

# ON THE SPIRITUAL EXPLOITATION OF THE POOR

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“The gospel tells us, cries the priest, that there will always be poor people, *Pauperes semper habebitis vobiscum*, and that property, consequently in so far as it is a privilege and makes poor people, is sacred. Poverty is necessary to the exercise of evangelical charity; at the banquet of this world here below there cannot be room for all.”

—Pierre-Joseph Proudhon<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the role that the so-called Christian Right plays in encouraging and perpetuating economic inequality in the United States by demonizing poverty, exalting the capitalist system, and discouraging economically vulnerable populations from resisting their own oppression. In so doing I aim to defend two distinct but related theses. The first is that the Christian Right’s beliefs about and behavior toward the poor follows from an underlying political theology which, while it has a substantive affinity with secular capitalist ideologies and, indeed, with capitalism itself, is neither solely nor even chiefly *determined* by them. The second is that although the Christian Right’s oppression of the poor intersects and overlaps with capitalist exploitation, it is not simply an extension or variation of the same.

Religions can and do have genuine power independent of

ruling classes, which means that they can and do exist independently of, and prior to, the particular modes of production that give rise to ruling classes in the first place. Thus, although religions frequently play a role in generating forms of false consciousness that disempower the oppressed, they do not always do so for the sake of ruling economic interests, or as a mechanical consequence of underlying economic structures. On the contrary, religions often proceed in a perfectly autonomous fashion in their efforts to promote their own interests and to advance their most fundamental theological and political commitments. To the extent that such efforts require, or at least result in, the oppression or exploitation of the poor and other marginalized groups, this oppression or exploitation is altogether distinct from the kind that occurs under capitalism even if they happen to coincide. All of this suggests that eradicating the capitalist mode of production does not necessarily eliminate capitalist ideologies like the Christian Right—a notion that has significant ramifications for the struggle against economic oppression in the United States and around the world.

## **Religion and False Consciousness**

“What has to be explained,” wrote Wilhelm Reich, “is not the fact that the man who is hungry steals or the fact that the man who is exploited strikes, but why the majority of those who are hungry don’t steal and why the majority of those who are exploited don’t strike.”<sup>2</sup> For Marx, as is well known, this phenomenon is a straightforward consequence of the ideological “superstructures” of capitalist society—that is, by the various social, political, legal, and cultural institutions that generate beliefs, attitudes, and other “forms of social consciousness.”<sup>3</sup> Because the “real foundation” of these superstructures is the underlying “economic structure of society,” the “general character” of

the forms of consciousness they create is determined by “the mode of production in material life.”<sup>4</sup> This implies that the major institutions of capitalist society tend to produce ideas that reinforce capitalist economic structures and, by extension, the power of the capitalist class. Because this effect comes at the expense of the working classes, however, its achievement requires them to accept “a number of closely related illusions”<sup>5</sup> that domesticate their “potentially revolutionary impulses”<sup>6</sup> and, more generally, “prevent [them] from behaving as their interests would otherwise dictate.”<sup>7</sup> It is precisely such illusions—which Marx terms “false consciousness”—that account for the persistent failure of oppressed people to resist their own oppression in the way Reich describes.

Religion is unique among social institutions in its ability to shape “people’s interpretation of the world” and to influence their “beliefs, goals, emotions, and behaviors, as well as... their interactions on both interpersonal and intergroup (national and international) levels.”<sup>8</sup> This ability derives, in the first place, from the superior authority religion claims for itself on the basis of its alleged ability to disclose “*transcendent* reality.”<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, by purporting to have privileged awareness of, and access to, a higher dimension of being that is not subject to the limitations and imperfections of ordinary material existence, religion presents itself as a source of absolute or universal truth.<sup>10</sup> In this way it obscures its embeddedness within concrete empirical circumstances, making it appear as something other than a human invention.<sup>11</sup> This enables it to function as an especially powerful form of false consciousness—an “opium,” as Marx put it, that inures “the oppressed creature” to the “real wretchedness” of his situation while simultaneously concealing its true cause.<sup>12</sup>

Marx’s theory of ideology has been routinely criticized on the grounds that it “tends to ignore many aspects of religion, to oversimplify a complex phenomenon, and to

make sweeping generalizations.”<sup>13</sup> My own misgivings concern its tendency to reduce all oppression to economic oppression, on the one hand, and its failure to acknowledge the relative autonomy of different forms of social consciousness, on the other. On Marx’s account, the various components of the capitalist superstructure are oppressive only insofar as they abet capitalist exploitation of poor and working class people via the production of false consciousness. This suggests that the use of religion to more effectively oppress them is simply a variation of economic exploitation. Putting aside the fact that religions can and do oppress women, racial and ethnic minorities, LGBT people, and the like for reasons that have nothing to do with their class position, it is simply not the case that religions rationalize exploitation and other forms of oppression solely or even chiefly for the sake, or at the explicit or implicit behest, of the ruling class, nor that they are “determined” by the “mode of production of the material conditions of life”—at least not if “determined” means *caused to exist or to take some one particular form rather than another*.

This is not to deny that religions play a role in reinforcing existing economic structures and promoting ideological agendas that serve the interests of one class at the expense of others, nor that existing power structures have the capacity to *condition* or *influence* religions in various ways. Ruling classes have supported and even deliberately co-opted religions that reinforce (or have the capacity to reinforce) their wealth and power. This is evident, for example, in the case of “civil religion,” whereby a ruling class uses religion to “sanctif[y] existing political values into common creed for all society.”<sup>14</sup> But religions have also sought to reinforce their own power by means of what Benjamin Lynerd calls “political theology”—i.e., “the practice of extracting political values from [the] religious beliefs... of existing faith traditions.”<sup>15</sup> In some cases this

occurs by default, as when a religion's beliefs just happen to coincide with ruling interests; in others, it requires existing beliefs to be altered or new beliefs to be created for the explicit purpose of currying favor with the ruling class.

## **The Christian Right: A Brief Overview**

The term "Christian Right" refers to a political, social, and religious movement comprising a "loose alliance of politically motivated and mobilized Christian conservatives who have played a significant role in American politics since the late 1970s."<sup>16</sup> Motivated by a desire to "restore the 'Christian' character of American culture [and] to provide a 'Christian' solution for the... problems of society,"<sup>17</sup> the movement is known for aggressively promoting a host of extreme right-wing causes including, but not limited to, "mak[ing] abortion illegal, fighting against gay rights (particularly gay marriage), supporting prayer in school, advocating 'abstinence only' sex education, opposing stem cell research, curtailing welfare spending, opposing gun control, and celebrating the war on terrorism."<sup>18</sup> This agenda reflects an underlying "political theology"—that is, a set of political beliefs, values, and principles that are derived (or purport to be derived) from a particular religious worldview. Although the Christian Right has always included a wide variety of perspectives ranging from Pentecostalism to Roman Catholicism, its political theology is rooted in the particular form of American evangelical Christianity from which it evolved historically.

The definition of "evangelical Christianity" (or "evangelicalism") is a matter of considerable dispute even among those who identify as "evangelicals." The American theologian Roger Olson, for example, has argued that the term has no fewer than "seven distinct though occasionally overlapping meanings," all of which "are legitimized by

either broad historical usage or common contemporary usage.”<sup>19</sup> For purposes of this chapter, I understand evangelicalism to refer to a broad theological orientation “situated [chiefly] in the Reformed and Wesleyan traditions” of Protestant Christianity that arose “during the eighteenth century in Great Britain and its colonies.”<sup>20</sup> The four “defining qualities” of this orientation are usually described as *conversionism* (the belief that Christianity involves being “born again” in Christ), *crucicentrism* (the belief that salvation is made possible by Christ’s death and resurrection), *biblicism* (the belief that the Bible is the inspired word of God and, by extension, the sole and absolute foundation of truth), and *activism* (the belief that Christians should actively encourage the conversion of non-Christians).<sup>21</sup>

According to this account, evangelicalism encompasses “a diverse group of individuals, congregations, denominations, and nondenominational ministries”<sup>22</sup> including “holiness churches, Pentecostals, traditionalist Methodists, all sorts of Baptists, Presbyterians, Black churches in all these traditions, fundamentalists, [and] pietist groups... to name only some of the most prominent types.”<sup>23</sup> As George Marsden notes, however, it also refers “to a self-conscious interdenominational movement with leaders, publications, and institutions with which many subgroups identify.”<sup>24</sup> A distinction must be drawn, accordingly, between American evangelicalism *as such*—which has historically “reflect[ed] a range of theological, political, and social convictions”<sup>25</sup>—and the ideologically and theologically conservative evangelical movement to which Marsden refers. Strictly speaking, it is the latter rather than the former from which “the Christian Right” emerged.

As an offshoot of the modern evangelical movement, the Religious Right in the United States traces its origins to Anglo-American fundamentalism—an “interdenominational crusade for the total restoration ... of the faith” that arose

“from both the Wesley holiness and Higher Life Reformer traditions... in the post-Civil War period.”<sup>26</sup> As Matthew Sutton notes, the fundamentalists “feared that churchly conservatives had lost the authentic radicalism of New Testament Christianity” and “viewed liberal Protestantism and movements like the Social Gospel as troubling distortions of Christianity that had seemingly transformed religion into... shallow nostrum[s] for curing temporal problems.”<sup>27</sup> Believing that global conditions augured the imminent return of Christ, they adopted a severe asceticism and militant outlook that isolated them from the American cultural mainstream.

The historical consensus is that modern evangelicalism emerged from a split with the fundamentalist movement that occurred in the 1940s and 1950s. During this time, a new generation of Christian leaders emerged that rejected the movement’s cultural isolationism, its anti-intellectualism, and its “emphasis on personal ethical prohibitions at the expense of a positive social program.”<sup>28</sup> These self-described “neo-evangelicals”—including such notables as Billy Graham—sought to provide an “alternative to both Protestant liberalism and the more extreme forms of fundamentalism”<sup>29</sup> by forging interdenominational alliances and creating a “unified... social and cultural program” that would “evangelize the nation” from within “the respectable centers of American life.”<sup>30</sup> Propelled by the mid-century religious revival, the newly-minted movement grew steadily throughout the 1950s as tens of thousands of Americans abandoned mainline churches in order to be “born again.”

Although its leaders “were... staunchly anti-Communist and supported Washington’s militant Cold War foreign policy,”<sup>31</sup> the evangelical movement of this period is often characterized as an apolitical phenomenon whose chief focus was “evangelism and denominational concerns” rather than “overt political involvement”<sup>32</sup> and whose

success had more to do with popular large-scale revivals, “door-to-door evangelism, extensive publication programs, and close-knit congregational structures”<sup>33</sup> than conscious efforts to manipulate the levers of political power. In reality, it had always held a firm commitment to right-wing social, political, and economic policies<sup>34</sup> and enjoyed a closely-knit and mutually beneficial relationship with the Republican Party and its main constituencies from the very beginning of its existence.<sup>35</sup> As early as the 1930s, evangelicals like James Fitfield were making common cause with prominent business leaders in their shared opposition to the New Deal. As Kevin Kruse notes:

Fitfield convinced the industrialists that... [evangelicals] could be the means of regaining the upper hand in their war against Roosevelt [because] they could give voice to the same conservative complaints... but without any suspicion that they were motivated solely by self-interest.<sup>36</sup>

In so doing they could successfully refute the claim—beloved of liberal Democrats and liberal Christians alike—“that business had somehow sinned and the welfare state was doing God’s work.”<sup>37</sup>

Unlike the business leaders, who actually *were* motivated by self-interest rather than religious faith, evangelicals like Fitfield opposed the New Deal mainly because they saw it as a stepping stone to Communism and thus as “a perversion of Christian doctrine.”<sup>38</sup> The same was true, by extension, of the Social Gospel and other forms of liberal Protestantism that regarded “caring for the poor and needy” rather than “the salvation of the individual” as “the central tenet of Christianity.”<sup>39</sup> As Kruse writes, “If any political and economic system fit with the religious teachings of Christ, it would have to be rooted in a similarly individualistic ethos. Nothing better exemplified these

values, [the evangelicals] insisted, than the capitalist system of free enterprise."<sup>40</sup>

Although this "militantly conservative political stance" did not originate in the 1960s, as many accounts claim, it unquestionably intensified in response to the political, social, and cultural upheaval of that era as well as the "internal crisis" this upheaval precipitated within the evangelical movement.<sup>41</sup> As rank-and-file evangelicals became increasingly divided over civil rights, the Vietnam War, and other issues, the leadership ramped up its "unreservedly pronationalist and procapitalist positions"<sup>42</sup> and slowly reneged on its earlier commitment to interdenominational unity by ginning up a backlash against the prevailing trends of liberalism, ecumenism, and pluralism within the mainline churches. As Neil Young writes:

They decried the breakdown of the traditional heterosexual family; fretted about changing gender roles and the strength of the women's movement and feminism; denounced sexual permissiveness, abortion liberalization, and the normalization of homosexuality; and inveighed against government encroachments on individual rights, free enterprise, and religious liberty.<sup>43</sup>

By the early 1970s the militantly conservative establishment had won the day. Swiftly pushing the movement in an even more openly political direction, figures such as Francis Schaeffer, Anita Bryant, Jerry Falwell, and Pat Robertson openly aligned themselves with the far-right wing of the Republican Party and mobilized their followers to take up political activism. In so doing, they led the way in transforming evangelical Christianity into one of the largest, most well-organized, and most influential grassroots political movements in American history: the

Christian Right.

In the nearly forty years since Ronald Reagan's election—an event that is widely acknowledged as the beginning of its ascendancy—the Christian Right has spent millions of dollars on the formation of political action committees (e.g., the Moral Majority, the Christian Coalition, the American Family Association, etc.), “think tanks” (e.g., Focus on the Family, the Family Research Council, etc.),<sup>44</sup> educational institutions (e.g., Liberty University, Regent University, etc.), and media outlets (e.g., *Christianity Today*, the Christian Broadcasting Network, etc.). Throughout this period the number of evangelical churches in the United States grew explosively as membership in the more liberal mainline denominations began to decline.<sup>45</sup> By 2016 the number of self-identified evangelical Christians in the United States had risen to 94 million, approximately 27% of the population, making them the single largest religious constituency in the country<sup>46</sup> and, second only to Mormons, the single largest Republican voting bloc.<sup>47</sup> With the support of its capacious and well-funded infrastructure, the Religious Right has skillfully deployed this bloc to lobby for conservative causes and elect untold numbers of conservative candidates to political office. In so doing, it has become one of the most formidable forces in right-wing politics as well as in American cultural and religious life—not by accident, as some have claimed, but by a deliberate design that is coeval with the modern evangelical movement itself.

## **The Christian Right and Capitalist Political Theology**

On the surface the Christian Right's militant commitment to and advocacy of right-wing economic policies appears glaringly out of place in the context of a religious tradition that has historically recognized justice for the poor as one

of its most significant and enduring concerns.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, even a cursory examination of the Bible makes clear that both the Old and the New Testaments place far more emphasis on combating the sins of “injustice and oppression” than “intemperance, unchastity, [or] the sins of the tongue.”<sup>49</sup> This is not to say, of course, that all Christians share the same beliefs regarding wealth and poverty—only that caring for the poor and “the conditions in which they live” has been a recurring point of emphasis in every Christian tradition, including evangelicalism.<sup>50</sup> Also puzzling is the enthusiastic support given to the Christian Right’s free market agenda by its largest constituency, a group that is less educated and more economically underprivileged than the population at large and thus more likely to be directly harmed by it.<sup>51</sup>

Standard accounts of the Christian Right have responded to these and other seeming paradoxes in various ways, the most common of which is to regard it as an aberration that needs to be decoupled both historically and theologically from the broader evangelical tradition whence it emerges, and even from Christianity itself.<sup>52</sup> This is evident, for example, in the aforementioned tendency to claim that the pre-1970s evangelical movement was basically apolitical—or, at the very least, that never espoused anything approaching the Christian Right’s fanatically pro-capitalist positions—in which case the Christian Right is little more than a Johnny-come-lately bastardization of evangelical Christianity.

Even if this is accurate, it remains an open question *how* and *why* the Christian Right came into existence when it did, as well as *how* and *why* it managed to achieve such considerable success since that time. Typical answers to these questions are framed in terms of contingent historical, social, political, and even demographic factors that have nothing to do with theology. Some attempt to situate the Christian Right in the context of the wave of

militant anti-Communism that swept across the United States in response to the tensions of the Cold War. Others portray it as part of a broader political, social, and cultural backlash against the excesses of the 1960s, or as the product of a tactical or pragmatic alliance between evangelical Christians and secular business interests “for the sake of advanc[ing] their own respective agendas.”<sup>53</sup>

Although all such accounts contain grains of truth, they are essentially of a piece with the (vulgar) Marxist account described at the outset in their insistence that the character of the Christian Right, to say nothing of its very existence, is determined solely by external forces. This is a mistake. More than a century ago, Max Weber argued in his landmark study *The Protestant Ethic* that certain iterations of Protestantism—including those that gave rise to evangelicalism—developed unique political theologies that ascribed unprecedented value to the individual and, as such, exhibited a natural affinity with the classical liberal philosophies that encapsulate the capitalist ethos. This helps explain why the modern evangelical movement was not only fervently anti-Communist, but also vociferously and unqualifiedly supportive of free-market capitalism. The latter, after all, was not true of most professing Christians who opposed Communism both during and after the Cold War.

The Roman Catholic Church, for example, repeatedly characterized *laissez-faire* capitalism and capital “C” Communism as different iterations of a single worldview—“materialist humanism”—that denies “the essential transcendence of humanity,” inflicts grave harm upon “individual person[s] and... social purpose,” and run “contrary to the order established by God and... the purpose which He has assigned to earthly goods.”<sup>54</sup> The Church rejected Communism, accordingly, on the same grounds that it rejected capitalism—that is, for failing to acknowledge the sovereignty of God and the dignity of the

human person. Like the Catholic Church, the evangelical movement opposed Communism chiefly on the grounds that it “denies or ignores the existence of the supernatural”—including, obviously, the existence of spiritual saviors; that it “focuses all attention on man, rather than on man’s relation to God”; and that it actively seeks to replace religion with an all-powerful state that seeks to provide a purely temporal form of salvation.<sup>55</sup> In the Church’s case, however, this did not translate to a uniform repudiation of Communism’s “social and economic programmes,” many of which are broadly resonant with Catholic teaching, nor to a uniform acceptance of free-market alternatives.<sup>56</sup> The reason it did in the evangelicals’ case is that their political theology lacks the organicism and social holism characteristic of Catholic social thought, attaching far greater importance to individual freedom and responsibility. That a hyper-individualistic political theology that “weds the gospel of individual conversion to the Lockean social contract”<sup>57</sup> would oppose collectivism and affirm the value of limited government and private property is not in the least surprising.

All of this is by way of saying that the Christian Right wasn’t born out of a capitalist conspiracy to hijack an otherwise benign religious movement. On the contrary, the reason it exists and has the particular character it does is because it developed from a religious tradition that has always had “an intellectual affinity [with]... the American brand of right-wing politics.”<sup>58</sup> It is, accordingly, a logical extension of, rather than a deviation from, the political theology of American evangelical Christianity—a political theology that, even though it coincides with and actively abets capitalism and its allies, is independent of and undetermined by them.

This suggests that a distinction must be drawn between otherwise diverse ideologies whose political, social, and economic values happen to coincide, and the various ways

these ideologies intersect and interact with one another. As some have noted, the Christian Right lends considerable financial and political support to political parties and business interests that harm poor and working class people through their policies. It also provides the kind of false consciousness that serves as a spiritual rationalization for such policies and ensures the acquiescence of their victims. In the Marxist formulation, this would suggest that the Christian Right is simply a component of the ideological superstructure and, as such, operates solely for the sake of maintaining the capitalist system and not for its own ends. As such, its activity is entirely heteronomous and its role in reproducing the capitalist mode of production is only indirect. As I argued above, this is not an accurate reflection of the Christian Right's motives and activities. Although its values coincide with those of all other ideologies that play a role in reproducing capitalism, they are not strictly identical to or dependent on the values of capitalism itself. Indeed, the only intrinsically valuable end that capitalism recognizes is its own reproduction; all other ends are only valued as means. The mere fact that the Christian Right's activities are conducive to this end does not imply that they are carried solely or even principally for its sake. It values the reproduction of capitalism, but only as a means to attaining independently existing values derived from its political theology.

When the Christian Right oppresses the poor, therefore, it is not doing so "indirectly." It is not merely facilitating or providing the conditions of possibility for some sort of "genuine" capitalist oppression, nor is it merely serving as a proxy. This is true, again, even if the reproduction of capitalism is a consequence of its activities. The poor, like many marginal and disempowered groups, are victims of several different kinds of oppressive structures that prey upon them for different reasons. In practice this combined onslaught may appear as a single oppressive effect, but this

doesn't mean that the effect in question is precipitated by a single cause. Whatever else one can say about the "true believers," they are not acting solely for the sake of reproducing capitalism; by their own lights, they are acting pursuant to religious values. If they are exploiting poor people in the process, they are not doing so *merely* out of self-interest or a desire to generate profit—they are merely following what they take to be the will of God.

## Endnotes

- 1 Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *Property Is Theft! A Pierre-Joseph Proudhon Anthology*, Iain McKay, ed. (Oakland: AK Press, 2011), 356.
- 2 Wilhelm Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, ed. Mary Higgins and Chester Raphael (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1970), 19.
- 3 See Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, trans. N.I. Stone (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Company, 1904), 11.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 John Plamenatz, *Ideology* (London: Macmillan, 1971), 24.
- 6 Raymond Belliotti, *Power: Oppression, Subservience, and Resistance* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2016), 16.
- 7 Michael Rosen, *On Voluntary Servitude: False Consciousness and the Theory of Ideology* (London: Polity Press, 1996), 1.
- 8 Israella Silberman, "Religions as a Meaning System: Implications for the New Millennium," *Journal of Social Issues* 61:4 (2005), 641-663: 644.
- 9 Jo-Ann Tsang, et al., "Psychometric and Rationalization Accounts of the Religion-Forgiveness Discrepancy," *Journal of Social Issues* 61:4 (2005), 785-805: 789. Emphasis mine.
- 10 Karl Marx, "A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction," in *Early Political Writings*, ed. Joseph O'Malley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 57-70.
- 11 Ibid., 57-70.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Malcolm Hamilton, *The Sociology of Religion: Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2012), 88.
- 14 Benjamin Lynerd, *Republican Theology: The Civil Religion of American Evangelicals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 35.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Aaron Haberman, "The Christian Right," in *Religion and Politics in America*, ed. Frank Smith (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing, 2016), 146-151: 146.
- 17 Lynne Arnault, "Praying for a Godly Fumigation: Disgust and the New Religious Right," in *Global Feminist Ethics*, ed. Rebecca Whisnant and Peggy DesAutels (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), 217-242: 220.
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- 20 M.A. Noll, et al., eds., *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700–1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 6.
- 21 David Bebbington, “Enlightenment and Revival in Eighteenth-Century England,” in *Modern Christian Revivals*, ed. Edith Blumhofer and Randall Balmer (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 17–41: 21.
- 22 Candy Brown and Mark Silk, eds., *The Future of Evangelicalism in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 6.
- 23 George Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1993), 5.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Brown and Silk, 6.
- 26 Matthew Sutton, *American Apocalypse: A History of Modern Evangelicalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 3, x.
- 27 Ibid., 14.
- 28 Marsden, 72.
- 29 Bruce Schulman and Julian Zelizer, *Rightward Bound: Making America Conservative in the 1970s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 32.
- 30 Marsden, 73–74.
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Schulman and Zelizer, 33.
- 34 See Lynerd, especially chapters 1 and 2.
- 35 For a detailed history of this relationship, see Kevin Kruse, *One Nation Under God: How Corporate America Invented Christian America* (New York: Basic Books, 2015).
- 36 Ibid., 7.
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Ibid.
- 41 Marsden, 74.
- 42 Ibid.
- 43 Neil Young, *We Gather Together: The Religious Right and the Problem of Interfaith Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 3.
- 44 Michael Katz, *The Price of Citizenship* (New York: Macmillan, 2002), 21.
- 45 Ibid.
- 46 Available online: <http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/religious-tradition/evangelical-protestant/>.
- 47 Available online: <http://www.people-press.org/2015/04/07/a-deep-dive-into-party-affiliation/>.
- 48 Schulman and Zelizer, 2.
- 49 Lynerd, 150.
- 50 Berend DeVries, *Champions of the Poor: The Economic Consequences of*

*Judeo-Christian Values* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1998), 5.

51 According to the Pew Religious Forum, 35% of self-identified evangelical Christians earn household incomes of less than \$30,000 per year and only 14 percent hold college degrees. See <http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/religious-tradition/evangelical-protestant/>.

52 See, for example, Gregory Boyd, *The Myth of a Christian Nation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005); Jim Wallis, *God's Politics: Why the Right Gets it Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It* (New York: HarperOne, 2005).

53 Lynerd, 5.

54 Edward Norman, *The Roman Catholic Church* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), 171-172.

55 Richard Pierard, *The Unequal Yoke: Evangelical Christianity and Political Conservatism* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1970), 100.

56 Indeed, the Liberation Theology movement of the 1960s articulated its message of radical social and economic justice in explicitly Marxist language. As Norman notes, liberation theology "grew out of sympathy for working-class movements in the cities of Latin America, and for racial equality in South Africa" and sought to identify the Christian Gospel with the political aspirations of the oppressed classes" (174).

57 Lynerd, 35.

58 *Ibid.*, 18.