business or evangelism.

¹⁰³ Virginia Garrard-Burnett, *Protestantism in Guatemala: Living in the New Jerusalem* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998), 69, 90; Gerard Colby and Charlotte Dennett, *Thy Will Be Done, The Conquest of the Amazon: Nelson Rockefeller and Evangelism in the Age of Oil* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1995), 123-124, 202-203, 290, 484-489.

CHAPTER 3

THE BUSINESS OF EVANGELISM

Near Vicksburg, Mississippi, on a sunny July morning in 1952, evangelist Billy Graham stepped up to a platform, raised his eyes toward heaven, and asked God to bless a 200-foot long cargo ship. Graham had been invited by R.G. LeTourneau, one of the world's most prominent manufacturers of heavy earth-moving equipment, to pray for the ship, its voyage, and its contents. Bound for the African nation of Liberia, "The Ark of LeTourneau"—as Vicksburg residents nicknamed the ship—contained five hundred New Testaments, a dozen "technical missionaries," and \$500,000 worth of LeTourneau's earth-moving, lumbering, and land-clearing machinery. LeTourneau, who was flying ahead to Liberia "to be there when the boat rams that beach," had arranged for these donations to be put to use on 500,000 acres of virgin jungle, which he had leased the year before from the Liberian government. For the peoples inhabiting the lease zone, LeTourneau's machines would clear surrounding jungles for them, using a portable sawmill hauled by the largest bulldozer in the world and a 22-ton machine that reportedly could "shear off big trees like a scythe cutting grass." After selling any harvested mahogany wood, LeTourneau's missionaries would work with local peoples to cultivate rice, grapefruit, banana, and palm trees for export, with LeTourneau agreeing to pour the first five years' worth of profits back into the mission. He assured a journalist from *Time* magazine that he was not interested in profiting from his African excursions; neither did he want to create minimally devout, "rice Christians" who, as he later put it, "hung around the mission professing [their] love of God for the free rice and clothing being handed out." Rather, LeTourneau viewed

his mission as a Christian mission that did not differentiate between economic and spiritual development. “Hungry natives will listen to us about God,” LeTourneau believed, “if we can show them a field of grain with a combine harvesting more in a day than they can eat in a year.” For LeTourneau, this was merely “trying to do a missionary job in a businesslike way.”¹⁰⁴

Like his contemporaries in other public organizations, independent colleges, and domestic and international missions, LeTourneau’s excursion into Africa shows how conservative evangelism, corporate interests, and regional development overlapped in the early years of the Sunbelt Age. LeTourneau’s integration of faith and business was not out of character, either for him or for other mission-minded evangelicals. In all of his industrial plants, he encouraged the maintenance of a religious atmosphere, particularly one informed by his form of conservative evangelicalism. In both the context of wartime America and early Cold War America, LeTourneau viewed his evangelicalism as necessary for international economic dominance. Likewise, he used evangelicalism to build networks of mutual support between himself and other business leaders nationwide. Looking outside the nation’s borders, LeTourneau also sought to synthesize business interests and evangelism in the form of foreign missions, an effort that met with mixed success. In all these arenas—the industrial workplace, the postwar evangelical subculture, the foreign missions field—LeTourneau’s actions illustrated the tightening postwar bond between the corporate mode and evangelical engagement. In other words, like his contemporaries at the BGEA or on college campuses, LeTourneau was at the center of the booming business of evangelism.

¹⁰⁴ “Partnership with God,” *Time* (July 28, 1952), 65-67; On the difference between a “rice Christian” and a “working Christian,” see R. G. LeTourneau, *Mover of Men and Mountains: The Autobiography of R. G. LeTourneau*, reprint ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1960, 1967), 246.

Moving Earth and Heaven

Ironically, these complex dynamics centered around a man that was not native to either the South or the West. Born in 1881 in Richford, Vermont, Robert Gilmour LeTourneau moved to California in 1909. Like George Pepperdine, LeTourneau started out in the automobile business, working as a repairman in the small town of Stockton, California. At the same time, LeTourneau sold tools to contractors and began experimenting with dirt-moving equipment, welding together his own scrapers and building electric motors to adjust their blades as they either moved or smoothed the earth. In the 1910s and 1920s, LeTourneau perfected his designs and gained patents for a wide variety of haulers and scrapers. His scraper, in particular, was an important innovation, making extensive land leveling possible and helping to usher in the age of industrial earthmoving. In 1935, he opened his first shop, a small manufacturing facility in Stockton. Thanks to the need for public works projects nationwide, LeTourneau's business grew during the Great Depression, as his machines worked on the Boulder Highway to Hoover Dam in Nevada, the Marysville Levees, the Orange County Dam, and the Newhall Cut-off in California. Such projects necessitated the expansion of his manufacturing operations eastward and southward, with plants opening during and after the 1930s in several locales: Peoria, Illinois; Vicksburg, Mississippi; Toccoa Falls, Georgia; and Longview, Texas. During World War II, LeTourneau became the leading manufacturer of bulldozers and earthmovers in the nation. According to one estimate, LeTourneau's machines constituted 70 percent of the heavy earth-moving equipment used in World War II, with their finest moments forever captured in photographs taken days after the famed D-Day invasion of Normandy, France.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ "LeTourneau, Robert G(ilmour)" in Balmer, *The Encyclopedia of Evangelicalism*, 402-403; Roy Bainer, "Science and Technology in Western Agriculture," *Agricultural History*, vol. 49, no. 1 (January 1975), 71; Charles Reagan Wilson, "Bulldozer Revolution," in Charles Reagan Wilson, et al., eds, *The Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 736; "Milestones," *Time* (June 13, 1969), 90.

Although he regularly described his career as a product of God's providence and his own pluck and determination, LeTourneau's business overlapped with a number of large-scale economic and social transitions that reshaped America in the early to mid-twentieth century. Most importantly, LeTourneau's bulldozers were both beneficiaries of—and contributors to—what historian C. Vann Woodward termed the "Bulldozer Revolution." According to Woodward, the bulldozer had by mid-century become the primary symbol of the South's political economy. If the mule symbolized the rural, small town, agricultural South, the bulldozer was the agent of change in the twentieth century. The bulldozer's "relentless speed" and "supreme disregard for obstacles" marked its importance, as did "its heedless methods; in what it demolishes and in what it moves." As the "advance agent of the metropolis," the bulldozer demolished "the old to make way for the new." When compared to the social and legal revolutions that happened during and after slavery, the Bulldozer Revolution seemed to Woodward to offer more substantial change for the region and its people. "All indications are that the bulldozer will leave a deeper mark upon the land than did the carpetbagger," he concluded, surmising that the (sub)urban-industrial revolution created by the bulldozer would literally bulldoze over the past, resulting in—for good and ill—a synthesizing of the South into the nation's economic, political, and cultural life.¹⁰⁶

As historian Bruce Schulman has detailed, however, the "Bulldozer Revolution" was also fueled and facilitated by a revolution in state policy toward the South. Defense contracts and federal infrastructural development went southward from the 1930s to the 1970s, setting the stage for stunning economic growth in the region. In turn, local boosters attempted to attract businesses and business leaders to their respective corners of this developing region, offering

¹⁰⁶ C. Vann Woodward, *The Burden of Southern History*, rev. ed (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), 6-7; Wilson, "The Bulldozer Revolution," 736.

ever-sweeter deals in terms of labor, land, and low taxes to interested developers and industrialists. In “selling the South” in this manner, boosters aimed at creating economic and social progress, albeit with limits. Federal monies and industrial development certainly created new levels of prosperity, but they also worked to reconstitute, or even calcify, long-standing social, economic, and racial orders.¹⁰⁷

LeTourneau’s career was intimately connected to this “Bulldozer Revolution” and its dependence on federal policy and local boosterism. To be sure, LeTourneau’s plants manufactured earthmovers for sale to private companies; indeed, LeTourneau’s machines were bought and used by a wide variety of road-builders, loggers, land-clearers, and housing developers. His clients even included the Panama Canal Company.¹⁰⁸ But more often than not, LeTourneau’s machines worked for the federal government, especially in subsidized service to the Pentagon.

This close relationship between defense dollars and LeTourneau’s business model developed in the midst of World War II. Needing to facilitate the creation of a mobile army via the construction of bases, landing strips, and makeshift roads, the Pentagon contracted with LeTourneau for hundreds of bulldozers, scrapers, rooters, and cranes. Troops and engineers in nearly every corner of the Pacific and European theatres used LeTourneau’s machines, making them a vital component of both air and land operations. The result for LeTourneau was a profit and production windfall. In 1943 and 1944, he reaped sales of \$36 million and \$42 million, respectively, and netted approximately \$2 million in yearly profit. Peak production by LeTourneau in 1944 was four times its 1940 volume; by war’s end, LeTourneau supplied Army engineering units alone with over 8,000 scrapers and over 14,000 bulldozers. Nearly a third of

¹⁰⁷ Schulman, *From Cotton Belt to Sunbelt*; James C. Cobb, *The Selling of the South: The Southern Crusade for Industrial Development, 1936-1990*, 2nd ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

¹⁰⁸ “New ‘Mules’ Due at Panama Canal,” *The New York Times* (August 12, 1956), 169.

the money spent by the Army Corps of Engineers on earthmovers during the war went toward the purchase of approximately 75,000 of LeTourneau's machines. LeTourneau's company had grown substantially during these years to accommodate this change, with the construction and use of four manufacturing plants and two main sales offices, one in Stockton and the other in Washington, D.C. Thus, LeTourneau's company was a servant to the state, complementing production for commercial or private contracts with a wide variety of government contracts.¹⁰⁹

Although V-J Day brought a termination in nearly \$21 million worth of contracts (with and without cost), in the Cold War of the 1950s and 1960s, LeTourneau's place in the Southern Rim's military-industrial complex became more firmly entrenched.¹¹⁰ At various times in those decades, his contracts with the Pentagon were in the dozens, including but not limited to construction projects and machinery for U.S. Army and Air Force bases in California, Texas, Florida, Kansas, Georgia, and Oklahoma. Transport carriers for British missile delivery systems and bomb parts for the U.S. were, at various times, another important part of his company's manufacturing output.¹¹¹ For his contributions to the Pentagon's purposes, LeTourneau received several civilian service awards, including the Presidential Certificate of Merit and the National Defense Transportation Association's award for aiding "the effectiveness of the transportation industry in support of national security."¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Robert Haralson Selby, "Earthmovers in World War II: R. G. LeTourneau and His Machines" (Ph.D. Diss., Case Western Reserve University, 1970), *iii-v*, 30-32, 392, 416.

¹¹⁰ Approximately \$18 million in cost and without cost contracts had been canceled before the formal end to the war. See *Summary of War Contract Terminations Relative to World War II* (June 10, 1946), n.p., in Box F2X, LeTourneau Family Papers, Margaret Estes Library, LeTourneau University, Longview, Texas (hereafter LETU). Currently, these papers are generally cataloged, but substantial portions remained unfiled and unsorted. Nevertheless, the contents of the collection fit broadly into three divisions: the papers of R. G. LeTourneau, the papers of his wife, Evelyn LeTourneau, and the assorted papers of his son, Richard LeTourneau.

¹¹¹ Dozens of military-related contracts are available in Box FOD, LETU; "R. G. LeTourneau is Building Missile Carriers for Britain," *Wall Street Journal* (June 6, 1957), 17; "New \$24 Million Order," *Longview Morning Journal* (August 29, 1968), 1-A.

¹¹² Clipping, "LeTourneau Pledges War Aid, No Profit," *Houston Chronicle* (March 25, 1946), n.p. in Folder "Certificate of Merit Award," Box J2Z, LETU; "Defense Transport Unit Cites Texas Industrialist," *The New York Times* (August 16, 1959), 84.

Just as federal money was vital for LeTourneau's profit margins, so too were the efforts of local businesses and business leaders. For instance, in 1935, LeTourneau reached an agreement with Caterpillar Tractor Company to equip their tractors with his scrapers, blades, and other accessories, as well as sell his machines alongside Caterpillars at dealerships. To tighten this corporate partnership and streamline production, LeTourneau opened a plant in Caterpillar's hometown of Peoria, Illinois. In 1942, a local Chamber of Commerce in Mississippi attracted him to the Vicksburg area with the offer of purchasing the land that his plant needed. At the end of World War II, Longview newspaper publisher and booster Carl Estes attracted LeTourneau's attention with a nearby army base and hospital that the government was willing to sell to a private entity. Arrangements for the property sale were made with the Public Buildings Administration and Federal Works Agency, and LeTourneau's bid of was given a 100 percent discount when he revealed his plans to turn the hospital into an industrial training school for East Texans. Longview's Chamber of Commerce also oversaw the purchase of 10,000 acres of land by LeTourneau, creating a local collections fund to underwrite a lower price for the property. By the winter of 1946, a manufacturing plant was up and running in Longview and enrollment was open for the first classes at LeTourneau Technical Institute of Texas, which would later become LeTourneau College and, then, LeTourneau University.¹¹³

On one particular occasion, however, LeTourneau's decision to locate a plant in a given area was more than just a matter of dollars and cents. In Toccoa Falls, Georgia, the interests of evangelicalism, business, and the state converged. In 1937, Dr. R. A. Forrest, president of the

¹¹³ Eric C. Orlemann, *Caterpillar Chronicle: History of the Greatest Earthmovers* (Osceola: MBI Publishing, 2000), 49-51; "Piety & Profits," *Time* (March 25, 1940), 78; Wilson, "The Bulldozer Revolution," 736; Selby, "Earthmovers in World War II," 399-401; "Texas Army Hospital to be LeTourneau Technical School," *NOW* (February 8, 1946), 2; "LeTourneau Tech Will Demonstrate Educational Plan," *NOW* (February 15, 1946), 4-5; *NOW* was a monthly and bi-monthly magazine published by LeTourneau Inc. and LeTourneau University. All copies of *NOW* are available in one of the following places: among LeTourneau's papers, in various, uncataloged boxes in his archival collection, or in the general stacks at LeTourneau University's Margaret Estes Library.

Toccoa Falls Institute (TFI), a lay evangelical organization devoted to domestic and foreign missions, gave a brief talk at an Omaha, Nebraska church about his organization's efforts in North Georgia. Intrigued by the speech, LeTourneau contacted Forrest through several intermediaries and offered the Institute a \$1,000 donation, along with a request to "distribute it in whatever manner your judgment directs." Forrest did so, spreading the donation in Korea, Borneo, and China and recording his efforts for LeTourneau's review. Impressed by Forrest's thrift and efforts, LeTourneau visited Forrest in Toccoa Falls and began discussions about building a manufacturing plant in the North Georgia mountains. In addition to the receptive religious environment of the region, the all-white, and presumably un-unionized labor force likewise attracted LeTourneau because, as he wrote Forrest, "I am having trouble with my labor in Illinois and California." "The foreign element is hard to handle," he complained, but he "like[d] the boys you have here." Many of these "boys" had already enrolled in a residential project run at the TFI by a local offshoot of the New Deal's National Youth Administration, which offered job training and developmental work for the young and unemployed and facilitated their training for work in LeTourneau's plant. The formula seemed to work well, especially as the plant geared for war. Indeed, during World War II, the plant became one of LeTourneau's most productive, earning an Army-Navy "E" Award as a reward for its contributions to the war effort.¹¹⁴

Like other evangelical businessmen in the 1940s and 1950s, LeTourneau believed in the importance of empowering his business interests with his faith. In conceptualizing how this occurred, LeTourneau made his own conversion story center stage. Raised as a member of the

¹¹⁴ Lamar Q. Ball, "New Industry in Georgia Born of a Chance Meeting," *Atlanta Constitution* (April 9, 1939), 1, 18; "LeTourneau Equipment is Big Feature with Yancey," *Atlanta Constitution* (July 17, 1939), 12; Clipping, "The LeTourneau Plant Passes It's 5th Milestone in it's Fantastic Growth," *Royston Record* (December 2, 1943), n.p.

Plymouth Brethren, LeTourneau had an evangelical conversion experience as a teenager at a revival. In his twenties, LeTourneau left the Plymouth Brethren and began his lifelong affiliation with the evangelical Christian and Missionary Alliance. Still, it was not until he reached his thirties and forties that he attempted to make sense of this conversion in the context of his identity as a businessman. In one favorable account, detailed in a laudatory biography entitled *God Runs My Business*, LeTourneau reportedly rededicated his life to Christ at another revival in and around 1913. After hearing the direct voice of God commanding him to be a dutiful Christian businessman, LeTourneau determined to become “God’s businessman.” According to this account, the moment that LeTourneau made God his business partner, “things started to go.”¹¹⁵ No clear documentary evidence supports the report in this account, but regardless, the implications of it are clear. LeTourneau viewed his evangelicalism as enhancing his business and vice versa, a view shared by dozens of evangelical businessmen and women that would unknowingly follow his example in the 1970s and afterwards.

In his management practices, employee relations, and educational endeavors, LeTourneau attempted to popularize this belief and make it a standard viewpoint in all the various spheres of corporate life. LeTourneau had no qualms about blending the sacred and the secular. At the opening of his each of the buildings at his Peoria plant, LeTourneau held dedication services, offering each building to “the service of God.” For the third addition to the Peoria facility, ex-president Herbert Hoover, a friend of LeTourneau’s, offered the commencement address in front of 6,000 people. In 1940, at a dedication of new buildings at the Toccoa Falls plant (which doubled as a evangelical retreat center), LeTourneau brandished a more provocative message via a banner that urged “AMERICA BACK TO GOD.” According to LeTourneau, each dedication

¹¹⁵ Albert W. Lorimer, *God Runs My Business: The Story of R. G. LeTourneau* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1941), 41-42.

service had a specific goal in mind. “If I did not seek to give God the glory and tell the world that this business really belongs to Him, seeking to honor Him in the dedication of this splendid new building” LeTourneau asserted, “I would not be fulfilling my part of the deal.” Of course, receiving God’s financial blessings were not automatically guaranteed by having a plant dedication. But, he concluded, “because I believe that God wants business men, as well as preachers, to be His servants . . . I believe that a factory can be dedicated to God as well as a church and that it may be used as a means of saving many souls.” People were looking for “a religion that really works.”¹¹⁶

In operating his manufacturing plants, LeTourneau aimed to remind his employees of this lesson on a nearly daily basis. In the 1930s and 1940s, LeTourneau maintained a paternalistic arrangement approximating the business operations and political views of Gilded Age southern industrialists. Since housing was often scarce for employees coming from the farm to work in his factory, he provided company owned housing and recreational outlets. The company village in Toccoa Falls—nicknamed “Tournapull, Georgia”—was a “one stop community.” It was also an intentionally religious community, with nearby retreat centers available for “Christian conferences throughout the summer months as well as some winter gatherings.” “Conceivably,” a company promotional reported, “one of the several babies that have been born at Tournapull, Georgia could go through life without leaving Le Tourneau Land except for education, dress cloth[e]s, haircuts, and a few dozen other items. . . . The Tournapull baby can grow up, get a job in the LeTourneau factory, foundry or office, find a husband or wife among his or her fellow employees and be married by a LeTourneau chaplain.” Chaplains played a variety of other roles

¹¹⁶ “LeTourneau Sale of Tractors Set,” *The New York Times* (May 10, 1953), F-10; “Piety & Profits,” 80; “New Toccoa Buildings Are Dedicated,” *NOW* (December 13, 1940), 1; R. G. LeTourneau, “Why Dedicate a Factory?” *NOW* (September 1974), 2. This last source was published after LeTourneau’s death, and thus was a reprint of a reflective essay on such matters that, as much as it could be determined, seemed to originate in the 1940s or 1950s.

as well: visiting sick employees, leading prayer meetings, and counseling employees on-site. Started up after he considered the impact of chaplains on military morale during World War II, the chaplain program was, for LeTourneau, the “Arm of the Church” in the workplace. Thus, chaplains worked to support and collaborate with local churches in their mutual effort at evangelism, even filling in for pastors when they were away from their pulpits. In turn, pastors came to speak at events held at LeTourneau’s plants, whether dedication services or in-house chapel meeting. To build trust and, presumably, loyalty between workers and management, these chaplains were “not required to divulge information which may adversely affect an employee” and strictly forbidden from “becom[ing] involved in policing absenteeism or other similar problems which normally are found in the personnel area.” Rather, the chaplain’s purpose was to create a motivated employee and increase efficiency through a hands-on, evangelistic appeal. As one LeTourneau pamphlet on “Industrial Chaplaincy” explained:

Although much of his work is with the personal lives and problems of industrial employees, the chaplain feels that he is of real service to the industry. That is because employees will do better, more accurate, and safer work when they are not preoccupied with personal worries. Experience shows the chaplain that most personal problems stem from being out of touch with God; and that when the chaplain can help an individual relate his life to God’s plan, personal problems become of small concern to him. The chief occupation of the chaplain is to bring people to God. Therefore, his personal experience with Jesus Christ; his personal walk with Him; his knowledge of the Word of God, and of life itself, is all important, for no man can lead another closer to the Lord than he is himself. The Chaplain’s chief concern is for the souls of men—that they be right with God. Christianity is so sane, so practical, so workable, that its application brings about solutions to the unrest and turmoil that appear everywhere in our industrial society. That is why Industrial Chaplaincy is “Christianity with its sleeves rolled up,” and is a very effective way of bringing peace among men, beginning with their everyday work.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ “LeTourneau’s One Stop Community,” *NOW* (December 6, 1946), 4-7; LeTourneau, *Mover of Men and Mountains*, 210-211; Pamphlet, “Industrial Chaplaincy” (R. G. LeTourneau, Inc.: n.d), 1, in Folder 15-17-4, Box J2Z, LETU.

At all his plants, LeTourneau also maintained an in-house chapel, which regularly welcomed revivalists and other evangelical authorities to speak to his employees and other interested parties. The chapel meetings became so regular that, in 1946, the company's in-house magazine reported that, "Few congregations get to hear more preachers than LeTourneau folk." Even in the midst of wartime production, LeTourneau's employees saw, on average, fifty different speakers per year and went to chapel services at least once a week, if not more often. At Peoria, revivalists from the Christian and Missionary Alliance, the Gideons, and nearby Wheaton College—then a bastion of conservative evangelicalism—made appearances. In Toccoa, LeTourneau hired a black gospel group, the Carolina Gospel Singers, to participate in the services, which were broadcast over WRLC, LeTourneau's company-owned radio station. The chapel services followed a relatively predictable routine: first, congregational singing from printed sheets, then, prayer via a moderator, next, special music, and finally, a twenty-minute sermon by the assigned speaker. In general, the stated purpose of these rituals was to present the gospel to LeTourneau's employees, although they also related to the purpose of the dedicatory services. Each chapel meeting reaffirmed to LeTourneau and his employees that they were working in a religious environment, one that emulated his beliefs about evangelicalism and entrepreneurialism. Work and worship were one and the same.¹¹⁸

LeTourneau's management strategies were directly linked with his broader views concerning the relationship between evangelicalism and the economy. The New Deal state and its Cold War policies might have been the foundation for his business, but LeTourneau did not see the state as an essential—or even preferable—part of God's economy. Like his counterparts in colleges and parachurch ministries across in the Southern Rim, corporate freedom was vital

¹¹⁸ "LeTourneau's One Stop Community"; "Plant Chapel," *NOW* (March 1, 1946), 1-5.

for personal freedom and, by proxy, the expansion of anti-communist evangelicalism throughout the postwar world.

He expressed these views most often in a column that appeared in nearly every issue of *NOW*, a company magazine first published in 1935. By 1955, LeTourneau's printing department published 550,000 copies of *NOW* each issue, with its circulation reaching far outside of LeTourneau's company and college.¹¹⁹ As LeTourneau regularly wrote in *NOW*, the "American free enterprise system" laid the groundwork for proper labor relations and the powerful role that religion might play in these relations. "God gave us the raw materials to work with for nothing," he once wrote, "and there is plenty to be had if we want to go to work and produce the things we want." Government regulation, in general, was counterproductive to the rise of American prosperity and the creation of wealth, although LeTourneau was not "against reasonable government spending because there are a lot of jobs to be done by the government which pay good dividends." Aside from these projects, LeTourneau was disillusioned by government programs and policies that did not "let management keep a reasonable percent of the profits." Over-production was a myth, and government regulation of it via high corporate taxes and pro-union labor laws only undercut the potential of the American worker to be productive. "Let's have free trade, freedom of labor and freedom for management and let the law of supply and demand take over," LeTourneau asserted. Otherwise, Americans could not hope to stem the slide "away from the old principle of learning, earning, and producing," a internal, semi-communist revolution "led by labor unions, many of whom believe that knock drag out lawlessness is the way to get more instead of working for it." Concluding, he couched these

¹¹⁹ "550,000 NOWs Are Printed Each Issue," *NOW* (January 15, 1955), 2-3;

demands in his own form of prophetic religion: “We all need to get back to the God of our forefathers who wrote on our coin ‘In God we Trust.’”¹²⁰

LeTourneau believed that government involvement and unionization raised too many expectations among laborers and merely disappointed them with shallow promises. Although LeTourneau had been a union member himself during his early days as a shop employee, and his Peoria plant maintained a union in the 1930s and 1940s, he still retained deep suspicions about the value of unions. Labor protest was particularly troubling. “Picketing certainly does not enhance the value of the commodity called labor in the eyes of managers who bring in the returns that pay wages,” he wrote, “No, picketing is not the answer, nor is sabotage or slow down.” Labor problems were decidedly pernicious because, for LeTourneau, they were preventable. “There is an answer that will benefit both manager and worker,” he continued, “Frequently, workers and management are reminded that that there is a third party involved in their disputes; the public. I would say rather that there is a First Party, and if that Party is given His true place there will be no dispute, and together we will go on to increase prosperity and usefulness. That Party will be given His rightful place when we acknowledge His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.” LeTourneau’s use of chaplains and chapels presumably sought to encourage this form of Christian amelioration. But his in-house practices also served another stated purpose—as an antidote to insurgent communism, whether at home or abroad. “God has blessed this land and given us this system of free enterprise, by far the finest in the world today,” he wrote. There were many who did not appreciate God’s gift, both in the front offices and on the shop floor. “A monopoly by industry will stifle our free enterprise system and so will a monopoly by labor,” LeTourneau believed, and both encouraged the move toward “inflation and

¹²⁰ “Business Economics,” *NOW* (June 1, 1959), 1-2; See also “Producers vs. Non-producers,” *NOW* (August 1, 1952), n.p.

communism both.” Particular problems lay with “the socialistic philosophy of some of our labor leaders,” which made Americans “mighty vulnerable to attack by Russia by stopping production.” And yet, by practicing a righteous form of “free market capitalism” in his own plants, and encouraging its growth elsewhere, communism might be stemmed and the Cold War won with the sheer power of the God-blessed market.¹²¹

LeTourneau’s belief in free enterprise and meritocratic uplift informed his approach toward charity as well. Throughout his career, LeTourneau engaged in charitable endeavors, supporting evangelistic associations, benevolence campaigns, denominational ministries, and world missions. His charity, however, stopped short of individual forms of support, as he believed that any able-bodied and intelligent person could and should work to better their station. Likewise, he was relatively reluctant to issue donations to any organization—religious or otherwise—that requested help.

Still, LeTourneau received hundreds of what historian Scott A. Sandage has documented as a particular form of interpersonal correspondence, the “begging letter.” In LeTourneau’s case, these correspondences were written by both groups and individuals beseeching him to offer them either money or advice about a particular employment scenario or ministerial endeavor. Nearly all of them affirmed the writer’s solidarity with LeTourneau by detailing his evangelical credentials, their admiration for LeTourneau’s faith and business practices, or their impressions of him from, say, a newspaper clipping or public interview. Then, most laid out their requests. LeTourneau’s response to most of these letters came in the form of cool and direct form letter, generally written by his secretary: “Thank you for your present letter which has been

¹²¹ A collection of LeTourneau’s columns – published by his wife after his death and entitled *R. G. Talks About* – can be found in Box J2L, LETU. These reflections on labor come from this volume, which apparently were taken from an October, 1948 edition of *NOW*. See Louise LeTourneau Dick, “Labor as a Commodity,” in *R. G. Talks About* (Longview, n.d.), 83-85; “Inflation and Communism,” *NOW* (December 15, 1959), 1.

thoughtfully read and considered. However, since Mr. LeTourneau receives so many similar requests and since it is impossible to grant them all, he has been forced to adopt a policy of not responding to requests of this nature unless the Lord definitely directs him to do so.” Most ended with a benediction: “We appreciate the sincerity of your letter and shall be glad to join with you in prayer concerning your need, knowing that if you commit your ways unto Him, and trust also in Him; he shall bring it to pass.”¹²²

For LeTourneau, free enterprise also offered new forms of global interaction and uplift. In one of his columns, LeTourneau asserted that free enterprise was a gift of God to the United States and had “given us the position of world power we hold today, and the unequalled standards of living which we enjoy.” Because “our forefathers” had sought out “freedom to worship God,” they had been blessed with economic prosperity; in contrast, because those that discovered South America—LeTourneau did not mention Roman Catholics by name—found and sought after “gold there instead of God,” the continent was both economically and religiously underdeveloped. The creation of American “free enterprise” also offered solutions for these countries’ predicaments, however, and LeTourneau saw himself as an instrument of God in bring those solutions about.¹²³ LeTourneau, of course, was not alone in these views. As denoted in the previous chapter, they were shared by a wide variety of conservative evangelicals inside and outside the Southern Rim. Perhaps LeTourneau’s most explicit connection to this postwar

¹²² Scott A. Sandage, *Born Losers: A History of Failure in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 228-229; Most of these “begging letters” can be found in Box J2Z, Folder 33-“Correspondence, Requests for Help,” LETU, although numerous others are spread throughout LeTourneau’s papers. For examples, see in the above folder: Letter, Reverend Howard D. Wisher to R. G. LeTourneau, December 24, 1941; Letter, Billy O. Wilcox to R. G. LeTourneau, February 4, 1942; Letter, O. R. Wurster to R. G. LeTourneau, January 27, 1942; Mr. O.C. Sutterfield to R. G. LeTourneau, April 4, 1965. An example of LeTourneau’s form response includes Roland R. Stoker to Mr. J.C. Sweeney, March 23, 1965. Also see Box FOV, Folder 12-“Mr. R.G. Correspondence,” including Letter, Robert G. Reilly to R. G. LeTourneau, August 6, 1957; Letter, Elner D. Hull to R. G. LeTourneau, April 8, 1957.

¹²³ “Free Enterprise,” *NOW* (June 15, 1956), 1; “Fair Exchange,” *NOW* (August 15, 1956), 1, 2.

network, however, came through his involvement in and directorship of the Chicago-based Christian Businessmen's Committee (CBMC).

Life as a Christian Businessman

Billy Graham knew LeTourneau and CBMC well. LeTourneau had developed close ties to the evangelist during the 1940s when Graham worked for the Youth for Christ movement. In fact, in 1946 a LeTourneau gift of \$7,000 to Youth for Christ (one of many gifts he would make to Graham's various ministries) bailed the young evangelist out of bankruptcy and allowed him to complete a ministerial campaign in Ireland. Graham retained a personal, financial, and ministerial connection to LeTourneau throughout the 1950s and 1960s, as well as with the CBMC that LeTourneau spearheaded in those decades.¹²⁴

Founded after a local revival in Chicago in 1930, the CBMC began as an open-membership club for businessmen who wanted to continue meeting with one another after the revival's conclusion. After their weekly prayer and testimony meetings attracted over eight hundred local businessmen, this club linked together with similar businessmen's groups in the city. From 1930 to 1936, these businessmen's groups organized as "committees" loosely organized as the CBMC. Dr. Paul W. Rood, president of BIOLA in Los Angeles, joined with Arnold Grunigen, Jr., a San Francisco investment banker to form a West Coast branch of the CBMC in 1937 and 1938. Together, the Chicago and California branches of the CBMC added international committees in 1938 and, after that, it became known as the CBMC-International, or CBMCI (although both members and outsiders interchangeably referred to it as either the CBMC

¹²⁴ On LeTourneau's early financial support for Graham, see Clipping, "Evangelist's Early Beginning Recalled," n.p. (October 24, 1968) in Folder, "R. G. LeTourneau," Box L0S, LETU. The link between LeTourneau and Graham was also personal, as Graham's son, Franklin, attended LeTourneau College as a freshman, as denoted by "Dr. William (Billy) F. Graham," *NOW* (September, 1971), 1.

or CBMCI). As a lay organization, the CBMC emphasized doctrinal unity around several key evangelical tenets, including the inspiration of the Scriptures, the Trinity, the Virgin Birth, the sinfulness of humanity, the death and resurrection of Christ, and the condemnation of the “lost.” Although it counted only premillennialists as voting members, this stance did not exclude from fellowship those who held other views about the Second Coming. Still, premillennialism strongly informed the urgency with which the CBMC went about its evangelical enterprise. For leaders and members, the organization existed as a missionary organization first, bringing together like-minded businessmen for the evangelization of anyone—whether they were in business or not—who came in contact with the CBMC.¹²⁵

LeTourneau was instrumental in the direction and growth of CBMC. After 1938, he served as an officer on the organization’s steering committee, chairman of the international wing from 1941 to 1949, and vice-chairman in 1960 until an undetermined date after that. He directed an organization that included hundreds of evangelical businessmen from across the nation involved with CBMC. Indeed, businessmen from Detroit, Philadelphia, New York, and Chicago could be counted among its ranks from the 1940s to the 1960s, as well as any number of corporate leaders in California, Arizona, Texas, Tennessee, West Virginia, North Carolina, and Florida. From only a handful of local “committees” in 1938, the CBMC exploded in membership during the 1940s and 1950s. By 1947, 162 CBMC committees were in operation, with significant growth occurring in California and other Southern Rim states; two years later, 197 chapters of the CBMC were up and running. By the early 1950s, an offshoot of the CBMC, the “leadership prayer breakfast” movement, was also attracting members of Congress to its meetings. Committees also emerged in the ranks of the military among officers. Known as the

¹²⁵ David R. Enlow, *Men Aflame: The Story of Christian Business Men’s Committee International* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1962), 13-19.

Christian Military Men's Committee, it worked with the CBMC to spread evangelicalism among the enlisted and their allies on various Cold War fronts, especially in Korea. Likewise, the CBMC had close ties to other lay evangelical organizations, such as the Rotary movement and Gideons International.¹²⁶

LeTourneau also served important roles in several other lay evangelical organizations. In 1940, the Gideons International elected LeTourneau as its International President. A Bible-distributing organization (most famous for their hotel Bible ministry), the Gideons selected LeTourneau for a limited, one-year term, primarily due to his busy business schedule. Via his connections to Georgia through his Toccoa Falls plant, LeTourneau orchestrated the single largest distribution ever made by the Gideons: twenty-thousand Bibles to the public schools of the Peach State. Perhaps LeTourneau's most prominent activity in the evangelical network of postwar America, however, came in the form of his speaking tour. From the 1930s to the 1960s, LeTourneau flew hundreds of thousands of miles for speaking engagements in hundreds of evangelical churches, large and small. Generally reserving his weekends for such visits, LeTourneau acted as both a lay minister and businessman during these visits, giving sermons on matters of both spiritual salvation and personal improvement. LeTourneau's financial commitment to evangelism was also significant. Eschewing the standard tithe arrangement of donating 10 percent of his income to church missions and ministries, LeTourneau donated 63

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 19, 25, 61-62, 63; 107; David W. Miller, *God at Work: The History and Promise of the Faith at Work Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 33-34; Joel Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 122, 173, 231. Presumably in keeping with its increasingly southern membership base, the CBMC relocated to Chattanooga, Tennessee in 1978. By the first years of the twenty-first century, it would become one of the most important organizations of evangelical businessmen in the nation and world, active with over 18,000 members in 700 committees nationwide and operating worldwide with a total of 50,000 members in seventy countries.

percent of his company's stock and nearly 90 percent of his personal income towards spreading conservative evangelicalism at home and abroad.¹²⁷

Most of this money went to an organization he founded at an indeterminate point in the late 1930s, the LeTourneau Foundation and its attendant beneficiaries. Backed by the millions of dollars he made in the earthmoving business, the LeTourneau Foundation was well-financed. According to one estimate, in 1945 alone LeTourneau funneled nearly \$13 million toward the Foundation. Such monies often went toward a wide variety of missionary and evangelistic programs, making the Foundation (according to *Newsweek*) "one of the largest missionary organizations in the country." For instance, LeTourneau's foundation sponsored the LeTourneau Evangelistic Center (LEC), a clearing house for missionary activities founded in 1938 and headed by a ministerial associate, Dr. Harold Strathearn. Based in New York City, the LEC aimed to bring "all the evangelistic interests of R. G. LeTourneau under one head," as well as extend and support Strathearn's work. As the former director of the Interstate Evangelistic Association, Strathearn had worked "to check the spread of Modernism in Baptist churches." His job was more expansive at the LEC, as he worked there to distribute millions of tracts and pamphlets to churches and individuals. In addition, he trained and managed twelve full-time evangelists who worked in understaffed foreign mission fields. The LEC and LeTourneau Foundation were involved in various other missionary activities as well, from distributing Scripture Calendars to American homes to promoting children's Bible Clubs in the Pacific North to supporting the Intercollegiate Gospel Fellowship "in organizing Christian students attending colleges in the New York metropolitan area and helping them carry on a progressive program of

¹²⁷ LeTourneau, *Mover of Men and Mountains*, 205-207; "Gideons to Dedicate 23,000 Bibles Here," *Atlanta Journal* (January 18, 1941), 14; "Corporations," *Time* (May 23, 1953), 92; On speaking engagements, see Boxes J4A through J4E, LETU; For examples of these speaking engagements and the arrangements made for them, see Rachel K. McDowell, "Churches to Mark Bible Sunday Here," *The New York Times* (December 6, 1947), 16 and "R. C. LaTourneau [sic] To Speak Here," *Atlanta Journal* (December 12, 1939), n.p.

work in presenting Christ to the student bodies of these colleges.” The LeTourneau Foundation even created airplane pilot programs for a “mighty armada of flying missionaries” that LeTourneau wanted to send to Africa, China, and Mexico.¹²⁸

LeTourneau’s charitable ventures also concerned the founding and support of an eponymous institutions—the LeTourneau Technical Institute of Texas. Located in the East Texas town of Longview, “LeTourneau Tech” (as it was nicknamed) was the product of a collaborative effort between LeTourneau, the federal government, and local officials to start up an evangelical technical college in the area. With the end of World War II, the U.S. Army and Federal Works Administration looked to sell the Harmon General Hospital and its accompanying barracks. During the war, the hospital had serviced wounded veterans and un-enlisted troops; after the war, however, the site’s 232 buildings and 156 acres of land were idle, waiting for a willing buyer to make an offer. Carl Estes, a local booster, army commander, and publisher, engineered the deal for the property’s sale to LeTourneau from the government. Estes spent a month in Washington, D.C. securing the sale while, at the same time, Grady Shipp, a member of the Longview Chamber of Commerce, secured the sale of an additional 10,000 acres to LeTourneau for the construction of his sixth manufacturing plant. In early 1946, all the paperwork and money had been exchanged to all parties, with LeTourneau fronting \$870,000 for the hospital and acreage surrounding it. Construction began immediately, with the factory and school up and running by the fall of 1947. In general, LeTourneau duplicated his model of providing housing, chaplains, chapels, and other amenities at Longview. Privatization of the entire enterprise also informed the legal standing of LeTourneau Tech, which remained a private institution in keeping with LeTourneau’s affinity for the “free market system.” Though his

¹²⁸ “Enterprise: The Monster-Maker,” *Newsweek* (November 16, 1959), 89, 90, 92; “Religion: Wings for Missionaries,” *Time* (September 17, 1945), 77-78; Lorimer, *God Runs My Business*, 186-191.

business rested on government subsidies, his university, he claimed, would not. “Government subsidies would of necessity tie [the] hands [of Christian colleges] so we must not do that,” he advocated. Because the federal government allowed room for tax deductions on gifts to hospitals and universities, LeTourneau thought they were “giving us a chance to preserve free enterprise.” He thought good Christians should take their offer by running private colleges that ran off private donations and corporate sponsors. “To be worthy of the support of Foundations and Christian Industrialists,” LeTourneau concluded, “our colleges should stick to the Faith of our Fathers and the free enterprise system, and not take the path of least resistance into Modernism, Atheism, and Communism.”¹²⁹

As a college committed to the evangelical faith and free enterprise, LeTourneau defined his university’s core mission as the provision of quality, faith-focused, private education for students interested in the burgeoning field of industrial technology. The nearby manufacturing plant was vital for that mission. Although coursework provided both exposure and review to the fundamentals of industrial training—Mathematics, Mechanical Engineering, Drawing, Machine Shop Practice, Chemistry, Electricity, Welding Theory and Practice, Metallurgy, Thermodynamics and Physics—the factory next door afforded students opportunities for real-world, pragmatic experience. As requirements for their degrees, all students worked part-time at LeTourneau’s factory, with their wages applied to their tuition. As a part of his deal with the federal government for the property’s sale, LeTourneau actively courted returning G.I.’s seeking education via the G.I. Bill. Initially, a large majority of his students came from the surrounding area. From the start, however, LeTourneau intended to recruit students southward to his university and factory because, as he believed, “The South should catch up to the North in

¹²⁹ “Texas Army Hospital to be LeTourneau Technical School,” 2; “Texas Gets Going,” *NOW* (April 19, 1946), 1, 4; “Texas Progress Report, No. 2,” *NOW* (June 7, 1946), 2-4; “Texas Progress Report, No. 3,” *NOW* (June 12, 1946), 2-5; “Free Enterprise,” 1, 3.

industry. If full advantage were taken of the milder climate, it could go ahead of the North—with a proper educational program.” In providing such a program at LeTourneau Tech, “We will have the northern boys coming south where construction machinery can work the whole year around and not have to hole up for the winter.” Most importantly, such students would encounter an educational environment at LeTourneau Tech that they, presumably, might miss at other schools. “LeTourneau Tech,” he concluded, “will not neglect the most important phase of education; the lack of which renders the life that is otherwise successful a dismal failure. Students will have regular classes for study of the Word of God and every encouragement though chapel services and other means to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and learn from Him.”¹³⁰

By 1959, LeTourneau Tech was attracting students from forty-six states and from Canada, Mexico, Cuba, Ecuador, Chile, India, South Africa, and Thailand. In keeping with the segregated nature of the postwar South, however, African-American students were not allowed to enroll as residential or commuting students. Not until 1965, when James E. “Jackie” Jones enrolled to play basketball and attend classes full-time, did the color barrier fall at LeTourneau’s university. Women likewise did not join LeTourneau Tech’s rolls until the admission’s office dropped the prohibition on women’s enrollment in 1961. Even after that point, most women who enrolled at LeTourneau Tech did not take classes in the so-called “hard sciences,” but generally undertook majors offered by the college’s newly established Liberal Arts department.¹³¹ Student culture at LeTourneau Tech also accorded to conservative evangelical

¹³⁰ Walter J. Brooking, “A Work-Study Program,” *The Journal of Higher Education*, vol. 18, no. 6 (June, 1947), 307-311; “Operation No. 6 East Texas Factory and School” and “LeTourneau Tech Will Demonstrate Educational Plan,” *NOW* (February 25, 1946), 2-5.

¹³¹ “Tech Students Come from Far and Near,” *NOW* (October 16, 1959), 2; Kenneth R. Durham, *LeTourneau University’s First Fifty Years* (Longview: LeTourneau University, 1995), 114; “LeTourneau College is Now Coeducational,” *NOW* (July 15, 1961), 2; “Campus Work Continues,” *NOW* (November, 1964), 1; Admissions

standards. Although it offered athletics programs, a wide variety of extracurricular activities, and an active student center, school by-laws required chapel attendance, Bible reading and study, and a dress code. Alcohol was strictly prohibited. If the makeup of the student body and student culture at LeTourneau Tech was generally in keeping with the dictates of conservative evangelicalism, then it was a byproduct of both LeTourneau's own religious views and his connections to a postwar subculture of conservative, evangelical private education. LeTourneau personally and publicly affirmed the work of other independent evangelical institutions in a variety of ways. He took part in a commencement at Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina, served as a trustee for John Brown University in Siloam Springs, Arkansas, and worked as a member of the board of reference for Wheaton College in Chicago, Illinois. George Benson of Harding College was a close friend of LeTourneau's and both affirmed each other's efforts in private education and public policy. At LeTourneau Tech, then, LeTourneau sought to not only create his own form of private education but create a public institution in line with other bastions of early Sunbelt anti-communism.¹³²

Like the heads of Campus Crusade for Christ or the Navigators, LeTourneau sought to use his technical college as a headquarters for the evangelization of certain corners of the Cold War world. Indeed, throughout the 1950s and 1960s, LeTourneau funded a private crusade to evangelize peoples in South America and Africa, particularly in the nations of Peru and Liberia. In general, LeTourneau intended these efforts to conform to the model of industrial development and management that he had fashioned for his own manufacturing plants and technical school. In doing so, he developed solidarity with other evangelical businessmen and evangelists who

advertisement, reprinted in *NOW* (April 15, 1962), n.p.; On student body and student affairs, see Box, *Pioneer*, 1948, 1950-1969, LETU.

¹³² LeTourneau, *Mover of Men and Mountains*, 212; Ken Durham, "LeTourneau, Robert Gilmour," *The Handbook of Texas*, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/LL/file36.html>; Clipping, "Tech Graduation," *NOW* (June 15, 1953), n.p. in Folder "Loose Files Folder #2," Box B4S, LETU.

shared his sense of urgency towards, and his set of solutions for, the state of global missions in the postwar era.

Missions to the Cold War World

LeTourneau's transnational endeavors were directly informed by his identity as an evangelical and businessman operating in a Cold War world. In a 1951 essay entitled "Why Liberia?" LeTourneau identified stopping communism as a goal of missionary activity second only to proselytizing. "Whether we like it or not," he wrote, "they are not going to stay ignorant, and the Communists will educate them if we don't." In this sense, LeTourneau acknowledged the efforts of the Truman administration to help "backward nations in the form of lend-lease," but LeTourneau saw another course to saving nations like Liberia from communist dominance: "A better job could be done by teaching them to help themselves, which in the long run will be worth much more to them." Justifying his own intent to enter the African markets, LeTourneau concluded that, "Maybe a happy medium would be an industrialist who has the know-how to teach them and is willing to take a certain amount of risk to create a greater market for his products especially when they are needed as badly as mine are for roads, railroads, utilities, airports, mining, land reclamation, transportation, etc." In Liberia, as well as in Peru, LeTourneau would attempt to establish this "happy medium."¹³³

LeTourneau first identified Liberia as a potential setting for missions work in the early 1950s. After representatives from Liberia heard LeTourneau speak about industrial improvement at a trade conference, they requested a meeting with him to discuss the potential of using an undeveloped area in Liberia as a testing ground for LeTourneau's ideas. LeTourneau continued to correspond with these representatives and, in May, 1951, he gained an audience

¹³³ "Why Liberia?" in Dick, *R. G. Talks About*, 173-174.

with Liberian president William V.S. Tubman about opening the interior jungle to development. Contracting a long-term lease on the land, the Liberian government granted LeTourneau 500,000 acres in the Liberian jungle for “the purpose of development.” In this area, which LeTourneau named “Tournata,” the primary objective of the mission was two-fold: “1. Industrial and agricultural development of an underdeveloped area; thereby providing an opportunity to the people for economic advancement. 2. Evangelizing the area and providing a Christian testimony among laymen of the country.” In other words, LeTourneau aimed to duplicate in Liberia what he had developed through his CBMC networks and through his plants in Georgia, Texas, and California—putting into practice his “basic philosophy” that conservative evangelicalism should inform business practices and vice versa. As reported by a sympathetic visitor in 1953, “The LeTourneau project is designed to be a business venture. . . . and from the soil and trees there can be a much better way of life for Liberians.” Mirroring LeTourneau’s thoughts on the matter, this writer insisted that, “By being business-like we can help them to help themselves, thereby developing in them the self-respect, the sense of accomplishment and dependability, the dignity of common toil, and the diligence that many of them now seem to lack. . . . Cannot a project be at the same time both good business and true Gospel, with prospect of food for the body and also for the soul? The Liberians need both, as do you and I.”¹³⁴

LeTourneau certainly viewed his offers as a plan for turning his subjects into the right kind of evangelicals and, subsequently, uplifting their social and economic standing. But he also viewed his project in Africa as an alternative form of Cold War policy, writing, “I don’t know how much progress the United Nations is going to make toward getting us together, but I know there is too vast a difference between our standards of living to have a peaceful world. The

¹³⁴ “Basic Philosophy,” Document #701 (1960?) in Folder, “Loose Files, Folder #1,” and “Bulldozers and Bibles,” *NOW* (May 1, 1953), n.p., in Folder, “Loose Files, Folder #2,” both in Box B4S, LETU.

difference in earning power of a laborer in America and a native laborer in Africa is too great.” LeTourneau viewed his project as an improvement because his private enterprise could make underdeveloped peoples more productive via technology. “If a man doesn’t want to work and is satisfied to live in squalor,” he continued, “that’s not too bad, but when a man can work and wants to work we should provide a way whereby he can receive, as the fruit of his labor, the things his labor can make. And by using machinery we can make his labor very productive. That is why these non-industrial nations must be mechanized before our troubled world gets in any worse shape than it is. And because I’m a mechanic and mechanization is my middle name, I’m on my way to Africa to see what can be done about it.”¹³⁵

LeTourneau had a standing offer to do the same in Peru as well. In 1953, LeTourneau met with Cameron Townsend, head of the evangelical Wycliff Bible Translators. Townsend was aware of LeTourneau’s interests in Africa and brought the possibility of a Peruvian colonization program to LeTourneau’s attention. The next year, LeTourneau flew to Peru and contracted with the Peruvian government and President Manuel Odría to build thirty-five miles of roads in the jungles northeast of the capital of Lima. A settlement named “Tournavista” developed on the banks of the Panchitea River and, by the early 1960s, approximately fifteen North American families and 125 Peruvian families lived there. Much like in Liberia, the goals for Tournavista were both economic and religious. As one pamphlet about both missionary outlets denoted, LeTourneau’s efforts were aimed at the following “National Needs:”

In both Liberia and Peru, the philosophy is not to make a donation of material or cultural advantages, but rather to give the people an opportunity whereby they, with their own labor, can obtain these things. It is only as they are made to stand on their own, that they will be able to move forward both technically and spiritually. They need our modern machinery and technical knowhow, but this

¹³⁵ Richard Howard LeTourneau, “A Study of the Basic Requirements for Success in an International Business-Christian Missionary Venture” (Ph.D. diss., Oklahoma State University, 1970), 45-46; “It’s a Small World,” *NOW* (February 15, 1952), 3-4.

alone cannot solve their problems. It is only as they put their faith in Christ that they will find the answer to all their problems.

Given these challenges, the pamphlet encouraged its readers to pray and give money to the LeTourneau Foundation, which would funnel funds toward costs incurred.¹³⁶ To elicit further support, LeTourneau himself spoke regularly during his speaking tours about his endeavors in Liberia and Peru, and he collected thousands of dollars in donations from sympathetic churches and missionary associations from around the country. He likewise attracted a wide variety of applicants to work in the Liberian and Peruvian missions. Like the “begging letters” he regularly received, these letters requested that LeTourneau consider the applicant’s contributions and spiritual devotion. Nearly all of them agreed with LeTourneau’s business-like way of doing ministry, arguing that they not only had the practical skills necessary for working in the jungles of South America and Africa but also the evangelical wherewithal and sense of “Christian mission.” Their former and present occupations varied widely: some had just been released from military service; others were college students; others had their local minister recommend their work; others were former farmers looking for a fresh start; one was even a native African, working at an American university and asking for help in starting up similar missions in Nigeria.¹³⁷ As these letters demonstrated, for the most part the Tournata and Tournavista projects served to identify LeTourneau as a leader in postwar evangelism. Little wonder that he

¹³⁶ LeTourneau, *Mover of Men and Mountains*, 257-258; “Economic Development,” Document #702 and “National Needs,” Document #703 (1960?) in Folder, “Loose Files, Folder #1,” in Box B4S, LETU.

¹³⁷ On the nature and intent of these letters, see the following: Letter, Robert J. Burket to R. G. LeTourneau, October 1, 1956; Homer Lee Marrow to R. G. LeTourneau, n.d.; Letter, Frank Sowers to Editor, September 10, 1956; Letter, Rev. Harry Ketchem to R. G. LeTourneau, October 5, 1956, all in Folder, “Colonizer Inquiries, 500-600,” Box B5G, LETU. Also, see Letter, Richard V. Stafford to R. G. LeTourneau, November 30, 1953; Letter, Obiora Agusiobo to R. G. LeTourneau, January 7, 1954 and May 6, 1954, all in Folder “Specialists (Lumbering – Forestry)” in Box L0S, LETU.

found adequate company and, indeed, direct support from other corporate-backed trendsetters like Billy Graham and Cameron Townsend.

The Best-Laid Plans

Yet, the public story that LeTourneau presented through *NOW* and other outlets often did not square with events on the ground in Liberia and Peru. Correspondence between LeTourneau and his representatives in Liberia and Peru revealed that their goals were not often met, or at least not met in the manner that LeTourneau expected. LeTourneau and his missionaries regularly encountered cultural and logistical obstacles that tested LeTourneau's best-laid plans. Still, the incursions that LeTourneau made abroad opened the door for transnational excursions elsewhere, both by his company and his business associates.

From the start, LeTourneau intended the Liberian and Peruvian endeavors to be work settlements. The goals in Liberia were relatively straight-forward: land heavy earthmoving equipment near the western coast settlement of Baffu Bay; set up a base of operations for this equipment, staffed with competent and trained personnel; clear the land in the immediate area and put it to "some experimentally productive use;" teach local populations how to operate and maintain equipment; and, finally, develop schools and churches to "advance Christianity among the natives involved with the project." The goals were much the same in Peru, and at both locations, LeTourneau hand-picked a director and instructed him to staff the project with willing, well-trained, and "Christian" personnel. LeTourneau referred to these personnel as "technical missionaries" who could "handle a Bulldozer as well as a Bible." As LeTourneau saw it, "Machinery in the hands of Christ-loving, twice-born men can help them to listen to the story of Jesus and His love." Relying on such evangelical leaders and laborers, LeTourneau expected a

worldwide revolution: “We can’t feed the world, but our machinery in the hands of consecrated Christians can open the door to let us in and open the door of the hearts to let the Lord come in, and then the initiative which they lack will come, and that, plus the teaching in the use of machinery will enable them to feed themselves.”¹³⁸

Concerning the Liberians and Peruvians working the projects, LeTourneau did not see them as exploited labor. Although he acknowledged that “We hear a lot about exploiting labor and exploiting the backwards countries,” LeTourneau thought “It sounds better when we talk about developing the backwards countries and perhaps we could talk about developing labor.” As he had done in his plants in the South, “development” included the visible hand of management and the dual goals of technical training and spiritual direction. “All this will cost money,” LeTourneau admitted, “but it can be at least partially financed by the raw materials which are being taken out in the meantime.” The sooner industrialists tackled the underdevelopment problem from this “long range development point of view instead of the short range or exploitation point of view,” LeTourneau concluded, “the sooner our world will become one world.”¹³⁹

In Liberia, LeTourneau’s son-in-law, Gus Dick, headed up the project; in Peru, LeTourneau appointed his son, Roy S. LeTourneau, to be general manager of the site. Both sites were incorporated as separate corporations—LeTourneau of Liberia, Ltd. (LTL) and LeTourneau del Peru, Ltd. (LDP)—under the LeTourneau company. Their incorporation marked these endeavors as more than non-profit, humanitarian projects. LeTourneau fully intended LTL and LDP to be productive and wealth-generating. The money generated by the combination of LeTourneau’s earthmovers and the native population’s labor would funnel into a general fund for

¹³⁸ LeTourneau, “A Study of the Basic Requirements for Success,” 49-50; “Christian Initiative,” *NOW* (May 15, 1954), 2, in Box B3W, LETU.

¹³⁹ “Development vs. Exploitation,” *NOW* (November 15, 1951), 3-4.

both projects, thus supplying LTL and LDP with the capital for continued missions work. The deal with LeTourneau—in Peru's case, the right to develop 400,000 hectares for an initial contribution of over \$500,000 worth of equipment—would act like an evangelical form of Keynesianism, as a “pump-primer” for the area’s economic and spiritual development.¹⁴⁰

To ensure the economic viability of both projects, LeTourneau gained the legal and political support of both the Liberian and Peruvian governments. In a contract signed with Liberia, LeTourneau’s company agreed to make certain concessions in keeping with the government’s desire to have LeTourneau “assist in the economic and social development of the country.” These concessions were aimed at both legitimizing LeTourneau’s involvement in Liberia while presumably setting up protectionist walls for Liberians. For instance, LeTourneau agreed to utilize native Liberian labor and not import unskilled workers from the United States or elsewhere. In addition, he was allowed to engage in religious and philanthropic endeavors, as long as they observed the Liberian constitution’s assurance of the free exercise of religion. Also, LeTourneau agreed to pay fair compensation for any raw materials exported out of Liberia, as well as turn over any immovable machinery or manufacturing equipment to the government after the conclusion of the project. In turn, LeTourneau received the assurance of “the right to import free from all customs duties, tariffs, and all other local and general taxes, all materials, equipment, and supplies for construction and operational purposes.” Likewise, via a legislative act that established LeTourneau’s company in Liberia, the government agreed to “encourage and assist labour supply and will use its offices to prevent infiltration of radical elements that would

¹⁴⁰ Sam Pope Brewer, “Colony in Jungle Gets Equipment,” *The New York Times* (January 19, 1954), 9; LeTourneau, *Mover of Men and Mountains*, 260-261. LeTourneau used the phrase “pump-priming” during a presentation to the International Development Advisory Board in Washington, D.C.

cause interruption of the corporation's activities or stop production and be dangerous to the peace of the [Liberian] Republic."¹⁴¹

In Peru, LeTourneau received similarly generous terms. There, he contracted to build thirty-two miles on the Trans-Andean Highway, which linked the Amazonian slopes with the Pacific. The highway was undertaken on the heels of the Point Four Program, a foreign aid and economic development policy overseen by the Truman administration from 1949 to 1953. Intended for thirty five countries, Point Four's goals approximated LeTourneau's: bring "third world" countries into the economic orbit of the U.S., contain communism, foster private investment abroad, and organize world trade.¹⁴² In addition, Point Four did not discourage the expansion of Christianity into its target zones, drawing both liberal and conservative leaders to cast Point Four as "a twentieth-century missionary vehicle for both democracy and Christianity."¹⁴³ Working with state officials, LeTourneau joined a number of other American and European companies in taking advantage of the political environment that Point Four created in the early 1950s—what one *New York Times* journalist later referred to as Peru's "free enterprise and free exchange policy." Whereas other U.S. companies like EBASCO and

¹⁴¹ "An Act Approving the Statement of Understanding Made and Entered Into on the 18th Day of January A.D. 1952 by and Between the Republic of Liberia Represented by the Secretary of State and R. G. LeTourneau" (Monrovia: Authority Government Printing Office, 1953), 2-8; "An Act to Create and Establish LeTourneau of Liberia, Ltd., and to Define Its Powers, Approved May 13, 1953" (Monrovia: Authority Government Printing Office, 1953), 14-15, both in Folder "Loose Files #2," Box B4S, LETU.

¹⁴² Views about the particular successes and failures of Point Four vary. Several scholars have cast it as an ineffective program and a side story in American foreign policy during the Truman Administration. For this view, see Robert A. Pollard, *Economic Security and the Origins of the Cold War, 1945-1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 207; Robert A. Packenham, *Liberal America and the Third World: Political Development Ideas in Foreign Aid and Social Science* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 48-49. Others see it as having more significance, despite its shortcomings. For Point Four's attempts at reorganizing the world economy, see Gabriel Kolko, *Confronting the Third World: United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1980* (New York: Pantheon, 1988), 145. For its involvement in the "green revolution," see John Perkins, *Geopolitics and the Green Revolution: Wheat, Genes, and the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 43-44. For a decent review of these various takes on Point Four, as well as a political history of the program and its ambiguous legacy, see Sergei Y. Shenin, *The United States and the Third World: The Origins of Postwar Relations and the Point Four Program* (Huntington: Nova Science Publishers, 2000), x-xi, 171-181.

¹⁴³ R. Fansmeier, "The Churches and Point IV," *Inter-American Economic Affairs*, 7 (Summer 1953), 82-83, quoted in Shenin, *The United States and the Third World*, 165.

Morrison-Knudson engaged in hydro-electric and irrigation projects, or Marcona Mining Company worked on shipping iron ore to the U.S., LeTourneau focused on road-building and excavation.¹⁴⁴ As a part of their contract, the Peruvian government granted LeTourneau 400,000 hectares (about one million acres) of land on the Panchitea River for development of the road and any other infrastructural projects he wished to undertake. LeTourneau used the opportunity as a testing ground for some of his new designs, including a “tree stinger,” which could uproot and topple 150-foot, old growth Amazonian trees in twenty seconds, and the “Lizzie Lorimer,” a walking platform ship that could both sail and anchor in high seas and hurricane-force winds.¹⁴⁵ With such agreements supporting his work in Peru, LeTourneau attempted to literally pave the way forward the involvement of other private enterprises in the region. By laying the groundwork for these enterprises, LeTourneau built additional networks of influence between himself and another industry burgeoning at mid-century in the Southern Rim. In South America and elsewhere in the early “global South,” LeTourneau the evangelical businessman was establishing closer ties to the business of underdevelopment.

Despite the platitudes of the agreements between LeTourneau and his host governments, both the Liberian and Peruvian projects were extractive enterprises. In Peru, this was because Odría wanted it this way. Since taking office in 1950, Odría had acted like local boosters in the American South marketing his country’s raw materials and cheap labor as enticements for U.S. companies interested in “economic development” in South America. Oil companies, in particular, found Odría’s offers hard to refuse. In the early 1950s, he had pushed through legislation in the Peruvian Congress that rewrote the country’s petroleum laws, granting high depletion allowances and 50 percent profit shares to any interested parties. Oil companies

¹⁴⁴ Guild Walker, “Peru Will Exploit Great Resources,” *The New York Times* (January 5, 1955), 45, 79.

¹⁴⁵ “New Road is Pushed into Peru’s Jungle,” *The New York Times* (June 27, 1954), 18; LeTourneau, *Mover of Men and Mountains*, 258-260.

descended on Peru, but ran into problems of extraction and infrastructure. Peru's oil fields in the Sechura Desert were not like the Texas badlands or Arabian desert. Extraction was difficult and costly. Likewise, little to no transportation infrastructure existed near several other prominent oil fields, leading Odría to consider LeTourneau's offers, through their mutual friend and development partner, Cameron Townsend.¹⁴⁶

LeTourneau had been in the oil business since the mid-1950s. Expanding his manufacturing operations into the realm of sea-going barges and movable platforms, LeTourneau made his first forays into oil extraction with the Zapata Off-Shore Company, a Texas-based company owned by George H.W. Bush. In 1954, Bush capitalized Zapata with the intent of exploring off-shore oil deposits in the Gulf of Mexico, and he contracted with LeTourneau to build an electric-powered, off-shore drilling platform. The \$2.5 million design that LeTourneau provided—named the *Scorpion*—was revolutionary, not only from an engineering standpoint but in terms of expanding the postwar oil economy. No longer fixed to a set location, drilling rigs could be moved around to a new location in less than eight hours, thus allowing Zapata and other oil companies the opportunity to identify and extract oil deposits in higher volume. After successful tests of the *Scorpion* in eighty feet of water, LeTourneau and Zapata paid \$4 million for the *Vinegarroon*, another off-shore rig that could drill to deeper depths. LeTourneau's oil rigs helped make Bush one of the richest men in Texas and opened up oil exploration in the Gulf of Mexico and Persian Gulf.¹⁴⁷ In turn, these designs branded LeTourneau as more than an evangelical earthmover; it also marked him as a shrewd businessman interested in forwarding the interests of the burgeoning postwar oil industry.

¹⁴⁶ Colby and Dennett, *Thy Will Be Done*, 244-249.

¹⁴⁷ Pamphlet, "They Took Two!" (LeTourneau Incorporated, 1957?) and Clipping, Lee Kelly, "Bush, LeTourneau Share Ties" *Longview News-Journal* (January 22, 1989), 1-E, 2-E, in Box J8U, LETU; "Oil Platform is En Route to Iran," *The New York Times* (November 24, 1958), 45.

In 1959, his son Roy had contacted a Mobil Oil subsidiary about supplying the company with transport barges for its equipment and building access roads and for its newly purchased drilling sites in Peru. Agreeing with Gulf Oil to build a road from the north banks of the Aguatia River to their drilling sites, LeTourneau garnered a three percent commission off any oil or gas profits that Gulf Oil produced out of the sites. Although R. G. LeTourneau thought this commission “sound[ed] like a mighty small royalty,” the contract nevertheless tied his company to the oil business in South America. In the 1960s and afterward, LeTourneau would continue to contribute to the rise of the global oil economy, both in South America and in other parts of the world.¹⁴⁸

Oil, however, was not the only commodity worth pursuing in Liberia and Peru. In Liberia, a visitor from *The New Yorker* reported in 1952, LeTourneau had “been ceded virtual control of ten thousand acres in the Baffu Bay area.” There, LeTourneau planned for his workers to “engage in lumbering, the mechanized cultivation of rice, and possibly in the raising of livestock, peanuts, and pineapples, along with palm oil, coco, coffee, rubber, bananas, raffia, and other tree crops.” Of these products, lumber and rubber interested LeTourneau the most. Along with a newly developed “tree rolling” bulldozer, the tree stinger that LeTourneau developed for road clearance proved useful in the Amazonian and Liberian jungles, encouraging deforestation for the dual purpose of felling profitable hardwoods and clearing land for agriculture. In Liberia, LeTourneau’s machines harvested a wide variety of native woods. By the early 1960s, a working saw mill encouraged production, but did not fully solve all the problems of industrial lumbering. As one observer noted, “Getting marketable trees out of the high bush to the sawmill

¹⁴⁸ Letter, Roy G. LeTourneau to R. G. LeTourneau (December 11, 1959); Letter, Roy G. LeTourneau to Richard L. LeTourneau (November 30, 1959), in Folder “Letters from Roy LeTourneau,” Box B5G, LETU; Letter, Roy G. LeTourneau to R. W. Blakeley (March 21, 1960); Letter, Roy G. LeTourneau to R. G. LeTourneau (March 22, 1960); Draft of Contract, LeTourneau del Peru, Inc. and Gulf Oil (April 14, 1960); Letter, R. G. LeTourneau to Roy G. LeTourneau (April 22, 1960) in Folder “Peru Corres. 1-1-60-61,” Box FOV, LETU.

site, cut into lumber, and shipped to Monrovia the capital city of Liberia, is a real adventure.” Trees were abundant, but trees of marketable value were not. Hence, a number of trees cut by the mill remained at the mission site for use in the construction of employee housing and poultry houses. Raising chickens was an offhand enterprise, as LeTourneau envisioned the reproduction of southern agriculture and agribusiness in the lands cleared by his tree stingers and tree rollers. In Peru, LeTourneau reported that, “Extensive experimentation has been done in agricultural products, [including] poultry, hogs, and cattle.” In general, “the products grown in our southern states do well there,” and LeTourneau imagined that production would not only increase but industrialize in the coming years. Already, by 1962, the mechanized means for “butchering, packaging, and freezing the produce” were established in Tournavista, Peru, with future plans “call[ing] for entering the poultry raising, rubber production, canning, and eventually manufacturing.”¹⁴⁹ By the late 1960s, the lands cleared by LeTourneau and other developers had also ushered in a new industry in Peruvian beef.¹⁵⁰

LeTourneau was also interested in Liberia’s rubber crops. Since the 1930s, Firestone Tire and Rubber Company and LeTourneau had been cooperating in the development of heavy-duty, over-sized tires. In Liberia, LeTourneau continued these interests. By standardizing rubber tree production there, LeTourneau expected a high return on his investment; one in-house estimate expected that rubber production at LTL might reach as high as 1,400 metric tons by the project’s twentieth year. To facilitate such production, LeTourneau’s intended to house his laborers on both small and large-scale rubber plantations, extracting rubber for sale in the U.S. tire market and, perhaps, for use on LeTourneau’s own machines. Likewise, those he employed in Peru and Liberia also worked in lumbering hardwoods for export and sale to American and

¹⁴⁹ Oden and Olivia Meeker, “Letter from Liberia,” *The New Yorker* (November 29, 1952), 106, 109; “Liberia Report,” *NOW* (April 1, 1961), 3; “Peru,” *NOW* (February 1, 1962), 3.

¹⁵⁰ LeTourneau, “A Study in the Basic Requirements,” 124-125.

European markets. LeTourneau paid his laborers, although records did not detail their exact wages. (In one report, he noted that he once paid Liberian laborers “a little above the going wage,” approximately fifty cents per hour for clearing a dense jungle by machete.) Exploiting cheap labor, however, was not LeTourneau’s long-term goal for either of his missions. Hence, he paid his “technical missionaries,” on average, between \$200 and \$350 per month to train native populations in using his machines, primarily as a way around paying low wages for what he deemed to be inefficient, time-consuming work. Cheap, unskilled labor could not compete with slightly more expensive, skilled labor and LeTourneau preferred to develop the latter rather than use the former.¹⁵¹

Still, if such management schemes further opened Liberia and Peru to outside corporatization, they did not do so without complications. In Peru, resistance to LeTourneau’s project came in the form of local religious protest. The Consortium of Catholic Engineers (CCE) charged that LeTourneau’s plans aimed to set up a “Protestant nucleus” in the region, which they believed would “have grave repercussions on the unity of the nation.” Such concerns had been expressed about other Protestant missions work in South America before, ending in violence in places like Columbia. In LeTourneau’s case, however, the CCE argued that LeTourneau was presenting the project as a business and infrastructural enterprise instead of what it really was—a missions program “bent primarily on proselytizing among the Indians.” Responding to the CCE’s charges, LeTourneau described his efforts and interests as “a business deal,” although he was “a man that mixes business and religion [and] . . . President [Odría] knows that.” Adding to these comments, LeTourneau argued that he had told Odría that his

¹⁵¹ Raymond Stadelman, “Resume of Annual Costs and Production of Crude Rubber,” (n.d.), 1-2, Box L0A, LETU; On LeTourneau’s early days in the tire market and his collaborations with companies like Firestone, see “Giant Tires,” *NOW* (March 8, 1946), 3-5; “Liberia,” in Dick, *R. G. Talks About*, 206-207; For salary records related to the Liberian project, see bank books and bank receipts stored in Box L0A, LETU.

developmental program would probably “see that the people get a better standard of living, and that probably the [Catholic] church . . . would get more money as a result.” In the end, economic desires seemed to trump religious anxieties, as LeTourneau’s sponsors in the President’s office and Peruvian government did nothing to stop his move into the Peruvian jungles.¹⁵²

In Liberia, LeTourneau faced similar difficulties. Rev. Fred G. Ferris, whom LeTourneau had charged with evangelizing the Liberians, reported in 1954 that evangelizing was easier said than done. Although Ferris wrote to LeTourneau that “everywhere we go we are welcomed with open arms,” he questioned whether his ministry was a success. “Our real desire and purpose is to give them something for their souls,” he wrote. But, “[t]hey have not been too ready to accept that ministry. Among the villages they tell us that they do not want our American custom . . . one wife, etc. [They say] The black man’s way is best.” Despite the efforts made by Ferris and his associates—building air strips, visiting churches, caring for the sick—“We often asked ourselves if we were getting anywhere with these people.” A slew of conversions in recent weeks had encouraged Ferris, but his frustration was not uncommon among LeTourneau’s managers and employees.¹⁵³

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, both the LTL and LDP ran into constant problems of execution. Religious differences composed only a part of LeTourneau’s problems. For instance, in Liberia, the stated goal of the mission—to instill in native populations both the evangelical gospel and an entrepreneurial drive—only created partial conversions. Writing in hindsight about the failure of the Liberian mission, LeTourneau’s son, Richard LeTourneau, observed what he termed a “Gap Problem” between “the commercial personnel and the nationals in [terms of] cultural and living standards.” “Serious problems developed,” he surmised, “because pastors and

¹⁵² Sam Pope Brewer, “Catholics Protest Texan’s Peru Plan,” *The New York Times* (October 1, 1953), 11.

¹⁵³ “Report from Africa,” *NOW* (September 1, 1954), 3-4.

congregations [in the Liberian project] could not reconcile the spending of thousands of dollars for machines, equipment, and commercial activities with the Christian message of love.” The unwillingness of LeTourneau and his employees to “distribute its ‘wealthy’ freely to all who had a need” led to an inability “to reconcile the concept of ‘you must work for what you receive’ with the charitable nature of Christianity and what appeared to them, an abundance of wealth.” Richard LeTourneau termed this sort of thinking a “limited cultural understanding” and “obviously . . . not the teaching of Christianity,” but he admitted that it served as a major obstacle for the Peruvian project. In the end, the “true concepts of free enterprise and Christianity blending together was understood by very few of the people in the area.”¹⁵⁴

Richard LeTourneau and others involved with both projects believed that such cultural differences were not the only cause of the project’s downfall. Inefficient organization and unintended consequences also affected the religious mission of LTL and LDP and undercut their economic viability. In a trip to the Peruvian project in 1969, one anonymous observer provided hand-written observations about the practical complications of the work there. “There seems to be a lack of a goal or an objective for the project as a whole as well as for the individual parts,” he noted. Each part of the Peruvian settlement—the school, cattle operations, road construction, colonization efforts—seemed to be working toward separate ends, leading to a great deal of bureaucratic overlaps, shared management positions, and operational repetition. To address these problems, he suggested that, “the benevolent portions, at least accounting-wise, should be separated from the commercial operations,” which would have “to show a profit or discontinue its profitable pursuits.” Reflecting on the ability of the Peruvian project to support itself, he

¹⁵⁴ LeTourneau, “A Study in the Basic Requirements,” 82-83.

mused that “If it CANNOT . . . in the NEAR future, without disregarding repayment of the original capitol [sic] investment, there must be something drastically wrong.”¹⁵⁵

Indeed, something was drastically wrong with both projects, as throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, LTL and LDP ran at a loss, with expenditures outweighing revenues by significant margins, sometimes totaling in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.¹⁵⁶ In addition to the organizational inefficiency, which led to wasteful spending, other logistical issues undercut LeTourneau’s efforts with LTL and LDP. In Liberia, President Tubman remained generally supportive of LeTourneau’s work, but government graft, legislative unpredictability, and broad differences of opinion about industry created tensions between LeTourneau and the Liberian government. In addition, a dearth of information about available raw material resources and environmental conditions, as well as a lack of adequately trained personnel and workable equipment, undercut the project’s efficiency, resulting in the need for LeTourneau himself to fund LTL fully out of his own pockets. With the entire capitalization of the project resting on LeTourneau’s personal investment, project managers deemed the three million dollars already dumped into Liberia too much and, in 1966, LeTourneau shuttered it.

In Peru, the problems were likewise myriad, albeit of a different nature. Capitalization problems also dogged the project from the start; indeed, the agreement between LeTourneau and Gulf Oil was only one of several attempts to find funding for the indebted project. But LDP also suffered from numerous other internal complications: the relative youth and inexperience of the mission’s managers; the lack of in-depth planning for construction and ministerial projects, the rapid re-growth of brush and vegetation in cleared lands, the experimental nature of LeTourneau’s machinery, and (most importantly) a lack of funding and responsible budgeting.

¹⁵⁵ Unsorted field notes, “Report on Trip to Tournavista: 1-28-69–2-2-69,” n.p., in Folder “Peru (1970),” Box B5G, LETU.

¹⁵⁶ LeTourneau, “A Study in the Basic Requirements,” 69, 111.

Unlike in Liberia, political instability in Peru, punctuated with a constant changing of the legislative and executive guard, resulted in an inability to follow through with projects and policies. Adding to these complications, the military coup of 1968 and disposition of Odria's hand-picked successor Fernando Belaúnde resulted in the cutting of supportive ties between LeTourneau and the Peruvian government.¹⁵⁷

By the time of his death in 1969, LeTourneau's interests in Liberia and Peru had faded considerably. Most of the land and infrastructure that LTL and LDP owned and developed had either been turned over to the Liberian or Peruvian governments or was in transference. In Liberia, the commercial side of LTL was, according to one memo, "phased out" while the missionary side was folded into the programs of the Christian Nationals Evangelism Commission, a California-based evangelical organization with which LeTourneau had close ties. In the Peruvian case, the military government declared LeTourneau's contract nullified, primarily on the grounds that he had not completed developmental work in the assigned area to satisfaction. As a result, Peruvian officials moved in 1970 to catalog the land and holdings of LDP and pressure LeTourneau's remaining personnel to abandon the project.¹⁵⁸

Still, LeTourneau's decision to quit in Liberia and Peru did not demolish his faith in the business of evangelism. Indeed, he maintained until his death that the use of business-based management strategies offered the most effective, efficient, rational, and beneficial methods for encouraging the growth of evangelicalism and the expansion of the free market. LeTourneau chose to overlook in his own projects exhibited the very qualities he disdained in the New Deal state: inefficiency, bureaucracy, cronyism, and underperformance. To do otherwise would have

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 85-89, 129-132.

¹⁵⁸ Inter-office memo from Richard H. LeTourneau (June 24, 1966), document #999 in Folder, "Loose Files Folder #2," Box B4S, LETU; Letter, Walter Knowles to Richard LeTourneau (September 21, 1970) and clipping, "LeTourneau Jungle Lands Return to the Authority of the State," n.d. in Folder "Peru (1970)," Box B5G, LETU.

undercut the very philosophy that he had spent much of his adult life attempting to mainstream and popularize, namely that mixing business and evangelicalism would further the interests of both businessmen and evangelists.

Despite the disappointment of LTL and LDP, LeTourneau's involvement in evangelism left a legacy, both in the ways that it opened up new avenues of Cold War-era globalization and in how it mirrored the efforts of Billy Graham, Bill Bright, Dawson Trotman, and others who linked the purposes of corporate America with the crusades of conservative evangelicals. On the first point, LeTourneau was integral to the rise of several pillars in the Sunbelt economy, including defense, oil extraction, and public works projects. Each of these had worldwide implications in the early Cold War and none could have been undertaken without LeTourneau's bulldozers, tree stingers, and drilling platforms. On the second point, LeTourneau was like other evangelicals in the early Cold War, expanding the horizons of postwar evangelicalism, both by providing financial support for its most important public celebrities or by financing his own versions of a postwar evangelical revival. Whether giving sermons in churches nationwide or funding evangelical missions half a world away, LeTourneau used his federally subsidized fortune to forward his business-inflected gospel of personal and social salvation.

In the years after his death, his sons Richard and Roy would continue their father's mission, aligning LeTourneau Incorporated more directly with the oil extraction business and using the profits from this realignment to support the stated mission of LeTourneau College, as well as the political and cultural activism of the so-called "New Evangelical Right." They, like other business leaders in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s would simultaneously shift the interests and emphases of their Sunbelt-bred gospel of wealth, gaining allies in a crusade against the latest manifestations of a liberalism they both depended upon and despised. Like LeTourneau, the first

place they looked for such allies were among their own managers and employees, among those working in the very companies behind the booming, postwar Sunbelt economy.

CHAPTER 4

PERSONNEL RELATIONSHIPS

Business rediscovered faith after World War II and, in the process, attempted to reassert Americans' faith in business. As business leaders emerged in the economic sectors of the postwar Sunbelt economy, they pushed a "practical" form of conservative evangelicalism through the use of corporate chaplains and through their public engagements. Business leaders in the region found common ground with a new wave of pro-business writers and speakers who embodied and preached a similar gospel of individual uplift and organizational loyalty. All in all, for many Southern Rim business leaders, the personal relationship between God and humanity that conservative forms of evangelicalism offered would not lead to social disengagement or disorder. Through the rightful integration of faith in corporate activity, the destructive capacities of free market, corporate capitalism would not only be checked, but its creative and democratic capacities would flourish. Deeper relationships between corporate personnel would result and, by proxy, deeper and more meaningful relationships between corporate employees and each other, their families, their communities, and their nation. Via such faith-based relationships, the state would be replaced by the Christian corporation, the new social authority of the Sunbelt Age.

"God's Ambassadors"

The infusion of evangelicalism into corporate life began in the early days of the Sunbelt Age, especially as the region's industries made room for religion at work in the 1940s and 1950s.

R. G. LeTourneau had incorporated chapel services and utilized corporate chaplains to motivate his workforce, but he was only one of many Southern Rim industrialists to do so. In 1947, Tulsa's Sunray-Mid Continent Oil Company began employing a chaplain and, by 1955, his services were in such demand that he considered hiring a second assistant. In 1949, Fieldcrest Mills in North Carolina continued the long tradition of company-sponsored churchmen keeping tabs on southern textile workers. "At Fieldcrest," noted one reporter for *Time*, "the Rev. James K. McConnell visits sick workers, keeps in contact with retired employees, tours the plant daily and makes himself available to people who need help to solve their troubles. All counseling is strictly secret, strictly voluntary." McConnell, a Southern Baptist, was apparently a busy man. He reported an average of three counseling talks a day "on problems ranging from alcoholism to unruly children." In the same year and in the same manner, Reynolds Tobacco started up a similar program, reporting their chaplains' positive impact on worker morale. Absenteeism was down, while production was up. In 1954, the Director of the National Association of Manufacturers' Church-Industry Relations Southern Division also wrote that employees at San Diego's Solar Aircraft Company and Dallas's Lone Star Steel Company participated in daily worship services. In the latter instance, a full-time, specially trained Methodist chaplain reported spent "his time primarily offering aid and counsel to troubled workers" in a "new \$40,000 building" that doubled as a on-site chapel. Similar chaplain or chapel services were available at the John E. Mitchell Company in Dallas and Douglas Aircraft Corporation in Long Beach, California.¹⁵⁹ In Pomona, California, businessmen's groups formed to discuss the Beatitudes and business ethics during breakfast and lunch. In Kansas City, Missouri, a partner in the Russell Stover Candy Company named Lem T. Jones set up a "Religion in Industry Committee" as a

¹⁵⁹ "Business: A New Help to Labor Relations," *Time* (October 31, 1955), 84; "Rev. Rhoades Slated to Speak," *The Independent* (June 23, 1951), 9.

department of the National Council of Churches. Louis Evans, a southern Californian Presbyterian minister, became an in-demand speaker at business conventions nationwide. “The old luncheon address used to be three wise-cracks and a filler,” Evans responded when asked about his popularity, “This hasn’t been true for a year or so. These fellows want you to dig in and make them think. You don’t have to apologize for talking about God—that’s what they want.”¹⁶⁰ Such programs grew nationally at a steady pace during the 1950s and 1960s but remained especially popular in the Sunbelt. In 1970, a California newspaper reported that “the company chaplain is becoming a fixture on the nation’s assembly lines and also shows up in shopping centers and department stores.” “The trend is particularly strong in the [S]outh,” noted the report, “Among firms employing them are R.J. Reyonlds [*sic*] Tobacco Co., Holiday Inns, Inc., McLean Trucking Co., Carolina Freight Carriers, Phar Yarns, Inc., . . . and Texas Aluminum.”¹⁶¹

The use of chaplains in Sunbelt businesses often occurred on a business-by-business basis through the 1970s and 1980s. By the early 1980s, however, the field was ripe for the emergence of Marketplace Chaplains, USA (MCUSA), a company fully committed to training and proliferating corporate chaplains.¹⁶² Founded in 1984, MCUSA was the brainchild of evangelist Gil Stricklin. Stricklin had a long history of attempting to make the evangelical message appealing to contemporary Americans. In the 1960s and early 1970s, he attained fame as a popular evangelist who reportedly had “preached the changeless Christian message in changing environments from the Gothic Anglican Cathedral in Melbourne, Australia, to an X-rated theatre in Tempe, Arizona.” He also served as a lecturer at the Billy Graham Schools of Evangelism, a director of public relations for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, and a denominational

¹⁶⁰ Duncan Norton-Taylor, “Businessmen on Their Knees,” *Fortune* (October, 1953), 141, 253.

¹⁶¹ Dean C. Miller, “Chaplains Help Industry,” *Daily Review* (Feb. 22, 1970), 48.

¹⁶² The company was initially known as Marketplace Ministries, Incorporated.

executive with the Baptist General Convention of Texas.¹⁶³ Stricklin had also served as a chaplain in the Army Reserves, an experience that convinced him of the need for taking chaplaincy into the workplace.

In 1983, Stricklin pitched his idea to his pastor, the former segregationist and still conservative W.A. Criswell of First Baptist Church-Dallas. After receiving Criswell's blessing, Stricklin approached five prominent businessmen at First Baptist with the idea. "You're going to get a lot of people sued," Stricklin recalled the first businessman's response: "You cannot mix religion and work." Undeterred, Stricklin developed a client list, starting in Texas and expanding to other southern states in the late 1980s. By the end of the 1990s, Stricklin's organization had a budget of \$2.4 million, with contracts for 300 Protestant chaplains in 160 companies in 30 states. According to company estimates, approximately 110,000 employees and family members had contact with MCUSA chaplains. Referring to their chaplains as "God's Ambassadors," MCUSA took a soft sell approach toward in-house ministry. "Our chaplains are quietly and inconspicuously in the workplace, not playing 'Just as I Am' over the PA system," Stricklin told one reporter in 2004. Employees initiated relations with his chaplains and, in general, chaplains took a pastoral approach toward their problems. "I'm a pastoral caregiver," claimed Jim Semple, a MCUSA chaplain in Paris, Texas, "I am here to build relationships and trust, and ultimately to present the message of Christ." Though an evangelical, Stricklin claimed that his company provided services via non-evangelical chaplains as well, making Roman Catholic priests, rabbis, and Buddhist monks available to any employee on request. Still, in promotional materials, MCUSA sought out chaplain candidates who had "served Christ for many, many years" and displayed evidence of being "longtime, victorious Christian(s)."

¹⁶³ "DR-Uvalde Baptist Association to Meet," *Del Rio News Herald* (October 6, 1978), 4; "Billy Graham's Publicist Joins Texas Baptists," *Big Spring Herald* (February 13, 1970), 2-B.

Likewise, proselytizing was not outside the pale of a chaplain's duties if employed by MCUSA, as evidenced by the 32,000 "professions of faith" that Stricklin proudly claimed as garnered by MCUSA chaplains during the company's first two decades in business.¹⁶⁴

Gaining souls for Christ, however, was not MCUSA's main selling point for companies. For employers, MCUSA presumably helped their bottom lines, keeping down worker unrest and boosting profits. Promotional material by MCUSA took a cost-benefit analysis of the company's offerings. For every dollar spent by a company on a corporate chaplain, Stricklin claimed that the company would reap between a five and sixteen times-fold return on their investment. Stricklin allayed fears of litigation by noting that, since the company's founding in 1984, "there has never been a lawsuit filed against Marketplace Chaplains USA, an individual chaplain or a client company as a result of the provision of our chaplain program." Employers also saw intangible benefits in contracting with MCUSA. "They're able to do more than I can do by myself as far as working with our people, helping our people and meeting their needs emotionally when they're going through a crisis," reported Earl Patrick, president of a realty company in Waco, Texas. Tim Embry, CEO of American LubeFast in Duluth, Georgia likewise found much to like in his company's contract with MCUSA, claiming that Stricklin "takes issues away from managers that they don't know how to handle and gives them to those that do."¹⁶⁵

Yet, MCUSA was not without its critics. The National Workrights Institute, a nonprofit labor organization, lobbied for firmer restrictions on chaplaincy organizations like MCUSA, believing a chaplain's job "is to convert the unconverted." The AFL-CIO also criticized

¹⁶⁴ Phillip L. Hamilton, "Marketplace Chaplains," *The Paris News* (August 22, 2004), 1-A; "Corporate Chaplain Helping Workers," *The Telegraph* (February 7, 1997), D-3; Stephen Singer, "Corporate Chaplains Face Legislative Challenges," *The Chronicle-Telegram* (March 11, 2006), E-4; "Frequently Asked Questions," <http://mchapusa.com/03faq.aspx>; Ken Camp, "Marketplace Ministries Marks 20 Years as God's Ambassadors," *Baptist Standard* (October 29, 2004), http://www.baptiststandard.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2637&Itemid=132.

¹⁶⁵ "Corporate Chaplain Helping Workers," D-3; Jane Lampman, "Spiritual Guidance...In the Workplace?" *The Christian Science Monitor* (September 1, 2005), 12-13.

corporate chaplains as violating federal prohibitions on workplace discrimination according to religion. Though generally approving of corporate chaplains, Douglas Hicks, a Presbyterian minister and professor of leadership studies and religion at the University of Richmond, identified another potential problem for workers who sought out chaplains like those offered by MCUSA. Companies “are profit-making institutions” and when “they get into the religion business, they can easily favor one group over another.” Thus, evangelical-led groups like MCUSA might claim inclusiveness and non-discrimination, but the opportunity for forwarding evangelical solutions to workers was both tempting and often encouraged by a chaplain’s client, often an evangelical executive. Since Hicks thought that corporate chaplains generally took “the side that’s paying them” in labor disputes, laid-off workers might also turn to chaplains who only encouraged them to deal with their grief or anger in non-litigious ways. Such concerns did not necessarily translate into successful legislative bids to restrict corporate chaplains from operating freely inside corporate offices and among corporate workforce. For instance, bills against corporate chaplains floundered in Hawaii and Colorado’s state legislatures.¹⁶⁶

Facing few legislative restrictions and a welcoming corporate environment, chaplaincy companies continued to flourish. Founded in 1995 and headquartered in North Carolina, Corporate Chaplains of America had 100 full-time chaplains working to minister to 75,000 workers in 24 states after only twelve years of operations. After starting up in the early 1990s, another for-profit chaplain provider—Chaplains Associates, Inc.—also built a healthy client list in the Atlanta metro area, including banks and other service-sector businesses.¹⁶⁷ Still, MCUSA remained the market leader in providing chaplains to American corporations and grew by leaps

¹⁶⁶ Singer, “Corporate Chaplains Face Legislative Challenges,” E-4; Kerry Hall, “Companies Hire Chaplains to Aid Workers,” *The Frederick News-Post* (January 14, 2006), B-11.

¹⁶⁷ “Praying for Gain,” *The Economist* (August 25, 2007), 60; Rebecca McCarthy, “Faith and Work: Businesses See Benefits of Chaplains in the Office,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* (January 14, 2007), J-1. “Chaplains Associates, Inc.,” client list at <http://www.chaplainsassociates.com/default.aspx?cid=0MjMdU%20mp5I>.

and bounds after 2001, when evangelical businessman Larry Wright became CEO. A former president and CEO for Piggly Wiggly in Memphis, Wright oversaw a point-by-point growth plan for MCUSA into the new millennium. “Our growth will be planned and managed for quality service to our client base as we serve them and others,” Wright told reporters after accepting the position. Under Wright’s program, the client list for MCUSA roughly doubled in five years. As in the past, this client base was remarkably varied, including companies in finance and banking, food services, distribution services, manufacturing, printing and publishing, and hospitality services.¹⁶⁸

Some companies, however, did not merely seek to incorporate faith at work through hired guns. Rather, they aimed at integrating their evangelicalism in their corporate culture and, if possible, in the cultures of other companies. To be sure, not all of these companies were located in the Southern Rim. For example, General Motors, Borg-Warner, The Boston Company, Raytheon, ServiceMaster, Herman Miller, Chemical Waste Management, Inc., Reell Precision Manufacturing, Inc., Burger King, Wendy’s, and AmWay were northern companies with evangelicals at their helm, either from the start at some point in their corporate histories.¹⁶⁹

Still, many if not most evangelical-led or evangelical-affiliated companies lay in the emergent Sunbelt, as the postwar economic boom in the region both heightened the fortunes of established evangelical companies and fostered the emergence of dozens of “new rich” entrepreneurs. From the 1950s through the 1990s, Sunbelt companies with either evangelical

¹⁶⁸ “Praying for Gain,” 60; “Marketplace Ministries Names Wright New CEO,” *Gazette-Enterprise* – Seguin, Texas (July 6, 2001), 7; “Clients of Marketplace Chaplains,” <http://marketplacechaplains.com/04clients.aspx>.

¹⁶⁹ The evangelical executives heading each of these companies included, respectively, Elmer Johnson, Jim Beré, Dick Crowell, Thomas Phillips, Kenneth Wessner, Max DePree, Jerry Dempsey, Dale Merrick, Charles Olcott, Dave Thomas, and Richard DeVos and Jay Van Andel. For interviews with several of these northern business leaders, see Laura L. Nash, *Believers in Business* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1994). Most of Nash’s interviews were with evangelical businessmen in Texas, Florida, and the Midwest. Other sources that discuss evangelical businessmen not studied in Nash’s book include “Reell Precision Manufacturing, Inc.: A Matter of Direction,” Kenneth E. Goodpaster and Laura L. Nash, eds., *Policies and Persons: A Casebook in Business Ethics*, 3rd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998), 135-150.

founders or directors included, but were not limited to Genesco, Eckerd's Drugs, Knight-Ridder, Rayco, Buford Television, In-N-Out Burger, The Allen Morris Company, Snyder Oil Corporation, Hall-Mark Electronics, Highland Park Cafeterias, The Medart Companies, Wyndam Hotels, Williamson Cadillac Company, Pizza Hut/PepsiCo, Martin Sprocket and Gear, Westaff, Inc., Pilgrim's Pride, Interstate Batteries, Cavan Real Estate Investments, *The Miami Herald*, Comps.com, eHarmony.com, FlowData, Inc., Hobby Lobby, Kinetic Concepts, SYSCO, World Wide Technology, and Godfather's Pizza.¹⁷⁰ Several corporate leaders, however, stood out, both as respective pioneers in their economic sectors and for exemplifying the numerous ways that corporate America and conservative evangelicalism could reinforce one another in the Sunbelt Age.

The Varieties of Corporate Evangelicalism

Evangelical principles and practices were not applied in uniform manner; rather, contingency marked the ways that corporate leaders incorporated their evangelical sensibilities into their corporate cultures. A sense of this contingency can be garnered through an overview of the most illustrative "evangelical" companies working in the emergent Sunbelt economy, namely Wal-Mart, HEB Grocery Stores, Tropicana, Pilgrim's Pride, Holiday Inn, Days Inn,

¹⁷⁰ I built this list from a perusal of Nash's book, select profiles in Merrill J. Oster and Mike Hamel, *The Entrepreneur's Creed: The Principles and Passions of 20 Successful Entrepreneurs* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2001), and other sources, including the following: "The Ins and Outs of In-N-Out," *Gilroy Dispatch* (March 6, 2006), <http://www.gilroydispatch.com/printer/article.asp?c=180266>; R. G. Ratcliffe, "Conservative Liberal With His Offerings," *Houston Chronicle* (September 21, 1997), 1-A, 21-A; Dan McGraw, "The Christian Capitalists," *U.S. News and World Report* (March 13, 1995), 53-62; Matthew Myers, "CEO Profile of David Green," *Revenue Generators* (September 2004), 4-5; David Steward and Robert L. Shook, *Doing Business by the Good Book* (New York: Hyperion, 2004). The evangelical executives for each of the companies listed above are as follows: Anthony Rossi, W. Maxey Jarman, Jack Eckerd, Alvah Chapman, Jack Willome, Bob Buford, Rich Snyder, Allen Morris, John C. Snyder, Jack Turpin, Ed Yates, William H. Rentschler, Jim Carreker, Ed Williamson, Steven Reinmund, W. Robert Stover, Lonny "Bo" Pilgrim, Norman Miller, David V. Cavan, Dick Capen, Christopher A. Crane, Neal Clark Warren, Bob Reese, David Green, James Leiningner, John F. Baugh, David Steward, and Herman Cain. Of these evangelical executives, all are white males, excepting David Steward and Herman Cain.

Chick-fil-A, and Mary Kay, Inc. Each of these companies showed a different manifestation of evangelical principles and practices in its history, daily operation, and/or social engagements. Whether transformed into an “evangelical” company from the bottom-up or the top-down, or built as a company in rural or urban environs, or run mainly by men or women, or actively engaged in defending free market enterprise or a tamed version of it—each of their company histories reveals the flexibility and multiple meanings of conservative evangelicalism in the corporate world of the emergent Sunbelt.

As one of the world’s largest and most powerful corporations, Wal-Mart deserves all of the attention it has recently received in the popular and scholarly press. Historian Nelson Lichtenstein’s assessment of Wal-Mart as “the face of twentieth-century capitalism” is right on target. Recent treatments of the connections between Sunbelt evangelicalism and the region’s economic development have also focused on Wal-Mart as a model for understanding how religion and the service sector of the Sunbelt economy reified one another. According to historian Bethany Moreton, Wal-Mart’s development was conditional on the transformation of the rural and small town South, areas commonly known as “Wal-Mart Country.” Though not an evangelical himself, founder Sam Walton drew many of Wal-Mart’s employees from the rural Arkansas, Kansas, and Missouri, areas replete with evangelicals and evangelical institutions. Thus, Wal-Mart was a product of this evangelical habitat, quickly and quietly becoming an evangelical company from the bottom-up during the 1970s and 1980s.¹⁷¹

¹⁷¹ Stanley D. Brunn, *Wal-Mart World: The World’s Biggest Corporation in the Global Economy* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Charles Fishman, *The Wal-Mart Effect: How the World’s Most Powerful Company Really Works—And How It’s Transforming the American Economy* (New York: Penguin, 2007); Michael Hicks, *The Local Economic Impact of Wal-Mart* (New York: Cambria Press, 2007); Anthony Bianco, *Wal-Mart: The Bully of Bentonville* (New York: Random House, 2007); Nelson Lichtenstein, ed., *Wal-Mart: The Face of Twenty-First Century Capitalism* (New York: New Press, 2006). On the “agrarian origins” of Wal-Mart, see Bethany E. Moreton, “It Came from Bentonville,” Lichtenstein, *ibid.*, 57-82. Also see Lichtenstein, *The Retail Revolution: How Wal-Mart Created a Brave New World of Business* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2009), 11-34.

Even its early capitalization depended on the contributions of notable evangelicals. Jesse H. Jones, a Houston millionaire and ardent evangelical whom Franklin D. Roosevelt reportedly nicknamed “Jesus H. Jones,” was a vital component of Wal-Mart’s early history. Jones had been converted by John E. Brown, a businessman-turned-evangelist who also counted George Harding and George Pepperdine among his friends. To return the favor, Jones raised donations from Houston oilmen for the establishment and accreditation of Brown’s own independent institution, John Brown College. As with business endeavors elsewhere in the South, the federal government was not far from Jones’s office. As the head of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC), the largest lending agency in U.S. history, Jones also oversaw millions of dollars worth of federal funding for private enterprises in the 1930s and 1940s. Enough of this federal money made its way into Little Rock investment bank Stephens, Inc., managed by Wilton R. “Witt” and Jack Stephens, to turn the regional bank into one of the most important centers of finance outside New York City, a major financier to firms like Tyson Chicken, J.B. Hunt Transport, and Wal-Mart. Although Sam Walton aggressively pursued help from Wall Street banks, the federally-supported monies that Stephens, Inc. offered brought Walton within the orbit of a growing corpus of evangelical power brokers. It also afforded Walton and his company an aura of hometown appeal, of being a company funded by local interests and attuned to local desires. For these reasons, Walton and Wal-Mart tapped into the long history of populist disdain for monopolistic entities and far-off Wall Street elites, successfully casting the company as a store made by and for the people of northwest Arkansas. The company’s attentiveness toward the evangelical sensibilities of those in its labor force and customer base also signaled its identity as a service-oriented “family store,” creating an initial source of its corporate power.¹⁷²

¹⁷² Bethany Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart: The Making of Christian Free Enterprise* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 30-34.

Whereas LeTourneau actually manufactured products for sale, Wal-Mart's primary product was service. Thus, motivating managers and employees to work diligently in service to customers, often with few rewards in terms of wages or benefits, was of paramount importance. From the 1960s to the 1980s, as Wal-Mart grew from a smattering of small retail stores to an up-and-coming retail powerhouse, Walton and his managers tapped into the evangelical sensibilities and concerns of their employees. In the process, argues Moreton, "Wal-Mart transformed itself into a national Christian icon from the bottom up."¹⁷³ This transformation came via its personnel, but it had different permutations, varying according to the sex and station of its workers. For the mostly male management at Wal-Mart, the company's appropriation of evangelicalism came in the form of a management philosophy that solved the "gender danger" that service work created for men. Unlike farm or industrial work, service work seemed feminized by comparison, offering a method for breadwinning that nevertheless threatened to undermine the "manliness" of male managers. Walton and Wal-Mart settled these concerns by affirming new management theories circulating in the 1960s and 1970s and reframing them to speak to new takes on manhood also circulating in the evangelical culture. In short, Wal-Mart's corporate culture endorsed "servant leadership," arguing that men could still retain a sense of manliness and male authority by "serving" their employees, their customers, and their families.¹⁷⁴

Moreton theorizes that this acceptance of "servant leadership" at Wal-Mart by male employees corresponded with a different set of demands for the company's most female workforce. For the mostly female workforce at Wal-Mart, Walton emphasized the value of women's work, assuring them that time spent in the aisles at Wal-Mart did not contradict their felt desires to be considered "good mothers" or "good Christians." "I come from a factory

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 122.

¹⁷⁴ Moreton, "The Soul of Neoliberalism," *Social Text* 25:3 (Fall 2007), 103-23.

background,” explained Janet Rugg, a Wal-Mart employee in 1992, “which meant work came first, before family, church, or anything else. . . . That is the reason I like Wal-Mart. I can keep God first in my life because Wal-Mart lets me work around church services.” The “servant leadership” ethic also appealed, since she was encouraged—much like at church on Sunday—to “treat [people] just how I like to be treated.” Even consumers—many living in the small towns and rural outposts that Wal-Mart targeted during the first few decades of corporate growth—readily identified Wal-Mart with evangelical principles, even if Walton himself and his management denied being a “Christian company.” Wal-Mart attempted to the moral concerns of conservative Christians by barring certain goods, such as CDs by Tupac Shakur and Snoop Doggy Dogg or anything related to Beavis and Butthead, while sanitizing others “for your protection,” such as airbrushing out nudity or sexual imagery from alternative rock album covers or fashion magazines like *Cosmopolitan*. Promoting other goods, especially books or music produced by evangelical media outlets, further marked Wal-Mart as presumably “pro-family” and “pro-Christian.”¹⁷⁵

In the 1970s and 1980s, as conservative evangelical activists around the Sunbelt aimed at making “pro-family” and “pro-Christian” synonymous positions, Wal-Mart tapped into this growing—and quite profitable—dynamic. As with other companies that did not want their religious affiliations to keep non-Christian or non-evangelical customers from coming through their doors, Walton and Wal-Mart did not splash its evangelical affiliations all over corporate advertisements or other forms of corporate branding. In other words, the “official” company line emphasized its family-friendly selection of goods and family-friendly work environment without explicitly citing their evangelical associations or lauding their workforce as majority evangelical.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 92, 122.

Still, much of Wal-Mart's corporate structure and culture drew from evangelical sources. Most of the company's early managers came to Wal-Mart from a smattering of evangelical colleges in the area, including Oklahoma Christian University, John Brown University, and Harding College. In turn, business courses at those colleges increasingly taught the "servant leader" model of management and received direct donations from Wal-Mart executives and foundations. In the 1980s and 1990s, as Wal-Mart became the world's largest company, evangelical faith remained a key component of its global power. New managers and employees for Wal-Mart's outside the U.S. received regular training in its "servant leadership" model and through programs like the Walton Scholars, many traveled regularly back and forth between evangelical colleges in the Ozarks and home offices in South America and Asia, creating links between faith and enterprise, and between corporate endeavors in both locales that R. G. LeTourneau would have envied.¹⁷⁶

Although Wal-Mart exemplified the complex ways that corporatism and evangelicalism could interact in the retail environment, it was not the only model to be found in the postwar Sunbelt. Other retailers in the blossoming service sector—such as HEB Stores of Texas—showed a different way of doing the Lord's work. In HEB's case, its evangelicalism came from the top-down instead of the bottom-up, as its corporate director, Howard E. Butt, Jr., used his company as an example of a "Christian business" and as the financial source for his various evangelical missions to modern America. Whereas Walton benefited from the contributions of his evangelical work force, Butt impressed his religious values on his workers and, through an important side project in his larger corporate mission, aimed to teach other managers how to do the same.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 49-172.

Butt's grandmother had founded H. E. Butt Grocery Store Company (HEB) in Kerrville, Texas in 1905, and his father, H. E. Butt, Sr. took over the store after he returned from World War I. In the 1920s and 1930s, the company expanded throughout Texas while, according to one 1971 retrospective of the store's history, it also "became active in food manufacturing and for many years operated the only pineapple canning plant in the continental United States." Butt, Sr. tapped into his Baptist upbringing to shape the company's corporate culture. As he liked to claim, HEB's success came from "hard work and observance of the Golden Rule." As a retailer, Butt, Sr. mirrored the "Golden Rule" corporate service mantra of retailers before him, most especially J.C. Penney. "Our greatest asset is public good will," he believed, "This asset of good will is greater than asset in merchandise. In this business the adage is surely true: 'He profits most who serves best.'" By 1953, this corporate model seemed to be working quite well. HEB Stores employed over 2,000 people as it continued to "serve the public according to [Butt Sr.'s] guiding philosophy." This included a strong encouragement from management for workers to involve themselves in the community, although workers were expressly forbidden from joining labor unions. According to HEB's guide for workers, "The company will oppose a union at H.E.B. by every legal means."¹⁷⁷

Butt, Jr. moved into the vice-presidential post of the company after World War II, while his father solidified the family's wealth through additional investments in several important segments of the early Sunbelt economy: banking, real estate, oil, and retailing. Butt, Jr. also took up the post as a newly converted Baptist, having experienced a "born again" experience as a teenager during World War II at Corpus Christi Junior College. As vice-president at HEB, Butt gained fame as an effective executive and—in the words of one 1955 report—a "Gospel

¹⁷⁷ "Charles C. Butt New H.E.B. President," *San Antonio Express* (July 20, 1971), 3-A; "Hard Work and Golden Rule Built H.E.B., Says Founder," *The Brownsville Herald* (April 16, 1953), 30; Jan Jarboe, "What Does H.E.B. Stand For, Anyway?" *Texas Monthly* (April, 1988), 159.

Bootlegger.” Between 1945 and 1955, Butt made over 1,650 appearances in twenty-two states and seven countries as an evangelical speaker. As a devout Southern Baptist, Butt also gained an audience at three Southern Baptist Conventions and the Baptist World Congress. His endeavors brought him into the purview of Billy Graham, whom Butt would support with financial contributions throughout the evangelist’s career. Butt also developed a close-knit network of like-minded businessmen and academics during the 1950s, forming a lay evangelical team of young business leaders that included Fred Smith, of Gruen Watch Company; Bill Mead, a Texas bakery owner; Roy Bass, a Lubbock attorney; Cecil Carrol, a Jacksonville, Florida insurance salesman; Fague Springman, a University of Maryland music professor, and Karl Steel, an art professor at evangelical Wheaton College. This network of laymen laid the groundwork for additional forays by Butt into energizing the work of businessmen, not only in spreading Bible-based management strategies to the American public but also among their own employees.¹⁷⁸

Butt Jr.’s most important contribution in the latter regard was the Layman’s Leadership Institute (LLI). First organized in 1955, LLI was initially an extension of another of Butt, Jr.’s lay organizations, Christian Men, Inc. By 1961, LLI brought together “[p]articipants, invited because of influential positions as prominent Christian laymen . . . from 42 states and overseas.” Prominent evangelical businessmen—like Genesco’s Maxey Jarman and Aluminum Product’s Herbert J. Taylor—joined rising stars in the evangelical subculture—like radio personality Paul Harvey and Los Angeles pastor Dr. Louis Evans—at LLI meetings. The primary goal of LLI was teaching businessmen to take their faith seriously and use their resources to extend the gospel. Butt, Jr. claimed at a Miami meeting of LLI in 1961: “We have developed a spectator Christianity in which few speak and many listen. The New Testament church, started as a lay

¹⁷⁸ “Texas Grocery Man Devotes Long Hours Evangelizing as ‘Gospel Bootlegger,’” *The Daily Chronicle* (March 7, 1955), 9; “Busy Texan is ‘Gospel Bootlegger,’” *Council Bluffs Nonpareil* (March 27, 1955), D-1.

movement, has deteriorated into a professional pulpitness financed by lay spectators.” To counter this tendency—even as he supported it via his financial backing of professional pulpitists like Billy Graham—Butt, Jr. believed the LLI could become a powerful force for convincing business leaders of the applicability of faith beyond Sunday morning.¹⁷⁹

The purpose of LLI overlapped with the Laity Lodge, another of Butt, Jr.’s social experiments. Set up on a 2,000 acre ranch in 1961 after Butt, Jr. witnessed operations at Evangelical Lay Academies—a lay organization in Germany—Laity Lodge was an update on the retreat camps long used by evangelicals to renew their faith or introduce the uninitiated to it. Butt Jr. selected Keith Miller, an Oklahoma oil man also interested in lay ministry and counseling, to be Laity Lodge’s first director. By the end of the 1960s, the Lodge was decidedly ecumenical in its approach toward ministry; Baptist, Methodist, Episcopal, Mennonite, First Christian, and Presbyterian representatives attended one program at the Laity Lodge in 1969. If expansive in who might attend programs at the Laity Lodge, it also had a singular mission. According to administrative director Bill Cody, a former personnel secretary for the Baptist Foreign Mission Board and ex-coordinator of the Layman’s Leadership Institutes, “The primary thrust of Laity Lodge . . . is in the area of personal Christian renewal, along with family and congregational renewal.” “We are re-examining the nature and depth of the commitment called for by Christ in the Gospel,” Cody continued, “It is our hope that we can determine what this commitment means in terms of being a part of the body of Christ in our local churches and in our vocational lives. But we also are seeking to enlarge our Christian vision to include the moral and

¹⁷⁹ “Local Men to Be With 900 at Laymen’s Meet,” *Corpus Christi Times* (January 13, 1961, 8-B; “Spectator Religion,” *The Morning Herald-Hagerstown*, Penn. (May 8, 1961), 14.

social problems of our generation.” Programs and curriculum at Laity Lodge focused on finding “meaning” in both ministry and in everyday work.¹⁸⁰

To that end, thousands came to Laity Lodge in the 1970s and early 1980s. By 1984, over 18,000 people and 250 different organizations attended private retreats at Laity Lodge. Not all were corporate leaders. Many congregations, Alcoholics Anonymous groups, and various civic service organizations also utilized the amenities at Laity Lodge. Still, when Butt, Jr. imagined the work of the laity in extending the evangelical enterprise, he believed that businessmen were the most important to reach because they were often the most reluctant to his gospel of applicable evangelicalism. His work with ILL and Laity Lodge reflected that conviction.¹⁸¹

If the service sector showed the imprint of evangelicalism, so did other new areas of the Sunbelt economy. For instance, in the industrial sector, agribusiness became a major area of economic growth after World War II. HEB Stores, of course, benefited from the general move toward economies of scale, as his shelves increasingly were stocked with the fruits of new forms of agricultural production. So did other evangelical businessmen, like Anthony Rossi, who founded of Florida-based agribusiness giant Tropicana Products in 1947 and turned it into a pioneer in fruit and fruit juice production and distribution in the 1950s and 1960s. In general, Rossi did little to apply his evangelicalism inside the fields, factories, and refrigerated “Juice Train” that supported his company. Yet, he did mirror his contemporaries—such as R. G. LeTourneau and Howard Butt, Jr.—in setting aside money for various missionary activities. A former Roman Catholic who converted to evangelical Protestantism, Rossi regularly traveled back and forth to his native Italy, sponsoring missions intended to convert Catholics there. In

¹⁸⁰ Eugene Paterson and Howard Hovde, *A Dream That Came to Life: The History of the Laity Lodge Retreat Center* (Macon: Smith and Helwys Publishing, 2007), 17-21; Al McCulloch, “Christian Renewal Goal of Mountainside Center,” *The Corpus Christi Call-Times* (August 10, 1969), 1-B.

¹⁸¹ “Laity Lodge Attracts Over 18,000 Annually,” *Kerrville Mountain Sun* (April 4, 1984), 9.

1966, he set up a permanent missions settlement in Messina, Italy with the support of fundamentalist Columbia Bible College, located in South Carolina. At the same time, Rossi supported the Gideons and founded the Aurora Foundation in the U.S. for the purpose of training missionaries for continued work in Europe and Asia, work that continued well after Rossi retired in 1978, after selling Tropicana to Beatrice Foods.¹⁸²

If Rossi often worked in the background of the burgeoning field of agribusiness, Lonnie “Bo” Pilgrim stood out, both in the flamboyance of his evangelicalism and in the contradictions his faith entailed. Owner of Pilgrim’s Pride, first a feed company and later a chicken processor headquartered in northeast Texas, Pilgrim marched, according to one journalist, “to the beat of a different drumstick” with “his quirky mixture of Jesus, chickens, progress, and Horatio Alger.” Pilgrim wore his religion on his sleeve. “I think the Lord is using Pilgrim’s Pride as an example of a Christian businessman,” he once told the *Austin Chronicle*, “I believe that from the bottom of my heart. I know the Lord does that with me. He has tried me with fire and he has blessed me.” Given God’s favors to him, Pilgrim regularly sought to return the favor through public gifts. “Pilgrim lives large,” continued the *Chronicle* report:

[H]e has shared his wealth with the citizens of Pittsburg and Mount Pleasant. Perhaps his most famous gift is the Prayer Tower, which sits on triangle-shaped Witness Park, near downtown Pittsburg. Completed in 1992, the 75-foot-tall stone spire contains beautiful stained glass, French bells, and Belgian clocks. Inside is a small chapel, chairs, a long kneeling bench, and a large, thumb-worn Bible on a lectern. There are no locks on the doors. Visitors come day and night to enjoy the quiet elegance and peacefulness of the place. Pilgrim also gives money to his church (the First Baptist Church of Pittsburg), to local schools, and to area churches.

¹⁸² John W. White, *The Great Yellow Fleet* (San Marino: Golden West Books, 1986); “Tropicana” in Janice Jorgensen, ed., *Encyclopedia of Consumer Brands*, vol. 1 (Detroit: St. James Press, 1994), 598-601; Wayne King, “A Taste for Profits,” *The New York Times* (June 16, 1974), 149; “What Makes Rossi Run?” *Forbes* (November 15, 1971), 50-51; Dale White, “Juice King Revolutionized Industry,” *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* (February 22, 1999), 1-B; Sanna Barlow Rossi, *Anthony T. Rossi: Christian and Entrepreneur* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1986).

Pilgrim's ostentatious evangelicalism also marked his business expenses. After buying a \$12 million private jet in 1999, Pilgrim wrote in a company newsletter that, "I want to thank Jesus Christ for our new Hawker 800 XP airplane." He had already put a Bible in the plane, just as he had in the first airplane he had purchased sixteen years earlier. "Another Bible has been added to the new airplane," he proclaimed, "We are now operating both airplanes for our company, which always praises Jesus."¹⁸³

Pilgrim's convictions informed the company's culture, albeit not in a comprehensive way. Like Tyson, one of his main competitors, Pilgrim had a corporate chaplain program—known as Pilgrim's Cares and staffed by Marketplace Ministries—to field the concerns of managers and employees alike. His autobiographical story of his rise to success was rife with references to how Jesus Christ and evangelical friends and contemporaries had shaped his career as a "Christian businessman." The Bible was also never far from Pilgrim's explanation of his success, as he cited passages like Philippians 4:13 ("I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me") as exemplars of a "can-do" spirit and indirectly compared his fellow board members and executives as the "good trees" referenced in Matthew 7:16-17 ("You will know them by their fruits . . . Every good tree bears good fruit."). Pilgrim selected any number of other passages from both the Old and New Testaments to cap each chapter in his autobiography, using each as a call to moral, meritocratic work on behalf of whatever corporation or organization employed his readers (e.g. 2 Timothy 1:14, Psalms 37:23, Romans 8:28, Matthew 10:8, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Matthew 7:12, Galatians 6:9, Deuteronomy 28:1-3, Galatians 5:14-15, Romans 12:3, James 4:13-15, 1 Peter 4:10, James 1:17, 2 Sam 7:29). Each passage pointed to a

¹⁸³ Robert Bryce, "Not Clucking Around," *The Austin Chronicle* (November 3, 2000), <http://www.austinchronicle.com/gyrobase/Issue/story?oid=oid%3A79226>.

singular message. The reader—especially those in management—should “See your company as God’s gift to you.”¹⁸⁴

For all his religious posturing, however, Pilgrim’s sense of Christian morality did not push him toward ensuring healthy labor relations or operating within the law on labor matters.¹⁸⁵ Pilgrim—like many of his fellow evangelical businessmen—held a low view of worker benefits and organizing. Once, in 1989, Pilgrim shocked the Texas state legislature when he walked onto the Senate floor and proceeded to hand out \$10,000 checks along with his personal business card to legislators just two days before a vote on workers’ compensation laws. One Senator called the stunt “outrageous” while a state representative promised to propose a law prohibiting such contributions on Capitol grounds. Two swing voters took Pilgrim up on his offer and reform floundered (though it was probably had less to do with Pilgrim’s shenanigans and more to do with historic gridlock among Texas legislators over compensation laws).¹⁸⁶ Still, “[t]he workers’ compensation law was never very good,” recalled Dr. Louis Arrondo, who worked directly with injured Pilgrim workers, “but it really got bad when Bo Pilgrim passed out checks to the Texas legislature.” The poor treatment of workers at Pilgrim’s plants overlapped with his increased

¹⁸⁴ Bo Pilgrim, *One Pilgrim’s Progress: How to Build a World-Class Company, and Who to Credit* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2005), 103, 107, 111-112, 189-197.

¹⁸⁵ Neither did his evangelical convictions seem to bring a reevaluation on Pilgrim’s part toward his company’s environmental impact. Though he once averred that, “[w]hen you sin against the environment, you are sinning against the Lord,” Pilgrim seemed less than inclined to redeem for his sins. Between 1985 and 1999, Pilgrim was cited numerous times by state and federal officials for violations of state and federal air and water laws. Over \$500,000 in fines had been aimed at Pilgrim during the same years. In 1999, Pilgrim dumped over three million gallons of wastewater each day into a creek near one of his factories in east Texas, drawing pause from the Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission, which was considering a permit request from Pilgrim to double his processing capacity and, presumably, his environmental impact. Still, Danny Crooks, a judge who lived in a county transformed by a Pilgrim plant, thought such environmental drawbacks did not outweigh the economic benefits the company brought to his community. “When you smell that [smell],” he claimed, “it smells like money.” Bryce, “Not Clucking Around.”

¹⁸⁶ Little seemed to change between then and when George W. Bush won the governor’s seat in 1994, a campaign that Pilgrim apparently supported. Pilgrim hosted Bush at his home during his run for the governor’s office and, although no record exists of Pilgrim’s exact views on the candidate, he most likely sent some checks his way since he shared Bush’s was as much a politically-inclined evangelical and free market capitalist as Pilgrim. Harris Collingwood, “These Campaign Gifts Ain’t Chicken Feed,” *Business Week* (July 24, 1989), 27; “Texas Businessman Hands Out \$10,000 Checks in State Senate,” *The New York Times* (July 9, 1989), 23; Roberto Suro, “Lobbying Becomes Bolder in Texas,” *The New York Times* (July 23, 1989), 18.

dependence on immigrant work. A common trend throughout the chicken processing industry, dependence on undocumented Hispanic work opened the door for further abuses. Pilgrim was demure about his use of migrant labor, telling *The Dallas Morning News* in 1996 that, “God wants poor people to have jobs.” A decade later, he told the same paper that he was “not looking for cheap labor” but for “available labor” because “How many people can you get to squat down and catch chickens?” Pilgrim’s active recruitment of Hispanic laborers—many with illegal immigration and work status—garnered an investigation into Pilgrim’s Mount Pleasant, Texas facility under the suspicion that Pilgrim officials were looking the other way when workers presented false documents and engaging in discriminatory hiring practices at other plants, rejecting non-Hispanic male applicants and Hispanic female applicants “in favor of Hispanic male applicants.”¹⁸⁷

Many of these immigrant laborers did not believe that Pilgrim’s willingness to open his production lines to them was part and parcel of a broader, moral humanitarian mission. Blanca Garcia, who had been injured at a Pilgrim plant, observed that racism and sexism was rife in the company’s culture. “They call us wetbacks,” he told a progressive journalist in 1994, “They tell us we should be grateful because we get paid more here in an hour than we do for a full day’s work in Mexico.” She added that she and fellow workers had been physically assaulted and sexually abused. Fines and investigations had done little to curb abuses at Pilgrim’s plants. Despite Arrondo’s work to talk about a communal response to Pilgrim, “They keep coming in injured everyday. . . . They have no one else to turn to. Nobody else tells them their rights.”¹⁸⁸

Small towns and rural areas were not the only places where corporatism and evangelicalism could intersect. Urban metropolises could serve as vibrant habitats for corporate

¹⁸⁷ Carol Countryman, “Shame of Pilgrim’s Pride,” *The Progressive* (August, 1994), 11; Christopher Helman, “Fowl Play,” *Forbes* (February 11, 2008), 42, 44.

¹⁸⁸ Countryman, “Shame of Pilgrim’s Pride,” 11.

evangelicals. In fact, the emerging metropolises on the Sunbelt were more often *the* habitat for corporate evangelicals, ushered forward by demographic reordering or federal largesse that built their metropolitan environs.

The racial and economic context of Sunbelt metropolises was particularly important for evangelical businesses in and around urban areas. As historians of the urban South and West have recently shown, the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s accelerated suburbanization forward, encouraging whites concerned about the racial integration of schools, public spaces, and businesses to move to suburban enclaves outside central cities, if they had the means to do so. “White flight” was more than a geographic relocation, however, but a political and cultural revolution, as new forms of politics and values became common among suburban residents. Despite the active role played by the federal state in laying the groundwork for suburban growth, suburbia turned into a bastion of anti-statist sentiments in the postwar period. Such sentiments emerged for distinct historical reasons. In the midst of federal civil rights legislation and desegregation of public spaces and schools, many white suburbanites exalted the ostensibly “color-blind” language of “freedom of choice” and “freedom of association” as political alternatives to adherence to federal court orders and policy. In addition, federal policies aimed at assuaging the urban crisis struck southern suburbanites as wasteful uses of public monies, resulting in a series of grassroots, suburban-centered tax revolts that sought to limit taxation for the purposes of urban planning and educational programs. Religious sentiments also informed the politics of Sunbelt suburbanites, with many suburban churches lauding a conservative set of “family values” as an antidote to the racial and sexual revolutions of the 1960s and 1970s. Combined together, such political sensibilities transformed suburbanites into a powerful voting bloc, particularly for conservative politicians and strategists working for the

Republican Party. To be sure, not all suburbanites affiliated with the tenets of conservatism. But enough joined the ranks of the “New Right” to tip the political balance of late twentieth century America, pitching it decidedly to the right.¹⁸⁹

One suburban company that benefited from—and tapped into—these racial, social, religious, and political restructurings was Atlanta’s Chick-fil-A. Incorporated by S. Truett Cathy in Hapeville, an inner-ring, industrial suburb of Atlanta in 1964, Chick-fil-A depended on the new consumer spaces created by the post-1960s proliferation of shopping malls around the Atlanta metropolitan area. Famed for its signature fried chicken sandwich and its policy of closing all its restaurants each Sunday, Chick-fil-A expanded into over one hundred locations by 1980, all of them in shopping malls; by 1986, this number had risen to 315 units in thirty-one states, with Chick-fil-A’s “priority markets” predominantly in the Sunbelt, in metropolitan growth zones in Florida, Texas, and, to a limited extent, California.¹⁹⁰

From the 1970s to the 1990s, Cathy developed a cohesive business ethos—oriented around the notion of a corporate “family”—that defined Chick-fil-A’s corporate culture and situated it within the culture of middle class, majority white, evangelical suburbia. To be sure, this “family” model of management had been a part of corporate America since the early twentieth century, but Cathy also linked this cooperative approach to the suburban sense of

¹⁸⁹ Kruse, *White Flight*; Lassiter, *The Silent Majority*; For an overview of the recent scholarship on suburbia and the Sunbelt South, see Kevin M. Kruse and Matthew D. Lassiter, “The Bulldozer Revolution: Suburbs and Southern History Since World War II,” *The Journal of Southern History* 75:3 (August 2009), 691-706. On race and politics in the urban and suburban West, see Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

¹⁹⁰ “Chick-fil-A Inc.,” in *Telephone Directory, Greater Atlanta, GA., White Pages* (Atlanta: Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company, 1976, 1986), n.p.; “Shopping Centers” (Atlanta: *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 1978) 46-47, 51, 53; Hargrett Rare Books and Manuscripts Library, University of Georgia, Athens, GA; S. Truett Cathy, *Eat Mor Chikin: Inspire More People* (Decatur: Looking Glass Books, 2002), 118; Teri Peitso, “King of the Malls,” *Business Atlanta* (February 1986), 28.

individual, meritocratic achievement.¹⁹¹ He wanted his business to run like an ideal suburban family, with his managers in charge of the personal and professional development of their employees into productive individuals groomed for entrepreneurial success. “Our commitment is going to be like a marriage,” Cathy told his managers, a sacred vow of stewardship and mutual service “with no consideration given to divorce.” Like managers, employees needed to demonstrate a “sense of significance” about their work and faith to increase their odds of employment at Chick-fil-A. By following these dictates, their work would be like the work of Chick-fil-A itself—“a divine business” conducted by a “family” that glorified God “best by success and not by failure.”¹⁹² To this end, Cathy often urged all new employees to follow the lead of the unit’s manager, who would train them, motivate them, and set an example for how they ought to serve customers and each other.

Various in-office activities reaffirmed this arrangement. For instance, in the early 1980s, company policy encouraged Chick-fil-A’s employees to sing songs of devotion to the company and their managers. One song, entitled “Movin’ On,” went: “Every day is an adventure/When you’re striving for a goal/There’s a spirit of excitement/When we see the dream unfold/Chick-fil-A, we’re movin’ on/Chick-fil-A, we’re growin’ strong/We’re one big happy family/That’s the way at Chick-fil-A.” Employees who exemplified such corporatized “family values” were also duly rewarded for their service to the company. Given that his predominantly teenage workforce was often drawn from career-conscious and college-conscious suburbia (and even recruited from local churches), Cathy set up an incentive program in the late 1970s and early 1980s that largely catered to his employees’ interests. Any employee who maintained a “C” average in school and

¹⁹¹ Julie Kimmel, *The Corporation as Family: The Gendering of Corporate Welfare, 1880-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

¹⁹² Cathy, *Eat Mor Chikin*, 97-100; Renee Gibson, “Chick-fil-A Chief at Home in Rome,” *Rome News-Tribune* (April 17, 1989), 4.

had worked part-time for Chick-fil-A for at least two years could be eligible for a \$1,000 scholarship to the school of his or her choice, depending on their manager's recommendation. By 1991, Cathy had given away millions of dollars to this scholarship program, with more than 6,500 former employees having taken advantage of this incentive.¹⁹³

Along with suburban companies like Chick-fil-A, the hospitality business was particularly fertile ground for corporate-evangelical collusions. Two of the most prominent of these evangelical types of hospitality businesses were Holiday Inn and Days Inn. Again, variety marked the exact application of evangelical in these businesses. In Holiday Inn's case, evangelicalism worked in the background among select executives, driving their corporate growth strategies and their personal use of monies garnered from such growth. In Days Inn's case, evangelicalism was explicitly threaded throughout the company, informing both executive views on how to run a company that specialized in hospitality and expanding its mission to include an evangelization program for anyone wishing to make a buck in the competitive Sunbelt market and put those bucks to good use in service to Christ's Great Commission.

Holiday Inn was the product of a triumvirate of Sunbelt evangelical businessmen: Kemmons Wilson, Wallace E. Johnson, and William B. "Bill" Walton (no relation to Sam Walton of Wal-Mart). Each was a devout Southern Baptist and each was heavily invested in two of the main pillars of the Sunbelt economy—real estate and tourism. The idea for Holiday Inn came about in 1951 after Wilson took a trip from his native Memphis, Tennessee to Washington D.C. with his family. "The typical hotel room of the 1950's was cold and drab," Kemmons told a gathering of the Newcomen Society in 1968, "We wanted rooms which were bright and airy with friendly, warm colors." In other words, Kemmons wanted to transform hotels into

¹⁹³ Cathy, *Eat Mor Chikin*, 111; Cathy, *It's Easier to Succeed*, 161, 133; Lewis Grizzard, "Chicken Man," *Atlanta Journal/Atlanta Constitution, Atlanta Weekly* (November 28, 1982), 62-66; Rice, "Chick-fil-A Founder Uses Spiritual Principles," *Athens Daily News* (September 23, 1991), 4-A.

hospitable environments, replicating the ideal postwar home on the road for middle class families on vacation. His hotel would emphasize cleanliness, safety, and predictability. To help in this endeavor, Kemmons developed a working relationship with an expert in postwar homebuilding, Wallace Johnson. Johnson was one of the nation's foremost home developers. He had developed plans for the city of Oak Ridge, Tennessee (home of the famed Manhattan Project) and was a leading officer in the National Association of Home Builders. In 1954, Wilson and Johnson incorporated Holiday Inns of America, and invited another real estate expert—a lawyer and general counsel of the Home Builders Association in Memphis, Bill Walton—to join the executive board.¹⁹⁴

“When we founded Holiday Inns,” Bill Walton told a reporter in 1987, “We said we were going to build a worldwide system based on the dignity of all people and the Christian principle of man’s love for his fellow man.”¹⁹⁵ In other words, from the start, Holiday Inn attempted to unite notions of southern hospitality to Christian service. It did this in several ways. First, the company’s early managers were not deemed employees of Holiday Inn but marked as franchisees, or more importantly, as “Innkeepers.” Franchising, of course, was a common business strategy in the 1950s, as exemplified in the fast food and retail industry by companies like McDonald’s. At Holiday Inn, however, innkeepers were encouraged to affirm a short list of business principles if they hoped to work as a franchisee, one of which included a promise to do business according “to the Ten Commandments.” In turn, all innkeepers were encouraged to read the Bible for advice on conducting their business according to the tenets of biblical hospitality. Innkeepers also had the religious resources of the company available, including

¹⁹⁴ Kemmons Wilson, *The Holiday Inn Story* (New York: The Newcomen Society in North America, 1968), 9-11.

¹⁹⁵ Dan Reese, “Former Holiday Inns Exec Funnels Energy Into Writing Books and New Hotel Chain,” *Memphis Business Journal* (June 22, 1987), 1-16.

approximately 2,000 corporate chaplains on call for themselves or their guests, along with prefabricated chapels for use by franchisees. Innkeepers were also strongly encouraged to allow Bibles to be placed in hotel rooms, if not prominently displayed.¹⁹⁶ Through presumably independent innkeepers, managers nevertheless had to affirm Holiday Inn's collusion of hospitality and service, acting in many ways to their guests like the innkeeper that the infant Jesus never had.

Other suburban-dependent, evangelical business leaders came to different conclusions about their evangelicalism's applicability to their corporate life and sense of cultural politics. Cecil B. Day, a former Atlanta real estate broker who founded Days Inn in 1970, was equally dependent on the suburban consumer economy and post-1960s suburbanization in the burgeoning Sunbelt. Like fellow evangelical Kemmons Wilson, Day offered a clean, relatively cheap room for customers in suburban Atlanta. Later, Days Inn sought out the business of tourists going on the ultimate middle class suburbanite vacation spot in the 1970s, Florida's Disney World. Intentionally placing his hotels along the "Golden Triangle" of interstates connecting several Deep South states to Florida, Day capitalized on the tourist traffic running up and down these highways during the spring and summer months.

A devout Southern Baptist, Day did not have the option of closing on Sunday like Cathy. In the hotel business, Sunday closings are impractical; one cannot kick out tenants on Saturday night. Thus, Day applied his evangelicalism in different ways and to different degrees. Alcohol was not available at any Days Inn; instead, patrons were invited to read and take home the bedside Bibles that Day provided ("Steal This Book!" they advertised). Each motel offered pastoral services; a "Chaplain on Call" card was displayed in every Days Inn room. Fifty percent of his employees attended weekly Bible studies that began an hour before work hours.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

This integration of evangelicalism into his management strategy earned praise for Day from numerous evangelical and business leaders during his lifetime and after his death in 1982. Paul Harvey, Kemmons Wilson, Jimmy Carter, Gerald Ford, Richard Nixon, Billy Graham, John Haggai, Bill Bright, Norman Vincent Peale, and Pat Robertson all considered Day a friend and, as Ronald Reagan put it, a fitting symbol for “how the American dream can be fulfilled without compromising a sense of values.”¹⁹⁷

In general, evangelical businesses—whether in small town, rural, or metropolitan areas—had divisions of labor that put men in charge of other men or women. But not all Sunbelt businesses with evangelical affiliations were founded and directed by men. In 1963, Mary Kay Ash started Mary Kay, Inc. with her son, Richard Rogers, in the suburbs of Houston, Texas. A divorcee whose second husband died tragically from a heart attack in the same year she founded her company, Ash had spent almost twenty-five years in the direct-sales business, working first for Stanley Home Products in Houston and then as a national training director for World Gift Company of Dallas.¹⁹⁸ A business model with historical precedence in the traveling Avon salesmen and door-to-door Bible hucksters of a previous generation, direct sales enjoyed a rebirth after the Depression, as companies like Tupperware, as well as the companies that Ash worked for, brought the retail business to the doorsteps of millions of Americans. Given the explosion of suburban housing in the 1950s and 1960s, the market was rich for individuals wishing to make a living selling various household wares to willing buyers in the suburbs. Ash was in charge of training many of those new sellers and was quite good at her job. But when the World Gift Company passed her over for promotion, granting it to a male co-worker she had

¹⁹⁷ Cecil Burke Day, Jr. and John McCollister, *Day by Day: The Story of Cecil B. Day and His Simple Formula for Success* (New York: Jonathan David Publishers, Inc., 1990), 23-29, 73-86; Deen Day Sanders, interview by author, May 27, 2008.

¹⁹⁸ “Doors to Executive Suite Were Closed, So She Started Her Own Company,” *Chemical Week* (August 6, 1975), 40.

trained, Ash resigned and decided to write a “how to” book for professional women seeking to survive the male-dominated world of postwar business. The book became a business plan for her new company, a skin-care company that later became Mary Kay Cosmetics.¹⁹⁹

Capitalizing her new company with \$5,000 in savings and naming her son as its first employee, Ash wanted Mary Kay to become a company run by and for women. In doing so, Mary Kay fit into a longer and broader history of direct sales companies selling home products as an enabler, rather than oppressor, of womanhood.²⁰⁰ But she was also building her company in the midst of a changing culture, one in which feminists both challenged traditionalist interpretations of female ability and pushed employers to pay women fair wages and dismantle glass ceilings. As historian Nancy Peiss has noted, Ash’s company quickly rode the crest of feminist protest, albeit through endorsing women’s abilities to sell femininity. “Although she criticized feminists for effacing sex differences in the pursuit of equality, Ash deliberately reached out to displaced homemakers and other women rocked by the social and economic turmoil of the 1960s and 1970s,” writes Peiss. “Lauding female ability, opening job opportunities in her own organization, addressing women’s needs as mothers—all the while avowing women’s desire to appear feminine—Mary Kay fused feminist economic aims with traditionalist ideals of womanhood.” Indeed, in interviews, Ash argued that militant feminists need to “come off it—and get with it.” “[Women] have to help themselves, too. And looking

¹⁹⁹ Chris Hutchins, “How Mary Kay Became a Makeup Powerhouse,” *Cox News Service* (December 4, 2001), accessed via Lexis-Nexis Academic (September 22, 2007). Also see biography of Mary Kay Ash at <http://www.marykay.com/company/companyfounder/default.aspx>.

²⁰⁰ Mary Kay Ash’s company was similar to AmWay, Shaklee, United Science of America, and Tupperware, all of which had a strict division of labor between men in authority and married women in sales or personnel positions. Mary Kay’s market also overlapped with Home Interiors, another woman-run, Texas-based, direct-sales company run by Ash’s friend and contemporary Mary Crowley. Nicole Woolsey Biggart, *Charismatic Capitalism: Direct Selling Organizations in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 93-95.

repulsive won't do it," she told one columnist in 1970 after the Texas governor appointed her to a state commission on the status of women.²⁰¹

In her emphasis on the power of beauty and decorum, it can also be argued that Ash's company fit into the history of what Charles Reagan Wilson has called "The Cult of Beauty" in the South. Often headed up by women and best symbolized by the beauty pageant, the cult was steeped in "the evangelical ideal of woman," which centered "on her special moral and spiritual nature." Most often, dressed-up and made-up beauty queens represented purity through "carefully regimented and restricted codes," but also fiercely competitive women who win "by embodying—in the evangelical view—not just outward beauty but inner beauty." In this popular cult, beauty queens specifically and southern women generally used their beauty along with her success "to testify to her faith."²⁰²

Ash certainly tapped into this popular cult of female beauty, even having personal connections to southern beauty pageants, serving on judge's panels during her career.²⁰³ But her place in modern evangelicalism also went deeper. By retaining strong religious commitments, women would make their way into the male-dominated world of competitive business without losing their feminine distinctions and sense of motherly duty. As Ash put it, her company's core philosophy was "God first, family second, career third," a direct challenge to the presumed feminist assault on both God and family through female careerism.²⁰⁴ As one former Mary Kay beauty consultant put it, "Everything [Mary Kay Ash] says, even listening to her inspirational tapes, is all directed to women. It has an undertone of 'we are capable, but we still have our

²⁰¹ Kathy Peiss, *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America's Beauty Culture* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1998), 262; Virginia Payett, "Two Female 'Giants,'" *Abilene Reporter-News* (June 19, 1970), 8-B.

²⁰² Charles Reagan Wilson, *Judgment and Grace in Dixie: Southern Faiths from Faulkner to Elvis* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995), 156, 158.

²⁰³ For an example of Ash's participation in beauty pageants, see "Mrs. Ash to Judge Miss GP," *Grand Prairie Daily News* (May 21, 1968), 6.

²⁰⁴ Bess Winakor, "Mary Kay: She's Queen of Cosmetics," *Corpus Christi Times* (March 4, 1976), C-1.

place.” Ash strongly urged beauty consultants hoping to work at Mary Kay to ask their husband’s permission before starting work. Likewise, women were encouraged to forego company business if family obligations or emergencies were pressing, generally with the subtle implication that family matters were first and foremost women’s work. Although Ash herself claimed that she would never “impose my personal religious beliefs on anyone,” evangelical devotion to a personal, all-encompassing faith was the company’s “bottom line,” since “on that day when God calls you to accept your relationship with Jesus Christ, nothing else matters.” “Each of us will come to that day,” she concluded, “and we must ask ourselves whether or not our lives have been meaningful.” A meaningful life, like a meaningful company, was one devoted not to the political or cultural sentiments of the day, but the bedrock conservative values of God, family, and faith. In Ash’s estimation, “miracles happen” for men and women who keep those values.²⁰⁵

The democratic nature of these “miracles” was an important facet of the business philosophy of corporate evangelicals. Presumably anyone—regardless of race, gender, or social station—could follow their biblically-mandated formula to achieving the American Dream. The record that many wanted to leave behind, what might be described as the liturgy of corporate evangelicals, revealed the facets of their faith in democratic capitalism. Through the written word, they aimed to show anyone and everyone how to attain success—with God’s help—in the Sunbelt Age.

²⁰⁵ Biggart, *Charismatic Capitalism*, 95; Mary Kay Ash, *Miracles Happen: Expect Great Things and Great Things Will Happen* 3rd ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 1994, orig. 1981), 65.

Do It Yourself (With God's Help)

So, how should one go about making the most of the opportunities afforded by the Sunbelt revolution? In the 1970s and afterwards, a number of evangelical business leaders lined up to provide the answer. Of course, the “how to” success book had been part of American popular culture since at least the days of Benjamin Franklin, experiencing ebbs and flows in their popularity throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Yet another revival in “how to” books came in the 1930s and 1940s. Ironically appearing at a time when the opportunities of social advancement ran up against the realities of Depression-era unemployment and social disorder, such books tapped into a lingering demand in the American public for straightforward paths to professional success and security, re-convincing many that they remained in charge of their own destinies. Speaking to those demands, writers like Napoleon Hill and Dale Carnegie laid out specific tips for Americans seeking—to paraphrase Carnegie—how to win friends, influence people, and make their way up the corporate ladder. Though such writers generally injected a vague “belief in belief” in their books, it would be Protestant pastor Norman Vincent Peale who, in the booming postwar economy of the 1950s and early 1960s, masterfully combined this spirituality with pop psychology to craft best-selling tomes on the power of positive thinking.

Other business leaders who wrote “how to” guides on business success certainly fit into these broader postwar trends. Many cited Dale Carnegie or Norman Vincent Peale for legitimating their views on how the world worked. Yet, their evangelical and regional backgrounds led to different lessons for their readers. In retelling their stories of business success, most often through self-published autobiographies or histories of their companies, evangelical business leaders used history to legitimize their own standing as the barons of the

Sunbelt Age. Their personal and professional histories were highly selective and often mythological, framing the past as a period devoid of external influences—such as federal spending in the Southern Rim—or distinct limitations—such as explicit or tacit forms of social discrimination. Their histories were also spiritual ones, in that they regularly cited various evangelical beliefs and activities as key ingredients to their success. Indeed, most of their books laid out narratives of their own lives that read like an evangelical conversion story. Once they were blind to the powers of faith in the business world; then they saw; then they overcame. Through emulating their faith-based formula for success, then, anyone who read their books could convert to the path that God had laid out for everyone, regardless of race, sex, or social standing. By following their advice, anyone could become their own booster, promoting themselves beyond the burdens of either their own individual past or the collective past of their native region and nation.

Since the burdens of the past were particularly acute in the South, a region long defined by economic underdevelopment and virulent forms of cultural and institutional racism, the books produced by southern business leaders best demonstrated the redemptive power of work blessed by God. Many biographies and autobiographies noted this fact, beginning their stories in the poverty-stricken southern past of the early twentieth century. For instance, Chick-fil-A's S. Truett Cathy wrote of the hardships of growing up on a failing farm in Georgia during the Great Depression. "Rural life," Cathy remembered, "left many scars," including memories of an alcoholic and abusive father, the death of a brother, and a sister stricken with polio. William B. Walton of Holiday Inn had a similar experience. "I was forced to become an adult at the age of twelve" after his father abandoned his family in the midst of the Depression. David Green, founder of Hobby Lobby, grew up in rural Oklahoma just a few miles from the Texas state line.

Green found retail stores to be fascinating and enchanting places. “Not that our family came to shop very often,” he wrote in his autobiography, “We simply didn’t have the money.”²⁰⁶ Not all of the South’s evangelical businessmen came from humble beginnings in the rural South. For instance, Anthony Rossi was an Italian immigrant who started a restaurant in Bradenton, Florida before moving into the citrus business. Howard E. Butt, Jr., Cecil B. Day, Alvah Chapman—chairman of Knight-Ridder—and Jack Eckerd—founder of Eckerd Drug Stores—all came from families of relative means.²⁰⁷ Still, tales of hard times and hard luck frequented in the popular literature produced by evangelical businessmen. And such stories stood in stark contrast to their later business careers for a reason, underscoring the notion that—despite their success—they had not lost their sense of where they had come from. They had not “gotten above their raising.”

One of the factors that kept them morally focused—and thus successful in their professional lives—was their regular dependence on the Bible. Veneration of the Bible was a distinct hallmark of conservative evangelical practice, particularly the practice of treating the Bible as inspired of God. Conservative evangelicals in business likewise treated the Bible as a self-evident book, one filled with easily-understood lessons for those seeking spiritual fulfillment and professional direction. For instance, in his 1965 book, *A Businessman Looks at the Bible*, W. Maxey Jarman filled page after page with laudations of the Bible as an inspired work, one filled with insights for businessman and non-businessman alike. Although he claimed up front that his book was “not written to say that the Bible . . . helped me to be a success in business,” Jarman hedged on this claim, regularly arguing that an honest acceptance of biblical teachings by

²⁰⁶ Cathy, *Eat Mor Chikin*, 12-15; Cathy, *It’s Easier to Succeed Than to Fail*, 34-39; William B. Walton, *Innkeeper* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1987), 15-23; David Green, *More Than a Hobby* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 1-2.

²⁰⁷ “Alvah Chapman, Miami Newspaper Titan, Dies at 87,” http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/12/29/alvah-chapman-miami-newsp_n_153914.html; “Jack Eckerd, 91, Founder of a Chain of Drugstores,” *The New York Times* (May 20, 2004), A-25.

the reader would positively affect their work by relieving them of fear, worry, and other personal “shortcomings.” To sell his reader on the applicability and power of the Bible, Jarman did not quiet his inner businessman, attempting to convince his readers that it was not unreasonable to treat the Bible as a literal text by using the rationale of the business world—fact checking, pragmatism, clear-headed reasoning—to defend conservative theological tenets (especially the dispensationalist theology that Jarman endorsed). “Perhaps I went to work [in writing the book] with a prejudiced point of view,” Jarman wrote, “but I believe that the techniques used in the business world are particularly well suited to an analysis of the Bible.” “In my business,” Jarman asserted, “I have learned that when an idea is presented it must be tested in practice, not just discussed in theory.” Such methods were “routine in business, and they were the best tools I had at my command;” hence, Jarman “decided to use them to test the Bible.” In doing so, Jarman came to the conclusion that the Bible was full of plain truths that stood the tests of honest businessmen. Similarly, if the reader would trust the authority of Jarman’s standard of truth—namely the conclusions of Christian businessmen like himself—then they would begin to appreciate its benefits at home, on the job, and in their community. In that sense, “The Bible is the best self-help Book in the world,” offering to those who believed its message of personal redemption “a new internal joy, a readiness to meet life’s burdens, and a willingness to look forward to the future with serenity and assurance.”²⁰⁸

If Jarman towed the line on calling the Bible an out-and-out formula for success, then not all of his contemporaries were as hesitant to endorse such a direct, cause-and-effect relationship between evangelical conversion, biblical insight, and business success. William Walton of Holiday Inn saw a more direct correlation, at least early on in his career. Though he admitted he

²⁰⁸ W. Maxey Jarman, *A Businessman Looks at the Bible* (Westwood: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1965), 6, 15-17, 153-159.

only had a “postage stamp sized knowledge of the Bible,” he decided that “the underlying management philosophy, and corresponding employee attitude, at Holiday Inns would be respect for the dignity of every individual and the Christian principle of love for your neighbor.” This was a universalist message “Who could object to anything so basically humanitarian as that?,” he asked. (Ironically, Walton increasingly thought that these values were under attack at Holiday Inn in the 1970s, as the company moved to allow pay-per-view movies and alcohol in its rooms.)

Others maintained a similar faith in Bible-based business. “Every business guideline . . . was already set in the Bible” for Cecil B. Day. According to his son, “He believed that biblical principles formed the foundation of any business that longed for success. From the Bible [Day] learned that lying, stealing, and selfishness not only were morally wrong but also spelled failure in any business or personal relationship.” Lonnie “Bo” Pilgrim likewise took his corporate philosophy from biblical texts, citing over a dozen separate verses for his executives—and anyone else—to consider when running a company. Other corporate leaders justified the more peculiar aspects of their corporate operations with biblical passages. For S. Truett Cathy of Chick-fil-A, closing on Sunday held implications that extended beyond the customs of his upbringing in the Sabbatarian South. “God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, set it aside,” Cathy argued in his own 1988 book, *It’s Easier to Succeed Than to Fail*. As the Bible prescribed, the Sunday Sabbath “is made for man, not man for it.” Such divine decrees, believed Cathy, were granted “not to make life hard but to make it better.” By honoring the Sabbath, Cathy “accepted that as a principle and honored God by doing it.” In return, “God . . . honored us and the business because of it.” Indeed, the Fourth Commandment, like the Bible in general, was “the formula God has given us for success.” By working seven days a week, the Cathy’s

might literally “miss the blessing” that God wished to grant them as an affirmation of their faithfulness.²⁰⁹

Not every evangelical businessman with a major role in the Sunbelt economy published a book of spiritual or professional musings. But many of the Sunbelt’s major figures did, including William B. Walton, S. Truett Cathy, Cecil B. Day, Mary Kay Ash, David Green, and Bob Buford.²¹⁰ Sales figures for these books remain relatively uncertain since most of the books written by or about corporate leaders only sold in stores owned and operated by the business leader. Or, more often, managers distributed them to employees as motivational tools. By contrast, the books written by popular writers had more exposure, finding a reading audience via mass-market book stores or Christian bookstores.

Among non-executive “how to” writers, Fred Smith, Sr. of Texas perhaps wore the most hats. Smith was close friends with Billy Graham, serving on the board of *Christianity Today* and playing a vital role in the publication’s financial turnaround during the mid-1970s. Smith also worked on the boards of Youth for Christ, Bill Glass Evangelistic Ministries, the Turner Foundation, RREACH International, and a crusade committee for Graham’s crusade in Cincinnati, Ohio. He also wrote articles for *Leadership*, a sister magazine of *Christianity Today*, as well as articles and books concerning pastoral life, pointing out how good business strategies might encourage better leadership and service from the pulpit. For these contributions, Garry Kinder, co-CEO of KBI Group in Dallas, claimed that “Fred is the greatest Christian leader in the last 100 years,” adding that, “Along with Peter Drucker, Fred is the finest management consultant of our lifetime.” Citing Drucker—the famed guru of personal, hands-on management

²⁰⁹ Walton and Lorentzen, *Innkeeper*, 122; Day, Jr., *Day by Day*, 197. Pilgrim, *One Pilgrim’s Progress*, 96; Cathy, *It’s Easier to Succeed Than to Fail*, 69-70, 78.

²¹⁰ More accurately, Cecil B. Day’s son published a biography of his father after his death in 1978, summarizing and contextualizing Day’s views about the intersection of faith, work, and success.

techniques—was appropriate. Throughout his career, Smith considered himself a “mentor” to business, civic, and pastoral leaders. As a mentor, Smith joined the servant-leader ethos, the motivational strategies of Drucker, and the personal discipline strategies of Oswald Chambers, an early twentieth century Baptist writer who authored miniature devotionals for believers to use. He likewise regularly used the Bible during speeches with his many audiences, emphasizing its applicability to the modern business world. His client list was quite lengthy. Not only did Smith keep up a busy speaking schedule in the evangelical subculture, speaking to pastors and congregational groups, he also provided exclusive mentoring services to numerous businesses. By the time of his death in 2007, he also contracted with Genesco, Mobil Oil, Caterpillar, Campbell-Taggart, Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Company, and the Taft law firm.²¹¹

Other evangelical writers took a different tact than Smith, writing guides for how individuals might overcome personal troubles through a combination of faith and work. For instance, in the 1980s and 1990s, Larry Burkett moved to the forefront of a growing, evangelical-based, cottage industry of financial advice counselors. Burkett had served in the armed forces, worked in the space program, and moved his way up to Vice-President for an electronics manufacturing firm before 1972, when he experienced a dramatic conversion to evangelicalism. “God reached down and touched me,” he claimed, “and once that happened I knew I was not going to stay in the electronics field.” Burkett joined Campus Crusade for Christ for a year after his conversion. Disliking his job as a frequent-flying fundraiser for Bill Bright, Burkett left Campus Crusade in 1976 to found Christian Financial Concepts (CFC). First operating out of a basement in their home in Tucker, Georgia, CFC’s staff consisted of Burkett, his wife and his kids. After several years of doing seminars of financial management and publishing a

²¹¹ “Leadership Guru Dies,” *Christianity Today* (October 1, 2007), 20; Pamphlet, “Fred Smith, Sr.,” (n.d.), in author’s possession. Also see “About Fred Smith, Sr.,” <http://www.breakfastwithfred.com/about/>.

newsletter, a major turning point came in Burkett's career in 1982. A revised version of his first major book—*Your Finances in Changing Times*—was published by Moody Press, a major evangelical publisher. Dr. James Dobson of Focus on the Family picked up the book and invited Burkett to appear on his syndicated radio show. Sales of the book increased, making a solid showing in Christian bookstores and resulting in Burkett deciding to broadcast his own thirty-minute call-in show, eventually known as “Your Money Matters.” By the 1990s, Burkett's career was in full stride. By the late 1990s, over 1.3 million copies of *Your Finances in Changing Times* had been sold, and Burkett's radio show was airing on hundreds of stations.

Burkett's approach toward financial management incorporated his own evangelical-tinged theology of how Christians should behave in the American economy. For Burkett, the “way a Christian uses money is the clearest outside indicator of what the inside commitment is really like.” Hence, faithful Christians had to treat money with respect, avoid debt, and tithe generously. They were not supposed to become paupers for Christ, but neither should Christians embrace a lavish lifestyle. “Somewhere between the careful ant and the foolish hoarder” lay the appropriate attitude towards earned wages, since “God wants us to have some surplus but not an attitude of selfishness or greed.” Such Bible-based principles for personal success were also the keys to working ethically in the business world. For Christian business owners, they had five priorities, promoted by Burkett in the following order of priority: evangelism, discipleship, funding “God's work,” providing for needs, and, finally, earning profits. In his 1990 book, *Business by the Book*, Burkett argued for the same hands-on, sensitive management strategies that other evangelical corporate leaders advocated. “If you find that you can't give the same

honor and regard to the lowest-ranked employee in your business,” wrote Burkett, “you need to stop right here and resolve it with the Lord.”²¹²

Altogether, Burkett’s books and radio shows made him one of the most prominent public evangelicals in the country during the 1980s and 1990s. Cancer slowed his career by the turn of the century and it took his life in 2003. Yet, Burkett certainly left a legacy, as his company—renamed Crown Financial Concepts in 2000—continued operations and continued to garner additional customers seeking out Burkett’s Bible-based approach toward personal success. Though Burkett, Smith, and dozens of other evangelical business leaders were instrumental in legitimizing the union of faith and work in the corporate world, one preacher of the creed of personal and spiritual uplift stood out. For him, as with his contemporaries, popular views about the beneficial union of corporate interests and evangelical ideas took on the auspices of gospel truth.

The Gospel According to Zig

Hillary “Zig” Ziglar made millions from the 1970s to the 1990s translating the evangelicalism of his youth into the business world. Ziglar authored or co-authored over two dozen books, most concerning salesmanship, personal development, and business performance. The titles illustrated Ziglar’s interests: *See You at the Top*, *Steps to the Top*, *Selling 101*, *Secrets of Closing the Sale*, *Top Performance*, *Better Than Good*, *Over the Top*, *Breaking Through to the Next Level*, and *Staying Up, Up, Up in a Down, Down World*. Each of these books aimed to “inspire” and “uplift” the struggling or directionless business professional, but Ziglar’s method and manners were not mere copycats of other “inspirational” or “positive thinking” authors like

²¹² Larry Eskridge, “Money Matters: The Phenomenon of Financial Counselor Larry Burkett and Christian Financial Concepts,” in Eskridge and Mark A. Noll, eds., *More Money, More Ministry: Money and Evangelicals in Recent North American History* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 311-350.

Dale Carnegie or Norman Vincent Peale. Like other evangelical business leaders and business writers, the historical context of an emerging Sunbelt shaped Ziglar's personal story and how he integrated his evangelicalism into his entrepreneurial philosophy and activities.

Born in Mississippi and raised in a devout evangelical household, Ziglar first entered the corporate world through a commission-only job at Wearever Aluminum, becoming its top salesman before leaving for a post at the Dale Carnegie Institute in New York City. Homesick and newly married, Ziglar moved back to the South to Texas, where he achieved a relatively comfortable life for himself and his family working during the 1960s for direct sales companies like Saladmaster and Holiday Magic and in sales training for American Salesmasters, Automotive Performance, and Mary Kay. In 1970, he started out on his own and founded We Believe (later incorporated as the Zig Ziglar Corporation) as a sales training company based in Dallas. Although he had strayed from his religious upbringing during his early years as a salesman, he rededicated his life to Jesus Christ in 1972 after an emotional conversion experience and subsequently joined one of the largest and most influential churches in the Southern Baptist Convention, First Baptist-Dallas. Ziglar was mentored by the church's pastor, Rev. W. A. Criswell, a staunch fundamentalist in theological matters and defender of racial segregation until he moved away from such views in the 1970s. Ziglar himself did not assert a segregationist stance, but he remained just as committed to theological and cultural fundamentalism as his pastor. In fact, his fundamentalism earned him notoriety during the emerging controversies in the SBC in the early 1980s, as he won the post of SBC vice-President from 1984 to 1985, where he oversaw the dismissal of a Mormon professor from an SBC university and conflicted regularly with moderates in the denomination.²¹³

²¹³ David T. Morgan, *The New Crusades, the New Holy Land: Conflict in the Southern Baptist Convention* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1996), 64; "Mormon Professor Faces Furor at Baptist University," *The*

About the same time as his conversion, Ziglar preached a straightforward gospel to the millions who attended his business seminars and bought his books, one inspired by the reciprocal ethic of the Golden Rule: “You can have everything in life you want, if you help other people get what they want.” Ziglar regularly used a simplified version of southern history to prove his points. For instance, in his best-selling *See You at the Top*, Ziglar did not address the postwar history of his home region in any specific terms. No mention of the civil rights movement, the economic restructurings, the defense economy, or metropolitan development could be found. Ziglar’s transformation from small-town country boy to big-time businessman was only due to evangelical principles and entrepreneurial drive. As the product of this history, Ziglar wanted to instill in his readers the same belief that his mother and his personal story of uplift instilled in him. “I believe you were put here to succeed, to be happy, healthy and to accomplish worthy objectives,” he concluded.²¹⁴ His personal history reaffirmed that fact and the need for his readers to pass this message along to others. To sustain this message’s salience and applicability, cherry-picking his way through much of modern southern history was not just an option; it was necessary to maintain Ziglar’s myth of Sunbelt salvation.

And yet, Ziglar’s take on modern history was, at the same time, vital for his larger message to contemporary American society. “By now,” he wrote, “you must surely know I’m one of these old-fashioned guys who believes in God, family and Country, and those vows—for better or worse—are not just words.” Ziglar placed the deepest roots of America’s debilitation squarely in the 1930s. In a chapter that addressed the pitfalls of “bad habits” for his readers, Ziglar argued that “All bad habits, trends, cancers, etc., start slowly, quietly, and apparently harmlessly. This is true on a personal, national and international level.” In national affairs

New York Times (July 8, 1984), 1-30; Russell Chandler, “Southern Baptist Ultraconservatives Turn Tide at Convention, Go on Roll,” *The Los Angeles Times* (June 16, 1984), 11-12.

²¹⁴ Zig Ziglar, *See You at the Top* (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Company, 1975), 94-102.

particularly, the preeminent “bad habit” of Americans first started “during the depression years when the relief programs got a foothold.” As such, New Deal liberalism was anathema for

Ziglar:

It was during [the Great Depression] that Americans started electing their Senators and Congressmen because of their “promises” to vote more aid for their section of the country and not for their ability, integrity and patriotism. When Americans started looking for a “handout” instead of a hand, we were laying the first foundation stones for a national policy built on fear and greed instead of strength and dignity.

Like many of his predecessors in the early Cold War and contemporaries elsewhere in the Christian business community, Ziglar advocated the resurrection of “the free market enterprise system” as the primary solution to America’s hand-out habit, and his most famous illustration underscored this point. Since his early days as a motivational speaker, Ziglar had used a simple prop—an old-fashioned, chrome-plated water pump—as a symbol for “the story of America, the story of the free enterprise system and the story of life.” The pump’s lesson was simple. First, start with full effort, pumping away with effort and dedication. Then, prime the pump by putting “*you* in whatever you do.” Next, “work at it with the right attitude and the right habits . . . [and] keep at it with bulldog tenacity and persistence.” Finally, when the blessings of effort began to flow like water gushing out of the pump, “keep it flowing with a little steady effort.” Though the full meaning of the pump analogy might have been lost his audience, Ziglar’s illustration served as another form of anti-New Deal rhetoric. In the place of Keynesian economic theory, which emphasized “pump-priming” the economy via state expenditures, Ziglar emphasized “pump-priming” via individual effort. The lessons taught by the water pump were entirely populist and democratic, available for anyone and capable of implementation by anyone. Unlike state policy, the “free enterprise system” placed no limits on personal success. “It has nothing to do with age or education,” Ziglar believed, “Nothing to do with whether you are black or white,

male or female, overweight or underweight, extrovert or introvert or whether you are Catholic, Jew, or Protestant. It has everything to do with your God-given rights as a free person to work as long as you wish, as hard as you wish and as enthusiastically as you wish to get everything in life you really want.” To Ziglar, all had equal opportunity in the democracy of the free market. The choice to prime the pump, and keep pumping, was the only thing that differentiated the winners from the losers, the blessed from the rest.²¹⁵

To reiterate his views, Ziglar devoted the final chapter of *See You at the Top* to evaluating the pros and cons of “Free Enterprise vs. Communism.” Like other conservative evangelicals, Ziglar tended to conflate New Deal liberalism with communism and place the fault for the nation’s contemporary ills squarely at the feet of the federal state. “Over the years, vote-seeking politicians passed liberal legislation (liberal with the working man’s money),” he wrote. This had granted the federal state undue power and, as such, he encouraged his readers to “do something to reduce the ridiculously high expenditure of the Federal Government and . . . figure out a way to get more federal funds for our people back home.” Becoming politically active was key: “As voters, we need to become personally involved and elect officials who dedicate themselves to getting and keeping the Government out of business and encourage more business people to get into government. One look at the Post Office, Medicare, Medicaide [*sic*], Social Security, and the food stamp program will convince anyone that . . . the Government simply doesn’t know how to run a business.” To do this, Americans needed to recognize their failures in “sell[ing] our youth and fellow citizens on the obvious advantages and benefits associated with America and the free enterprise system.” It was obvious to Ziglar that Americans had “to sell America and the free enterprise system to our children” and “equally clear that we need to sell the free enterprise system to our teachers and professors who often belittle the very system

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 272-273,322-326.

that sustains them.” Finally, Ziglar thought that it would profit the nation immensely “to sell labor leaders and union members on the concept that a laborer should be free to work as hard and as enthusiastically as he wishes for the benefit of everyone.” By electing “officials on the simple fact that the right to work and produce without undue government restraint,” the unnatural insurgency of New Deal liberalism would be defeated and a God blessed capitalistic democracy would be reinstated. “That *is* Free Enterprise,” Ziglar concluded, “That *is* the American way.” If his readers would heed his call for a return to biblical faith and personal growth, Ziglar had little doubt that “your ‘good days’ will extend into a good forever and I truly will *SEE YOU AT THE TOP.*”²¹⁶

This multi-cultural and presumably “egalitarian” message made Ziglar one of the most sought-after speakers of the late twentieth century and a worldwide business celebrity. After *See You at the Top*’s publication, Ziglar incorporated the Zig Ziglar Corporation in 1977 and worked to popularize his views primarily through business seminars that toured the nation. At times, these seminars were standalone affairs, with Ziglar as the only speaker. At other times, Ziglar spoke along with a cadre of other figures from the inspirational and “success” speaker circuit. Regardless of his seminars’ exact lineups, by 1980, Ziglar was giving an average of five speeches per week and travelling over 300,000 miles per year. By 1995, he regularly filled arenas, stadiums, and convention centers around the country and made, on average, over one hundred speeches per year for an average pay of \$30,000 a pop. Ziglar also delivered his message to an ever widening audience. By the late 1990s, as the Zig Ziglar Corporation licensed out training seminars and material to a growing list of clients located in Australia, Romania,

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 350, 354, 362-363, 375-376, 383.

Nigeria, England, Turkey, India, Malaysia, and the Philippines. In the U.S., pollsters for Gallup found that thirty-seven percent of Americans knew his name.²¹⁷

Ziglar's intended his seminars to be more than just business meetings; they were revivals that sought to embody the evangelical and entrepreneurial message of his books and beliefs. Journalists that visited his seminars regularly commented on this aspect of Ziglar's appearance and performance style. Many noted his southern accent, folksy charm, and use of down home anecdotes; others observed his unassuming flannel suits, which seemed to reference either the bygone pastors of small town America or the door-to-door salesmen of the same mythical time and place. The water pump, a central image in all his books, was nearly always used, or at least referenced during his message, which could last as little as forty-five minutes or go on for hours. How he delivered his message fit this image. "When Ziglar talks, people listen," asserted one reporter in 1990. Speaking for more than three hours at one seminar in Indiana, Ziglar kept nearly 1,500 listeners rapt "that was part tent revival and part how-to-succeed in business." "He kneels, he gesticulates, he mimes a robber sticking up a bank," wrote another reporter at a seminar in D.C. in 1995, "He speaks in the rolling cadences of a good Southern Baptist preacher." These stylistic cues mattered, since "what he preaches is the gospel of good old American gung-ho individualism." Another offered a less flattering, but no less descriptive, portrait: "Zig himself is refined and smooth, a Southern gentleman in a banker-gray, pinstriped suit," wrote a Philadelphia reporter in 1995, "He wears black wingtips, a starched white shirt, and a diamond tie clip in the shape of an arrow—pointing up, of course!" Onstage, an unmistakable transformation came over him: "Zig zigged, and he zagged. He bobbed and weaved. He pranced and stomped and pounded about the stage, veins popping from his neck,

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 322-326; Michael Vitez, "He Delivers Hope," *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (November 17, 1995), A-1; "International Opportunities at Ziglar," http://www.zigziglar.com/ziglar_worldwide.php.

spit flying from his mouth, beads of sweat dripping down his forehead, always preaching his message of hope, hope, hope.” Even in 2006, at the age of eighty, Ziglar was able to earn descriptions from a San Antonio reporter about how he maintained a “style similar to an evangelical preacher,” drawing crowds in with gestures and rhetorical devices straight from the revival circuit.²¹⁸

With his southern, drawling, evangelical style, Ziglar branded himself as different from most inspirational speakers and attracted a diverse audience of interested parties and devotees. This was not the case in his early career. In the 1960s and 1970s, Ziglar was like most motivational speakers, attracting mostly salesmen to his motivational seminars. “His speeches have been heard by tens of thousands at sales meetings,” reported *Esquire*’s Robert Friedman in 1979, “If you sell real estate for Century 21, or vitamins for Shaklee . . . or cosmetics for Mary Kay, or hamburgers for Jack-In-The-Box, or hotel rooms for Holiday Inns, chances are you’ve been ‘Ziglarized.’”²¹⁹ In the 1980s and 1990s, however, Ziglar’s audiences were becoming diverse. “More government workers, more professionals, more blue collars, more educators,” were in the crowd at one event in 1992.²²⁰ Race did not seem to be a decisive factor either, as African-Americans and other non-whites attended Ziglar’s seminars in proportionate number. Women likewise filled Ziglar’s audiences in the 1980s and 1990s; for instance, they made up over half of his audience at one event in Boston in 1988. (At this same event, a visitor noted that Ziglar’s “condescending jokes about his wife” did not “go over very well with his half-female audience”).²²¹

²¹⁸ Paul Christopher Sancya, “Guru of Inspiration Captures Crowd,” *Post-Tribute* (April 25, 1990), n.p., “Let a Thousand Gurus Bloom,” *The Washington Post* (February 12, 1995), W-17; Michael Vitez, “He Delivers Hope,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (November 17, 1995), A-1; Meena Thiruvengadam, “Part Revival, Part Pep Rally,” *San Antonio Express-News* (May 17, 2006), n.p.

²¹⁹ Robert Friedman, “Inspiration, Inc.,” *Esquire* (September 1979), 24

²²⁰ Megan Rosenfeld, “The Secrets of a Confidence Man,” *The Washington Post* (November 1, 1992), F-1.

²²¹ Alex Beam, “Zigomania!” *Boston Globe* (October 18, 1988), 87.

Such missteps were rare, however. Ziglar's rapport with his audience was demonstrable at his seminars, albeit for a wide variety of reasons over the course of his career. At some of his first seminars, where interactions between Ziglar and his audience was decidedly more like an therapy session instead of an arena concert, one reporter recorded a litany of explanations for consuming Ziglar's offerings:

One after another, the thirty-six men and women in the Del Monte Room of the Dupont Plaza hotel stand up and nervously explain why they have come to Dallas. There's a Chevrolet dealer from Tennessee who says he wants a more positive attitude so he can sell more cars; a district manager from Oklahoma for Jack-In-The-Box restaurants who wants a clearer understanding of his priorities; a high school football coach from Alabama who wants to win his state championship; a management-training coordinator for a cigarette company in North Carolina who wants to give up smoking; a speed-reading teacher from Kansas City who wants to learn how to relax; and a manufacturer of sunglasses from Texas who says he wants some of that richer life.

Even later in Ziglar's career, such reasons for his appeal were commonly provided by Ziglar's customers. In 1992, David Jenson surveyed Ziglar's seminars and found that the "number one reason" people attended was "to 'get motivated,'" while the chance to see Ziglar in person was a close second; in fact, seventy-five percent of those Jenson surveyed had read one of his books and listened to at least one of Ziglar's tapes. Ziglar's onstage persona was also compelling for other attendees. "He's just alive," marveled one of his fans, "Look at him running around on stage. His gravelly voice, his twang. . . . Look at him down on one knee. Nobody does that. Look at those hand gestures." Like the personality-driven sermon by a celebrity preacher, Ziglar's performance underscored his credibility. "It's inside. He means it. He is what he does."²²²

Other "Zigophiles"—as one reporter termed them—admired Ziglar's motivational powers as well as his emphasis on specific sales skills. David Hamilton, a jewelry salesman

²²² Friedman, "Inspiration, Inc.," 26; Michael Vitez, "He Delivers Hope," A-1.

from New York living in suburban Atlanta, remembered that Ziglar's books, tapes, and seminars "helped me out tremendously because I had no formal training." Hamilton tried to translate, at least in part, lessons gleaned from Ziglar's books and seminars, using them in sales meetings, "depending on how it [translated], conceptually, from what he's talking about the art of selling to our particular situation." Larry Carpenter, a St. Louis real estate and billboard seller, credited Ziglar with inspiring him to leave his job as a truck mechanic. Though a success in his business, Carpenter still attended Ziglar's seminars religiously; between 1980 and 1998, he did not miss a single one. Like Carpenter, Leland Heller, a physician from South Florida, believed strongly in Ziglar's philosophy of personal uplift and positive thinking. He found his suggestions not only substantitive for business success but also for psychological treatment. Patients with suicidal tendencies, he averred, particularly benefited from Ziglar's charm and optimism.²²³

For those underrepresented in the business world—particularly women and non-whites—Ziglar also held particular appeal. Elizabeth Sage, a single mother and secretary at an electric company, appreciated positive thinking philosophy demonstrated at a 1978 seminar featuring Ziglar and Norman Vincent Peale, primarily because it showed her how to be a woman in the workplace. "The field [for sales] is opening up for women," she said, "I know I can do it, but I need confidence." Raised in a home that emphasized "that a woman should only stay home and take care of the children and not work," Sage found having a "positive mental attitude" empowering, even though she had not fully translated them into professional success. "I get these angry feelings and find if I just say to myself the words in the book [on positive mental attitude], . . . it helps. It makes me feel better." Karen Beckwith's career aims were likewise stuck in a rut when she attended a Ziglar seminar in the early 1990s. "My little business is not working out too

²²³ David Hamilton, interview with author, September 14, 2008; Skip Hollandsworth, "How Many of You Have Heard of Zig Ziglar Before – Or is This Your First Time-uh?" *Texas Monthly* (July 1999), 84-87, 122-127.

well,” she told a reporter during an interview, “I decided last night to give it one more try. So I came here to get some help.” Formerly in computer and commodities sales, Beckwith had recently started up a new mortgage business. “I’m new at this,” she admitted, “There’s a learning curve.” Ziglar offered Beckwith encouragement that, even though her business was floundering, its best days were ahead as long as she kept her chin up and eyes open for business opportunities. “I’ve had a hell of a life,” she explained, “But what are you going to do, go around being [angry] all the time?” She preferred Ziglar’s route: “It’s all in your attitude.” Marcus Tappan, a black businessman who had experienced relative success in his dental business agreed. Ziglar’s tapes had “contributed a lot to my success,” particularly Ziglar’s advice about goal-setting. As a result, Tappan believed that Ziglar’s suggestions were applicable beyond the business world. A mentor to inner city youth, Tappan believed that Ziglar’s tapes and philosophy could grant troubled kids the direction they needed to build not only wealth, but also personal happiness.²²⁴

By the standards of faith and practice that many corporate evangelicals laid out for themselves and their followers, Elizabeth Sage, Karen Beckwith, and Marcus Tappan were models worth imitating. Other corporate evangelicals would have probably viewed these strivers in the same way, as people committed to changing their station in life and inspiring others to do the same. If the pursuit of success likewise edified their religious faith, and their evangelical faith in particular, then all the better. More importantly, however, the endorsement of these strivers implicitly legitimized the authority of corporate actors as the new barons of the Sunbelt Age. This authority went beyond the corporate office and into the very throes of the so-called “culture wars” that were beginning to divide Americans in the 1960s and 1970s. As these

²²⁴ Megan Rosenfeld and Robert Wilson, “Success Unlimited,” *The Washington Post* (June 17, 1978), B-1; Rosenfeld, “The Secrets of a Confidence Man,” F-1; Vitez, “He Delivers Hope,” A-1;

conflicts over matters of personal expression, sexuality, and political affiliation intensified, conservative evangelicals both drew strength from like-minded corporate leaders and borrowed strategies from the world of business. As with their Cold War crusades and missions to the Sunbelt workplace, the blessings of business would not be far from the political and cultural revolution of modern conservatism.

CHAPTER 5
CULTURE WARS, INC.

As the son of R.G. LeTourneau, Richard LeTourneau had long been at the nexus of corporate interests and evangelical crusades. He had overseen his father's unsuccessful endeavors abroad in the 1950s and 1960s, but in the 1970s and early 1980s had begun to respond to domestic concerns, writing books that forwarded his views about the nation's most pressing problems. "There's Only ONE Way Back to Greatness," he claimed on the cover of *Democracy in Trouble*, a short book he published in 1985 as a part of his One Way Series. Most of the other books in this series focused on management strategies in the modern workplace or discussed the "Laws of Success for Modern Christians." *Democracy in Trouble*, however, laid out a plan for redeeming the nation from the "seven disasters in our society," namely the "desertion from God, deterioration of family life, degeneration of values, dilution of our educational system, decline of practical knowledge, destruction of motivation, [and] distortions in leadership." The movement of American youth away from "God-centered" commitments to "man centered" politics had brought about these social problems. "Our democracy . . . has begun to disappear under the false concepts of humanism and 'plurality,'" wrote LeTourneau, "which is pulling us farther and farther from God." Inevitably, America would follow Friedrich von Hayek's road to serfdom, "gliding into socialism," communism, and then authoritarianism—that is, unless a cadre of committed Christians responded in to stem the tide. As a businessman and an evangelical,

LeTourneau aimed to be on the front lines of this war for the souls of American youth and for the soul of the nation.²²⁵

Richard LeTourneau linked the protest movements of the 1960s—the civil rights movement, the feminist movement, the anti-war movement—with the nation’s slide into social unrest and immorality, a move that would inevitably produce more revolution, followed by unfortunate calls from Americans for more state influence in the marketplace. Business leaders, joined with other concerned Americans, had the power to stem protest and restore traditionalist values to their proper place. LeTourneau was not alone in his assessments and proposed solutions. Throughout the nation and Southern Rim in the 1960s and 1970s, any number of corporate leaders—whether evangelical or not—aligned with concerned evangelical activists to fight a cultural war against the newly emergent social movements.

Historians have effectively chronicled the rise of a “New Evangelical Right” during these decades, but they have not paid enough attention to the influence of corporate leaders and corporate modes of political organizing and cultural activism. The union between business and born-again politics did not show up in one locale or in one organization but in many. Indeed, the blessings of business were everywhere and multifaceted during America’s late twentieth-century cultural conflicts— from the philanthropic endeavors of mass market Christian companies to the efforts of the New Evangelical Right’s backers in business to the niche markets of emergent Christian culture industries.

Words and Deeds

In certain cases, conservative groups and organizations fell under the corporate umbrella of a specific business leader. Of course, corporate leaders and businessmen had sponsored

²²⁵ Richard LeTourneau, *Democracy in Trouble* (Longview: LeTourneau Press, 1985), 11-23, 45-65.

various social philanthropies since the late nineteenth century. But in a previous era, most of this corporate funding went toward strictly religious endeavors, such as sponsoring revivals, supporting seminaries, or funding missionaries. The efforts of R. G. LeTourneau in the 1950s and 1960s exemplified new spins on this form of religious philanthropy, while others in the evangelical corporate world—such as W. Maxey Jarman and Anthony Rossi—tended to keep their public interests relatively focused on saving souls or supporting charitable organizations.

In the 1960s and 1970s, however, a number of other evangelical businessmen expanded their social vision, putting their wealth behind new endeavors to address broader social and cultural concerns. Not content to focus solely on evangelism, these corporate figureheads engaged in political and cultural activism, seeking to return wayward Americans to the verity of conservative social and economic values. Three figures in particular exemplified how corporate enterprises often turned profits into political and cultural activism guised as philanthropy or social service—Cecil B. Day, Zig Ziglar, and S. Truett Cathy.

Cecil B. Day sought to shape American evangelicalism and society in ways particular to his professional life and personal interests. “He started to tithing as a young man,” remembered his widow, Deen Day Sanders, “He started tithing time that he would give to other people or what have you, and that became a life principle. His tithing his money, his time, and his talents.” In particular, he tithed regularly to his local church, the upscale Dunwoody Baptist Church in suburban Atlanta. But he also devoted money toward supporting missions, giving ten percent of Day Realty’s profits toward missions and his non-profit religious organization, the Day Foundation.²²⁶ Founded in 1968 and funded in the 1970s and early 1980s with investments and

²²⁶ Deen Day Sanders, interview by author, May 27, 2008; Day, *Day by Day*, 74-76. Day’s efforts—both with his business and his philanthropy—garnered the attention of notable evangelicals and conservatives. Sitting Presidents and former Presidents even weighed in on Day’s life and work. Jimmy Carter thought Day “demonstrated by example how a rich family life and professional success can be achieved based on biblical

monies skimmed from Days Inn's profits, the Day Foundation focused especially on what he deemed to be the most troubling aspect of post-1960s America, namely the decline of conservative, evangelical churches and religiosity in New England. According to Edward White, Jr., began directing the Day Foundation in 1976, "Mr. Day" felt that churches in New England had "started getting away from the truth of Scriptures [in the 1960s], preaching the gospel, and sharing the essence of what faith and following Christ is all about." To counteract this trend, the Day Foundation acted as both a conduit for funneling funds to support evangelical church growth and as an intermediary for like-minded evangelical groups and organizations. The Foundation's influence has thus been broad and deep, ranging from evangelical campus ministries to worldwide missions groups like the Haggai Institute. Though no longer affiliated with Days Inn—the Day family relinquished the name and majority stock holdings in the company after Day's death from bone cancer in 1982—the Day Foundation continues to receive funding from Day's investment portfolio and donations from a wide variety of business supporters, churches, and non-sectarian associations.²²⁷

Zig Ziglar was another publicly-engaged evangelical business leader, fighting his own personal culture war through his company's books and educational programs. Though primarily focused on business success, Ziglar's many business books were an exercise in cultural activism. Any number of conservative writers supported Ziglar's propositions. Indeed, Ziglar's books

principles. Gerald Ford cast him as "a stalwart believer in and fighter for the highest American principles," while Ronald Reagan thought that Day proved that "the American Dream can be fulfilled without compromising a sense of values." Other dignitaries and celebrities in evangelical culture—Richard Nixon, Billy Graham, S. Truett Cathy, Bill Bright, Pat Robertson, Norman Vincent Peale, and Corretta Scott King—lauded Day's blending of evangelicalism and entrepreneurialism, viewing both as the foundations for his influence in public life.

²²⁷ Edward J. White, Jr., interview by author, July 9, 2008. Day also engaged in a variety of humanitarian efforts, including "prison ministries or senior citizens or children or youth or . . . youth detention, halfway houses, [and] inner city things." Flexibility existed among certain evangelical businessmen and women about the application of evangelical tenets to corporate life, resulting in genuinely beneficial—and admirable—forms of philanthropy. These socially-conscious "exceptions" (if they can be termed that) often proved the rule, namely these entrepreneurs' disdain for state-based solutions to pervasive social or familial problems.

should be read in the context of a growing body of published work by various conservatives in the 1970s and 1980s that linked the decline in the American work ethic to a decline in public morality. Such ideas were expressed by conservative writers like Catholic Michael Novak, Christian libertarians Ron Nash and Doug Bandow, and conservative evangelicals David Childon, Pat Robertson, and R. C. Sproul, Jr.²²⁸ Evangelical businessmen like Richard DeVos of AmWay (and later owner of the Orlando Magic) and Jack Eckerd of Eckerd Stores also published books that expressed similar views.²²⁹

Ziglar expressed his grievances, however, with particular aplomb, and his views were the most popular. For instance, Ziglar's *See You at the Top*, first published in 1974, sold over two million copies in the next three decades. His 1978 follow-up *Confessions of a Happy Christian* did nearly as well, while additional books—*Dear Family*, published in 1984, and *Raising Positive Kids in a Negative World*, published in 1996—summarized Ziglar's views on the troubled state of the American family. In each of these books, Ziglar integrated formal business tips with jeremiads about the deleterious effects of political elites, the media, rebellious college students, feminists, homosexuals, and communists (presumably parading as liberals). For Ziglar, the restoration of democratic, free market capitalism was essential to restoring the nation's moral sense of direction. Men and women with strong work ethics did not lie, cheat, or steal; neither did they demand unnecessary "rights" from the state or engage in forms of sexual or social experimentation. Readers were invited to join Ziglar in restoring these values by working on

²²⁸ Michael Lienesch, *Redeeming America: Piety and Politics in the New Christian Right* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 94-138.

²²⁹ Richard DeVos and Charles Paul Conn, *Believe!* (Old Toppan: F.H. Revell, 1975). As a sidenote, Charles Paul Conn became President in 1986 of the conservative Church of God-affiliated Lee University in Cleveland, Tennessee. Also see DeVos, *Compassionate Capitalism: People Helping People Help Themselves* (New York: Plume, 1994). Jack Eckerd and Chuck Colson, *Why America Doesn't Work* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1991).

their own to combat liberalism in their homes and communities and passing along their concerns to friends, family members, and elected officials.²³⁰

Ziglar also vowed not to wait on politicians to respond to conservative demands, developing the “I CAN” program, a school curriculum on entrepreneurialism, patriotism, and “character development” for use in elementary and secondary schools across America. Commercial self-help courses had been available for purchase in America throughout most of the twentieth century, although most were used to supplement in-office seminars or for at-home training seminars for sales staff. In contrast, Ziglar’s program was specifically aimed at students, translating the lessons and suggestions of his books and tapes to the classroom. Ziglar first released the I CAN program in 1977 and, by the early 1980s, it was in use by school districts nationwide. The numbers of students taught the I CAN curriculum varied from year to year, but one estimate calculated that nearly three million students received instruction from Ziglar’s program in the 1980s and 1990s. Materials for the I CAN course came in a packet for each class and consisted of twelve cassette recordings, daily motivational tapes, speech training tapes for teachers, a teacher’s guide, and various other guides and workbooks for both student and teacher. Copies of *See You at the Top* were also included. Teachers worked from designed curricula that used workbook exercises, group work, and role-playing to increase their ability to sell themselves, work in groups, and increase both their self-esteem and appeal to potential employers and customers. Typical assignments encouraged students to “Compile a Success Folder” where each kept “positive sayings,” or “choose a book about someone’s life who has

²³⁰ For examples of Ziglar’s economic and social views, see Ziglar, *See You at the Top* (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Company), 1975, 63-64, 75-77, 272-273, 282, 355-359, 368-370. Ziglar, *Confessions of a Happy Christian*, rev. ed. (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Company, 1980), 9, 27-29, 45, 61-64, 86, 108-110, 154; Ziglar, *Dear Family* (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Company, 1984), 129-136, 147-153; Ziglar, *Raising Positive Kids in a Negative World* (New York: Ballantine, 1996), 23-40, 87-102, 129-130, 167-180. Also see Joe L. Kincheloe, “Zig Ziglar: Motivation, Education, and the New Right,” *Vitae Scholasticae*, vol. 4 (1985), 203-209.

overcome some type of difficulty in their life—negative to a positive.” Students could also start a Success Club on campus “made up of students from ‘I CAN’ classes” or make “Mind Builders” for each classroom at their respective schools which would work like dry runs for corporate life, helping “to build good relationships between departments, student-teacher, student-administration and school-community.” Tapes for the program also emphasized the development of a loyal, dedicated workforce. Christian references and Ziglar’s religious affiliations were never mentioned in the I CAN program. Still, teachers were warned that certain tapes contained “some highly subjective comments by Ziglar” and were free to “design your own plan to reach the [curriculum’s] objective,” the program ended with Ziglar’s strident criticism of drug and alcohol use among present-day youth. Capping his program off was another round of invectives about the myth of a “free lunch” and suggestions about “What it takes to be a Winning Worker,” namely an attitude conditioned to “Start Me – and I’ll Go,” presumably farther along the “road to success.”²³¹

Despite Ziglar’s high expectations and his marketing’s claims that it would “PREPAR[E] TODAY’S YOUTH FOR AMERICA’S TOMORROW,” I CAN had mixed results. A comprehensive study of the course’s use in Georgia school districts in the early 1980s revealed that it fell far short of its intended goals. In general, the I CAN program improved the work attitude of students enrolled in marketing and distributive education, but it failed to improve their self-concept or their “human relations skills.” Ziglar later admitted the shortcomings of the program, writing, “my biggest disappointment has been our I CAN character-building course for schools.” Ziglar only expressed dismay about the course’s disappointing profit margins, however, arguing that “we have confirming data that where the course has been taught, drug

²³¹ Earl Charles Meyer, “The Effects of the Ziglar ‘I CAN’ Program on the Self-concept, Human Relations Skills, and Work Attitude of Cooperative Marketing and Distributive Education Students in Selected Secondary Schools in Georgia” (Ph.D. Diss., Georgia State University, 1982), 192-193, 242-248.

usage goes down; violence is reduced; attendance increases; grades go up; relationships among parents, teachers, and students improve; and the overall school attitude is better.”²³² Though questionably effective and pricey at \$299 per student, the I CAN program was still used by administrators and teachers across Ziglar’s home state of Alabama and throughout his adoptive state of Texas. Numerous other Sunbelt states adopted the I CAN course, as well as districts in Ohio, North Dakota, Illinois, and New York, thus illustrating the national appeal of Ziglar’s social vision.²³³

Ziglar’s friend and contemporary S. Truett Cathy of Chick-fil-A also engaged in a brand of cultural activism that sought to preserve and protect “traditional” family arrangements. “Next to a person’s salvation and the choice of Christ as Master,” S. Truett Cathy once averred, “the most important decision is choosing your mate.” In a proper, Christian marriage, Cathy believed in male leadership: “Father is chairman of the board, president, and chief executive officer in the world’s greatest institution – the home. Mother is executive vice president in charge of public relations, bookkeeping, interior decorating, the commissary, infirmary, hospital, and all those things that make a house a home.” In sticking to this arrangement, Cathy also believed that marital peace would abound, thus resulting in greater productivity on the job. As such, Cathy funded marriage seminars and implemented an annual “marriage retreat” for his operators, later expanding its availability to the wider public. Sponsored by his WinShape Foundation and run out of a retreat facility at Berry College, Cathy’s programs aim to assist “couples in maintaining and growing their relationships” while “experiencing the presence of God” via “prayer, worship, group discussions, and couple mentoring.” Supplemented with materials and funding from the

²³² *The I CAN Course Teacher’s Guide* (Dallas: Zig Ziglar Corporation, 1977); Pamphlet, “Preparing Today’s Youth for America’s Tomorrow” (1980); Meyer, “The Effects of the Ziglar ‘I CAN’ Program,” 93-94, 136-137, Appendixes H, I; Ziglar, *Zig*, 215-216.

²³³ For a list of school districts that have adopted the I CAN Course, see http://www.yesican.net/list_of_educators.htm.

National Institute of Marriage and the Center for Relational Care, both non-profit Christian marriage organizations, couples could pay for general relationship seminars or for more specialized weekend packages. For instance, the “Courageous Hearts” package promoted techniques for “restor[ing] communication and rekindl[ing] affection,” the “Prepare to Last” counseled “those considering engagement for a successful Christian marriage,” and the “Romantic Adventure” package offered an “exciting retreat for couples who want to increase their passion and have a blast doing it!”²³⁴

By the 1990s, Truett Cathy’s son, Donald “Bubba” Cathy, had become the foremost spokesman Chick-fil-A’s pro-marriage activism. “We need to win back our culture’s vision for marriage and family,” he told *Philanthropy* magazine in 2007, “Biblical truths do work do work and can be applied in business, personal, and charitable endeavors. Strategic investing in relational wellness within marriage and family is crucial to the continuity of a healthy and enduring nation.” Such a strategy had three goals; first, the equipping of local, grassroots marriage initiatives, whether in churches, schools, or businesses; second, the proliferation of a “sustained national media campaign, in conjunction with the local city marriage initiatives”; third, the funding of premarital education “to help get marriages off to a great start.” With the direction of the Marriage CoMission, a seminar series facilitated by “marriage champions from five key sectors of influence in the culture,” and the Marriage and Family Legacy Fund (MFLF), a fund-raising entity that “aligns the donor world with the strategic priorities of the marriage movement,” Bubba Cathy believed that his company’s “wise investment” would result in incalculable “benefits to individuals, families, and the nation.”²³⁵

²³⁴ Sharon Jayson, “Chick-fil-A Offers Marital Advice on the Side,” *USA Today* (June 22, 2006), 1-D; On WinShape Marriage’s programs, see <http://www.winshape.org/marriage/>.

²³⁵ “Building and Strengthening Healthy Families,” *Philanthropy* (October 1, 2007), <http://www.philanthropyroundtable.org/article.asp?article=1498&paper=1&cat=149>.

With the help of other outside sources and corporate partners, Chick-fil-A continued to include instructional supplements in its kids' meals, aimed at affirming what Cathy termed "Mom, apple pie, and American values." Sometime around 2000, Chick-fil-A and Focus on the Family, a Colorado-based conservative lobbying organization founded by Dr. James Dobson, and began a corporate partnership and, five years later, Cathy contracted Dobson to supply its restaurants with miniature versions of the organization's *Adventures in Odyssey* series, an "audio drama" for children that "presents exciting entertainment that brings moral and biblical principles to life." Educational CD's inspired by VeggieTales, a Christian cartoon series, and child-oriented games inspired by conservative author William J. Bennett's *The Book of Virtues*, also came along with any kids' meal purchase.²³⁶ Cathy also made financial contributions to other conservative religious organizations, such as Family First's All-Pro Dad foundation, and a number of evangelical parachurch ministries, including Fellowship of Christian Athletes and Campus Crusade for Christ.

Though he publicly asserted that his company was non-partisan during the electoral season (an advertising campaign in 2000 even featured the Cows' universal call for "Donkees and "Elefunts" to "Vote Chikin" because "Itz Not Right Wing or Left"), Cathy's public activism earned him notice from a variety of conservative politicians and organizations. In March 2008, Cathy hosted a town-hall meeting for John McCain's presidential campaign at Chick-fil-A headquarters. Students from Impact 360, a nine-month Christian leadership training program that Chick-fil-A supports, peppered McCain's meeting with questions while McCain assured the crowd, which included Chick-fil-A employees and executives alike, of his commitment to

²³⁶ On *Adventures in Odyssey*, see <http://www.whitsend.org/>; Buchthal, "The Ten-Minute Manager's Guide to...Being Child-Friendly," *Restaurants and Institutions* (February 15, 2006), 20; Erica Noonan, "Southern Christian Chicken Maker Chick-fil-A Comes North," *The Associated Press State and Local Wire* (October 19, 1998), accessed via LexisNexis.

continued tax cuts, a military presence in Iraq, and a firmness toward what McCain termed “the Judeo-Christian issue” of illegal immigration. A month later, Cathy was honored in 2008 with the President’s Call to Service Award, presented to him by George W. Bush for his long record of philanthropy. Afterwards, Cathy was also venerated at a lunch hosted by The Marriage and Family Foundation, Marriage Co-Mission, and Family First, all conservative organizations devoted “to strengthen[ing] marriages in America” since “healthy marriages are a keystone to the success of our nation.”²³⁷

If Cathy was skittish about contributing directly to partisan politics, other evangelical businessmen were not. Indeed, many of the major political organizations in the conservative evangelical movement from the 1960s through the 1980s owed their financial security and organizational direction to corporate patrons. If not directly informed by the contributions of business leaders, then models of marketing and organization drawn from corporate culture certainly informed operations at many important political interest groups in the evangelical electorate. Indeed, the blessings of business were hard to miss in the political history of the New Evangelical Right.

Of Money and Morality Politics

Hundreds of millions of dollars flowed into the coffers of conservative evangelical leaders during the 1970s and 1980s. The televangelists of those decades garnered the greatest amount of attention from the media for their fundraising, with the shady and illegal activities of Sunbelt televangelists like Oral Roberts, Rex Humbard, Jimmy Swaggart, and Jim and Tammy

²³⁷ Aaron Gould Sheinin, “McCain: ‘Strong Role’ for Perdue,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* (March 7, 2008), B-1, B-4; Joni B. Hannigan, “McCain Visits Chick-fil-A Offices,” *Baptist Press* (March 10, 2008), <http://www.bpnews.net/printerfriendly.asp?ID=27586>; “Chick-fil-A Founder S. Truett Cathy Honored at the White House For His Life-long Commitment to Volunteer Service,” *PR Newswire* (April 15, 2008), accessed via LexisNexis.

Faye Bakker, receiving particular attention and derision. Yet, one Sunbelt televangelist—Jerry Falwell of Lynchburg, Virginia—unified corporate donations, corporate strategies, and grassroots fundraising with particular skill.

As the lead pastor of Thomas Road Baptist Church, Falwell had maintained a fundamentalist's suspicion of broader secular culture and other evangelicals who he deemed as having gone off course in matters of cultural accommodation or biblical interpretation. His derision of Pentecostals as heretics—for their emphasis on speaking in tongues as evidence of continued revelation or sanctification—certainly came out of his fundamentalist leanings, but in matters political, Falwell showed little wariness toward religious collaboration with like-minded groups or with modern marketing methods or corporate strategies.

Following the insistence of Dr. Francis Schaeffer, a strongly conservative theologian who believed that evangelicals must battle against “secular humanism,” Falwell moved beyond the Baptist fundamentalism of his upbringing and early pastoral career, encouraging political engagement of the part of evangelicals and collaboration between various branches in conservative evangelicalism. Liberty University, the fundamentalist college he founded in 1971, might push fundamentalist doctrines in its curriculum, but it served as a center for conservatives of various stripes, much like Harding College or Pepperdine College had for nearly two decades. In addition, in 1979 Falwell was instrumental in promoting televangelism through his *Old Time Gospel Hour* program and championing conservative forms of ecumenism through the Moral Majority, which welcomed the support of conservative Catholics and conservative mainstream Protestants.

To build political consensus, Falwell also had to reach outside the bounds of his particular congregational or denominational community. In doing this, Falwell welcomed the

support of big business leaders who shared his views on matters of economy or morality, even if they had only tangential attachments to Falwell's religious worldview. As Kim Phillips-Fein has noted, "Although the 'religious right,' as it became known, was always deeply moved by issues having to do with family and sexuality . . . its spokesmen often framed their political positions in antigovernment language—which made it possible for them to form an alliance with the business conservatives." In the South especially, this antigovernment stance emerged in the context of the civil rights movement and the move of many conservative evangelicals to found Christian schools, both as havens from desegregation and, later, from the curriculum of public schools, which many evangelical parents found sorely lacking in lessons on abstinence, family values, or creationism. The efforts of IRS regulators and federal officials to strip Christian academies—such as the Lynchburg Christian Academy that Falwell founded in 1966—of their tax-free status, unless they conformed to federal standards of racial inclusiveness, struck many conservative evangelicals as a critical overreach by the federal government. According to Catholic and conservative activist Paul Weyrich, "What galvanized the Christian community was not abortion, school prayer, or the ERA [Equal Rights Amendment]. I was trying to get those people interested in those issues and totally failed." "What changed their mind," he concluded, "was Jimmy Carter's intervention against the Christian schools, trying to deny them tax-exempt status on the basis of so-called de facto segregation." Weyrich was a little off in his history; Jimmy Carter had not launched these initiatives since they began in 1972 when a district court deemed Bob Jones University—an all-white fundamentalist college in Greenville, South Carolina—as ineligible for federal tax relief because of its segregationist stance. But due to Carter's identity as an evangelical who did not stop such injunctions and, later, cited his duty to "uphold the Constitution" as President as a defense for doing nothing about abortion, he received the full

derision of conservative evangelicals. His successor—Ronald Reagan—would benefit most from their vote, but not before like-minded corporate sponsors would be drafted by Falwell and other evangelical activists to forward their joint cause against the federal government.²³⁸

Fired by such pocketbook concerns about taxation—along with broader concerns about homosexuality, feminism, abortion, and other cultural issues—conservatives in the evangelical community of the South and nation were open to political mobilization. Funding this mobilization was arduous work. To help with this effort, Falwell welcomed the advice and support of Epsilon Data Management, a Massachusetts-based marketing outfit begun in 1968 by four junior faculty members of the Harvard Business School. An innovator in computerized database marketing, Epsilon helped Falwell streamline his pitch to potential donors and automate contribution records. Others in the conservative movement used similar hi-tech methods. By the late 1970s, Epsilon also had seven of the top ten televangelists in the nation as clients while another conservative activist, Richard Viguerie, had the names and addresses of 15 million conservatives, each stored on 3,000 rolls of magnetic tape in his suburban Washington, D.C. office and available for contact through direct mail. But Falwell's methods—under the advisement of Epsilon—were particularly effective for organizing money and support. Falwell used a wide variety of standard marketing techniques to catch the attention of his readers. Direct mailings created the illusion of intimacy and like-mindedness, delivered ultimatums, confirmed the fears and desires of the reader, and gave off a tone of measured excitement about “joining” a worthwhile cause. In addition to Epsilon's staff, Jerry Huntsinger, a pastor and erstwhile religious marketer, wrote attractive copy for the mailings and fine-tuned their aesthetics, while

²³⁸ Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands*, 226; Weyrich quoted in Barry Hankins, *American Evangelicals: A Contemporary History of a Mainstream Religious Movement* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), 144; Richard T. Hughes, *Christian America and the Kingdom of God* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 154-155. For Carter's own recollections on the issue of abortion and his job as President, see Jimmy Carter, *Our Endangered Values: America's Moral Crisis* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005), 72-73.

Janice Gleason, the only woman on Falwell's marketing staff, wrote copy that a vital target audience for Falwell—homemakers and women in clerical work—might find appealing.²³⁹

Streamlining Falwell's organization—and the work of other televangelists—was also beneficial for Epsilon. “The rest of the company was barely making money,” remembered John Groman, an executive with Epsilon, “[but] The earnings on these accounts were fantastic.” Indeed, the revenues brought in from televangelists in the late 1970s and early 1980s approximated 30 percent of Epsilon's total revenue, allowing the company to go public in 1984 and paving the way for Epsilon executives and former executives to develop customer loyalty programs for American Airlines, Blockbuster, Hilton, Sony, Hertz, and the National Football League. Epsilon's contributions to Falwell's emerging political movement were likewise important, bringing in millions of dollars for Falwell's direct mail campaigns, for his ministry at Thomas Road, and for his work at Liberty University. In addition, the high-profile status that such mass marketing campaigns afforded Falwell helped him to bring in “superdonors.” Regularly during the 1980s, corporate figureheads contributed to Falwell's operations and Liberty University, including Arthur Williams (of A.L Williams and Associates life insurance company), Art DeMoss (the head of Liberty Life insurance group and big-time donor to Chuck Colson's Prison Fellowship), Bo Adams (an Arkansas cotton gin owner), and Don Hershey (the director of Hershey Equipment Company, an poultry and grain equipment manufacturer). Of Falwell's big-name backers, however, the biggest was Texas oil magnate Nelson Bunker Hunt.

Nelson Bunker Hunt was the son of H.L. Hunt, a Texas oilman with a long history of funding right-wing causes. Some were blatantly propagandistic. In the early 1950s, H.L. Hunt

²³⁹ Dirk Smillie, *Falwell, Inc.: Inside a Religious, Political, Educational, and Business Empire* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2008), 87-88, 90-95; Richard Viguerie, *The New Right: We're Ready to Lead* (Falls Church: Viguerie, 1981), 32-33; Nick Kotz, “King Midas of the ‘the New Right,’” *Atlantic Monthly* (November 1978), 52-61; Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands*, 213-214.

funded his own conservative non-profit organization, Facts Forum, Inc. before folding it to back right-wing radio programs in the late 1950s and early 1960s, such as the *Dan Smoot Report*, and *Life Line*, his own mass-market conservative radio program. No friend to Dwight Eisenhower, Hunt cottoned to ardent anti-communists like Joseph McCarthy, although he supported Lyndon B. Johnson in the 1960 election, primarily because of his fears of a Catholic takeover of the country through John F. Kennedy. Other right-wing endeavors were part and parcel of Hunt's personal eccentricity. *Life Line* regularly advertised Hunt's own line of "HLH"-branded food products, which included "Gastro-Majic" health tablets that he took religiously. In 1960, Hunt also published a paperback political novel entitled *Alpaca*, which romanticized a plutocratic America where the Constitution allowed the rich more votes. Though only a nominal believer who had a regular mistress and a healthy gambling habit, H.L. Hunt did have connections to the conservative evangelical world, holding a membership at W. A. Criswell's First Baptist Church in Dallas and backing the efforts of George Benson at Harding College.²⁴⁰ Along with several other Texas business leaders—including H.E. "Eddie" Chiles, chairman of the Western Company of North America and, later, owner of the Texas Rangers baseball club, and Mike Richards, chairman of two prominent Houston banks—H.L. Hunt backed the early career of James Robison, a Houston-born evangelist who came to be known as "God's Angry Man" and one of the most prominent voices for evangelical protest against what he termed the "demonism and liberalism" championed by supporters of evolution, homosexuals, the ERA, and the welfare state.²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ Robert G. Sherrill, "H.L. Hunt: Portrait of a Super-Patriot," *The Nation* (February 24, 1964), 182-195; "People," *Time* (February 29, 1960), 43; David R. Jones, "H.L. Hunt: Magnate with Mission," *The New York Times* (August 17, 1964), 1.

²⁴¹ William Martin, "God's Angry Man," *Texas Monthly* (April 1981), 152-157, 223-235; "James Robison (1943—)" in Glenn H. Utter and John W. Storey, eds., *The Religious Right: A Reference Handbook*, 2nd ed. (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2001), 110-111; Flake, *Redemptoriana*, 128-130; Grant Simmons, "Meet the Next Billy Graham," *Texas Business* (December, 1979), 25-28.

When H.L. Hunt died in 1974, Nelson Bunker Hunt inherited his share of the family wealth and picked up where both he and his father left off, continuing to donate money and lend his personal endorsement to a wide variety of conservative causes. Bunker Hunt had been formally involved in American politics for years before his father's death, with some of his most fervent support—and somewhere between \$250,000 to \$300,000 for “rainy day” money—going to segregationist George Wallace's 1968 bid for the Presidency.²⁴² In addition to oil and real estate holdings, the younger Hunt's stake in the emerging Libyan oil fields helped underwrite these endeavors, although his failed—and borderline criminal—attempt to corner the world silver market in 1979 showed the limits of his economic and political influence. Despite such setbacks, by the early 1980s Bunker Hunt had broadened or strengthened financial or personal connections to any number of anti-communist, neo-conservative think-tanks and initiatives.

Along with T. Cullen Davis and his brother William H. Hunt, Bunker Hunt was foundational to the creation of the Council for National Policy (CNP) in 1981. A secretive, non-profit organization that linked right-wing business leaders to (mostly) evangelical activists for the sake of developing political strategies on behalf of restoring free enterprise and “moral values” in the U.S. The CNP was majority white (99 percent), male (96 percent) and Christian (99 percent). It was also grounded in the Sunbelt, as the vast majority of members (84 percent) hailed from the South or west of the Mississippi River; approximately 26 percent of members were from Texas. Nearly every major Christian rightist joined the CNP in the early 1980s, as the organization's membership ballooned to over four hundred by 1985. Among its members were James Dobson, Pat Robertson, Bill Bright, James Robison, Jerry Falwell, the Religious Roundtable's Ed McAteer, Christian Voice's Gary Jarmin, Christian reconstructionists Dr. Gary

²⁴² Dan T. Carter, *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics*, 2nd ed (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000), 336-337.

North and R. J. Rushdoony, as well as right-wing activist Henry Morris, televangelist D. James Kennedy, and evangelical writers Tim and Beverly LaHaye.²⁴³ However, Hunt's involvement in the politicization of conservative evangelicalism was not limited to the CNP. As detailed in a previous chapter, Bill Bright's Campus Crusade for Christ and his "Here's Life" campaign certainly benefited from having Bunker Hunt on board, as did Billy Graham, for whom Hunt was reportedly a "big contributor." But Hunt also held a rally for the evangelist early in his 1980 Presidential campaign and granted \$1 million to the Moral Majority in 1981.²⁴⁴

Hunt's money often overlapped with monies flowing from other sources into the coffers of conservative, evangelical organizations in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In late 1981 and early 1982, an investigation by Deborah Huntington and Ruth Kaplan noted "an astonishing degree of interconnection among certain individual evangelical organizations, and between the evangelical organizations and the ultra-conservative, business-funded lobbying and educational organizations." Huntington and Kaplan were particularly impressed by "how few of these [conservative] groups stand alone." "There is at least one individual in almost every group who links it to another," they averred, "In many cases, these relationships form a complex web." This web, Huntington and Kaplan were right to note, was "not an accidental phenomenon." Rather, it was the product of big businessmen deciding to fund evangelicalism's politicization and the willingness of evangelical leaders and organizations to accept such funding. Decisions on both sides blurred the lines between so-called "economic conservatism" and "social conservatism," making market libertarianism and anti-unionism synonymous with opposing the regulation of Christian schools, abortion, gay rights, and other matters of moral policy.²⁴⁵

²⁴³ Lichtman, *White Protestant Nation*, 358.

²⁴⁴ Chandler Davidson, *Race and Class in Texas Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 76-77.

²⁴⁵ Deborah Huntington and Ruth Kaplan, "Whose Gold is Behind the Altar?: Corporate Ties to Evangelicals," *Contemporary Marxism* 4 (Winter 1981-1982), 64.

Money tied everyone together. Huntington and Kaplan identified approximately \$20.5 million in donations to 18 different organizations from 1975 to 1981. Nelson Bunker Hunt gave three-quarters of this total—\$15.5 million—to Campus Crusade and its “Here’s Life” campaign. The remaining \$5 million came from 37 foundations and individuals and went to the following groups: Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Garden Grove Community Church, Oral Roberts Evangelical Association, Billy Graham Evangelical Association, Young Life, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, and Christian Anti-Communism Crusade. Several of these groups also received funding from old school backers—such as the Pew Family and Hearst Family—and new school backers—such as the rabidly anti-union Joseph Coors of Colorado and Willard Marriott of Utah, who, though a conservative Mormon, backed Billy Graham. Pro-business organizations also interlocked with a number of other evangelical organizations, often to degrees that were not easily measured or public knowledge. Indeed, Huntington and Kaplan counted the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress (a Joseph Coors outfit), the Conservative Caucus, the American Conservative Union, the Public Service Research Council, and the National Right to Work Committee among the pro-business organizations that had direct or indirect involvement in conservative evangelical groups.

Activist Gary Jarmin exemplified this kind of tag-teaming between disparate conservative leaders and groups. A treasurer for the Christian Voice Moral Government Fund and legislative director for Christian Voice, a Christian lobbying group, Jarmin also served as a staffer for the Stop OSHA Campaign and legislative director for the American Conservative Union. He also participated—along with dozens of other conservative evangelical leaders, politicians, and businessmen—on the Religious Roundtable, the religious equivalent to the Business Roundtable. Formed in 1979 and headed by Ed McAteer, the Religious Roundtable was “a council of 56

conservative members of the clergy” organized “to coordinate Christian leaders from around the nation who are willing to fight in the political arena for pro-God, pro-family, pro-America causes.”²⁴⁶

Another good example included evangelical businessman Richard DeVos, the founder and president of AmWay. A big-time donor to Campus Crusade for Christ and leader of the Christian Freedom Foundation—which had published *Christian Economics* during the 1950s and 1960s—De Vos also served as a financial supporter for Third Century Publishers, a book publishing organization organized in 1974 by Bill Bright and John Conlan, a conservative politician, to distribute books and other materials about conservative economic and political philosophies. Rus Walton, once a Director for the National Association of Manufacturers and the American Conservative Union, both wrote books for Third Century’s “Good Government Kits,” including *One Nation Under God* for use in the study of “Christian economics” and *The Spirit of ’76*, a “handbook for winning elections.” The “Third Century Index” was an early version of the voter guides used by the Moral Majority and other evangelical political groups for ranking politicians according to their social and economic policies and views. By the fall of 1976, such literature was used in the campaigns of at least thirty Congressional candidates, providing information to voters based on the principles of “individual freedom, fiscal responsibility, [and] free competitive enterprise” along with other criteria, such as abolishing the House Internal Security Committee, decreasing Food Stamp benefits, continuing Panama Canal Treaty negotiations, ending forced busing, guaranteeing federal loans, and prohibiting Medicaid payments for abortion. Materials similar to the “Good Government Kit” later came from any number of other rightist organizations with similar forms of corporate backing or approval,

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 63-67, 70-71.

including the Moral Majority, Christian Voice, and the National Christian Action Coalition (NCAC).²⁴⁷

According to Huntington and Kaplan, “A complex network of management overlap[ped] joint activity, and common strategy overshadow[ed] the differences between the ‘Christian’ and business pressure groups.” Still, they were careful to point out several caveats about these forms of joint activity. Business donations and pro-business groups tended to benefit only particular evangelical groups; hence, “they must be understood only as individual organizations within the spectrum of religious activity” rather than “representative of any social force as a whole.” In addition, financial data was often scarce for specific donors, as was specific information about what business donors were buying with their donations. Some undoubtedly saw their support for evangelical organizations as inherently political and in line with their own political aims, but others might have merely been inclined to support such organizations for purely religious reasons. Indeed, they admitted it was often “difficult to separate promotion of the Christian gospel from an effort to preserve the political and economic status quo.” Yet, it was difficult to deny the great deal of ideological crossover between conservative business leaders and those in the conservative evangelical world that received their money and support. Thus, it seemed to Huntington and Kaplan that financial contributions were only the tangible result of a broader-based coalition between big business and conservative evangelicals, one built around a common conservative vision for the nation’s future.²⁴⁸

Their caveats signaled both the reach and limits of the corporate-conservative evangelical alliance of the late 1970s and early 1980s. Though recruiting big businessmen to join their cause for a Christian America, most of the money raised for supporting the political purposes of

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 68-70.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 62.

conservative evangelicals came from less prominent individuals and groups. Likewise, the political ends of all this fundraising and organizing, whether including the recruitment of corporate leaders or not, often did not square with the goals of conservative evangelicals. To be sure, conservative politicians—from Ronald Reagan to John Conlan to Jesse Helms—benefited from the support of a mobilized evangelical constituency. But the social policies that conservative evangelicals sought to write into law, whether concerning education or abortion, often did not turn into law in the 1980s. At the height of the New Evangelical Right's power, all the organizing of corporate funds and support brought little legislative gains as Ronald Reagan, and his successor, George H. W. Bush, ran into both legislative roadblocks and political reality. If anything, the political output of the 1980s “conservative revolution” benefited the monied interests of corporate leaders over the morality politics of conservative evangelical activists. Not until the political emergence of the first conservative evangelical corporatist in U.S. history to gain elected office—George W. Bush of Texas—would ends meet intents.

Sponsorship of programs and formal political activism was not the only form of corporate engagement with the changing social context of the late twentieth century. One of the most important—and money-making—collaborations between corporate America and conservative evangelicalism in the 1960s and afterwards was the emergence of the highly corporatized form of evangelical identity production. In other words, what defined someone as “evangelical” and what reassured them of this identity was increasingly filtered through corporate entities.

The Business of Christian Culture

Perhaps no better example of corporate cultural production—and its attendant forms of cultural activism—existed than the Christian music industry. After emerging in the Sunbelt

context of the 1960s and 1970s, this industry produced goods and services that both responded to and reflected a new assertiveness by evangelicals in American public life. Corresponding to similar impulses in the political world, the Christian music industry became an important source of personal edification for millions of evangelicals. It also became one of the most successful forms of evangelizing the political and cultural message of conservative evangelicalism, resulting in clearer results than the efforts of counterparts in the corporatized world of evangelical politics. In short, if voting was measured in real dollar terms, the Christian music industry—along with other forms of cultural production and consumption—was a demonstrable success. Sales of Christian music approached approximately 20 million albums in 1984. By 1996, 33.3 million albums sold; in 1999, 49.8 million albums sold. In terms of real dollars, Christian music was “the fastest-growing form of popular music, driving its message home to the tune of \$750 million a year,” according to one 1995 report. In 1998, sales of Christian music beat out both jazz and classical music, as it garnered 6 percent of the U.S. music market in sales.²⁴⁹ It was also an important form of cultural expression and activism, as like-minded Christians bought and consumed Christian music as a type of consumer politics, as a way of pushing back against the changing social and sexual standards of the day through increasingly corporatized forms of evangelical expression.

The roots of this industry can be traced to the Sunbelt. California, in particular, played a vital role in its development. As a cauldron of anti-war and countercultural protest during the 1960s and early 1970s, northern and southern California also served as the background for new forms of conservative evangelical protest. Indeed, conservative evangelicals were not immune to

²⁴⁹ Eileen Luhr, “Metal Missionaries to the Nation: Christian Heavy Metal Music, ‘Family Values,’ and Youth Culture, 1984-1994,” *American Quarterly* 51:1 (2005): 112, 114; Heather Hendershot, *Shaking the World For Jesus: Media and Conservative Evangelical Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 56; Jay R. Howard and Jon M. Streck, *Apostles of Rock: The Splintered World of Contemporary Christian Music* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1999), 153.

the protests happening at dozens of college campuses around the country, and they were especially concerned about those occurring in their midst. For instance, Bill Bright, head of Campus Crusade for Christ, organized a “Berkeley Blitz” to counter youth protest at the Berkeley campus of the University of California. Like Billy Graham’s famed attempts to reach “the Jesus Generation” of rebellious baby busters, churches in suburban California joined countless churches nationwide in sponsoring youth-centered in-house programs and revivals. Indeed, the desire to reach youth with the evangelical gospel was pervasive. But of these endeavors, the most important and influential evangelical youth movement in California evangelicalism was the Jesus Movement.²⁵⁰

As a Christian response to student protest groups and countercultural activities in California, the Jesus Movement valued free expression and anti-authoritarianism. Chuck Smith, a premillennialist Santa Ana, California pastor whose daughter exposed him to the burgeoning Jesus Movement, called himself and his followers “radical Christians.” In that vein, as Carol Flake has noted, “The Jesus revolutionaries demanded their own culture—their own rituals, rallies and music.” In constructing this culture, Smith and others in the Jesus Movement borrowed extensively from the counterculture, using slogans, rituals, and clothing that marked its followers as youth of a different sort—as rebels for Christ’s sake. In music, particularly, the Jesus Movement sought to separate itself from both the staid church music of their parents’ generation and the “do what you feel” message of popular “secular” music. Initially drawing from the folk revival of the late 1960s, the first wave of “Jesus music” attempted to blend evangelical messages and with both musical elements borrowed from the folk revival of the late 1960s and contemporary forms of rock production. Of course, this sort of hybrid music was not

²⁵⁰ John Turner, *Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ*, 119-146; Billy Graham, *The Jesus Generation* (Zondervan, 1971).

entirely an original concoction. Various “secular” artists—from Elvis Presley to Johnny Cash to James Taylor to The Beatles—had dabbled in religious music throughout the 1950s and 1960s. And, gospel artists during the same decades regularly incorporated sounds and stylings borrowed from contemporary “secular” music. Still, “Jesus music” was a popular alternative for young Christians desiring to reconcile their religion with American popular culture. Thanks to the Jesus Movement in general, and its musical endeavors specifically, by June 1971 *Time* could claim that “Jesus is alive and well and living in the radical spiritual fervor of a growing number of young Americans who have proclaimed an extraordinary religious revolution in his name.”²⁵¹

For all its grassroots stylings and proclamations of radicalism, a penchant for run-of-the-mill, mainstream commercialism emerged alongside the Jesus Movement’s music. Whether in terms of musical production or political activism, ironies abounded in the making of Christian music. Indeed, for as much as early evangelical artists continued to imagine themselves as “Christian rebels” or distinctively Christian artists working outside the “mainstream” of American culture, they nevertheless joined with corporate industries already comfortable with the profitability of rebellion and countercultural identity. Keeping the long history of modern corporate activity in mind, Christian musicians were in the mainstream of corporate, capitalist culture in more ways than one. Indeed, as Thomas Frank has pointed out, various self-styled “countercultural” groups from the 1950s through the 1970s were essential for showing corporate marketers new reservoirs for creating new and profitable forms of “cool.” Selling “lifestyles”

²⁵¹ McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 243-244; Carol Flake, *Redemptorama*, 172; “The New Rebel Cry: Jesus is Coming!” *Time* (June 21, 1971), 56-63.

alongside products—and linking such products to one’s lifestyle—became a mantra of advertising and corporate production in the 1960s and 1970s.²⁵²

It was no different in evangelical circles. Almost from the start, corporate interests informed the production and consumption of Christian music. Larry Norman—often hailed as the “Father of Christian Rock”—was from San Francisco and a member of People, a soft rock group who attempted to debut in 1968 with their album *We Need a Whole Lot More of Jesus and a Lot Less of Rock and Roll*. Before its release, Capitol Records strong-armed Norman and his group into changing the album title to the less inflammatory *I Love You*, which also shared its name with a Top-40 hit. The cover of the album featured a picture of Jesus, which Capitol replaced with a simple picture of the band. Incensed, Norman left both his band and the label, starting up Solid Rock, his own record label. Capitol still released *I Love You* in 1968 and followed it the next year with Norman’s solo work *Upon This Rock*, widely regarded as the first “Christian rock” album. Norman, however, had moved on, operating Solid Rock as an independent label. Norman and his brand of music took a turn for the better after he performed at Explo ’72, a youth festival held in the Cotton Bowl in Dallas in 1972. A “Christian Woodstock” planned by the Jesus Movement in tandem with Campus Crusade for Christ, Explo ’72 was specifically designed to reach out to Billy Graham’s “Jesus Generation.” (Graham gave a keynote address at the event.) Norman performed along with other emerging Christian artists and converted “secular” artists like Johnny Cash and Kris Kristofferson.²⁵³

Shortly after Explo ‘72, a music minister from Waco, Texas named Billy Ray Hearn founded Myrrh, believing that he could tap into the youth market in attendance at the Cotton

²⁵² Thomas Frank, *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998). Also see Joseph Heath and Andrew Potter, *Nation of Rebels: Why Counterculture Became Consumer Culture* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004).

²⁵³ Howard and Streck, *Apostles of Rock*, 30-31; Turner, *Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ*, 138-144.

Bowl. “He realized that these kids would listen to Christian music if it just existed,” remembered Billy Ray’s son Bill Hearn, “Young church people realized that there was good music out there that also had lyrics that affirmed their faith, that was consistent with their lifestyle.” Initially, Myrrh was a subsidiary of Word Inc., a Waco, Texas-based book publisher and gospel label, and filled with veterans from the Jesus Movement, such as 2nd Chapter of Acts and Randy Matthews. Barry McGuire, whose secular hit “Eve of Destruction” had attained a certain popularity in evangelical circles, later joined. According to his son, Hearn “built the first national [Christian] record company” with Myrrh until he left Word in 1975 to start another major Christian label, Sparrow.²⁵⁴ But it would take investment from large-market labels to make Christian music a contemporary cultural industry.

As in the publishing industry or movie industry, distribution was the key to a broader audience for Christian artists. Of course, not all artists or labels desired wider appeal; much like the fundamentalists of a previous generation, some desired to remain separate from broader American culture and rejected all dealings with mass-market labels or mass-market appeal as a threat to the sanctity and sincerity of their music.²⁵⁵ If Christian musicians were at times standoffish towards larger market labels, corporate music entities were also slow in investing in Christian music because, in the 1960s and 1970s, there was no clear market for it. To be sure, black “gospel” music was a well-defined market and one with big label backing. But even gospel music sold poorly and rarely made it onto mainstream radio. Christian music—which tended to have mostly white musicians blending rock or folk musical stylings with original

²⁵⁴ Andrew Beaujon, *Body Piercing Saved My Life: Inside the Phenomenon of Christian Rock* (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2006), 24-26.

²⁵⁵ This “separational” element in contemporary Christian music ran alongside other impulses, however, what Jay R. Howard and Jon M. Streck have aptly termed “integrational” and “transformational.” In the former arrangement, Christian musicians attempted to penetrate the secular music market by blending secular musical stylings with Christian lyrics; in the latter arrangement, they attempted to use their music to change the broader culture, trying to bring it into alignment with evangelical moral and political tenets. See Howard and Streck, *Apostles of Rock*.

Christian lyrics—was even less attractive to major labels. To be sure, a few major labels tested the feasibility of a Christian music market in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The motive, as one executive at CBS put it, was the bottom line: “I’ll not pretend that we’re here because of some new burst of religious faith. . . . We’re here because of the potential to sell records in the gospel market. We want to put gospel records in stores that don’t currently carry them. We want to transform gospel from a specialty market to a mass-appeal market.”²⁵⁶ Trying to tap into that market, ABC bought Word in 1974 and then Myrrh. Sparrow became a part of MCA’s holdings in 1981, while CBS started up its own Christian label, Priority (even though CBS later closed its doors as “a matter of sheer economics” in 1983). Elektra briefly distributed Christian music put out by the Light label, while MCA Records distributed the Christian label Songbird from 1979 to 1983. Joint ventures, such as Exit and What? Records, had their artists’ work distributed by Island and A&M.²⁵⁷

Yet, for the most part, Christian music had no serious backing from mass-market music companies until a Nashville teenager named Amy Grant showed the profitability of Christian music. Grant was the first “crossover” artist in Christian music history. “By 1983,” Grant had become “probably the most popular Christian female vocalist in the country,” wrote Paul Baker, an early chronicler of the Christian music industry. Her 1982 album *Age to Age*, released by Myrrh and backed by ABC, was a hit. Filled with praise and worship songs, *Age to Age* became the first “gospel” album to gain platinum record status for over a million units sold. By 1985, personnel in the burgeoning Christian music industry claimed that “a window’s open in this

²⁵⁶ Quoted in William D. Romanowski, “Evangelicals and Popular Music: The Contemporary Christian Music Industry,” in Bruce David Forbes and Jeffrey H. Mahan, eds, *Religion and Popular Culture in America*, rev. ed (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 116.

²⁵⁷ Beaujon, *Body Piercing Saved My Life*, 26-28; Paul Baker, *Contemporary Christian Music: Where It Came From, What It Is, Where It’s Going* (Westchester, Crossway Books, 1985), 151-154; Steven Holden, “Evangelical Pop a Hit of the Record Business,” *The New York Times* (February 20, 1985), C-17.

country for this kind of music, and it's open because of Amy.” Some saw this “window,” however, as a threat instead of an opportunity, as too much blending of the “secular world” and the church. As Barry Alfonso of *Billboard* observed, “Amy Grant’s popularity opened a Pandora’s box of troublesome issues that the Christian music industry has wrestled with to this day.”²⁵⁸ Christian artists were forced to deal with a number of questions: Are we “selling out” for the sake of broader appeal? Will we have to give up certain religious emphases in our music to garner more of a stage? Will the profit motive overtake the pastoral or proselyte motive? These questions concerned Christian musicians and their followers alike, but in the 1980s and early 1990s, many Christian musicians made a pragmatic deal with large-scale music corporations. To get their music distributed to a wide audience—presumably with the intent of evangelizing or edifying as many people as possible—they worked with large-scale music companies and seek out their resources. “The bottom line,” argued Bill Hearn of Myrrh, “is we needed the resources in order to grow, in order to fulfill our vision.”

In Grant’s stead followed dozens of other Christian musicians—Petra, Steven Curtis Chapman, Stryper, the Newsboys, D.C. Talk, Jars of Clay, MercyMe, Switchfoot, Third Day, Reliant K, and P.O.D. Each showed a willingness to work with corporate America to get their music to the masses. In the 1990s, corporate America was also willing to work with Christian musicians. Gaylord Entertainment Company bought Word in 1998 and then sold it to Warner Music Group in 2001.²⁵⁹ EMI bought Sparrow in 1991, then set up an entire division for Christian music, headquartered in Nashville, Tennessee. Nashville, of course, had long been a center for country music and evangelical publishers like Thomas Nelson, but this move by EMI—along with either the move or development of minor labels there—helped turn Nashville

²⁵⁸ Howard and Streck, *Apostles of Rock*, 62. Beaujon, *Body Piercing Saved My Life*, 33, 38.

²⁵⁹ Beaujon, *Body Piercing Saved My Life*, 37-43.

into a city known as the unofficial “center” of the Christian consumer industries. With large, mainstream labels like Gaylord, EMI, and Warner supporting their work, Christian musicians also found their albums on store shelves in Wal-Mart, Best Buy, and Target. A few garnered semi-regular rotation of mainstream rock stations. Most others became the primary content on regional and mass-market stations devoted to Christian music programming, which exploded in both number and audience during the 1990s.

Along with Christian bookstores (covered later in this chapter), Christian radio was vital for Christian music’s move into popular culture. To be sure, Christian radio stations had been around since the dawn of radio itself; indeed, many early innovators in the field were conservative evangelicals.²⁶⁰ But after the 1970s, Christian radio stations flourished, rising from 111 stations in 1973 to 1052 stations in 1989, 1807 stations in 1996, and 2513 stations in 2002. As a point of comparison, the number of radio stations in the U.S. in 2002 stood at 13,156, making “Christian radio” stations approximately 19.1 % of that total.²⁶¹ In the 1980s and 1990s, however, Christian radio followed broader trends in mass media, moving toward both increased specialization and corporatization. The reconfiguring of FCC law that redefined “non-commercial educational use” of radio allowed churches and religious organizations to qualify more readily for air time, without having to follow “fair and balanced” stipulations of previous decades. Thus, specialized groups—whether conservatives like Rush Limbaugh or evangelicals like Focus on the Family’s James Dobson—could more readily get programs on the air, especially on the cheaper AM bands. Local Christian radio stations also took advantage of the

²⁶⁰ For instance, see Douglas Carl Adams, *Selling the Old-Time Religion: American Fundamentalists and Mass Media, 1920-1940* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001).

²⁶¹ Bob Lochte, *Christian Radio: The Growth of a Mainstream Broadcasting Force* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2006), 10-12. Like Arbitron and other radio industry sources, Lochte counts “Christian, Contemporary Christian, Christian Hit Radio, Christian News/Talk, Gospel, Southern Gospel, Inspirational, and Religious” as “Christian Radio,” although the sub-genre with the greatest growth included non-gospel, “Christian music,” as defined earlier in this chapter.

liberalization of radio laws, but none did so like Ed Atsinger and Stuart Epperson's Salem Communications Company.

By the late-1990s, Salem Communications was a massive radio company, the largest Christian media company in the nation. Epperson—a native of North Carolina—and Atsinger—born in Hawaii and raised in southern California—were ardent evangelicals who first entered the radio business together in 1972, when they bought a Bakersfield, California station. In 1974, Atsinger put his first full-time Christian radio station on the air and, three years later, convinced Epperson to join him in developing additional stations. Twelve years later, they formed Salem Communications as a conglomerate of 13 Christian radio stations in New York, Los Angeles, and Boston., which steadily grew into five more cities during the late 1980s and early 1990s. When the Telecommunications Act of 1996 liberalized ownership rules—a move that encouraged conglomeration and monopolization nationwide—Salem benefited tremendously, adding new markets and new stations. In 1999, Salem Communications went public and used the capital infusion to gobble up additional market share. By 2006, Salem had 98 stations in 38 markets, with 60 stations in 23 of the top 25 markets. In addition, Salem was the third largest operator of stations in the nation's top 25 markets, trailing only radio conglomerates Clear Channel Communications and Infinity (a subsidiary of Viacom).²⁶²

As Salem became the undisputed leader in Christian radio, Epperson made no bones about his company's mission:

We are in this business primarily because we have a point of view. Moreover, we think our views are well received in the marketplace of ideas. Our editorials [on Salem's news/talk programming] emphasize limited government, free enterprise, a strong national defense and traditional moral values. . . . I deplore the current state of this immoral and debased culture. I am working in every way I know how to change it. I think what is being passed off as entertainment these days is an outrage, but I am serious when I say we support limited government. . . . It is

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 9, 80-81

my fervent hope that Conservatives, especially Religious Conservatives, won't get driven into believing that more government is the answer to this cultural problem. It will only lead to disasters . . . and no bill, once passed by Congress and signed into law, is ever repealed. Today it is [shock jock Howard] Stern, Bubba (the Love Sponge) and Janet Jackson in the spotlight. Tomorrow it could be Limbaugh, Dobson and Janet Parshall.²⁶³

Salem's mission, in many ways, matched the demands of its audience. According to a 1996 study by *Religious Broadcasting* magazine, Christian radio stations—including those owned by Salem or run by independent operations—were overwhelmingly utilized by white conservatives: 83% of listeners were white (compared to 13% Hispanic and 2% African-American) while 79% identified themselves as “conservative,” 16% as “moderate, and only 3% as “liberal.”²⁶⁴ Many stations played various forms of Christian rock, pop, adult contemporary, or “inspiration” music. Talk shows led by evangelical leaders like Larry Burkett or James Dobson also frequented. Altogether, the cultural concerns of many of these stations and their listeners were perhaps best summarized by the slogan for Atlanta's FISH 104.7—“Safe For the Whole Family.”

As the Christian music industry joined hands with large-scale corporate industries, certain musicians in the industry continued the legacy of protest that had sparked the first moves toward creating a Christian counterculture. In general, however, the more involvement a Christian musician had with a large, mass-market corporation, the less such social issues marked either their music or their public persona. “I don't know of many CCM bands that would have been in the [John] Kerry camp,” writer Mark Joseph told *The New York Times* in 2005, “A lot of that is just a function of abortion. As the parties became so entrenched on abortion, a lot of these bands tend to be against it, to line up with the G.O.P. But there's an awful lot of pressure on bands not

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 84-85. Epperson himself had long been involved in conservative Republican politics and twice ran—unsuccessfully—for Congress.

²⁶⁴ Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone: The Enduring Influence of the Christian Right* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1998), 49-50.

to come out for the G.O.P. from more of the mainstream labels.”²⁶⁵ Yet, even with corporate executives taming some of the harshest critiques of abortion, the issue drove the politics of Christian music.

If or when Christian musicians addressed social issues in their music, abortion and its legalization via *Roe v. Wade* was often at the top of their hit list. Why? In short, Christian music was heavily marketed towards youth, the very people who many evangelicals feared might experiment sexually and thus need to seek out an abortion. Thus, Christian musicians used their music as a platform for either encouraging their young listeners to consider other options or join in the fight against *Roe v. Wade*. Christian metal rockers like REZ, Barren Cross, King’s X, Holy Danger, Hellfire, Guardian, and Lust Control all produced songs condemning abortion. Christian pop-rap artists DC Talk had minor hits with “Children Can Live (Without It),” as did Christian grunge band Grammatrain with “Execution.” American band Big Tent Revival catered to culture war politics in several videos, including one for “If Loving God Was a Crime” where scenes of police officers chasing and hand-cuffing Christian protestors bled seamlessly into shots of real anti-abortion protests. In 1998, Kathy Troccoli—a conservative Catholic—won song of the year honors from the Gospel Music Association for her anti-abortion song “A Baby’s Prayer.”²⁶⁶ Christian pop rockers P.O.D. were perhaps the most conspicuous with their take on the issue, finishing off their 1994 album *Snuff the Punk*—the “punk” here being the Devil—with “Abortion is Murder.”

Some groups not only made their stance of abortion clear through their music or other public outlets, but did so by supporting political organizations or candidates. 4Him, one of the more popular Christian groups of the 1990s, was invited by the Pro-Life Coalition to record

²⁶⁵ Brian Wise, “Bringing Christian Rock to a New Stage,” *The New York Times* (October 23, 2005), CT-6.

²⁶⁶ Eileen Luhr, *Witnessing Suburbia: Conservatives and Christian Youth Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 137-138; Bill Bell, “Onward, Christian Music!” *The Daily News* (May 1, 1998), 59.

public service announcements for George H.W. Bush during his 1992 Presidential run, which according to *Billboard*, “stress[ed] . . . Bush’s strong pro-religion and pro-family values.” At the 1992 SESAC awards in Nashville, Dale Thompson, a member of the popular Christian pop-metal band Bride, shouted “Bush/Quayle ’92!” after receiving an award for his band. He later cited the issue of abortion as the reason behind his support for their ticket. Christian band The Newsboys mirrored Thompson’s support for the GOP, noting that the Liberal Party’s success in their native Australia had “dangerous” parallels with the Democratic Party in the U.S. “The Liberals came in and we saw change in the country overnight,” believed lead singer Peter Furler, “It really scared us and we could see it sort of happening again in very similar format with the U. S. of A.” “From a Christian point of view,” he continued, “morally speaking, things just went downhill” as prostitution, pornography, and abortion clinics went on the rise in Australia, much as they would in a country headed by Bill Clinton and his Democratic Party supporters.²⁶⁷

If the emergence of a Christian music industry was a major form of cultural activism among conservative evangelicals, then it coincided with another impulse: the setting up of small businesses and business conglomerations that affirmed “Christian values”—however defined—in the face of social change. By creating this Christian consumer culture through explicitly Christian businesses, evangelicals again unified their pursuit of profit with their prophetic witness to a nation seemingly gone off course. In the words of Christian Bible Association president Bill Anderson, these evangelicals engaged in a “business ministry” to modern America. Or, as one scholar called this new generation of Christian business leaders, they were unabashedly “for-profit prophets.”²⁶⁸

²⁶⁷ Bob Darden, “Christian Acts Forthcoming About Their Support for Bush,” *Billboard* (October 31, 1992), 8.

²⁶⁸ Quoted in Borden, “Making Money, Saving Souls,” 68.

“For-Profit Prophets”

Starting in the late 1970s, H.L. Stansell Trucking began painting “Truckin’ for Jesus” on the side of all its trucks and on its building on U.S. 19 in Palm Harbor, Florida. This was not an overwhelmingly popular decision. Worried about offending their customers, Campbell Soup canceled its contract with Stansell. Yet, Stansell’s owners kept on trucking with the slogan for years afterwards, claiming that some sought out the company for its statement of public faith. Apparently, not enough sought out the company, as it filed for bankruptcy in 1999 and H.L. Stansell’s grandson was arrested and charged in 2001 with workers’ compensation insurance fraud. By that point, other companies—such as Covenant Transport of Chattanooga, Tennessee—were picking up where Stansell left off, encouraging voluntary Bible studies at truck stops, though stopping short of emblazoning religious slogans on the back of their haulers.²⁶⁹

Christian truckers running up and down the highways pointed to a broader trend. For every large-scale corporate that either explicitly or implicitly used evangelicalism in their corporate culture, there were dozens of other smaller-scale companies that emerged as a part of a growing trend toward running Christian businesses. Of course, conservative evangelicals had been active in the business world throughout the postwar era, even before the social movements of the 1960s got underway. But their endeavors took on a different tack in the last three decades of the twentieth century. Some, though certainly not all, evangelicals took up business careers outside of the so-called “secular” world of mass-market business, either branding themselves as exclusive sellers of Christian goods and services or as Christian business leaders working in a for-profit, entrepreneurial environment.

²⁶⁹ G. G. Rigsby, “Businesses Mix Faith, Commerce,” *St. Petersburg Times-Largo Times* (January 23, 2000), 1; Erika N. Duckworth, “A Deep Faith Drives Family and Its Trucking Company,” *St. Petersburg Times* (April 3, 1994), 1-H; Julie Church, “Man Behind ‘Truckin for Jesus’ Charged,” *St. Petersburg Times – North Pinellas Times* (July 14, 2001), 1; Pam Belluck, “Drivers Find New Service at Truck Stops: Old-Time Religion,” *The New York Times* (February 1, 1998), 1-1.

Christian bookstores and Christian small businesses proliferated after the 1960s. Between 1965 and 1975, the number of independent Christian bookstores doubled from 725 to 1850. Store sales, on average, grew annually at 16 percent between 1975 and 1979 (almost double the national retail growth rate of 9.7 percent over the same years).²⁷⁰ Year-end accounting in 2004 from the Christian Booksellers Association estimated \$4.34 billion in retail sales of all Christian products. By the same account, in 1995 *U.S. News and World Report* estimated that roughly half of all small businesses in the U.S. were operated by self-described “born again” Christians. By 2005, between 500,000 and 600,000 Christian enterprises were in the American private sector.²⁷¹

Both Christian bookstores and Christian small businesses were resources for Christians in general—and conservative evangelicals in particular—who wanted to buy Christian goods and services from fellow believers. As with all consumer purchases, numerous motivations lay behind the consumer’s decision to frequent a Christian business establishments. Some bought because of persuasive advertising; others bought for a sense of belonging to a broader consumer community; others bought as a statement of personal identity; others bought for the feeling of contributing to like-minded businesses; others bought out of a sincere concern about the deleterious effects of “secular” goods and services. Christian bookstores—and to some extent, Christian small businesses—tended to follow the lead of other companies, engaging in “lifestyle branding” that encouraged consumers to purchase an emotional attachment to their Christian identity.²⁷² Much like the broader cultural industries in the U.S. and the Christian music industry,

²⁷⁰ Colleen McDannell, *Material Christianity: Religion and Popular Culture in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 246.

²⁷¹ <http://www.cbaonline.org/nm/timeline.htm>; Kevin Horan, “The Christian Capitalists,” *U.S. News and World Report* (March 13, 1995), 54; Kate Shelnutt, “Faith is Placed in Directories,” *Richmond Times Dispatch* (August 5, 2006), B-9.

²⁷² Borden, “Making Money, Saving Souls,” 69-70.

Christian bookstores and Christian businesses conflated self-expression and identity with buying. For conservative evangelicals especially, buying at Christian bookstores went beyond merely buying goods for devotional use, instruction, or evangelism. Buying at Christian bookstores and Christian businesses could also offer conservatives a sense of solidarity with other conservatives. It could also offer a shelter from the culture wars or, in some cases, the means to join the fight. Regardless of the exact reasons behind their use, Christian bookstores and Christian small businesses were places where cultural activism happened via consumption.

Of course, Christian retailing already had a long and storied history before the emergence of the independent Christian bookstore in the 1950s. For the most part, Christian retailers before World War II were either extensions of Bible publishing houses or Sunday School suppliers, or they were the famed traveling Bible salesmen and women of popular lore and literature. The postwar “Christian bookstore” broke from these trends. Most were mom-and-pop operations, independently capitalized, entrepreneurial to the core, and quite modest in terms of inventory and broader social importance. In short, they sold Bibles, books, stationary, and other merchandise to customers—increasingly middle class, suburban customers—in their nearby communities. The homegrown nature of early postwar bookstores encouraged the founding of the Christian Bookseller’s Association (CBA) in 1950. Founded in Chicago by Ken Taylor and Bill Moore, both of Moody Press, and John Fish, manager of Scripture Press Store, the CBA worked like any other trade association, holding yearly conventions and serving as a supportive business network for Christian bookstore owners. Though some in the CBA debated the particular ups-and-downs of running their “business ministries,” the profit motive was never questioned. “It is to their [Christian booksellers’] credit that most of them are motivated by a desire to spread Christian literature more than to make a profit,” asserted a speaker at the CBA’s first convention,

“although that too [making a profit] is absolutely necessary.”²⁷³ Christian booksellers—like others who combined faith and business—were still, at the end of the day, trying to do business.

Though the CBA and its members certainly exhibited a grassroots, entrepreneurial quality, large-scale corporate interests were never far from the Christian bookstore, especially after the 1960s. During that decade, most Christian bookstores transformed into “Christian department stores,” selling not only Bibles and books but a wide array of Christian merchandise. As with the Christian music industry, the Jesus Movement was vital for this transition. The self-expressiveness encouraged by this youth movement also encouraged self-expressiveness in forms other than music. Noting the potential of selling conservative evangelicalism as a “lifestyle,” Christian bookstores in the 1970s and 1980s increasingly stocked their shelves with what detractors called “Jesus Junk”—Christian-themed bric-a-brac that ranged from clothing to posters to souvenirs to jewelry to stationary to gifts to films to games to toys to plaques to art. The shift to a “Christian department store” was dramatic. In 1978, 63 percent of store sales in Christian bookstores came from books, Bibles, and Sunday school curriculum; in 1993, print materials made up 49 percent of total sales, while sales of Christian music rose from 12 to 15 percent. Sales of “non-print merchandise”—or Christian bric-a-brac—nearly doubled in fifteen years, from 20 percent to 36 percent.²⁷⁴

Corporate interests reentered the Christian bookstore business during this transition. Increasingly, Mom and Pop might still run the store, but large-scale Bible and book publishers generally served as their main suppliers, especially after a series of books with strongly evangelical themes—*The Late Great Planet Earth*, *The Living Bible*, and *Total Woman*—became best-sellers. The trend towards corporatization and specialization in the Christian music

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 71-72.

²⁷⁴ McDannell, *Material Christianity*, 247, 259.

industry also affected the Christian publishing industry in the 1970s and 1980s. Christian presses—whether Zondervan of Grand Rapids, Michigan or Thomas Nelson of Nashville, Tennessee—garnered an increased share of the evangelical publishing market. Non-religious presses and corporations like ABC and Harper & Row bought a stake in the Christian publishing industry, either buying out smaller Christian presses or turning others into subsidiaries.

The transformation of the Bible itself during the last three decades of the twentieth century illustrated these trends. “Bibles are big business,” wrote Randall Balmer after visiting the CBA’s annual convention in 1988, and they were big business both for the high levels of specialization and corporatization. “In order to sell more and more Bibles,” noted Balmer, “publishers have devised all sorts of angles: new translations, new typefaces, new colors, new bindings.” By the late 1990s, Bibles for specific buyers also proliferated. “First there was *The Word.*,” wrote a reporter for *The Boston Globe*, “Today, there are Words, and Words and Words.” More than 3,000 different versions of the Bible were on the market by 1999. Most were not new translations but “specialty Bibles” for each potential customer segment: men, women, preachers, students, business leaders, non-whites, and on and on. Most were published by a short-list of major publishers, including Thomas Nelson, Zondervan, or Tyndale, all with evangelical leanings and with large capital foundations and distribution outlets. Most also stocked the shelves of a growing number of large-scale Christian bookstore chains, including Family Christian Bookstores and Crossway Books, and “general retail” stores like Wal-Mart, Barnes & Noble, and Costco. As a result of this general trend toward corporatization in the production and distribution of Christian books, the small-scale, independent Christian bookstore of the 1960s and 1970s was quickly becoming a thing of the past. “The generation who grew up going to Christian bookstores is dying,” reported one California minister, “There are a lot of

people in the ‘CBA market’ now working with Barnes & Noble.” A smaller Christian book retailer in Lynchburg, Virginia agreed, albeit with mixed feelings. Though happy that such “books are calling people back to their roots” and causing Americans to realize “their need for God and family,” she admitted that, “We can’t compete with the big chains on discounts.” Her bookstore was trying to survive by doing “better on service.”²⁷⁵

If the Christian bookstore exemplified one manifestation of reconciling the profit motif with a prophetic stance toward modern American culture, then the emergence of Christian small businesses signified another manifestation. Christian small businessmen had been a prominent part of corporate America for decades, as signified by the Christian Business Men’s Committee. In addition, many Christian small businessmen followed the broader trend in corporate America toward integrating their faith in the workplace. Though their businesses were much smaller in terms of personnel and market, they nevertheless affirmed the applicability of evangelicalism inside their particular companies and through their broader social or professional engagements. Exactly how their faith might be applied varied widely. Some were explicit, attaching evangelical phrases or dedications to the names of their companies. Others were less conspicuous, avoiding public identifications with any religion while inviting corporate chaplains into their companies or handing out religious materials at work. Some joined the ranks of Christian trade organizations, whether the Christian Business Men’s Committee, the Fellowship of Companies for Christ International, or smaller, more localized committees. Some did business with other Christian companies, whether small businesses like themselves or larger, evangelical-affiliated or evangelical-led corporations.

²⁷⁵ Randall Balmer, *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: A Journey into the Evangelical Subculture in America*, 4th ed (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 198; Diego Ribadeneira, “From Dads to Students, There’s a Bible for You,” *Boston Globe* (April 10, 1999), A-1; Mark Kellner, “Faith Sales Shift,” *The Washington Times* (July 24, 2002), A-2.

Regardless of the exact application of their Christianity to their business activities, the steady growth of Christian small businesses encouraged the rise of a business sector devoted solely to cataloguing Christian small businesses. In the mid-1970s, W. R. Tomson founded the *Christian Yellow Pages (CYP)* in Modesto, California. *CYP* grew primarily through franchising and operated according to Tomson's belief that "Christians need to know who their fellow Christians are in the business community in order to do business with them." "We believe," he averred, "that if you need an electric drill, you should purchase it from a Christian hardware dealer. If you need dental care, we can tell you where to find a Christian dentist. The directory says in effect, 'The persons listed herein are Christian businessmen.'" Why might such consumers find *CYP* helpful? "The unspoken assumption," wrote Aubrey H. Haines for *The Christian Century*, "is that the Christian consumer should find such merchants to be more honest, reliable and ethical in their business dealings than other merchants, who may identify themselves as Jewish, as secular humanists, [or] as Christians who reject the 'born-again' tag, or whatever."²⁷⁶

Beyond providing protections for evangelical consumers, *CYP* also assured its readers that only business owners who signed a pledge of faith endorsing evangelical beliefs would find space on its pages. The exclusion of many Catholics and Protestants, not to mention all Jews and non-Christians, drew suits from the Anti-Defamation League and B'nai B'rith, both against *CYP* and a counterpart in San Diego, the Christian Business Directory. Thomson responded to these charges in an open letter to the Anti-Defamation League. "The fact is that the bias of the Christian Yellow Pages is not against anyone per se," he wrote, "but rather for born again Christians." His lawyer, Robert E. Miller, also an evangelical, was more candid. "We don't feel we discriminate against anybody," he told *The New York Times*, "We'd like everybody to be a

²⁷⁶ Aubrey B. Haines, "Buying 'Christian,'" *The Christian Century* (September 21, 1977), 804.

born again Christian.”²⁷⁷ The court, however, sided with the plaintiffs in the case, awarding “injunctive and monetary relief.” After the lawsuit, *CYP* had to accept advertisements from anyone, regardless of religion. Still, *CYP* did not actively solicit advertisements from non-evangelical businesses and approximately nine out of ten advertisements were from self-professed born-again Christians.²⁷⁸

Lawsuits were only one problem encountered during the early years of *CYP*. Though it doubled from 14 to 28 pages between 1975 and 1976, the Dallas version of *CYP* barely broke even. In Richmond, where a *CYP* franchisee reportedly met “a barrage of protest from practically every main-line Christian, Jewish, and interfaith organization from Southern Baptists to Episcopalians.” As a result, the directory’s published copy ran at roughly one-fourth the proposed length and the area director reported a loss of “between \$2,000 and \$4,000 on the venture.” Opposition in North Carolina cost the publication 75 percent of its potential sales, causing delays in *CYP*’s publication. The resistance of liberal Protestant organizations was particularly notable. Claiming that the directories were both “divisive among Christians” and “discriminatory to the Jewish community,” Charles Davidson of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. (Southern) claimed that *CYP* ran “counter to the highest Christian principles of fairness and nondiscrimination in the market place.” He added, “There is little difference between religious discrimination in a public advertising medium and racial, creedal or sexual discrimination in the voting booth, the sale of housing, or as the basis of employment.” Davidson also warned of the

²⁷⁷ “‘Christian-Only’ Ads Charged With Bias,” *The New York Times* (September 7, 1977), 36.

²⁷⁸ Tomson and *CYP* appealed the decision, claiming that their status as a “nonprofit religious corporation was not a business establishment” and “that regulation of the content of the directory violated . . . rights to freedom of speech, religion, and association.” Their appeal did not succeed, although the court allowed the continuing of “publishing certain editorial materials,” in keeping with the First Amendment’s allowances concerning free speech. Nick Taylor, “The Walking Fingers March to War,” *Madison Avenue* (May, 1985), 38-43; *David Pines et al. v. W. R. Tomson et al.* (Civ. No. 68622) Court of Appeal of California, Second Appellate District, September 27, 1984; David M. Ludington, “A Study of the Christian Yellow Pages as an Advertising Tool for Small Businesses,” (Mt. Berry, Berry College, n.d.), 3-4, in author’s possession.

directories' ulterior motive, citing the San Diego-based Christian Business Directory's connections to the California Christian Campaign Committee, a conservative organization committed to electing Christian representatives to public office.²⁷⁹

Despite such controversies—or perhaps because of them—*CYP* grew in subscriptions in the 1980s and 1990s, joining *The Shepherd's Guide*, a similar publication started in Baltimore in 1980. Their first markets, according to a 1977 report in *The Washington Post*, tended to be “primarily in cities in the West, South, and Midwest, such as Portland, Tuscon, San Jose, Minneapolis-St. Paul and Miami.” Others were available in Atlanta, Richmond, and Dallas, although none were in print in the Northeast. Bill Bray, an entrepreneur from Wheaton, Illinois and organizer for Campus Crusade for Christ, saw directories like his own—the Christian Business Directory—as necessary responses to the nation's “moral slide away from God.” “The smaller Christian society becomes and the more pagan America becomes,” he concluded, “We'll be forced to put these out to cling to each other.”²⁸⁰

Such born-again business directories certainly fit into the general move toward creating an evangelical sub-culture based around consumption. By the late 1990s, *CYP* was national, although its target market remained “primarily to Christian advertisers and consumers in the South and on the West Coast.” Concerning its effectiveness, Berry College business researcher David M. Ludington found that *CYP* had been a mixed blessing to Christian businesses and consumers. Most businesses (63%) that Ludington surveyed discontinued use of *CYP* for poor results. Others (22%) said they wanted to use money set aside for marketing in other mediums. Few cited strong evidence that *CYP* contributed positively to their bottom lines, although many

²⁷⁹ Janis Johnson, “‘Christian Yellow Pages’ Under Fire,” *Washington Post* (February 25, 1977), D-14; Constance D’au Vin, “Christian Nationalist Crusade Closing Down,” *Washington Post* (January 13, 1978), B-6; Haines, “Buying ‘Christian,’” 805.

²⁸⁰ Nikita Stewart, “Shoppers Balance Beliefs, Business,” *Washington Post* (March 5, 2006), C-1; Johnson, “‘Christian Yellow Pages’ Under Fire,” D-14.

(51%) seemed happy to have their ads in *CYP*, since the forum’s mission was in line with their own desires to entice Christians to shop at their stores. Such responses convinced Ludington that “the decision to advertise in the *CYP* is an emotional decision, not a business decision. It might even be compared to a donation to the church.”²⁸¹ Despite questionable bottom-line benefits, Christian small businesses continued to frequent the pages of *CYP* and other Christian business directories. “Most ad reps say don’t do it because it turns people off,” reported Richard Markussen, a Clearwater, Florida mortgage seller, “If it does turn some off, that’s fine. God will take care of us and the business.”²⁸²

Such a devil-may-care attitude toward broader American society stood alongside a fervent desire for wanting to see American society changed. Whether in terms of political or cultural activism, many if not most conservative evangelicals sought to affect American society, throwing their support behind politicians, organizations, and endeavors that affirmed their vision for the nation. The willingness to rely on support from various corporate entities in this effort had taken on numerous manifestations in the 1970s and 1980s, much as it had in prior decades. But by the late 1980s and 1990s, no single figure had both symbolized and exemplified the presumed connections between corporate America and conservative evangelicalism. The rise of Sunbelt corporatist and conservative evangelical—George W. Bush—changed this trend, both leading to a legitimization in law of “faith at work” and the fulfillment of the faith-based policies that evangelicals and their corporate backers had wanted in American public life since the first years of the Sunbelt Age.

²⁸¹ Ludington, “A Study of the Christian Yellow Pages,” 7.

²⁸² Rigsby, “Businesses Mix Faith, Commerce,” 1.

CHAPTER 6

KEEPING THE CHARGE

Not long after George W. Bush arrived at the Texas governor's mansion in 1995, he decided to do some redecorating. Joe and Jan O'Neill, longtime friends and political contributors, loaned Bush a painting finished in 1916 by German painter W. H. D. Koerner. Entitled *A Charge to Keep*, the painting depicted a western rider rushing on horseback up a steep, tree-lined path, followed by two other riders. The painting's background evoked the uncertain wilderness of frontier lore. Gray, foggy mountains framed the foreground's gaunt characters.

Bush was reportedly moved by the painting and hung it directly opposite his desk, within view of anyone who visited his office. Afterward, Bush wrote a memo to his staff. "I thought I would share with you," he wrote, "a bit of Texas history which epitomizes our mission. . . . When you come into my office, please take a look at the beautiful painting of a horseman determinedly charging up what appears to be a steep and rough trail. This is us." "What adds complete life to the painting for me," he concluded, "is the message of Charles Wesley that we serve One greater than ourselves." For Bush, Koerner's painting reminded him of itinerant Methodist evangelists like Wesley, spiritual pioneers who braved the elements for the sake of spreading the Gospel. Indeed, one of Bush's favorite hymns was composed by Wesley and it, not coincidentally, held the same name as his much beloved painting:

A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify,
A never-dying soul to save,
And fit it for the sky.
To serve the present age,
My calling to fulfill:

O may it all my powers engage
 To do my Master's will!
 Arm me with jealous care,
 As in Thy sight to live;
 And O Thy servant, Lord, prepare
 A strict account to give!
 Help me to watch and pray,
 And on Thyself rely,
 Assured, if I my trust betray,
 I shall for ever die.²⁸³

Presumably, Koerner did not intend his painting to evoke such religious interpretations. Journalist Jacob Weisberg argued that, in 1915, the *Saturday Evening News* contracted Koerner to provide the illustration—originally entitled “The Slipper Tongue”—for a short story “about a smooth-talking horse thief who is caught, and then escapes a lynch mob in the Sand Hills of Nebraska.” “Had His Start Been Fifteen Minutes Longer,” its caption read, “He Would Not Have Been Caught.”²⁸⁴ Yet, for Bush, Koerner’s painting summarized both his personal beliefs and public ambitions. In this painting, as in Wesley’s hymn, Bush seemed to see himself—a presumably moral, forthright, individualist who had successfully wedded religious certainty with the risk-taking temperament necessary for success in private enterprise and public service. Bush believed, as an evangelical, businessman, gubernatorial candidate, and governor, that he held a “charge to keep” as he transformed its tenets into public policy. As he rose in stature from a popular state governor to Presidential hopeful, George W. Bush aimed to rally the nation around his collusion of corporate and conservative evangelical values.

In doing so, Bush fit into a long history of corporate evangelicals who endeavored to bring their moral and economic beliefs to bear on American society. Whereas other corporate evangelicals might forward their political or cultural crusades through over avenues, Bush

²⁸³ The memo is available for viewing at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/jesus/readings/chargetokeepmemo.html>; Stephen Mansfield, *The Faith of George W. Bush* (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 2003), 12-14.

²⁸⁴ Jacob Weisberg, *The Bush Tragedy* (New York: Random House, 2008), 89-91.

attempted to affect political and cultural change via a platform of “compassionate conservatism” and “faith based” policies in Texas. Later, as he became the first corporate evangelical elected to the White House, he oversaw federal legislation that lined up with his vision of a moral, just, productive society. By the early years of the new millennium, Bush’s endeavors in Texas and in Washington, D.C. signaled both the reach and limits of the “interesting alliances” between corporate America and conservative evangelicalism in the Sunbelt Age.

Conversions

Born into the high society of New Haven, Connecticut in 1946, George W. Bush had little personal interest in the political and cultural connections between Christianity and business until the 1970s. His pedigree, in many ways, prevented it. Bush was the grandson of Prescott S. Bush, a wealthy Wall Street banker and U.S. Senator from 1952 to 1963. In general, Prescott Bush was a stereotypical “Eisenhower Republican” throughout his time in office, holding pro-business views and a hard line on world communism, but remaining disdainful of McCarthyism, moderate on social issues, and generally accepting of civil rights.²⁸⁵ Like many Northeastern Republicans who retained membership in establishment churches, Prescott Bush was a lifelong High Church Episcopalian. Though devout—Prescott Bush led his wife and children in regular prayer and Bible lessons and Sunday attendance at Christ Church of Greenwich was required—religion served as confirmation of the *noblesse oblige* that marked their family’s social “duties” and political standing. For Prescott Bush, a man’s relationship to God, like his emotions, was a

²⁸⁵ Timothy Naftali, *George H. W. Bush* (New York: Times Books, 2007), 11-12;

private matter, ideally having little effectual impact on matters of business, family, and politics.²⁸⁶

George W. Bush's father, George H.W. Bush, broke with Prescott Bush's New England Republican sensibilities, at least in part. Relocating the family to Houston, Texas after graduating from Yale University in 1948, George H.W. Bush proceeded to build both a business—Zapata Oil—and a political career there. In the late 1950s, he founded Zapata Off-Shore Company with the help of R. G. LeTourneau's self-elevating, tripod drilling platforms. LeTourneau's design allowed Zapata to expand operations into off-shore oil. In 1959, Bush moved his family and Zapata's offices to Houston and, by 1961, had become a millionaire. In 1963, he made his first foray into politics. He had been tapped by Houston's Republican Party to run for a county chairmanship and limit the growing influence of the far right-wing John Birch Society in Houston political circles. Bush won the chairmanship but then accommodated himself with some of the Birchers' concerns over civil rights. Breaking with his father's views, George H.W. Bush made the most of the city's simmering anti-civil rights sentiment during his 1964 run for the U.S. Senate, presenting to white Houstonians a philosophy he termed "responsible conservatism."

Espousing the "color blind" conservatism utilized by Republican hopefuls in other Sunbelt states, Bush argued that he supported civil rights but remained suspicious of the extension of federal power that Lyndon B. Johnson's Civil Rights Act entailed. According to Bush, the anti-discrimination provisions of Johnson's plan threatened white jobs, "trampled upon the Constitution," and "was passed to protect 14 percent of the people." If elected to the Senate, Bush pledged to protect "the other 86 percent." Described by columnists Rowland Evans and

²⁸⁶ Herbert S. Parmett, *George Bush: The Life of a Lone Star Yankee* (New York: Scribner, 1997), 31; Naftali, *George H.W. Bush*, 5

Robert Novok as a “slightly refined Goldwater Republican,” Bush also condemned the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, foreign aid increases, and “wildly spending money on anti-poverty programs.” Still, Bush lost his 1964 Senatorial bid to Democratic incumbent Ralph Yarborough, who successfully cast Bush as “a carpetbagger from Connecticut who is drilling oil for the Sheik of Kuwait.” Reflecting on the loss with his pastor at St. Martin’s Episcopal Church, Bush admitted that “I took some of the far right positions to get elected. I hope I never do it again. I regret it.”²⁸⁷

In 1966, George H.W. Bush ran again for office, presenting himself as a non-Goldwaterite, even running to the left of his conservative Democratic opponent, Frank Briscoe. Elected as a Republican Representative from Houston’s suburban Seventh Congressional district, Bush continued his move away from Goldwater-style conservatism once in Washington. According to his biographer Timothy Naftali, Bush “began to vote more like his father than like Barry Goldwater. Quickly dropping any pretense to being a Texas conservative, he allied himself with moderate, civic Republicans, who believed in the goals of the Great Society and the war in Vietnam but wanted both to be managed more efficiently.”²⁸⁸ Indeed, throughout much of his Washington career, Bush remained a “Lone Star Yankee” who flirted with harder-right conservatives in election years but tended to retain both personal and political allegiances to the sentiments of his grandfather’s “establishment” Republican Party.

Though of the same New England stock, George W. Bush embraced a religious and political ethos quite different from his father and grandfather’s. A graduate of Yale University in

²⁸⁷ The Bush family attended First Presbyterian Church while in Midland during the 1940s and 1950s. After Zapata’s move to Houston in 1959, Bush became a member at St. Martin’s Episcopal Church, one of Houston’s wealthiest congregations. George W. Bush served as an altar boy at St. Martin’s. Parmett, *George Bush*, 83-87; John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge, *The Right Nation: Conservative Power in America* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), 33-34; Michael Schaller, *Right Turn: American Life in the Reagan-Bush Era, 1980-1992* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 8; Bill Minutaglio, *First Son: George W. Bush and the Bush Family Dynasty* (New York: Times Books, 1999), 82; Naftali, *George H. W. Bush*, 11-15; Mansfield, *The Faith of George W. Bush*, 35-38.

²⁸⁸ Naftali, *George H. W. Bush*, 15-17.

1968, George W. Bush completed an M.B.A. at Harvard in 1975 before going into the Midland, Texas oil business. In 1977, Bush married Laura Welch and subsequently moved away from the Episcopal Church and into his wife's Methodist congregation. His religious redefinition did not win him many friends in the heavily Protestant districts of west Texas, as denoted in a 1978 run for the Nineteenth Congressional District seat against Kent Hance, a conservative Democratic state senator who successfully painted Bush as an elitist northeasterner and irreligious outsider. Hance later claimed to Nicolas Kristof that Bush invoked the spirit of George Wallace after the loss, learning that if he wanted to win in Texas, he better not "be out-Christianed or out-good-ol-boyed again."²⁸⁹

Though Hance undoubtedly exaggerated, the claim nevertheless fit with Bush's growing affinity for evangelicalism, a move ushered forward by a series of professional failures. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Bush and other Midland oil tycoons watched their fortunes turn south along with the Texas oil economy. Into the turmoil stepped evangelist Arthur Blessitt. World famous for carrying a twelve-foot cross on his back for thousands of miles since 1969, Blessitt came to Midland in 1984 for another revival organized in part by Jim Sale, an oilman and member at Midland's First Baptist Church. Sale put Blessitt in touch with Bush, who expressed interest in Blessitt's message. After meeting in the coffee shop of a Midland Holiday Inn, Bush prayed a "conversion prayer" under the direction of Blessitt. The conversion seemingly did not take until Don Jones—a prominent Midland banker whom Bush knew well—was "born again" the subsequent spring. Jones's conversion reportedly affected Bush, bringing him to open up with Billy Graham during a retreat weekend in 1985 at the family vacation home in Kennebunkport, Maine. Though the details of this conversion vary, Bush regularly cited this

²⁸⁹ Nicolas Kristof, "Kerry's Blue-Collar Bet," *The New York Times* (July 7, 2004), <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/07/07/opinion/07KRIS.html>.

event as the moment of his conversion instead of his previous encounters with Blessitt. The change in Bush's behavior after 1985 was indisputable. He stopped drinking and joined a group of like-minded "born again" businessmen at the Community Bible Study in Midland. Like the Christian Business Men's Committee of years past, the Community Bible Study emphasized systematic study of the Bible and applicability of the faith to daily life. Though finding such a community of faith certainly righted Bush's life, his new evangelical credentials would ironically serve his non-evangelical father the most.²⁹⁰

Though conservative evangelicals were vital to his election as Ronald Reagan's vice-President in 1980 and, especially, his rise to the Presidency in 1988, George H. W. Bush's time in the White House did not fully convince this constituency of his credentials. Bush's retreat from his campaign pledge of "no new taxes" and his cooperation with the Democratic Congress on issues related to deregulation, employment, education, and environmental policy angered conservative Republicans. Though he took a high-profile stand against "pro-choice" positions, vetoing ten abortion-related bills between 1989 and 1992 and supporting pro-life friendly decisions by the Supreme Court, Bush still disappointed many social conservatives, who wanted to make abortion fully illegal and use the federal government to promote "traditional" family values.²⁹¹ Thus, as Kenneth J. Heineman has observed, many conservatives considered Bush "an inarticulate preppie nightmare. Free marketers thought Bush was just another tax-and-spend liberal, and a few Christian conservatives saw him as a prolife backslider." In response, Bush regularly insisted that he was a committed conservative. "But," he added with overtones of Prescott Bush, "I'm not a nut about it."²⁹²

²⁹⁰ Mansfield, *The Faith of George W. Bush*, 59-71.

²⁹¹ Schaller, *Right Turn*, 60-65, 135-136.

²⁹² Bush's disdain for social conservatives and the Religious Right was sometimes mutual. He was rumored to remark, among friends, "F--- 'em. . . You can't satisfy those people." See Kenneth J. Heineman, *God is a*

Such hemming and hawing on matters of religion and politics created a distinct problem for the elder Bush. “His father wasn’t comfortable dealing with religious types,” remembered a Bush staffer, “George [W. Bush] knew exactly what to do.” The younger Bush worked alongside Doug Wead, a former Assemblies of God evangelist, friend of televangelist Jim Bakker, and major player inside Richard DeVos’s Amway. Wead wrote up a manual for the 1988 campaign, entitled, “The Vice President and the Evangelicals: A Strategy,” in which he explained what conservative evangelicals might want in a presidential candidate.²⁹³ The younger Bush traveled around the country, meeting and talking with evangelical leaders, assuring them of his father’s faith and their mutual commitment to forwarding the evangelical agenda inside Washington. Still, the overt religious politics of third-party candidate Pat Robertson drew attention and support away from George H. W. Bush. Thus, the results of the younger Bush’s efforts in the 1988 Presidential election were somewhat inconclusive.

After the 1988 election, Bush returned to Texas, buying and managing the Texas Rangers, a major league baseball team. Though just as financially unstable as his previous endeavors in the Texas oil economy, Bush’s foray into professional baseball occupied his attention through the early 1990s. The time was one of relative disappointment for conservatives nationwide, as the economic recession of the early 1990s undercut the appeal of Bush’s father among American voters and laid the groundwork for the surprising success of Bill Clinton in the 1992 election.

Still, the first vestiges of a new form of conservative politics were also in the works. In the same year as Clinton’s electoral success, Crossway Books, an evangelical press, published *The Tragedy of American Compassion*, a historical overview of social policy and welfare

Conservative: Religion, Politics, and Morality in Contemporary America (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 158-159.

²⁹³ Mansfield, *The Faith of George W. Bush*, 83-86.

practice written by Marvin Olasky. A former Marxist, Olasky converted to evangelical Christianity in 1976 and later became as a speechwriter and public affairs coordinator for the Dupont Corporation. In the early 1980s, Olasky accepted a post as a professor of journalism at the University of Texas, and he published several books in the late 1980s on corporate public relations and philanthropy. In 1989, began work on *The Tragedy of American Compassion*, receiving institutional and financial support from The Heritage Foundation and The Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, a Milwaukee-based foundation “committed to preserving and defending the tradition of free representative government and private enterprise that has enabled the American nation and, in a larger sense, the entire Western world to flourish intellectually and economically.”²⁹⁴ According to ethicist and business historian James Hoopes, George W. Bush “learned [from Olasky] an historical argument as to why government welfare programs . . . fail to redeem the poor.” In turn, Bush married Olasky’s social vision to a “managerial mindset” that envisioned “faith-based organizations” as both “politically popular” and the key to improving “the effectiveness of social service programs.”²⁹⁵

The tragedy of American compassion, according to Olasky, was how the twentieth-century welfare state had corrupted “our concept of compassion.” For Olasky, “Governmental welfare programs need to be fought not because they are too expensive—although, clearly, much money is wasted—but because they are inevitably too stingy in what is really important, treating people as people and not animals.” The welfare state was fundamentally flawed, unable to grant either direction or dignity to struggling Americans, all the while allowing gross abuses by “those who have dug their own hole.” By dismantling the impersonal and inefficient welfare state and

²⁹⁴ For a brief biography of Olasky, see <http://www.nndb.com/people/325/000058151/>; On the “The Bradley Foundation – The Foundation’s Mission,” see http://www.bradleyfdn.org/foundations_mission.asp.

²⁹⁵ James Hoopes, *Hail to the CEO: The Failure of George W. Bush and the Cult of Moral Leadership* (Westport: Praeger, 2008), 90.

supplanting it with engaged, grassroots service organizations, Olasky believed that Americans would find “[n]ew ways of fostering affiliation, bonding, categorizing, discernment, employment, and freedom,” all accompanied by a Judeo-Christian revival that would transform “the everyday advice people give and receive, and the way we lead our lives.”²⁹⁶

Academic and liberal reviewers panned *The Tragedy of American Compassion*, casting it as “romantic,” “shallow,” “bizarre,” “utopian,” and full of “delusions of charity.” In contrast, conservative reviewers fawned over Olasky’s book. Former Secretary of Education William Bennett reportedly hailed it as “the most important book on welfare and social policy in a decade.” Newt Gingrich read it cover-to-cover, distributed it among fellow GOP freshmen, and, in his first address to the nation after the 1994 returns, declared that “Our models are Alexis DeTocqueville and Marvin Olasky.” The pro-business, pro-free market American Enterprise Institute’s Charles Murray (author of *The Bell Curve*, another Bradley Foundation-funded opus) wrote the book’s preface and applauded Olasky’s recognition that “the problems of America’s social policy are not defined by economics or inequality, but by the needs of the human spirit.” Daniel A. Bazikian, in a review for another libertarian economic organization, the Foundation for Economic Freedom, wrote that Olasky had “set forth his case compellingly and clearly.” “One hopes,” concluded Bazikian, “that this book will act as a catalyst in bringing about a thorough discussion of the issues involved so that the needs of the poor can be properly addressed.”²⁹⁷

Via the political rise of Olasky’s most important admirer, “born-again” businessman George W. Bush, this “discussion” eventually became codified as state law and, eventually,

²⁹⁶ Marvin Olasky, *The Tragedy of American Compassion* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1992), 5, 232-233, 230.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, xvii; David Grann, “Where W. Got Compassion,” *The New York Times Magazine* (September 12, 1999), 62-65; Julian Wolpert, “Delusions of Charity,” *The American Prospect* (Fall 1995), 86-88; Daniel A. Bazikian, “Book Review: *The Tragedy of American Compassion* by Marvin Olasky,” *The Freeman: Ideas on Liberty*, vol. 43, no. 12 (December, 1993), 497.

national policy. Bush met Olasky briefly in 1993, but apparently did not read Olasky's book until 1995, a year after he was elected during the gubernatorial campaign in Texas. Still, in many ways Bush embodied Olasky's views on social policy and, once in office, he vigorously championed Olasky's work as the intellectual basis for a new form of American conservatism. In the long term, Bush's policies would become the newest iteration of a long-standing alliance between corporate interests and conservative religion in the Sunbelt Age. This new set of policies, however, would not be an exercise in repetition. They would be truly revolutionary.

“A Modern-Day Revolution”

Bush jumped into the Texas governor's race in November, 1993. His intent was to unseat a popular, moderate Democrat governor Ann Richards, who four years before had beaten Republican candidate Clayton Williams by two points in the popular vote. Bush gave speeches in Houston, San Antonio, Austin and Dallas, promising “the people of Texas . . . a modern-day revolution.” Although his platform was not fully consolidated at this point, Bush promised reform in education and crime policy, and assured conservative voters that he favored parental consent on abortion for minors and legislation that assured the right to carry concealed weapons. His position on the role of the state was in line with conservative tenets, as he stressed “the role of the individual” over the role of “collective government,” which he believed had become “baby sitters for people.”

On the religious front, Bush's brand of faith was not out of the ordinary; in fact, as previous chapters have shown, it was common among corporate evangelicals or evangelicals backed by corporate interests. Like Billy Graham, who was a personal friend of the family, Bush thought believers should “listen to the New Testament but don't be harshly judgmental of

others.” Towing such a fine line between inclusiveness and exclusiveness marked the careers of numerous evangelical business leaders and politicians, and Bush was no different. He believed that conversion was a prerequisite to heavenly bliss, but he also viewed his religious beliefs as a ground for unifying certain political and religious constituencies. For Bush, evangelicals—whether in public service or the private sector—should count on their faith in Christ to reform both the individual and society, all for the sake of transforming participants in the free market into moral agents. Indeed, like his counterparts in corporate offices around the Sunbelt and elsewhere in evangelical America, Bush blended a faith in individual uplift in the God-blessed free market with an acute sense of social responsibility appropriated from the liberal Protestantism of his forebears. Out of this brew of individualist, pro-corporate, socially-reformist, pro-legislative, ecumenical evangelicalism would emerge Bush’s “compassionate conservatism.”

As his campaign unfolded, Bush would repeatedly cite his religious faith and his background in business as two interlinked spheres of daily life. Combined together, they qualified him for office and grounded his platform for “revolutionizing” Texas. Early on, however, Bush’s appeals—whether on earthly or heavenly matters—had little appeal among those polled by *USA Today*. Eight weeks before the March primaries, when asked how they would vote in the general election, Texans favored Richards over Bush by an eight-point margin, 47 percent to 39 percent. Richards’s seemingly secure position came from the inability of the Texas GOP to settle squabbles within their own ranks. Increasingly during the early 1990s, conservative evangelicals grew in influence and power within the state party, crowding out moderates and leading potential candidates for office to consider the necessity of speaking to this constituency. The power of conservative evangelicals in the state GOP became readily apparent

in early 1994, when longtime Republican Party chairman Fred Meyer stepped down. Party insiders claimed that a growing constituency of right-wing religious groups forced Meyer out. In his place came two possible replacements: Representative Joe Barton and Tom Pauken, both of whom had the support of the state Christian Coalition, Eagle Forum, Texans United for Life, the Home School Coalition, and Concerned Women for America. Because both candidates represented the views of conservative evangelicals, Dick Weinholt, a former advertising executive, national fund-raiser for Campus Crusade for Christ, and chairman of the Texas Christian Coalition told the *Washington Post* that, in the vacuum created by Meyer's abdication, "It doesn't matter . . . who wins." Ralph Reed, another Christian Coalition politico, agreed. "We've already won before the first ballot is cast," he said, "It's a win-win situation."²⁹⁸

Potentially a major beneficiary of these changes in state leadership, Bush told the press that he was officially "neutral" because "somebody has to be around to pick up the pieces." Still, Bush certainly welcomed any support that social conservatives were willing to grant. In questionnaires sent to his campaign office by groups like the Pro-Family Coalition, Bush responded with assurances that he would stand against public funding of and state insurance for abortions, hand over educational review to parents, oppose regulation of home education, and cull the powers of the Texas Education Agency over local school districts. He also supported a voluntary school prayer amendment and opposed extension of state benefits to "domestic partners." For groups less concerned about such social policies than corporate freedoms and tax policy, Bush promised to "carefully evaluate the existing business tax structure . . . to ensure that Texas businesses are allowed to compete fairly," all the while "overhaul[ing] our state welfare

²⁹⁸ Ken Herman and Mark Horvit, "Bush Kicks Off Governor's Race, Offers 'Modern-Day Revolution,'" *Houston Post* (November 9, 1993), A-1, A-8; Ken Herman, "Like Father, Like Son, Sort Of," *Houston Post* (November 7, 1993), A-27, A-29; Jessica Lee, "The Bush Sons," *USA Today* (January 17, 1994), 4-A; Mark Potok, "A 'Crisis' for Texas Republicans as Evangelicals Gain Virtual Control," *USA Today* (May 13, 1994), 2-A; David S. Broder, "Christian Coalition Allies Vie for Texas GOP Post," *Washington Post* (June 10, 1994), A-16.

system.” Bush also appealed to corporate interests by promising to support tort reform and to appoint “people to state boards and commissions with business backgrounds who understand how harmful government regulation can be and who will rely on market forces.”²⁹⁹

All in all, Bush assured potential voters that he would stand for a new type of conservatism by freeing up market mechanisms and pushing pro-business policies, endorsing the cause of “moral leadership,” and shepherding laws and policies that emphasized personal morality and responsibility. Local religious groups, by Bush’s estimation, would also play a vital role in bringing forth this vision for Texas and, later, for the nation as a whole.

With this approach, Bush believed that he could court both conservative evangelicals and more moderate swing voters needed to defeat Richards in the general election. This was a common tactic for conservatives inside and outside the Lone Star State. As the 1994 mid-term elections approached, Bush was a part of a bevy of conservatives in state races who attempted to reunite various conservative and moderate-right constituencies and limit the ambitions of Democrats riding high after the 1992 defeat of Bush’s father by Bill Clinton, an upstart moderate Arkansas governor. Organizing for the 1994 midterm elections focused on the shared values of conservatives instead of their differences. Given the experiences of the late 1980s and early 1990s, when evangelical conservatives ignited all sorts of infighting over the direction of the GOP, the platform for 1994 focused on a set number of presumably universal ideas about the sanctity of American capitalism and the heresy of the welfare state.

With a political base in a Sunbelt bastion of new conservatism—Cobb County, Georgia—Newt Gingrich had long held such views. As a House Representative since 1980, the

²⁹⁹ Texas Pro-Family Coalition 1994 Questionnaire, Folder “Pro-Family Coalition, 1994,” Candidate Questionnaire, United We Stand-Tarrant County, Folder “United We Stand, Undated,” AIMPAC State Candidate Position Paper, 1993, Folder “AIMPAC, 1993.” All in Box 2002/151-21, Records of Governor George W. Bush, Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Austin, Texas (hereafter GWB)

head of the Conservative Opportunity Society since 1983, and Minority Whip since 1989, Gingrich wanted to move beyond the tax-cutting and supply-side reforms of Reaganomics and usher in a full-scale conservative revolution, replacing the welfare state with the “opportunity society.” According to Gingrich ally Steve Gunderson, to build consensus for this revolution, the Contract with America “focused on what united the party—economic issues—and not what divided us.”³⁰⁰ This position only made nods toward more divisive issues—like abortion and gun control—while retaining the moral, “color-blind” overtones of economic freedom and anti-statism. Entitlement programs, specifically Medicare and welfare, would be culled back or privatized. Personal responsibility would flourish. Businesses would thrive. But as an after-effect of such new forms of fiscal and state policy, personal morality would likewise be restored. As Gingrich wrote in 1995, “The greatest moral imperative we face is replacing the welfare state with an opportunity society. For every day that we allow the current conditions to continue, we are condemning the poor—and particularly poor children—to being deprived of their basic rights as Americans. The welfare state reduces the poor from citizens to clients. It breaks up families, minimizes work incentives, blocks people from saving and acquiring property, and overshadows dreams of a promised future with a present despair born of poverty, violence, and hopelessness.”³⁰¹ The Contract with America promised to fix these problems of the state and the soul.

In Texas, mobilizing conservative evangelicals was vital to GOP successes in federal and state elections, as well as in the gubernatorial contest. Indeed, according to political scientist John M. Bruce, “The midterm elections of 1994 offered a chance for the conservative Christians in the state to flex their muscles.” And flex they did. Tom Pauken took the post of Republican

³⁰⁰ Quoted in Nicol C. Rae, *Conservative Reformers: The Republican Freshmen and the Lessons of the 104th Congress* (Armonk: Sharpe, Inc., 1998), 39.

³⁰¹ Newt Gingrich, *To Renew America* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), 71.

Party chair in 1994, a position he held through 1997. Though Democrats retained a majority in both houses of state government, ten winning candidates for the U.S. Congress “were aligned with or supported by the Christian Right in some way.” In the state house, candidates associated with conservative evangelicals won in nine out of thirteen races. In the state senate, ten of the fifteen candidates associated with conservative evangelicals, with half of those races won by their candidate.

The most important race, however, was for the governor’s seat. Defeating Richards by almost eight full points, Bush garnered strong support from conservative evangelicals, who in 1994 made up 33 percent of state voters. Sixty-two percent of “born again” white voters had thrown their vote behind Bush. Oddly enough, given the presumed power of issues like abortion and education to kickstart evangelical mobilizations in the state, these voters did not list “family values” issues as driving their vote; neither did they regularly cite crime, unemployment, experience, or the necessity of “change.” Rather, they liked the “moderate” stance of the GOP’s offerings on the issues, especially social issues.³⁰² Though an admittedly vague reason for casting a vote for Bush, it signaled the apparent appeal of his platform of social and economic reengineering—a platform reflecting what was called “compassionate conservatism.” With the appearance of a mandate, and with similar successes for conservative evangelicals and the GOP nationwide in 1994, Bush set about putting his pro-corporate, pro-Christian policies together.

³⁰² Other reports on the election pegged the number of white “born-again” voters between 20-25% of the state population. Regardless, “White evangelicals constituted a greater percentage of the electorate than of the general public, suggesting that the Christian Right was successful in mobilizing their target constituency to the polls.” John M. Bruce, “Texas: The Emergence of the Christian Right,” in Mark J. Rozell and Clyde Wilcox, eds., *God at the Grassroots: The Christian Right in the 1994 Elections* (Lanham: Rowmand and Littlefield, 1995), 75-77.

From the Alamo to Austin

First, however, Bush had to wait for GOP politicians in Washington to clear the path with federal legislation. In 1994 and 1995, GOP legislators ran into continual resistance from the White House on the broad issue of balancing the federal budget. Republicans followed Gingrich's lead, threatening a government shutdown unless Clinton accepted their program for balancing the budget by 2002, which included deep cuts in Medicaid, food stamps, and Assistance for Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). When two government shutdowns resulted from disagreements between Congress and the White House on the extent of federal fiscal policy, public support for the GOP's hard-ball tactics dropped. Still, Gingrich and his supporters in the GOP had redefined debates over public spending. As Charles Noble has pointed out, in 1994 and 1995 Clinton fought over the details "rather than the public philosophy behind the Contract with America." Thus, "Clinton fought on ground defined by the right." As a result, when the more pointed issue of welfare reform became the focus of GOP representatives, Clinton capitulated to their proposals, both because welfare reform fit with his campaign promise to "end welfare as we know it" and because of a lack of political capital. With little to no control over the policy-writing process, Clinton signed the GOP-supported Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996. Sweeping in its extent, this act converted AFDC into block grants to the states, ending its status as a federal entitlement. Work requirements were imposed, with those failing to find work after two years denied all federal assistance. In keeping with the moral angle of welfare reform, federal funds were denied to unmarried parents under eighteen while states received the right to deny benefits to women who had additional children on welfare, as well as to unmarried persons under eighteen years of age.

“In one fell swoop,” concluded Noble, “the nation had given up its commitment to income maintenance as a ‘right.’” The long-standing New Deal approach to public welfare had ended.³⁰³

For Bush’s purposes in Texas, the most important part of the 1996 act was Section 104, more popularly known as the “Charitable Choice” provision. Written in late 1995 by Senator John Ashcroft—a self-identified Pentecostal and conservative leader—Section 104 gave “states specific options to provide welfare-related services to the poor through contracts with charitable, religious, or private organizations.” In addition, it allowed public funding for “beneficiaries of assistance with vouchers which are redeemable with such organizations.” This public funding would come from the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, which replaced AFDC. As one report on “Charitable Choice” noted, “The new TANF program involves more than just handing out checks.” Religious organizations that proved successful “in moving people from dependence to self-reliance” would receive preferential funding from TANF, although how they decided to spend such funds—whether on work and job training programs, food pantries, maternity homes, or health services—would be left to the discretion of the organization’s directors. To allay concerns about an improper and unconstitutional mixing of church and state, Section 104 ensured that religious organizations engaged in overseeing Charitable Choice programs would not have to fear discrimination in terms of federal funding but could nevertheless maintain independence in “the definition, development, practice, and expression of . . . religious beliefs,” and could “discriminate on a religious basis the terms and conditions they establish for their employees.” Still, all religious organizations that received Charitable Choice approval and TANF funding remained subject to federal audits and were prohibited from using federal expenditures for “religious worship, instruction, or proselytizing.”

³⁰³ Charles Noble, *Welfare As We Knew It: A Political History of the American Welfare State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 124-128.

Likewise, participants in the program could not “discriminate against a beneficiary on the basis of religion, a religious belief, or a refusal to participate in a religious practice.” Neither did beneficiaries have to receive services from religious organizations; they could “demand that the state provide them with services from any alternative (non-religious) provider.”³⁰⁴

The linchpin of “charitable choice” was the “faith-based organization.” The religious affiliations of faith-based organizations varied widely. Conservative evangelical groups certainly frequented the list of beneficiaries, but Catholic and non-evangelical Protestant groups likewise filled the rolls. The Charitable Choice provision, then, as applied in Texas under Bush, was not designed to privilege conservative evangelical groups specifically, even though the economic policies that conservative evangelicals vigorously championed undergirded its application in the state. How to forward this type of dual mission—of anti-statism in terms of business regulation and tax policy but pro-statism in religious sponsorship—without trampling the establishment clause of the First Amendment or alienating members of the voting religious public in Texas became a preeminent focus of policy for Bush during his first term in the governor’s chair in Austin.³⁰⁵

³⁰⁴ “Q & A on ‘Charitable Choice’ in Welfare Reform, (Section 104 of P.L. 104-193)” and “Conference Report on H.R. 3734, Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (House of Representatives—July 30, 1996),” both in Folder, “Charitable Choice: House Welfare Reform, 1996,” File 2 of 3, Box 2002/151-23, GWB.

³⁰⁵ Of course, the use of local religious organizations as points of social service had precedence, stretching back to the “poor relief” efforts of religious groups in the Gilded Age. In more recent times, conservative politicians had intermittently hailed religious organizations as more effective than public welfare or secular, non-profit service providers. For instance, in a 1982 speech to more than 100 religious leaders, President Ronald Reagan voiced his belief that “churches and voluntary groups should accept more responsibility for the needy rather than leaving it to the bureaucracy.” Citing the biblical story of the Good Samaritan, Reagan argued that God had already provided a blueprint for social welfare policy. “The story of the Good Samaritan has always illustrated to me what God’s challenge really is,” Reagan asserted, “He didn’t go running into town and look for a case-worker to tell him that there was a fellow out there that needed help. He took it upon himself.” Though Reagan’s own faith-based vision did not join his oversight of deep cuts in public welfare, a decade later in Mississippi, a push from the office of Governor Kirk Fordice led to the implementation of a collaborative church-state initiative to combat poverty. Known as Faith & Families of Mississippi (FFM), this initiative invited local churches to participate in bringing “holistic” solutions to Mississippi’s poor populations, encouraging a blend of personal morality, familial solidarity, and sexual restraint—usually cast in racial overtones reminiscent of the “welfare queen” trope of the late 1980s—as the keys to getting off welfare. Logistical problems and suspicion of state oversight from evangelical churches in

It took an event at the Alamo, however, to push the governor toward firmer support for both Olasky's ideas and the tenets of "Charitable Choice." On July 17, 1995, state employees threatened to shut down an evangelical organization in Texas known as Teen Challenge. A drug program that used evangelical conversion as a method for treatment, Teen Challenge was in violation of state building codes. Approximately 300 mostly black and Hispanic supporters of the organization held a rally at the Alamo in San Antonio. Several held signs reading, "Because of Jesus I Am No Longer a Debt to the State of Texas" and "Once a Burden, Now a Taxpayer." Bob Woodson, head of the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise and former chair for Gingrich's Grassroots Alternatives for Public Policy Task Force, spoke at the rally. "The authors of the Contract With America talked to us all about the devolution of authority and focusing on programs that work and really help people," Woodson said, "What the authors of the Contract didn't realize is that its principles of devolution and welfare reform would stir up a hornet's nest within the poverty industry, and that their main target would be the unwanted competition from effective grassroots initiatives. . . . We need the Republican leadership to speak up, now." Like Woodson, Olasky used the event to blast the welfare state and urge GOP backing for organizations like Teen Challenge. Writing an op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal*, Olasky praised the protestors for "holding firm" against "conform-or-die bureaucrats" and "state power." Citing Teen Challenge's impressive record of success among program graduates, Olasky believed that

Mississippi dogged FFM nearly from the start, however, and under the subsequent administration of Governor Ronnie Musgrove, it "no longer functioned as a church-state collaborative relief effort." Reagan quoted in Ram A. Cnaan and Stephanie C. Boddie, "Charitable Choice and Faith-Based Welfare: A Call for Social Work," *Social Work* vol. 47, no. 3 (July 2002), 227; For more on FFM, see John P. Bartkowski and Helen A. Regis, *Charitable Choices: Religion, Race, and Poverty in the Post-Welfare Era* (New York: New York University Press, 2003), 60-85.

similar programs—preferably evangelical programs—would revolutionize welfare as Americans knew it.³⁰⁶

After the Teen Challenge protest, Bush moved toward strong support for Charitable Choice provision and faith-based organizations, even before the bill passed through Congress. Bush called Teen Challenge “a pioneer in how Texas approaches faith-based programs” and promised to “call together people [and] ask them to make recommendations . . . to the legislature.” Taking on the auspices of a personal and political mission, Bush was going to ensure that “Teen Challenge is going to exist . . . and licensing standards [would be] different from what they are today.” “Government does not have a monopoly on compassion,” he argued in March, 1996, “This legislation says to people of faith, you can be a part of the solution without losing your soul. These bills say to all Texans, we need to enlist faith in our battle against drugs and crime and poverty and illegitimacy.” Two months later, Bush’s office announced the establishment “of a blue ribbon task force relating to faith-based service programs.”³⁰⁷

The Governor’s Advisory Task Force of Faith-Based Community Service Groups (FBTF) was a part of a comprehensive review of how state policy in Texas might fund and support faith-based initiatives as a supplement—and ideally, a substitute—for state and federal welfare.³⁰⁸ In

³⁰⁶ Grann, “Where W. Got Compassion,” 62-65; Marvin Olasky, “Addicted to Bureaucracy,” *Wall Street Journal* (August 15, 1995), A-16.

³⁰⁷ Roy Maynard and Marvin Olasky, “Governor Bush Backs Teen Challenge,” *World Magazine* (July 29-August 5, 1995), n.p.; Memo, “Governor Bush Supports Legislation Empowering Faith-Based Groups to Help the Needy,” (March 11, 1996), Folder “Faith-based Initiatives, Correspondence, Press Releases, Talking Points, Newsletters, Newspaper/Magazine Clippings, State of the State Address (Jan 1. 1999), Background Info, Nomination Form, Resume, 1996-1999,” Box 2002/151-321, GWB; Form letter, George W. Bush to Name (May 2, 1996), Folder “FBTF: George Bush Letter to Members, May 2, 1996,” Box 2002/151-23, GWB.

³⁰⁸ Bush issued an executive order in December, 1996, four months after the passage of the federal bill, encouraging “all pertinent executive branch agencies to (i) take all necessary steps to implement the ‘charitable choice’ provision of the federal welfare law, and (ii) take affirmative steps prescribed by the Act to protect the religious integrity and the functional autonomy of participating faith-based providers and the religious freedom of their beneficiaries.” PHOTO 3978 See “Executive Order, GWB 96-10,” December 17, 1996, Folder “Charitable Choice, General, 1996-1997,” File 2 of 3, Box 2002/151-321, GWB.

keeping with the provisions of “charitable choice,” the members of the FBTF were drawn from various religious institutions and service organizations. Still, there was a notable majority of Christians represented on the FBTF; only one of the FBTF’s seventeen members was not a Christian. Evangelical Protestants also dominated the roster, and several of its members came from faith-based organizations that Bush strongly endorsed, such as Teen Challenge. If lacking in religious diversity, the FBTF nevertheless had a wide variety of professions represented in its ranks, with preachers and social workers joining lawyers, business leaders, and professional counselors to bring Bush’s plan for Texas to fruition.³⁰⁹

According to the executive order that established it, the task force’s mission was three-fold: “(i) examine the role of faith-based programs in Texas and determine how Texas can best create an environment in which these organizations can flourish and most effectively help those in need; (ii) determine which state laws, regulations, or procedures impede the effectiveness of such organizations ; and (iii) provide specific recommendations as to how Texas law could best accommodate the programs and activities of the affected community organizations.”³¹⁰ There was a fourth, unstated mission as well—selling faith-based initiatives as appropriate substitutes or alternatives to state welfare services. In short, the FBTF was an efficiency and public relations committee, a body charged with figuring out how roadblocks, either in state law or in public opinion, could be removed for the benefit of Bush’s faith-based agenda.

The FBTF was also a counterpart to Bush’s policy pushers inside his administration and a commission of sympathetic lawmakers in the state house, who throughout Bush’s first and second terms worked fervently to supplement the establishment of “faith based” organizations

³⁰⁹ Press release, “Governor Bush Announces New Task Force on Faith-Based Programs,” (May 2, 1996), Folder “FBTF: Press Release/rosters, May 1996,” Box 2002/151-23, GWB.

³¹⁰ Executive Order, GWB 96-5 (May 2, 1996), Folder “FBTF, Executive Order, BWB 96-5,” Box 2002/151-23, GWB.

with the ending of presumably “anti-business” policies in Texas. If the FBTF presumably served as *prima facie* evidence of Bush’s commitment to doing “compassion” better than the liberal state, then the deregulatory, tort reforming, and tax cutting efforts of legislators in Austin would serve as indisputable proof of his pro-business “conservatism” that he had been trumpeting since the 1994 campaign. Then, Bush had clearly identified himself as a friend of business, opening the campaign with a speech declaring that, “[a]ll public policy in Texas has to be based on the fact that entrepreneurs and small-business people are the backbone of our society . . . and the basis of hope. The best way to allocate resources in our society is through the marketplace. Not through a governing elite, not through red tape and over-regulations, not through some central bureaucracy full of experts who think they know more than we do, but through the actions of free men and women in the marketplace.”³¹¹ Over the next six years, Bush would earn additional favor from corporate interests throughout Texas, either by pushing or endorsing corporate deregulation or favorable corporate policies. Freeing up environmental restrictions and tort reform topped the list.

On environmental policy, any number of measurements signaled the success of Bush’s pro-business agenda by the latter years of his governorship. During Bush’s tenure in Austin, no city in Texas moved off a “nonattainment zone” list for badly polluted metropolitan areas, while fifty-six of ninety-six other cities in the country did. Another measure of air quality—the total number of days when cities in Texas went over a high ozone count—went from an average of 46.75 under Ann Richards to 62.75 under Bush. The Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission—a kind of state Environmental Protection Agency—had seen its commissioners fully replaced with Bush-friendly and business-friendly appointees. Pesticide stations monitoring water quality in Texas went from 27 in 1985 to only one by 1997. Large-scale food

³¹¹ Quoted in George W. Bush, *A Charge to Keep* (New York: William Morrow, 1999), 30.

corporations were provided advance notice of “surprise inspections” by state regulators. And, in 1997 and 1999 respectively, oil executives were invited first to make recommendations on legislation that aimed to make voluntary compliance—instead of forced compliance—the new standard for lawful operations in Texas, later receiving approval for voluntary compliance through a bill written by a energy and utilities lobbyist and passed by the state legislature. Tort reform also worked, more or less, on behalf of business plaintiffs in civil cases, as a 1995 bill that Bush endorsed in the state legislature imposed strict limits on damages awarded to defendants. “This would have never happened without George Bush,” reflected Ralph Wayne, co-chairman of Bush’s 1994 campaign and head of the Justice League, a pro-corporate tort reform organization, “He kept his word far and beyond.”

Altogether, Bush’s favors for business from 1994 to 1999 further cemented his pro-business identity and garnered him financial support for his political career in Texas. A 1999 probe by Texans for Public Justice, an independent, non-partisan watchdog group, found that “much of the money came from contributors with major stakes in state regulations.” Two evangelical business leaders—Lonny “Bo” Pilgrim and hospital-bed manufacturer James Leininger—gave a combined total of almost \$900,000 to Bush’s campaigns. The largest donor during the 1998 gubernatorial campaign was an oil-and-gas operator who reportedly gave \$101,000 to Bush; four energy companies also gave huge amounts to Bush, totally approximately \$325,000, while several companies that backed Bush’s business legislation in 1997 gave a quarter-million dollars to both his 1998 campaign and 2000 Presidential campaign. All told, Bush received a total of \$21.3 million—more than half of his gubernatorial fundraising—from “a broad range of 15 [corporate] interests,” ranging from financial services to energy and mining companies to real estate developers to manufacturers to lawyers, wholesalers, retailers, health

care providers, agribusiness, travel and leisure businesses, and fishing and forestry interests. Bush thanked his corporate backers for their support by offering them “prestigious state positions” in Austin. For instance, all but one of Bush’s nine appointees to the Texas Board of Regents had contributed to his campaigns, amounting to a total of \$419,406. Among other Bush insiders and supporters, appointees included Donald L. Evans, the head of an Midland oil corporation, Charles Miller, a Houston investment manager and education activist, and Woody L. Hunt, an El Paso home-builder. In a rare moment of full disclosure, Bush’s top aide Karen Hughes admitted to the *Los Angeles Times* that, “It is difficult to find someone who is conservative and successful in Texas and has not contributed to Gov. Bush.”³¹²

Though it might be expected that Bush would pack all branches of his administration with corporate leaders or campaign supporters, this was not the case with the FBTF. Still, the FBTF worked as an important counterpart to Bush’s endeavors to further align the state behind its dual endorsement of pro-corporate conservatism and religiously-based public services. To that end, the FBTF convened over the course of summer of 1996 to discuss how the state might best empower religious organizations to pick up the slack for the social services and welfare entitlements that Bush promised to cull for the sake of the Texas’s economic health. Marvin Olasky attended the first meeting in Austin in early June, 1996. Governor Bush also attended, urging members “to make sure that there is an environment in Texas that fosters efforts by faith-based and other service organizations to meet the need of our Texans who are in crisis.”³¹³

During the first meeting, members discussed the major problems of the welfare state and brainstormed avenues toward meeting the FBTF’s first mission—creating a positive

³¹² Previous two paragraphs from Ivins, *Shrub*, 107-121; Alan C. Miller, “Texas Corporate Interests Financed Bulk of Bush Races,” *The Los Angeles Times* (July 14, 1999), A-1, A-8.

³¹³ Letter, Thomas W. Currie to Delton Brazell, May 18, 1996, Minutes, The Governor’s Task Force on Faith-Based Community Service Groups (June 11, 1996), Folder “[Meeting], June 11, 1996,” File 1 of 2, Box 2002/151-23, GWB.

environment, or what Bush himself called an “enabling environment”—and second and third missions—determining and removing legal impediments to faith-based organizations. Olasky reminded members of the sins of the state, claiming that welfare was run by “good intentioned people” but unfairly benefited its most fervent defenders, “government officials” and “highly subsidized people in [the] private sector.” Gilbert Herrera, a Lubbock evangelist, strongly agreed with Olasky. “The power with the state didn’t work over the last 30 years,” Herrera believed, “[We] need to give back to people and power of God.” Olasky again agreed, claiming that there was “more value” in “not sending money to Washington [since] most people would rather give directly to org[anizations].” Fred S. Zeidman, a Jewish CEO in Houston, questioned whether there was any economic evidence to support up Olasky’s grievances, leading D.R. Millard, an assistant U.S. attorney, to reply that third-party reports on such matters existed and could be consulted. If members of the committee seemed unconvinced of the economic benefits of faith-based organizations, they did not express their concerns. Instead, discussions circled around matters of oversight, as religious entities that received federal or state dollars might be subject to intrusive regulation. Most of the committee’s members that either ran independent service organizations or had experiences with them wanted no additional strings attached if they were “licensed” as state-approved faith-based organizations. The issue of state-church collusions, and the costs and benefits of this new relationship, thus dominated the conversation.³¹⁴

During a follow-up meeting in July, the FBTF continued to wrestle with whether faith-based initiatives could and should benefit from state involvement.³¹⁵ By their third and final meeting in late August, however, the FBTF had made enough strides to offer a list of suggestions

³¹⁴ Handwritten notes in Folder “[Meeting], June 11, 1996,” File 2 of 2, Box 2002/151-23, GWB.

³¹⁵ Summary notes, “The Governor’s Advisory Task Force on Faith-Based Community Service Groups, July 16, 1996,” 1-3, Folder “[Meeting], July 16, 1996,” Box 2002/151-23, GWB.

to the governor for what any legislation on faith-based initiatives should entail. Specifically, the FBTF urged the governor to exempt future faith-based initiatives from state licensure and compliance guidelines, thus securing their independent status and avoiding any state-church constitutional issues. Various oversight commissions—such as the Texas Commission on Drug and Alcohol Abuse or Probation and Parole—were encouraged to cull back their regulatory powers, while the FBTF decided that “programs receiving state funds should be exempt from any auditing that proposes to examine the source and utilization of any program funds generated outside of state sources.” These conclusions were not unanimously endorsed. Committee member Delton Brazell thought the reforms failed “to address ministries which are privately funded.” Since Texas would have greater oversight on private faith-based organizations, Brazell believed that this could result in the forced closure of organizations “due to the requirement to adhere to standards which ‘meet or exceed state minimums,’” a clear violation of the First Amendment’s establishment clause. Still, Brazell only offered his concerns as a caveat, rather than as a deal-breaker. Though he abstained from signing over approval for the final report, all sixteen of the FBTF’s members put their signatures behind its reforms.³¹⁶

Concerning the last goal of the FBTF—selling faith-based initiatives—the committee sought to downplay any concerns that government expenditures might privilege one group over another and, effectively, lead to the establishment of religion. Correspondence between committee members and administrators in the governor’s office seemed to center on how their final report on faith-based initiatives should be framed. Early drafts tended to edit out references to the past, such as the presumed “mistakes” of the 1960s, and downplay common conservative critiques of the welfare state as “a nanny state.” Direct shots at liberal positions on the necessity

³¹⁶ “Suggestions for Governor’s Advisory Task Force on Faith-Based Community Service Groups, August 27, 1996,” Folder, “Meeting, August 27, 1996,” Box 2002/151-23, GWB; Letter, Delton Brazell to Don Willett, November 19, 1996, Folder “General Notes and Correspondence, 1996-1997,” File 3 of 4, Box 2002/151-23, GWB.

of a secular state were summarily deleted, although prose and quotes about the general ineffectiveness and cost of state programs generally remained untouched. If the political language of the report avoided divisiveness, religious language also tried to tow a fine line between inclusiveness and exclusiveness. For instance, general references to the “faith community” were made repeatedly, avoiding specific references to “Christian” faith communities. Yet, citing the “Old and the New Testament” as the *only* foundation for social concern hinted at religious assumptions about authoritative texts that Jews or Muslims might have found exclusivist or erroneous. Quotations included in the report’s sidebars and throughout the prose also seemed to highlight the apparent inclusiveness of Bush’s faith-based initiative. For instance, Thomas Currie suggested that the final report include quotations from Reinhold Niebuhr’s *The Irony of American History* and *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness*. Both quotations were picked for their laudations of active, Christian service of others and the virtues of the democratic system. (Niebuhr’s socialist leanings and typical theological emphasis on continual struggle against sin and injustice were not cited.) Other quotations from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Mother Teresa, Albert Schweitzer, Anne Frank, and the Gospel of Matthew were also bandied around, most concerning the necessity of unity, self-sacrifice, and service unto the least of these. Concerning the most volatile issue coming out of the FBTF—whether state support for faith-based organizations constituted a violation of federal establishment laws—corrections made to the report played up the positives. Religious organizations would become co-partners in reform with the state. Religious organizations had nothing to fear from state sponsorship. Religious organizations would not have to stop conducting religious services or practices, nor would they have to kowtow to a specific set of guidelines concerning how they used faith in their charitable work.³¹⁷

³¹⁷ Facsimile, Dr. Tom Currie to Don Willett, October 6, 1996, and E-mail, Vance MacMahon to Don Willett,

After several rounds of editing for message and effect, Don Willett, Bush's Director of Research and Special Projects, collected the findings of the FBTF into a single report, entitled *Faith in Action: A New Vision for Church-State Cooperation in Texas*.³¹⁸ Published in December, 1996, the 72-page report laid out Bush's vision for collaboration between the state and religious organizations throughout Texas. State expenditures and involvement in social services would drop, as would legal prohibitions and regulations on faith-based organizations that received state funds for their charitable work. Bush himself unveiled the report's finding at a public presentation in San Antonio, at Christian Assistance Ministries (CAM), the very faith-based organization that affirmed the FBTF's work a few months before. Bush's advisors recommended CAM as the perfect place to unveil the formal report; it was "very respected and broadly supported" by a host of churches and denominations, it was "very apolitical," it took "no public money for fear of heavy-handed regulation," and it was willing to "look at the 'alternative accreditation' option of private sector oversight." In other words, CAM symbolized the very faith-based organizations that he wanted the state government to empower in the realm of social service. Bush said as much during his speech at CAM, noting that he had signed another executive order that morning approving the distribution of vouchers to needy persons, a decision that Bush believed would change them from "passive recipient[s] of a handout [into] proactive holder[s] of a voucher that empowers them to choose the help they need that fits them best." Faith-based organizations like CAM would take up the slack in this arrangement and Bush wanted to ensure that such organizations would have the legal and financial leeway to operate

October 7, 1996, both in folder "General Notes and Correspondence, 1996-1997," File 4 of 4, Box 2002/151-23, GWB; Folder, "Faith Based Task Force, Introductory Drafts, 1996," Box 2002/151-23, GWB.

³¹⁸ Letter, Don Willett to Task Force Members, December 11, 1996, Folder "Planning Materials for Release of Task Force Report, December 17, 1996," Box 2002/151-23, GWB. A copy of this report can be viewed at <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/svcs/charchoice/faithful.pdf>.

freely. Thus, Bush promised to push the state legislature to work on new laws that made the provisions and suggestions made in *Faith in Action* binding policies in the state of Texas.³¹⁹

Putting Faith into Action

In January 1997, as Bush prepared to forward what he called his “faith-based legislative agenda,” the FBTF mailed copies of “Faith in Action” to dozens of institutions, organizations, and individuals. The majority of recipients were on the conservative end of the political spectrum, including the Acton Institute, American Conservative Union, the American Enterprise Institute, the American Family Institute-Texas, the CATO Institute, the Christian Coalition, the Family Research Council, First Things, the Barry Goldwater Institute for Public Policy Research, the Heritage Foundation, the Hoover Institute, The National Center for Policy Research, and Prison Fellowship, and the Southern Baptist Convention. Intellectuals associated with or sympathetic to Olasky’s views likewise received copies of the report. Conservative journalists also received copies.³²⁰

Only a few non-conservative groups were contacted to read and comment on “Faith in Action,” thus belying its self-stated goal of trumpeting a bipartisan solution to the ills of the welfare state. Detractors to Bush’s report and his legislative agenda picked up on such conservative currents and slammed Bush for various reasons. “I don’t think anyone in the state ought to pay for anyone’s ministry,” said Jay Jacobson of the Texas branch of the ACLU, “It’s

³¹⁹ Undated memo, Unknown writer to Karen Hughes and “Talking Points, Faith-Based Community Report, San Antonio, TX, December 17, 1996,” 1-2, both in Folder “Planning Materials for Release of Task Force Report, December 17, 1996,” Box 2002/151-23, GWB.

³²⁰ “Executive Summary and Full Report on FAITH IN ACTION: A NEW VISION FOR CHURCH-STATE COOPERATION IN TEXAS...mailing 1/8/97.” Apparently, some discussion and editing went on between Vance MacMahon, Don Willett, and perhaps Karl Rove before preparing the final mailing list, as denoted by “Faith Based Names,” 1-2, “Policy Groups,” 95-111, “Faith Based Report,” 1-2, Notes, “Faith Based Report,” all in folder “FBTF: Mailing Lists, 1997, undated,” Box 2002/151-23, GWB. It is uncertain how or why those crafting the mailing list included certain recipients, but nevertheless, the vast majority of the report’s recipients were decidedly antagonistic to the welfare state.

not the state's business to subsidize prayer." Spike Johnson, head of American Atheists, Inc., agreed: "It's absurd. It's absolutely destroying the separation of church and state." Others, especially those in the very faith communities that Bush wanted to energize, objected to the legislation on pragmatic grounds. Charles Merrill, pastor of Austin's University United Methodist Church, told the Dallas Morning News that, "For a guy like Bush to not understand the gravity of the problem is beyond me. . . . To lay the [brunt of social services] at the foot of churches is obscene." FBTF director Dr. Thomas Currie, who had been stumping for the legislation since the report's release, defended Bush's plan. "The governor is trying to move us away from the status quo and into some new ventures," he claimed. The proposed legislation would not dump welfare clients onto churches, Currie claimed. David Sibley, a state Republican senator strongly in favor of Bush's agenda, agreed: "We've seen some of the faith based institutions do a much better job than what we're doing. We want to open it up and let more people do better things for other people." As with all things associated with the welfare state, deregulation was the key to freeing up private entities. Through Bush's legislative agenda, religious organizations would stand to benefit in their missions to serve Texans. Texas's business community would stand to benefit as well.³²¹

In the midst of debates and discussions over his faith-based agenda, Bush cast his political endeavors in pro-business terms. In an April, 1997 speech in Houston to a conference of Texas Rotarians, Bush argued that, "I have learned that business principles—when applied to government—can make for better public policy." "My business background has helped a lot," he continued, "I have a clear understanding of how good business practices can be used to transform government. I also know that the role of government is not to create wealth but to

³²¹ Bill Minutaglio, "Churches' Role in Social Services Debated," *Dallas Morning News* (April 6, 1997), 39-A, 42-A.

create an environment that attracts capital and fosters entrepreneurship.” For Bush, reordering the state according to the logic of a businessman meant emphasizing five goals in state services: “set clear, understandable goals,” “results matter,” “align authority and responsibility at the local level,” “prioritize,” and “respect competition.” Taken together, this business-based state policy would encourage “a new culture of responsibility that says to each and every person: You are responsible for your children. You are responsible for your family. You are responsible for your community. You—not anyone else—you are responsible for your actions.” Government’s role, then, was to encourage “this change through laws and policies that insist on personal responsibility.” Though he did not discuss his faith-based agenda specifically during this short speech, it was nevertheless a vital part of bringing about Bush’s redefinition of the welfare state and the role of local, faith-based organizations in encouraging its intended replacement—a “new culture of responsibility.”³²²

The state legislature stood with Bush and his agenda, passing it easily through the upper and lower houses. Each piece of legislation focused on one particular policy that the FBTF and Bush wanted. HB2481 “exempted non-medical faith-based drug and alcohol treatment centers and counselors from state licensure and regulation.” HB2482 allowed child care facilities that met or exceeded state standards “to be accredited by recognized, private-sector entities instead of being licensed by the state.” SCR44 encouraged various state agencies to “use faith-based programs to help criminal offenders and those at-risk of becoming offenders to turn their lives around.” Private Christian ministries, operating on a voluntary basis, would thus be allowed inside Texas state prisons. Finally, HB21 allowed private donations of medical equipment to faith-based entities for use in providing free or reduced cost health care. The state legislature

³²² Folder, “Rotary Club – Large Club Conference, April 10, 1997 [Houston, TX],” Box 2002/151-170, GWB.

also set up the Texas Association of Christian Child-Care Agencies (TACCCA) as the “alternative credentialing agency” promoted by the FBTF.³²³

Bush signed all of these bills on June 12, 1997 at Mission Arlington in Arlington, Texas. “The welfare system of today has failed,” he told the media covering the event, “In order to have compassion tomorrow, it has become clear to me and clear to the state of Texas that we must encourage compassionate people to become involved in the delivery of help to people who need it.” Mission Arlington seemed like such a place, providing job training, child care, food and clothing distribution, and adult day services to the Arlington community. But it was also a place that needed the direct sponsorship of government to extend its mission. The Bush administration explicitly denied that it designed this new form of state-sponsored “compassion” to replace public services for those that depended on them. “The bills are aimed at increasing the menu of opportunities, in addition to government services, available to those in need,” claimed Ray Sullivan, a spokesman for the governor. Still, the emphasis on cutting down on use of state services, namely by those who would now choose state-sponsored religious organizations over state or federal welfare programs, was certainly included the talking points for Bush’s bills. Likewise, Bush regularly framed the new legislation as the fulfillment of a campaign promise to bring Gingrich’s revolution to Texas, cutting public services, ending ineffective programs, and lowering expenditures, presumably for the benefit of business growth and the creation of the moral, opportunity society in the Lone Star State.³²⁴

³²³ Press release, “Governor Bush Signs ‘Faith-Based’ Bills to Expand Availability and Choice in Welfare-Related Services,” Folder “Faith-based Initiatives, Correspondence, Press Releases, Talking Points, Newsletters, Newspaper/Magazine Clippings, State of the State Address (Jan 1. 1999), Background Info, Nomination Form, Resume, 1996-1999,” Box 2002/151-321, GWB; Helen Rose Ebaugh, “The Faith-Based Initiative In Texas: A Case Study,” paper for the Roundtable on Religion and Social Welfare Policy (October 2003), 2.

³²⁴ Jeff Prince, “Bush Signs Four Bills at Mission,” *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* (June 13, 1997), 1-B, 2-B; Mindy Warren, “Bush to Sign ‘Faith-based’ Legislation in Arlington,” *Arlington Morning News* (June 12, 1997), 4-A; Also see “Talking Points, Faith Based Bill Signing Ceremony (June 12, 1997), Folder “Articles, Federal Faith-Based, 1995-1996, File 1 of 3,” Box 2002/151-23, GWB.

As Bush gave speech after speech in 1997 and 1998, he repeatedly highlighted the work of faith-based initiatives in addressing the problem of the welfare state. As in the past, he fit this view of faith-based initiatives fit into a broader conservative platform. “The best welfare plan is local,” he told an audience at Republican gathering in Indianapolis, “The most effective and compassionate welfare system is one that restores the human link between recipient and giver—that replaces a faceless bureaucracy with the helping hand of a neighbor.” Bush’s faith-based agenda under the approval of the “Charitable Choice” provisions both established this link and encouraged moral and economic growth. With religious organizations serving as the safety nets for the poor and needy, government was freed “to create an environment that attracts capital, an environment where people were willing to take risks and create jobs.” Likewise, government was taking an active role in addressing the “moral decay” that Bush saw as a part of “the culture of many in my generation, a culture that said, ‘If it feels good, do it, and blame somebody else when you have a problem.’” Altogether, faith-based initiatives were vital for a new view of the state, namely that “Government can be a part of the solution with laws and policies that send clear signals that each one of us is responsible for our own behavior.”³²⁵

In 1998, Bush used this platform to gain reelection in a landslide against his Democratic challenger Garry Mauro. Of course, his faith-based agenda was not the make-or-break factor in the election; still, it was a vital part of a “compassionate conservative” package that Bush presented to Texas voters. After his reelection, additional barriers to state sponsorship of faith-based operations fell. In 1999, the state legislature passed HB2017, which required the Texas Department of Human Services (TDHS) “to designate eleven regional liaisons to oversee and encourage outreach to [faith-based organizations].” In response to this new legislation, the

³²⁵ Folder “Speech, Midwest Republican Leadership Conference, Indianapolis, Indiana, August 23, 1997,” Box 2002/151-170, GWB.

Texas Workforce Commission—which was responsible for job training and development programs—set up “faith-based liaisons” to plan outreach to faith-based organizations and promote “Welfare to Work” programs with such organizations “in a manner that respects their unique religious character.” In tandem with this new legislation, the TDHS distributed instructions for state representatives known as the “Charitable Choice Language” document.

Written in June of 1997 and intended to establish rules concerning faith-based organizations for TDHS staff, it quickly became the benchmark for how TDHS treated faith-based organizations. In short, the “Charitable Choice Language” document encouraged a “hands off” policy toward operations at faith-based organizations. TDHS and its liaisons could not mandate changes in executive boards to minimize religious influences nor keep faith-based organizations from hiring employees based solely on religious affiliation. Likewise, faith-based organizations could establish separate accounts for governmental auditing. Though faith-based organizations could not discriminate against potential users of their services based on religion and had to direct the user toward “secular” alternatives if requested, the document assured that “TDHS shall not interpret this contract to require a charitable or religious organization to alter its form of internal governance or remove religious art, icons, scripture or other symbols.” As the manual for TDHS’s work with faith-based organizations, this document did not necessarily tie the hands of state liaisons if a church-state issue such as over an organization proselytizing or forcing users to enroll. But it also discouraged liaisons from investigating faith-based organizations, either in terms of how they used state money or treated clients, thus ensuring that, if they wanted, faith-based organizations could accept state funding with little to no intrusive regulations of their treatment of clients.³²⁶

³²⁶ Quoted in Ebaugh, “The Faith-Based Initiative In Texas,” 4.

In tandem with TDHS, the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) was another important agency that oversaw the distribution of contracts to faith-based organizations working to bring clients into the workforce. As with TDHS's work, much of TWC's programs received direct funding from federal sources, especially Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). After April, 2000, TWC was encouraged to award state contracts to faith-based organizations, whether for child care, transportation, job training, literacy, GED classes, food, shelter, clothing, or other "workforce development" programs. TWC also maintained a database of faith-based organizations that offered job-related programs for potential clients and set up workshops with faith-based organizations that wanted to apply for grants from TANF. Faith-based organizations also had the way cleared during Bush's second administration to other federal resources—such as VISTA and block grants. They also had broader access to Texas's "Adopt a Nursing Home" volunteer program, TDHS's multi-million dollar "Local Improvement Program," and Housing and Urban Development funds.³²⁷

Due to poor or non-existent record-keeping on the part of TDHS and TWC, how much funding or support made its way into the offices of faith-based organizations remained unclear to social scientists attempting to make sense of Bush's faith-based labyrinth. Nevertheless, Bush's intent to deregulate faith-based organizations and prop them up as an alternative to the welfare state certainly gained ground during his second term. His successes in freeing up what he regularly called "the armies of compassion" in Texas, however, were marred by reports of abuse and graft in the new, faith-based system. Though these problems did little to affect his status as a rising GOP star in the race to recapture the White House, they certainly revealed the limits of his faith in corporate friendly, business-based "compassionate conservatism."

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, 5-7.

The Limits of Faith

With the welfare reforms of the 104th Congress and the replacement of AFDC with TANF, a new era in the American welfare state had come to Texas, as Bush and the state legislature enjoyed local control over welfare expenditures and spending. Critics countered their enthusiasm with charges that faith-based organizations hardly made up for the steep budget cuts and public disinvestment in welfare programs that had occurred since Bush and his fellow Republican revolutionaries came to power in 1994. For those on the bottom rungs of Texas society, Bush's "reforms" had seemingly passed them by. According to Christopher King, a welfare expert at the University of Texas, Bush had constructed a welfare system that, in some ways, was "much more friendly to families" than the provisions laid out in the 1996 federal law. (King cited time limits on welfare benefits, which applied under the 1996 federal law but did not apply to children in Texas.) Still, Bush was also "no different than other governors. I don't see the Clinton administration looking that much better. We're toughening up on welfare moms everywhere." The proof was in the details. The Bush governorship fit into a long downward trend in cash payouts in the state welfare system, as from 1970 and 1996 the inflation-adjusted "real value" of such assistance had dropped by 68 percent, the steepest drop in the country. Though in 1999, the state legislature had bumped monthly welfare cash payments up to \$201 per month from \$188 per month, Bush had tried unsuccessfully to persuade the state legislature to add on a number of new restrictions that would keep applications for welfare down. And, in terms of actual support for welfare families, Texas remained at the end of Bush's tenure near the bottom in terms of maximum monthly welfare payments for families of three, ranked forty-seventh out of fifty. Given his disdain for setting aside state funds for welfare endeavors, Bush's faith-based initiative was not surprisingly backed by outside sources, as Bush encouraged the

legislature to use millions of dollars in block grants from the federal government—instead of from state tax revenues—to support religious organizations engaged in social work and job training. In 1999, the use of \$7 million in federal block grants for faith-based organizations led Celia Hagert, an analyst at the Center for Public Policy Priorities in Austin, to quip that Bush was “conservative with state money, compassionate with federal money.”³²⁸

Tax policy in Bush’s Texas had also complicated the governor’s claims of being a “compassionate conservative.” In 1996, according to a study done by the Citizens for Tax Justice, Texas had the third most regressive tax system in the country. In addition, despite a boost in tax revenues due to the late-1990s’ economic boom, Texas dropped from forty-ninth to fiftieth among the state in per capita state spending during Bush’s tenure. Many of these cuts in spending went toward backing Bush’s massive overhaul in the state’s tax code, primarily to the benefit of high earners and large corporate interests. Though some in the Texas business community rallied against Bush’s 1997 tax reforms, claiming the cuts he offered to property owners would result in higher business taxes, over the course of his tenure in Texas, Bush’s cuts generally worked in favor of his counterparts in business. According to a 2000 report by the Citizens for Tax Justice, corporate and business taxes during Bush’s tenure, for the most part, declined through a complicated combination of tax reordering and compromises from 1997 to 1999. Though Bush failed in getting the tax code rewritten in 1997, he nevertheless engineered tax changes in 1999 and oversaw a reduction in overall taxes in Texas that pushed \$3 billion. Such changes, however, did not necessarily equate “reform” in the Citizens’ report. “In 1995, Bush came to the governorship of a state with one of the most regressive tax systems in the country,” it concluded, “His 1997 proposal would have made the tax system even more

³²⁸ George Lardner Jr. and Edward Walsh, “George W. Bush: The Texas Record, Compassion Collides with the Bottom Line,” *Washington Post* (October 24, 1999), A-1, A-14.

regressive. In 1999 Governor Bush again pushed tax legislation that, while having progressive elements, appears to have mainly helped businesses and their well-off owners.” In general, Bush’s cuts also put the state in a difficult financial situation after he left office. As the economy cooled and unexpected increases came in Medicaid and education costs, Texas faced a potential \$700 million shortfall in tax revenues, leading new Texas governor Rick Perry to consider further cuts in road construction and higher education.³²⁹

Attempts at bringing faith-based organizations into the deregulated welfare business also ran into unintended consequences. The offer of state monies without oversight proved less attractive to faith-based organizations than Bush or the legislation’s framers expected. GOP state representative John Smithee told the *Washington Post* that he was “surprised and disappointed” by the lack of enthusiasm from religious groups for the alternative accreditation program: “I really thought more groups would apply.” For instance, only eight organizations received accreditation from TACCCA from 1997 to 2001. During the same period, over 2,000 other faith-based, child-care facilities decided to continue operations with a standard state license.³³⁰

Legal problems also hounded organizations that welcomed the opportunity to work under the safeguards of independent accreditation. For instance, at Teen Challenge, the faith-based, residential drug rehab centers that Bush deemed “a pioneer” in how to affect local social change, health and safety standards worsened due to the lack of state oversight. Since it formally registered an “exempt” status with the state, Teen Challenge was not required to have licensed counselors, conduct criminal background checks for employees, protect patient confidentiality

³²⁹ Sam Howe Verhovek, “Bush Stumbles on Taxes in Texas,” *The New York Times* (May 31, 1997), 7; Report, “Texas Governor George W. Bush’s Record on Taxes” (Austin: Citizens for Tax Justice, 2000), 1-7; Adam Zagorin and Hillary Hylton, “Beyond the Beltway: When Tax Cuts Hit Texas,” *Time* (March 12, 2001), 36-37.

³³⁰ Hanna Rosin, “Faith-Based Youth Homes’ ‘Lesson’,” *Washington Post* (June 21, 2001), A-3, A-12; “The Texas Faith-Based Initiative at Five Years: Warning Signs as President Bush Expands Texas-Style Program at National Level,” (Austin: Texas Freedom Network, 2001), 9.

rights, keep up with staff training, meet state health standards, or report abuse, neglect, emergencies, or errors. It was an independent agency, at least until 1998, when a young boy filed a suit against a Dallas Teen Challenge center for allegedly hiring a drug trafficker, who sexually molested him and two other boys. Such a publicized case of misconduct, however, was few and far between for independent faith-based organizations like Teen Challenge. Legal problems also circulated around a faith-based organization known as Roloff Homes. Founded in the 1950s by Lester Roloff, a fundamentalist preacher and head of the People's Baptist Church in Corpus Christi, Roloff Homes was a faith-based home for at-risk teens. Committed to "tough Christian love" and discipline, Roloff Homes had repeatedly resisted state regulation for its practices through the 1970s and, in 1985, left for Montana to avoid closure by Texas regulators. After Bush signed HR2482 in 1997, he invited the ministry back to Texas, now under the direction of Wiley Cameron, who had advised legislators when writing the law and served on the independent TACCCA accreditation committee. Charges of physical abuse Roloff Homes' Rebekah Home for Girls—a young girl claimed she was tied to a bed and beaten—resulted in the firing of Cameron's wife, who ran the girls' home. Criminal investigations found additional cases of abuse, including a 2000 case where two teenagers complained that they were tethered together by counselors and forced to dig all night in a sewage pit as a form of Christian discipline. In the spring of 2001, its accreditation was revoked by the state and, in response, Roloff Homes once again moved its operations out of Texas. Though Roloff Homes departed, similar organizations continued to operate totally outside the bounds of state oversight or standards of care. One 2001 report from the Texas Freedom Network, an anti-Religious Right organization based in Austin, estimated that over one hundred "exempted faith-based treatment programs" existed in Texas.³³¹

³³¹ Rosin, "Faith-Based Youth Homes' 'Lesson,'" A-3, A-12; "The Texas Faith-Based Initiative at Five

Complaints of malfeasance resulted in law suits as well. “Just as Texas has been a leader in implementing Charitable Choice beginning with George Bush’s term as governor,” noted one 2003 report, “so too has it been a leading location for lawsuits regarding the provision and oversight of government monies allocated to [faith-based organizations.” In 2000, the American Jewish Congress and the Texas Civil Rights Project filed a lawsuit in state courts to challenge the validity of a contract between TDHS and the Jobs Partnership of Washington County (JPWC), a group of churches that collaborated as a non-profit agency committed to moving people from welfare to work, and from low-paying jobs into higher-paying forms of employment. The lawsuit claimed that evangelical Christianity permeated the program, tax funds were used to buy Bibles, and proselytizing was common. Though TDHS cut ties with JPWC, it maintained funding for similar programs. The next year, the case bounced around in appeals courts until the District Court revisited the case to assess the plaintiff’s claims for monetary damages.³³²

With Bush vacating his governor’s seat for a the Presidential campaign trail, and with direct assaults on his faith-based legislation either happening or looming, state legislators reviewed the benefits and costs of sponsoring faith-based organizations in Texas. Claiming to “even the playing field” between more secular and religious service organizations, the same legislators who approved Bush’s faith-based agenda in 1996 decided not to renew the state’s “alternative accreditation” during the 2001 spring session. Though state monies would still go

Years,” 20-21; This episode is also detailed in Sheila Suess Kennedy and Wolfgang Bielefeld, *Charitable Choice at Work: Evaluating Faith-Based Job Programs in the States* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2006), 82-83.

³³² Ebaugh, “The Faith-Based Initiative in Texas,” 9-12. In 2003, another lawsuit objected to InnerChange—an evangelical prison program operated by Chuck Colson’s Prison Fellowship—using facilities at a state prison for free.

toward faith-based organizations, they undercut one of Bush's main goals—allowing certain faith-based organizations to accept state funds without having to accept state regulation.³³³

Despite the real limits of his faith-based social policy, Bush proceeded to hold it up as a social policy worthy of support by Texans and adoption by the American public. To that end, Bush issued one of the more provocative public announcements of his administration in the summer of 2000, right in the midst of his presidential campaign. “Throughout the world, people of all religions recognize Jesus Christ as an example of love, compassion, sacrifice, and service,” he wrote, “Reaching out to the poor, the suffering and the marginalized, he provided moral leadership that continues to inspire countless men, women, and children today.” To honor the sacrifice and example of Bush's Lord and Savior, he joined with “Christians of all races and denominations” to proclaim June 10, 2000 “Jesus Day” in Texas. Non-Christian groups inside and outside Texas protested the declaration as an exercise in religious establishment, but the announcement garnered strong support from Bush's evangelical base. As a part of a state-wide celebration of Jesus which featured marches throughout various cities in the Lone Star State and in other states, Bush urged people “to follow Christ's example by performing good works in their communities and neighborhoods.” In short, he invited his fellow Texans to bring the power of faith—and specifically, the Christian faith—to bear on the social ills of the state and nation, much as he had presumably been doing throughout his six years as their governor.³³⁴

Bush's declaration of “Jesus Day” in the summer of 2000 was hardly coincidental. Facing off against Democrat Al Gore, Bush regularly cited his faith as a qualification for the

³³³ Sheila Suess Kennedy and Wolfgang Bielefeld, “Government Shekels Without Government Shackles?: The Administrative Challenges of Charitable Choice,” *Public Administration Review* 62:1 (January-February, 2002), 9.

³³⁴ Laurie Goodstein, “Bush's Jesus Day is Called Insensitive and a Violation of the First Amendment,” *The New York Times* (August 6, 2000), 1-20; A scanned copy of the “Jesus Day” memo is available at http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/jesus/art/pop_jesusday.jpg.

highest office in the nation. He had done this since the early stages of the campaign, famously marking himself as the “faith-based” candidate during the GOP primaries in 1999. “Christ,” Bush quickly responded to queries about his favorite philosopher, “Because he changed my heart.” According to Mark Silk, this admission was the key to understanding Bush’s social policies and Presidential campaign platform: “While that might have seemed philosophically vacuous to many, it expressed the traditional evangelical Protestant theology of social betterment: The way to make people, and thereby society, better is to change their hearts by bringing them to Jesus.”³³⁵ Nothing seemed to prop up Bush’s claims about the rightful social application of religion like his faith-based initiatives in Texas, which he promised to extend to a national level, if elected. Even during the primaries, Al Gore did little to challenge Bush’s position of the use of faith-based organizations at the federal level, telling the Salvation Army in Atlanta in May, 1999 that he wanted corporations of America to encourage and match contributions to faith-and-values-based organizations. “For too long, faith-based organizations have wrought miracles on a shoestring,” he said, “With the steps I’m proposing today, they will no longer need to depend on faith alone.”³³⁶ Gore’s proposals were met with a chorus of amen’s from his audience.

To be sure, the amen’s that Gore garnered for supporting Bush’s position stood in stark contrast to what was actually happening on the ground in Texas. Nevertheless, Bush continued to present a national faith-based agenda as a major plank in his Presidential platform of “compassionate conservatism.” “It is conservative to reform welfare by insisting on work,” Bush had stated at the beginning of his campaign, “It is compassionate to take the side of

³³⁵ David Domke and Kevin Coe, *The God Strategy: How Religion Became a Political Weapon in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 29-30; Mark Silk, “Old Alliance, New Ground Rules,” *Washington Post* (February 18, 2001), B-03.

³³⁶ Ceci Connolly, “Gore Urges Role for ‘Faith-Based’ Groups,” *Washington Post* (May 25, 1999), A-4.

charities and churches that confront the suffering that remains.”³³⁷ He continued this appeal throughout the 2000 campaign, although the other side of “compassionate conservatism” often remained in the background, much as it had in Texas during Bush’s tenure there. As a blending of ideological interests, Bush’s “compassionate conservatism” overlapped with another blending of public interests that Bush himself embodied. In short, Bush was the latest in a long line of individuals that hoped to align the interests of conservatives in corporate America with those in evangelical America. Bush, of course, was the first President to represent fully those interests, both personally and politically. But he was not the first public figure to seek out or symbolize these collaborations, nor was he alone in doing so in national public life. Bush’s type of economic and religious politics—the curious and complex mix of the free market, faith, and faith in the free market—had also proliferated in numerous corporate office parks, churches, private businesses, and political outposts. Indeed, as Bush’s first term took shape, the blessings of business seemed to be everywhere, both for evangelicals like him and for other Americans. Bush and his followers—whether evangelical or not, Republican or not—aimed to keep the charge, to continue preaching the resurrected gospel of wealth in the face of the heresy of the state well into the new century.

³³⁷ George W. Bush, “Remarks Announcing Candidacy for the Republican Presidential Nomination” (June 12, 1999), The American Presidency Project, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=77819>.

CONCLUSION

In the crowd at George W. Bush's inauguration in 2000, Zig Ziglar was beside himself with joy. "It was an exhilarating experience," he later wrote, "I'll be the first to admit that the folks who watched the event on television saw and heard more, but the historical significance of the moment was breathtaking." For Ziglar, Bill Clinton's presidency had become an embarrassment. Clinton was "perhaps the brightest man to occupy the Oval Office since Thomas Jefferson" but he "had so badly abused that prestigious position, damaging his opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of so many people in the world." Ziglar had been deeply dismayed by Clinton's adultery with Monica Lewinsky, as well as his willingness to deceive friends, family, and the American public to cover it up. Ziglar held equal derision for those who excused Clinton of his actions. "It was American politics at its worst," he believed, "Some senators justified their position by saying he was 'so good for the economy' and it was 'a personal matter,' ignoring the fact that there is no doubt that our personal lives strongly influence our public lives and careers."

If Clinton was the symbol of everything Ziglar despised, then Bush was the symbol of everything he could have asked for in a President. Ziglar watched Bush's inauguration and "fully understood more than just the changing of the president was taking place. It was a change of philosophies." The opening prayer by Franklin Graham, Billy Graham's son, "was truly inspiring. . . . Just as the founding fathers of our country acknowledged Jesus Christ as Lord, so did Franklin Graham conclude his prayer by saying as much." The closing prayer by Rev. Kirbyjon H. Caldwell, of Houston's Windsor Village United Methodist Church, was equally as

meaningful to Ziglar, signaling Bush's presidency as "the return of godly leadership to our country." Overall, the inauguration was a divinely inspired event that brought "tears of gratitude and relief to my eyes and the eyes of countless others."³³⁸

Ziglar responded to Bush for many reasons, but most particularly because both ran in similar circles. Both strode the lines presumably separating the worlds of corporate America and evangelical America. And, the philosophy that Ziglar believed was becoming mainstream through Bush's election—"compassionate conservatism"—was one that Ziglar shared. Indeed, its tenets overlapped with Ziglar's belief in an evangelicalized version of deregulated, accumulationist capitalism. Whereas Ziglar and other evangelical businessmen and women worked to make this philosophy mainstream in American culture through their private businesses or public efforts, Bush had made it a center of his political platform. By the time he stood in front of Ziglar and thousands of others onlookers, he had already made it a central aspect of his professional and political career in Texas. Over the next few years, it would become an important part of his Presidential legacy, and one of any number of examples of the continuing influence of corporate evangelicalism in contemporary America.

Restructuring the federal welfare state along the lines of Texas's faith-based program was one of Bush's first acts as President. Only a few days after the inauguration, Bush issued an executive order that established the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI) and created faith-based centers in five cabinet departments: Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Education, Labor, and Justice. Bush offered the director's chair to John DiIulio, Jr., a well-respected University of Pennsylvania political science professor and self-identified Democrat who had corresponded with Bush during his years in Texas on matters related to faith-based social policy.

³³⁸ Zig Ziglar, *Zig: The Autobiography of Zig Ziglar* (New York: Doubleday, 2002), 201-203.

Yet, placing the OFBCI outside the White House's administrative structure undercut its effectiveness. According to Amy E. Black and Douglas L. Koopman, the OFBCI "was too weak and too disconnected from key White House staff to provide the support, expertise, and political muscle needed to champion the faith-based initiative's legislative details and lobbying strategy." The OFBCI also suffered from the early departure of DiIulio, who quickly became frustrated with the politics surrounding his job and exhausted from a summer of debating a House bill on faith-based initiatives he did not fully support. Reflecting on his brief time as OFBCI chief, DiIulio could only describe his tenure as "rocky," not only "in relation to certain among the president's evangelical Christian supporters . . . but also in relation to many a well-connected, inside-the-Beltway GOP libertarian and small-government conservative, for whose views I found it impossible, both in public and in private, to disguise my disdain." The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and subsequent "war on terror" contributed to the Bush administration's disinterest in following through on campaign promises to give their faith-based agenda their full attention.³³⁹

Still, despite problems of execution and direction, and waning interest from inside the White House, the OFBCI survived intact and gained renewed direction from Iulio's replacement, Jim Towey, a committed Catholic with a bipartisan resume working on faith-based issues in Florida, where Bush's brother Jeb served as governor. After Bush's reelection in 2004, the OFBCI continued to work in the background of the administration. During Bush's second term, the OFBCI was instrumental in garnering faith-based organizations and initiatives additional funding from federal agencies, awarding \$2.1 billion to religious organizations engaged in faith-

³³⁹ Amy E. Black and Douglas L. Koopman, "The Politics of Faith-Based Initiatives," in Mark J. Rozell and Gleaves Whitley, eds., *Religion and the Bush Presidency* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 155-175; John J. DiIulio, Jr., "Afterword: Why Judging George W. Bush is Never as Easy as It Seems" in Robert Maranto, Tom Lansford and Jeremy Johnson, eds., *Judging Bush* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 297.

based social service. At times, the OFBCI's operations seemed to evidence a form of religious cronyism, granting special favors and funding to organizations most supportive of Bush's religious worldview. Though many Democrats supported Bush's faith-based agenda as much as his Republican compatriots, some Democrat critics of the OFBCI used the case of the charismatic Bishop Eddie L. Long of Lithonia, Georgia's New Birth Missionary Baptist Church to highlight what they perceived as the potential for abuse and political gain by the Bush administration, especially in African-American communities. Long, a black clergyman, prosperity gospel preacher, and GOP supporter who had praised Bush's "very deep religious connections," had received a million dollar grant under the guise of "Faith-Based and Community Initiatives" and funneled through the U.S. Administration of Children and Families in 2003, presumably for his church's social support program. Another grant of \$1.7 million to an organization run by Bishop Harold Ray of South Florida, who had given the invocation at a West Palm Beach rally for Dick Cheney, also raised concerns.³⁴⁰ Such types of federally-sponsored back patting, whether they occurred as Democrats reported or not, also brought lawsuits over the politicization of faith-based social programming. As a result, the Supreme Court likewise heard cases challenging the constitutionality of Bush's OFBCI, although generally coming down on Bush's side. In 2007, the Court provided a major decision on the issue in favor of federal support for faith-based organizations, ruling that taxpayers could not challenge the White House initiatives on the grounds it violated the Establishment Clause. The evangelical *Christian Post* declared the decision "a major victory for religious charities that receive government support."³⁴¹

³⁴⁰ William Reed, "Thee of Little Faith: An African American Guide to Faith-Based Funding," *Westside Gazette* (May 18-24, 2006), http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_8198/is_20060518/ai_n50606088/.

³⁴¹ Ethan Cole, "Supreme Court Blocks Atheists' Attack on Faith-Based Programs," *The Christian Post* (June 26, 2007), <http://www.christianpost.com/article/20070626/supreme-court-blocks-atheists-attack-on-faith-based-programs/index.html>.

Though its constitutionality was intact, the effectiveness of faith-based social policy was still in question. After Bush left office in 2008, Duke University sociologist Mark Chaves found little to no evidence that faith-based policies energized local social services, especially those done by Christian congregations and other local religious communities. “One fundamentally incorrect assumption [of Bush’s Office of Faith-Based Initiatives],” Chaves wrote, “was that there was untapped capacity for this sort of work among congregations who were not already doing it.” Chaves used data from National Congregations Study in 1998 and 2007-2008 to show that, “on the contrary . . . no such untapped capacity exists.” Federal efforts during Bush’s presidency, concluded Chaves, “produced no increased congregational role in the system.” The election of Barack Obama in 2008 seemed to spur no reconsideration of this fact or renewed criticism of the ineffectiveness of “faith-based” reforms. If anything, Obama seemed to agree that “faith-based” initiatives should continue to receive federal and state-level support; in short, Obama accepted Bush’s version of “compassionate conservatism”—at least when it came to welfare policy and social services—as gospel truth. The intent of the Obama administration to continue Bush’s policies was disconcerting for Chaves, and he encouraged the new President to “look for ways to better support the full mix of religious and secular organizations, including congregations, who already are out there doing this work” while avoiding “the mistake that the previous administration made of trying to bypass the currently active organizations or change administrative rules in a vain attempt to bring new religious organizations into the social services mix.”³⁴²

Though Bush’s faith-based policies often did not fully help the needy, his approach to tax policy and corporate regulation had a more comprehensive impact on the American public. Bush

³⁴² Sam Hodges, “Study Shows Faith-Based Initiatives Don’t Boost Church’s Social Service,” *Dallas Morning News* (February 5, 2009), <http://religionblog.dallasnews.com/archives/2009/02/study-shows-faith-based-initia.html>.

used an inherited budget surplus from the Clinton administration to argue for tax cuts, especially for wealthy households and corporations, arguing that their entrepreneurial and investment potential was fundamentally restricted by federal tax rates. With a sympathetic Republican Congress, Bush signed a series of tax cuts between 2001 and 2003 that tilted the nation's tax structure in favor of the wealthiest Americans. Rates for wealthy taxpayers in 2001 were reduced from 39.6 to 35 percent, while simultaneously phasing out taxes on estates. Tax cut bills in 2002 reduced corporate taxes while another round of tax cuts in 2003 dropped capital gains taxes by 15 percent. To be sure, working and middle-income taxpayers received a modest cut in their taxes, but Bush's tax cuts nevertheless favored citizens like him and his counterparts in corporate America. According to one review of Bush's tax policy, taxpayers with incomes over \$1 million—approximately 257,000 taxpayers—received “a bigger combined tax cut than the eighty-five million taxpayers who [made] up the bottom 60 percent of the population,” or 85 million taxpayers.³⁴³

Big business also benefited greatly with Bush in the White House and Dick Cheney working as his right-hand man. A former executive, staunch conservative, and longtime supporter of deregulation, Cheney was particularly adept at pitching the federal government behind business interests. Through a series of pro-business appointments in executive agencies and federal departments—especially those concerned with environmental and energy policy—Cheney aimed to reshape the regulatory landscape. And reshape it he did. Corporate executives and lobbyists gained posts at the Department of the Interior and Environmental Protection Agency. Mining and oil industries were allowed permission onto federal lands for the purposes of extraction and development. The Forest Service had its regulatory structure redone to

³⁴³ Robert K. Schaeffer, *Understanding Globalization: The Social Consequences of Political, Economic, and Environmental Change*, 3rd ed. (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 115-116.

privilege timber and energy companies. The Consumer Products and Safety Commission saw its staff cut in half. Demands for power plants, refineries, steel mills, and other industries to avoid upgrading pollution systems went nowhere, framed effectively by Cheney and the Bush administration as injurious to “working people.” In perhaps the most important regulatory change, Cheney and Bush supported the appointment of a former pharmaceutical company executive named Mitchell Daniels—famously known as “Dick Cheney’s Dick Cheney”—to oversee the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). As an agency that had the responsibility of reviewing all proposed regulatory changes, the OMB proved vital for extending the Bush administration’s pro-business agenda, and in that capacity under Daniels, it outdid expectations by gutting the budgets of various government oversight agencies, including the EPA and OSHA. Though spokespersons for the Bush administration might talk about such activities in the abstract as “pro-growth” or eliminating “burdensome regulations,” OMB’s policies was not abstracted from people working in newly deregulated companies. According to Shirley Anne Warsaw, “The extensive list of regulatory changes approved by OMB under Daniels included those issued by the Mine Safety and Health Administration that loosened protections for coal miners from black lung disease and new regulations by the Department of Transportation that increased the allowable time for truck drivers on the road from ten to eleven hours. [The OMB] also approved a rule change that dropped the requirement for hospitals to install facilities protecting against tuberculosis.”³⁴⁴

Along with cutting favors for upper-income taxpayers and corporate entities, Bush and the Republican-led Congress ramped up spending on defense, a policy approach justified by the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and subsequent “war on terror” in Iraq and Afghanistan. As a result of

³⁴⁴ Shirley Anne Warsaw, *The Co-Presidency of Bush and Cheney* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 102-126.

these policies, the budget surplus of the Clinton years vanished and deficits skyrocketed into an annual rate of \$540 billion. Economic growth from 2004 to 2007 tempered the deficit's growth, but it nevertheless was on track to push upwards of two trillion dollars by the end of Bush's second term. In addition, Bush's fiscal policy created a regressive situation, where wealthy households saw their taxes cut and corporations enjoyed lower tax rates. Meanwhile, the tax cuts did little to stimulate the economy, increase employment, create new jobs, or increase the take-home pay of American workers. Such an approach toward taxation and spending also seemed to lay the groundwork for an untenable economic future for the nation. "Unless he changes tack," argued *The Economist* in 2003, "he could leave a terrible mess behind him."³⁴⁵

The Economist was also concerned about another aspect of Bush's economic policy, noting that "house prices in many places have been rising at their fastest-ever rate." "Can this go on?" it wondered, or was housing "[t]he next bubble to pop?" The housing price bubble was connected to a general approach of federal support for certain industries on the one hand (such as investment and speculative banking on Wall Street, along with a notably Sunbelt-centered real estate business) and deregulation of corporate activities on the other (such as lending practices). Working in the wake of Clinton-era endorsements of lower interest rates and loser lending for middle-income and working homeowners-to-be, as well as the 1999 revocation of the Glass-Steagall Act's prohibition on cross-ownership between commercial and investment banks, Bush made home-ownership and easier access to credit a "cornerstone" of his domestic policy. As a result, the home-ownership rate rose to a historic high of 69.3 percent in the second quarter of 2004. To be sure, Bush proposed the creation of a regulatory agency to oversee lending practices by the federally-supported housing giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. But Bush did not push

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*; "The Latest Bush Tax Cut: Disingenuous and Risky" and "The Next Bubble to Pop?" *The Economist* (May 31, 2003), 13.

hard for such an agency and, actually, encountered stiff opposition to it from Democrats in Congress who agreed with freer loans for lower-income homeowners. The SEC's relaxing of a rule limiting net capital and bank debts in early 2004 also granted enormous financial leverage to some of Wall Street's largest banks, encouraging them to issue ever-increasing numbers of securities backed by various types of mortgages and insured by large-scale insurance companies like AIG. No one in the Bush administration and few in the Republican-controlled Congress or in the corner offices of Wall Street saw anything wrong with this aspect of federal policy until it was too late. By the fall of 2007, the housing bubble had burst, sending shockwaves through the nation's financial intuitions and broader economy, ushering in an economic crisis on par with the early years of the Great Depression.³⁴⁶

The exact place of Bush's evangelicalism in these policy decisions was not often self-evident. On the one hand, his free-wheeling approach toward taxes, housing, and Wall Street probably had a great deal to do with Bush's own proclivity for towing the conservative line of "free markets and free enterprise" instead of any specific, cited religious belief. On the other hand, Bush had since his time in Texas presented tax cuts and deregulation alongside social programs for the poor or underprivileged as a total package. "Compassionate conservatism" was compassionate because it presumed the best way to be concerned about the "least of these" was by also being concerned about the powers that be. By letting Wall Street operate freely, by allowing large-scale corporations to pay fewer taxes, by allowing wealthy Americans to take home more income, Bush's political approach served the greater good, uplifting those both high and low in American society. Bush worked within a long history of corporate evangelicals who held similar views, stretching back to the businessmen who supported the anti-communist or

³⁴⁶ Jeffrey E. Cohen and Costas Panagopoulos, "The Politics of Economic Policy in a Polarized Era: The Case of George W. Bush," in Maranto, et al., *Judging Bush*, 178; Stephen Labaton, "Agency's '04 Rule Let Banks Pile Up New Debt," *The New York Times* (October 2, 2008), <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/03/business/03sec.html>.

anti-labor crusades of the 1940s and 1950s to the practices of evangelicals at Holiday Inn, HEB Stores, Wal-Mart, Chick-fil-A, Mary Kay, and a host of other companies. Though certainly not all of these business leaders might agree with the specifics of Bush's domestic policies or practices, they most likely would have nodded along with Ziglar at his inauguration, both in approval of Bush's private faith and his public faith in what's good for business is probably good for America.

For Bush, it was also not a stretch to apply his evangelical line of thinking to foreign affairs as well, serving as the ideological justification for ever-rising spending on fighting wars abroad. Surely, a type of evangelical certainty informed his foreign policy after 9/11, as fighting "Islamofascism" and terrorist "evildoers" was not about pursuing a criminal network which had engaged in the murder of over 5,000 Americans. Rather, it was about forwarding the "Bush Doctrine," a unilateral, God-blessed war of good versus evil, of eliminating security threats through protracted military campaigns and state-building in Iraq and Afghanistan. Like conservative evangelicals from Billy Graham to George Benson to R.G. LeTourneau, Bush treated the state-backed defense establishment, military, and defense-related companies as the both the defenders of American security and progenitors of all that was good and moral about America. To not accrue significant debt to fund their endeavors, and not funnel federal money and contracts to the corporations that supplied and supported the troops, was to counter both the economic and moral mission of America to a part of the world still presumably living under a post-Cold War evil empire instead of under an ostensibly beneficent, moral, Christian, capitalist one. Such a single-minded approach toward domestic and foreign policy earned Bush many enemies, but also encouraged him—and his supporters—of the verity of their views.

Indeed, to a certain extent, Bush's reelection in 2004 exhibited the continuing power and broad appeal of this corporatized brand of conservative evangelical politics. According to a study conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, Bush did ten points better in the 2004 election than in 2000 among white evangelicals, garnering 78 percent of their vote. Among all voters, Bush's "strong religious faith" was the "most important candidate quality" for 14 percent of the electorate, while his appearance as a "strong leader" with a "clear stance on the issues" mattered to over a quarter of voters. Contrary to exit polls and the quick-fire political analysts in the media, the importance of "morality" and "moral values" in his reelection mattered beyond his evangelical base. To be sure, Bush's take on foreign and domestic policy did well among white evangelicals and other voters who cited his commitment to "moral values" as paramount for their vote, but not demonstrably better among this constituency than he did four years earlier. "If anything, then," noted a particularly insightful look at the role of "morality" in the 2004 election, "the effect of religion . . . was more about Bush's gains among infrequent churchgoers and Catholics than his support among the evangelical white Protestants who have been the primary focus of postelection analyses."³⁴⁷

By the spring of 2008, however, Bush's policies had alienated most Americans, with 70 percent disapproving of his handling of the devastated economy and only 39 percent holding firm that "things were going well" in Iraq. Overall, 71 percent of Americans disapproved of how Bush was handling his job as President.³⁴⁸ Ironically, though change was in the air, Bush's policies did not end when Barack Obama replaced him in January, 2009. Obama, of course, was

³⁴⁷ "Religion and the Presidential Vote," Pew Research Center for People and the Press (December 6, 2004), <http://people-press.org/commentary/?analysisid=103>; Gary Langer and Jon Cohen, "Voters and Values in the 2004 Election," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 69:5 (2005), 753.

³⁴⁸ Jon Cohen, "On the Economy, 70% Disapprove of Bush," *Washington Post* (April 15, 2008); Paul Steinhauer, "Poll: More Disapprove of Bush Than Any Other President," <http://www.cnn.com/2008/POLITICS/05/01/bush.poll/>.

not a conservative like Bush. He was not a product of corporate America. He had never spent time in a corporate office, had not gone to business school, and did not measure the verity of social policy according to how well it mirrored the logic of business efficiency. Neither was he a product of Bush's type of evangelicalism, the individualist, missionary, Sunbelt brand of conservative Protestantism that had saved his soul and presumably inspired his social and political ethic and popular appeal among fellow evangelicals. Nevertheless, Obama presided over a nation and political culture in Washington that—to varying degrees—was operating in accord with the values of business leaders like Bush, people who saw easy and necessary collusions between the interests of corporate America and conservative forms of evangelicalism. This came through clearly in Obama's tacit embrace of Bush's "faith based" initiatives, soft-gloves approach toward Wall Street, and continued commitment to state-building and occupation in Afghanistan. But it was also present in many other corners of the nation where corporate interests and evangelical interests continued to overlap. Indeed, the varieties of corporate-evangelical alliances in the new millennium demonstrated the legacy of past alliances and the mixed blessings that business brought to evangelicals in their various crusades to reshape public life in postwar America.

To evaluate the various legacies of this history, it might be best to approach with a methodology borrowed from the field of business, applying a cost-benefit analysis to the presumed contributions of corporate America to the shape of conservative evangelicalism. On the "benefits" side of the ledger—the presumed blessings of business—corporate interests have certainly played a part in the postwar growth and globalization of evangelicalism. The missionary endeavors of evangelicals—whether led by celebrity evangelicals like Billy Graham or parachurch ministries like Campus Crusade for Christ and its counterparts—have benefited

tremendously from the money and administrative participation of corporate elites. Of course, as the failures of R.G. LeTourneau demonstrated, the business of evangelism has been anything but a sure bet. Still, the central goal of many evangelicals—“saving” the lost—has been energized and encouraged by men of considerable means.

This business of evangelism continues. “[S]ome say Business as Mission (BAM),” reported *Christianity Today* in 2007, “is the next great wave in evangelization.” Like LeTourneau, “BAM practitioners use business ventures not only to make a financial profit, but to act as an avenue for the gospel. . . . Yes, they exist to provide jobs and services and to make profits. But BAM companies are more than examples of Christian capitalism. The business itself is a means to spread the gospel and to plant churches.” Such companies continued to view faith and the—now global—free market as interchangeable and mutually supportive: “The BAM model affirms that business is a Christian calling; that free-market profit is rooted in the cultural mandate; and that rightly done, ‘kingdom businesses’ offer economic, social, and spiritual help to employees, customers, and nations.” Led by companies like Johnny Combs’s Texas-based Paradigm Engineering, Ken Crowell’s Galtronics, Inc.—with U.S. offices in Georgia, Arizona, and California—and Bill Yeager’s Colorado-based Yeager Kenya Group, Inc., dozens of large-scale and small scale businesses were a part of the BAM movement. “The day of the Kingdom Professional in world missions has arrived,” trumpeted the promotional literature of Intent, a Chicago-based technology company that played a vital role in shaping the BAM movement. “The remaining people who have yet to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ,” it asserted, “will be most appropriately accessed by Kingdom Professionals who use their God-given and market-honed skills as their legitimate passport to the nations.”³⁴⁹

³⁴⁹ Joe Maxwell, “The Mission of Business,” *Christianity Today* (November 2007), 24-28; On Galtronics, Inc., see <http://www.galtronics.com/index.asp?catID=2787&siteLang=2>.

In an interview with *Christianity Today*, three Arkansas businessmen—Dale Dawson, Dabbs Cavin, and Todd Brogdo—agreed with such sentiments, likewise working in the spirit of R.G. LeTourneau by attempting to teach “microenterprise” in Rwanda. Attempting to solve this nation’s chronic debt problem through lessons intended to teach accounting and business techniques to students and families alike, these businessmen joined with missions groups like World Vision and major banks like Citigroup to—in the words of Linda Lair, a board member of the evangelical Weberg Foundation—“help the poor in the developing world with a hand up rather than a hand out.” In conjunction with groups like Opportunity International, Hope International, and Geneva Global, such new forms of business-based missions only aimed to grow in the twenty-first century. According to Eric Thurman, coauthor of the microfinance movement’s unofficial bible, *A Billion Bootstraps*, “There are only about 100 million families currently using microcredit, and the truth is that somewhere between 10 and 20 times that many people could improve their lives if microcredit were available.” However, Aneel Karnani, a business professor at the University of Michigan, was not so sure of microfinance’s promise. In his essay, “Microfinance Misses Its Mark,” Karnani argued that, “The critical issue is whether microcredit helps eradicate poverty.” Citing evidence to the contrary from China, Vietnam, South Korea, Bolivia, Bangladesh, and Indonesia, Karnani concluded that “on that front, it falls short.”³⁵⁰ Still, operations like the microfinance movement and BAM showed that, in Asia, Africa, and South America, the business of evangelism and entrepreneurial uplift—a mission pioneered a generation before in the early Cold War—continued apace in the increasingly “flat world” of the global marketplace.

Various evangelical businessmen also continued to engage in personal missions to reshape the cultural commitments of the American public. Following in the stead of Zig Ziglar,

³⁵⁰ Isaac Phiri, “From Hand Out to Hand Up,” *Christianity Today* (October 2007), 86-95.

evangelical speakers like Peter Lowe continue to fill arenas with their message of God-blessed entrepreneurial success. Born in Pakistan to Anglican missionaries, Lowe fashioned his “Success” seminars into an explicit blend of his own evangelical faith and his entrepreneurial message. Claiming his Christian faith was “the No. 1 secret” to his success, Lowe regularly invited those who attend his seminars to consider conversion, both for its spiritual and material benefits. Though hardly an exclusivist in terms of religion—his wife, Tamara, is Jewish and usually joins him on tour and Muhammad Ali has also spoken at his seminars—Lowe often invited his audience to pray, “Lord Jesus, I need you. I want you to be No. 1 in my life.” He also welcomed the support of conservative politicians and celebrities. At one time or another, Gerald Ford, Elizabeth Dole, and former President Ronald Reagan have appeared on the same stage as Lowe. The links between Lowe’s seminars and corporate America are likewise tight. According to Lowe’s publicist, “four out of five people are sent by their businesses.” Today, Lowe stands as the frontrunner of a multi-billion dollar industry that Ziglar helped to build. According to Marketdata, the top twelve motivational speakers made \$328 million in 2005. Estimates for the industry as a whole show an increase of almost 50 percent in sales over the past few years, as motivational speakers pulled in \$5.7 billion in 2000 and \$9.6 billion in 2006. Though such activities are not an evangelical enterprise per se, Sunbelt evangelicals like Ziglar and Lowe have been instrumental in keeping the motivational industry going in a nation where their Sunbelt story of success remains an attractive and meaningful message of how to blend faith and work in a free market pursuit of heaven on earth.³⁵¹

Like Larry Burkett, Atlanta’s Dave Ramsey continues to merge the counsel of heaven with the concerns of earth. One of the more popular radio personalities on the air—his weekday

³⁵¹ Jennifer L. Stevenson, “The Minister of Motivation,” *St. Petersburg Times* (February 20, 1997), 1-B; Michael L. Rozansky, “At Show, Nothing Succeeds Like the Selling of Success,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (June 28, 1998), H-1; Mark Hemingway, “One Writer, Unmotivated,” *National Review* (October 22, 2007), 44.

“The Dave Ramsey Show” runs on over 350 radio stations nationwide, with more than 3.5 million listeners weekly—Ramsey emphasizes “financial peace” and “wealth coaching,” urging his listeners to avoid all forms of personal debt. A fan of Proverbs 22:7—“The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is the servant to the lender”—and an ardent believer in the Bible’s so-called formula for financial success, Ramsey stands in a long tradition of assessing debt and poverty as a personal rather than structural problem. Never acknowledging the thirty-year trend of stagnating wages and rising credit dependence among American workers, and only tangentially interested in the necessity of debt incurrence for entrepreneurial ventures, Ramsey holds firm in his belief that prosperity can and will come through a blend of prayer and personal perseverance. In that vein, he has published best-selling books on personal responsibility and debt management, as well as a series of children’s books that aim to teach personal financial responsibility via stories like *The Super Red Racer: Junior Discovers Work*, *Careless at the Carnival: Junior Discovers Spending*, *Battle of the Chores: Junior Discovers Debt*, and *A Special Thank You: Junior Discovers Integrity*. His radio program and books likewise show a strong emphasis on evangelical tenets, as callers recently “freed” from the “bondage” of debt excitedly yell “Freedom!” in exultation of their personal conversion to his financial principles and their gratitude to Ramsey’s entrepreneurial message. Evangelical churches both sponsor many of his seminars on debt management and, indeed, seek out his advice. As his website details, Ramsey also offers certification programs for financial counselors at local churches and material on becoming “A Debt Free Church.” “Remember,” the site notes, “Without FINANCIAL FREEDOM, it is impossible to have SPIRITUAL FREEDOM.”³⁵²

³⁵² Bobby Ross Jr., “Dave Ramsey Continues Crusade Against Debt,” *Frederick News-Post* (March 28, 2003), B-4; For more on Ramsey, his company, and its programs for children, see <http://www.daveramsey.com> and <http://kids.daveramsey.com/>.

Evangelical corporate leaders have also managed, to varying degrees, to wield a certain influence in America through their business endeavors. Most of the businesses detailed in this account continue to operate, and they continue to blend the evangelicalism of either their founders or their current directors in with their daily operations and social engagements. Others have joined their ranks. For instance, Phillip Anschutz, a Colorado oilman and land developer, has used his money and influence in an attempt to reshape “secular” culture through mass media. As the primary stockholder of Regal Entertainment (the nation’s largest chain of movie theaters), Anschutz ranks as the thirty-first richest individual in the United States, making him wealthier than multi-billionaires Rupert Murdoch, Steve Jobs, David Geffen, Charles Schwab, and H. Ross Perot. Drawing from a pool of considerable wealth, Anschutz has become a champion of “family friendly” and “values” entertainment, promoting the international distribution of various quasi-evangelical films and books, the most notable being the film adaptations of C.S. Lewis’s *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe*. In a similar spirit, Neil Clark Warren, an evangelical psychologist and former professor at the conservative Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, has sought to expand his work on family preservation and promotion via the national and international reach of the internet. A best-selling author of several books on child-rearing and familial management, Warren founded the website eHarmony.com in 2000 and based its operation on a blend of his own evangelical psychological theories and the “family values” of conservative political action group Focus on the Family. (Warren has since broken ties with Focus on the Family, deeming it “too political.”) Same-sex patrons were explicitly excluded from eHarmony’s service, at least until a recent lawsuit forced eHarmony.com to drop these restrictions. Still, the site remains an Internet fixture and decidedly informed by Warren’s evangelical views on the keys to familial sustenance. Like other online dating sites, eHarmony is

currently conducting cultural research for setting up satellite sites specially designed for Chinese and Indian users.³⁵³

Currently, businesses either run by evangelicals or started up by evangelicals are spread across the nation and throughout other nations, but the Southern Rim remains their world headquarters, setting trends in economic and religious collusions that continue to proliferate through personal and professional networks, international ministries, developmental programs, and transnational media.³⁵⁴ Consider, for instance, the reach and influence of Dr. James Leininger. A San Antonio doctor, businessman, and major shareholder in Kinetic Concepts, a leading manufacturer of geriatric beds, Leininger maintains a web of influence that crosses any number of institutional boundaries. According to one report, Leininger had, since the early 1990s, become “God’s Sugar Daddy.” In 1996, Leininger “made more than \$2 million in political and philanthropic donations.” He gave \$281,000 to the A+ PAC for Parental School Choice, \$185,275 to Texas House, Senate and State Board of Education candidates, \$99,000 to national party committees and candidates, \$25,000 to Governor George W. Bush, \$460,000 to the CEO Foundation of San Antonio, \$210,000 to the National Right to Life organization and their educational trust fund, and over \$300,000 more to three other conservative think-tanks and political organizations. A decade later, his financial and political power had not ebbed.

According to the San-Antonio Express-News and the Texas Freedom Foundation, publicly

³⁵³ Ross Douhat, “The Apocalypse, Rated PG,” *The Atlantic Monthly* (May, 2005), 36, 38, 40; Christopher Palmeri, “Dr. Warren’s Lonely Hearts Club,” *Business Week* (February 20, 2006), 82; John Cloud, “Is eHarmony Biased Against Gays?” *Time* (June 1, 2007), <http://www.time.com/time/business/article/0,8599,1627585,00.html>; David Colker, “eHarmony to Offer Same-Sex Dating Service,” *Los Angeles Times* (November 20, 2008), C-3; Lisa Takeuchi Cullen and Coco Masters, “We Just Clicked,” *Time* (January 17, 2008), <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1704691,00.html>; “US Online Love Brokers Eye China,” http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007-02/15/content_809971.htm.

³⁵⁴ The Christian Business Men’s Committee—now known as the International Christian Business Association for Men and Women—continues to operate throughout the U.S. and in dozens of countries. It is joined by any number of similar organizations, including the International Fellowship of Christian Businessmen, the Businessmen’s Fellowship, the Fellowship of Companies for Christ, International, the Full Gospel Businessman’s Fellowship International, and countless local and state-level branches and upstart business associations.

available records “showed Leininger linked to 95 people and 44 organizations,” many some of the most important conservative groups in the Lone Star State. Of economically and socially conservative organizations receiving donations or tacit support, the most prominent included Texans for a Republican Majority, Texans for School Choice, Texas Republican Legislative Campaign Committee, The Texas Club for Growth, and the Texas Right to Life Political Action Committee. He also maintained overlapping connections with other conservative executives via the Texas School Choice Resource Foundation and over a dozen other organizations, including the Texas Public Policy Foundation, CEO Foundation, Texans for Government Integrity, and the Christian Academy of San Antonio. He also held a “controlling interest” in Winning Strategies, “a political consulting company with a client list that includes the Christian Coalition,” and he held the trademark license for *The Beginner’s Bible* and “its supplemental coloring books for children.”³⁵⁵

As with other evangelical businessmen, Leininger’s experience shows that the interests of evangelical business community have never been static or straightforward. Rather, they have shifted accordingly as regional power and international engagements of the nation itself shifted, thus placing evangelical business leaders squarely within the main currents of modern American history, not standing stubbornly against them. In addition, their companies and their international engagements will undoubtedly continue, albeit not via a form of public action not usually recognized or documented by pundits or scholars. These business leaders will not stand with placards on picket lines. They will not use referenda. They will not send out flyers. They will not register voters. They will not generally give captivating speeches on the need for

³⁵⁵ R. G. Ratcliffe, “Conservative Liberal With His Offerings,” *Houston Chronicle* (September 21, 1997), 1-A, 21-A; Bill Berkowitz, “God’s Sugar Daddy,” *Media Transparency*, online at: <http://old.mediatransparency.org/story.php?storyID=134>; Report, “Anatomy of Power: Texas and the Religious Right in 2006” (Austin: Texas Freedom Network Education Fund, 2006), 8-12.

cultural redemption (although they may write a book about it). Instead, they will go about their missions one customer, one purchase order, one contract, or one web hit at a time.

The construction of a distinct evangelical subculture, one defined by the production and consumption of “Christian” goods and services, has likewise been intimately related to corporate modes of organizing, marketing, and distribution. Nashville, Tennessee remains a vital Sunbelt center for the Christian music industry and, year after year, sales of Christian music—whether of the contemporary rock, soft rock, indie rock variety—continue to go up. Christian radio stations now run programming in a number of major markets, most centered in the metropolitan areas of Sunbelt states, and Christian concerts and music festivals are attended by millions, drawing corporate sponsorship from many non-evangelical corporations, ranging from soft drink companies to credit card companies.

The successful use of corporate logic to drive the production and consumption of Christian identity has crossed over into the ecclesiastical realm, as churches in evangelical America—especially those strung around the suburbs of Sunbelt cities—operate with the “bottom line” of increasing membership via “seekers” interested in “new ways” of “doing church.” The megachurch has emerged as the most obvious example of this full incorporation of corporate administration and management. Today, dozens of “CEO pastors” oversee large-scale, all-inclusive churches that often look like corporate office complexes and offer sanctuary, entertainment, recreation, and community to members and visitors alike. The corporate model is central to the church’s administration and operation, with organizational flow charts, branding techniques, and customer satisfaction models that outdo many private, for-profit enterprises.³⁵⁶

³⁵⁶ Though less than 1% of all congregations in the U.S. can be classified as megachurches, they still set trends for other churches to follow and point toward a future where corporatization is the key to whether a church body lives or dies. That nearly 50 percent of them can be classified as “conservative” and another 33 percent as “somewhat conservative” also shows their importance in continuing conservative forms of evangelicalism in

Early innovators in this regard, such as southern California's Robert Schuller during the 1960s and 1970s, set the stage for the proliferation of this model of church operations, taking cues from corporate efficiency techniques and the retailing business to ensure an "inventory" of whatever programs or services "customers" wanted, "accessibility" through church features like "surplus parking," "visibility" through ample and effective marketing, and ever-increasing "cash flow." Other large-scale or wannabe large-scale churches across the country—and not just in the Sunbelt—followed suit. For instance, staff members at Bill Hybels's Willow Creek Community Church in suburban Chicago refined Schuller's methods and wedded them to concepts from Kenneth Blanchard's popular management book, *Leadership and the One-Minute Manager*. The affinity for corporate methods and style continued as the church grew. As *The Economist* reported in late 2005, "The corporate theme is not just a matter of appearance. Willow Creek has a mission statement . . . and a management team, a seven-step strategy and a set of ten core values. The church employs two MBAs—one from Harvard and one from Stanford—and boasts a consulting arm." Hybels' efforts had even inspired a case-study of its practices by Harvard Business School.³⁵⁷

The widespread success of Rick Warren's *The Purpose Driven Church* and his other "how-to" guides for church growth also revealed the prestige and influence of such megachurch entrepreneurs and their messages. Warren, in particular, has perhaps done as much as anyone in

America. Still, megachurches are cultural and communal institutions first and political institutions a distant second. Indeed, contrary to popular myth, they are not headquarters for grassroots political organizing as over 76% never "partnered with other churches in political involvement activities the past 5 years." Nevertheless, especially for conservatives looking for religious justification for their political or economic sensibilities, megachurches reinforce notions of meritocratic uplift, privatization, cultural superiority, and class solidarity. Scott Thumma, Dave Travis, and Warren Bird, "Megachurches Today, 2005: Summary of Research Findings," (Hartford: Hartford Institute for Religious Research, 2005), 1-27; Scott Thumma and Dave Travis, *Beyond Megachurch Myths: What We Can Learn from America's Largest Churches* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007), 18-19; John Dart, "Close-Knit Megachurches," *The Christian Century* (September 12, 2001), 11, 14.

³⁵⁷ Conrad Eugene Ostwalt, *Secular Steeples: Popular Culture and the Religious Imagination* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 2003), 65-66; "Jesus, CEO," *The Economist* (December 24, 2005), 41.

popularizing the corporate model of the megachurch, often comparing successful churches to innovative businesses and companies as opposed to ineffective churches that wallow in bureaucracy, impersonality, and irrelevancy. Warren borrowed this philosophy from Peter Drucker, one of the late twentieth-century's foremost management gurus with whom Warren developed a close mentoring relationship after first making his acquaintance in the early 1980s. In a 2005 interview in *Fortune*, entitled "The Best Advice I Ever Got," Warren claimed, "Peter has taught me that results are always on the outside of your organization, not on the inside. Most people, when they're in a company, or in a church, or in an organization, they think, Oh, we're not doing well, we need to restructure. [So,] They make internal changes. But the truth is, all the growth is on the outside from people who are not using your product, not listening to your message, and not using your services." Though Warren never claimed churches like his were just another business enterprise, his easy collapsing of the principles of corporate growth and church growth was hard to miss. By pitching his church, its stated mission, and its programming right at its potential customer base—namely managers, corporate service workers, and their families, all searching for a "purpose driven life"—Warren both continued a trend of corporate-evangelical cross-pollination and put new spins on it, marking him as one of the most public and powerful "evangelical innovators" in the "spiritual marketplace" of contemporary America.³⁵⁸

Though the megachurch's corporate trappings aim to attract and keep the loyalty of patrons from many walks of life, they make megachurches especially inviting to those who work as professionals and managers in corporate America. As Conrad Ostwalt has noted, "The [secular corporate] management style appeals to the target audience of these megachurches as

³⁵⁸ Warren quote from Shayne Lee and Phillip Luke Sinitiere, *Holy Mavericks: Evangelical Innovators in the Spiritual Marketplace* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 142.

well, since the client is about as likely as not to be a corporate manager of some sort.”³⁵⁹ To appeal to such a “target audience,” many megachurches offer “relevant” messages and programming fine-tuned for congregants and families looking for spiritual meaning, community, and direction in a world where corporate definitions of success and personal worth have not quite sufficed. At other times, however, megachurch pastors can stretch beyond a pastoral or therapeutic role, encouraging their congregations to become more aggressive in using faith to bring success. This charge is particularly acute among megachurch leaders in the “prosperity gospel” branch of charismatic evangelicalism. More popular among congregants who would like to make their way up the corporate ladder in America than those who already reside on its middle and top rungs, the prosperity gospel offers financial and personal success to anyone willing to put in the effort through direct requests to God and devotion to finding and keeping work. According to Dallas bishop T. D. Jakes, one of the most influential black ministers in contemporary evangelicalism, “I see absolutely no excuse today for a man not to have a job. If there isn’t a job available in your community that’s suited to your educational level, find a job that’s lower than your educational level and fill it until a better one opens up. If it’s not illegal, and if it’s not sin, go for it.” By showing a willingness to work faithfully in whatever job God provides, opportunities for increase will show themselves, offering the believer the possibility of using portions from their paycheck to gain even greater financial blessings. “I broke the spirit of poverty over my house by giving my tithes and giving my offerings,” writes Jakes, “I beat the devil out of my checkbook and pleaded the blood over my finances. I scraped and crawled my way up out of poverty and into God’s prosperity by doing what God said to do! And you can too.” Working with a similar social and spiritual philosophy, Joel Osteen, head of the multi-ethnic, non-denominational Lakewood Church in Houston, repeatedly reminds his audience to

³⁵⁹ Ostwalt, *Secular Steeples*, 66.

pursue their “best life now” at home, at church, and especially at work. Since work is a vital part of creating such a “successful” life, he has interlaced sermons on the “biblical” foundations of righteous, happy living with laudations of those who seek to please their bosses as much as their Lord. “[E]mployers prefer employees who are excited about working at their companies,” he believes, “You won’t be blessed with [a wrong attitude]. God wants you to give it everything you got. Be enthusiastic. Set an example.”³⁶⁰

If the union and interchange between corporate America and conservative evangelicalism has been most transformative and important in evangelical missions and mainstream cultural influence, the fusion of corporate interests and conservative evangelicalism has often failed to produce intended results in the political realm. To be sure, the Bush administration’s rewriting of the federal welfare state along the lines of “faith-based” public planning has been important, and the limited results of such policies have not been emphasized by Bush’s successors. But the foundations of the welfare state—though certainly less sturdy than in decades past—is not solely based on faith or been privatized to faith-based organizations. In addition, the runaway spending on the “war on terror” and continual growth of the size and influence of the federal state remains a bugaboo for many conservative evangelicals. The fight against the New Deal heresy of a centralized, bureaucratic, regulatory state has been a long one, stretching back to the early days of the Cold War and continuing through the latter years of the Culture Wars. And yet, only bits and pieces of the federal state have been “reformed” along the lines of conservative morality, and, in many ways, patterns of private, individual behavior seem relatively unaffected. Abortion is still backed by federal court decisions; gay marriage proposals and legislation have

³⁶⁰ T. D. Jakes, *Why? Because You Are Anointed* (Lanham: Pneuma Life Publishing, 1994), 148, 157, quoted in Shayne Lee, *T. D. Jakes: America’s New Preacher* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 117-118; Osteen quote from Barbara Ehrenreich, *Bright-Sided: How the Relentless Promotion of Positive Thinking Has Undermined America* (New York: MacMillan, 2009), 145.

found welcome on the dockets of several states; entertainment companies still trade in sex and violence; the majority of teenagers still choose to have sex instead of remain abstinent. More often, the economic conservatism of evangelicals and their big business backers—a preference for a freer market—has come to redefine state policy toward matters of the boardroom instead of matters of the bedroom or school.

This does not mean that evangelicals and like-minded counterparts in the halls of business have given up or have not won real victories. The 2008 fight in California over Proposition 8, an anti-gay marriage referendum, confirmed the continuing power of culture war issues among certain segments of the American body politic. That a prominent big businessman, hotel magnate Doug Manchester, provided \$125,000 to fund anti-Prop 8 messages likewise showed the continuing collaboration between big money and grassroots social conservatives, many in the evangelical camp.³⁶¹ But overall, the freer market has prevailed alongside freer views on matters of sexuality and morality. Overturning the social and sexual revolutions of the postwar era with corporate-backed revolutions of their own has sometimes proven easier said than done.

Still, now as in the past, collusions between corporate leaders and evangelical political leaders remain powerful and expansive, if sometimes difficult to nail down. For instance, Erik Prince, the founder and CEO of Blackwater, a North Carolina-based for-hire private military contractor, appears to be continuing his family's long role as a behind-the-scenes player in conservative evangelical circles. His father Edgar Prince was a billionaire auto parts manufacturer in Michigan who joined the DeVos family in bankrolling evangelical causes such as Focus on the Family and the Family Research Council in the 1970s and 1980s. Unlike his

³⁶¹ John R. Lamb, "Bonnie vs. the Manchester Hyatt," *San Diego City Beat* (February 2, 2009), http://www.sdcitybeat.com/cms/story/detail/bonnie_vs_the_manchester_hyatt/7772/.

father, Erik Prince moved away from his father's faith, converting to Roman Catholicism in 1992. After a brief stint as a Navy SEAL and his father's death in 1995, Prince sought out his fortune in the defense and hi-tech economy of the Research Triangle area, founding Blackwater in 1996 and building its facilities on 6,000 acres in the North Carolina's Great Dismal Swamp with money inherited from his father's estate. Though he diverged with his father in both religion and profession, his conservative leanings on matters of economics, politics, and morality put him in agreement with evangelicals who shared his father's conservatism, including George W. Bush and Chuck Colson.

In a 2007 interview with *Newsweek*, Prince confirmed his support for various conservative organizations, but also emphasized that his support was more circumstantial than fundamental; for instance, he claimed to have only attended "one or two" meetings of the Council for National Policy. Still, a book on Blackwater published in the same year documented evidence of Prince's donations in years past to numerous conservative Catholic organizations, as well his support for various evangelical political action committees and causes. Unspecified amounts also went to various evangelical colleges and schools, while the Haggai Institute supposedly received \$200,000 from Prince in support of their evangelistic campaigns in developing nations. Prince also served on the board of directors and donated money to Christian Freedom International, an evangelical missionary group active in Somalia, Sudan, Afghanistan, and Iraq. In late 2009, he stepped down as CEO and relinquished daily operations of Blackwater, which was re-branded as Xe in the midst of numerous legal suits and political fire over the deaths of its contractors and role during the Bush administration. Yet, Prince's

contributions reveal that the legacy of corporate involvement in certain, politically-connected segments of evangelical America has yet to run its course.³⁶²

Certainly, the “interesting alliances” between corporate America and conservative evangelicalism in the Sunbelt Age have affected the course of modern evangelical politics and culture, even if they have not fully reshaped the nation in conservative evangelicals’ own image. Today, conservative evangelicals show a particular affection for corporate entities and ideas. This is not an accidental infatuation but a product of postwar history. In short, the participation of corporate leaders and like-minded corporate backers has helped to make conservative evangelicalism more mainstream, bringing it back to a standing not altogether unlike what evangelicals enjoyed during the nineteenth century. More particularly, evangelicals remain a powerful part of mainstream life in contemporary America, whether in the office buildings of dozens of companies strung throughout the Sunbelt and elsewhere, in the small businesses, companies, and congregations alongside the highways of urban and suburban America, in the inside-the-beltway and heartland conversations about public policy and cultural commitments, in the domestic and foreign missions fields. Of course, conservative evangelicals do not exercise absolute influence. They do not have the backing of every corporate leader, or the commendation of every conservative politician. But they are an essential part of the fabric of American public life because they have sought out those who have been as instrumental as they have in influencing the course of American public life and attached themselves to the leaders and interests of one of the postwar era’s most important social and economic institution—the for-profit, business corporation. By receiving the blessings of business, conservative evangelicals

³⁶² Jeremy Scahill, *Blackwater: The Rise of the World’s Most Powerful Mercenary Army* (New York: Nation Books, 2008), 65-87; Evan Thomas and Mark Hosenball, “The Man Behind Blackwater,” *Newsweek* (October 22, 2007), 36-39; Mike Baker, “Erik Prince, Blackwater Founder, Cutting Ties With Company,” *The Huffington Post* (December 2, 2009), http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/12/02/erik-prince-blackwater-fo_n_376880.html.

have more often than not blessed business and made the unrestrained pursuit of the profit motive sacrosanct. As the policies and deregulatory ethos of the past thirty years and the administration of the evangelical CEO President George W. Bush have made clear, holding steadfast to such a faith can prove disastrous for the larger society, if, ironically, never quite debilitating to the faith of those who seem to hold Christ and corporate America in comparable esteem.

This reality should offer a sobering corrective to any grandiose expectations of change in the halls of American power or in the everyday endeavors of conservative evangelicals.

Regardless of the ups and downs of the election cycle, the political and cultural activism of conservative corporate leaders is likely to continue for as long as their businesses are in business and like-minded evangelicals are willing to take cues or contributions from them. Likewise, the need to secure the blessings of business will continue to shape evangelical commitments and crusades in the contemporary Sunbelt, nation, and world.

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