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Christian Conservatism: A Study in Alienation and Life Style Concerns*

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Introduction

One of the most discernible features of the 1980 presidential and 1982 congressional elections was the intense campaign effort conducted by a number of religious-political organizations. The loose alliance of these various organizations has come to be referred to as the New Christian Right. The movement was armed with a "hit list" of liberal candidates, "moral report cards," and "Christian political action manuals." The goal was to mobilize Evangelicals into a potent political force. The spokesmen of the various New Christian Right Organizations endorsed "Christian candidates" and "Christian issue positions," and took credit for the defeat of many well-known liberals and the election of conservative candidates, in the 1980 elections. However, more recent scholarly analysis of the 1980 election returns has cast some doubts on the true impact of the electoral activities of the New Christian Right.¹

The activity of the New Christian Right appears to be more than just a passing phenomena to the extent that the potential may be there to mobilize the natural constituency of Evangelicals and born-again Christians in the population. A national poll by George Gallup in 1981 found that 38% of the respondents in the sample identified themselves as born-again Christians. Nineteen percent of the respondents were classified as Evangelicals. The strength of the movement lies primarily in the Southern and border states.²

The increasing scholarly interest in the study of the New Christian Right is reflected in the growing body of literature on this topic. Thus far, a substantial number of works have appeared which describe the political perspectives and goals of these New Christian Right organizations.³ While such works have increased our knowledge about the New Christian Right organizations, research which empirically explores the orientation and values of the New Christian Right's target population still remains scarce.⁴

The emergence of the New Christian Right is not unique to the extent that such "left" and "right" groups have emerged before on the American political horizons. In fact, right-wing religion in particular has been a permanent feature of the American political scene. Social scientists have studied such movements from a variety of perspectives and have provided many theoretical models to explain their rise and fall. Two of these models are the alienation model and the life style concerns model.

This article is based on an empirical study of Evangelicals (The New Christian Right's target population) from four counties selected from different areas of Southern Missouri. The attitudes of Evangelical and non-evangelical respondents are compared in order to determine if the alienation and/or life style concerns model provide satisfactory explanations of the rise of Christian conservatism as a political movement.

Analytic Framework

The argument that a society based upon the rational division of labor tends to produce irrational and alienated individuals is a persistent theme in 20th Century social and political theory.⁵ Traditional societies, i.e., those not based on modern schemes of divided labor, tend to provide more security and support for the individual as he/she passes through life. In modern industrial societies most individuals are employed by large organizations and live in impersonal urban settings. This latter life style does not provide the feelings of support and belonging that traditional society furnished for the individual and tends to produce alienated and anomic individuals. Alienated individuals are those who feel that their vote doesn't count and that "they" really run things no matter what actions one takes as an individual. This feeling is associated with dissatisfaction and lack of trust in major American institutions.

Reinforcing this alienation model are the psychological concepts employed by Erich Fromm⁶ to attempt to explain the rise of Nazism in Germany and the Authoritarian Personality Construct of T. W. Adorno.⁷ Both of these explanatory concepts of the phenomenon of mass movements were developed after World War II. In 1955 the Alienation Model was used by Richard Hofstadter, S. M. Lipset, and Daniel Bell⁸ to explain the rise of Senator Joe McCarthy and right wing extremism in the United States in the 1950's. Their conclusion was that McCarthy's supporters tended to be highly disillusioned and dissatisfied with the American political system. Moreover, McCarthy's followers were "anomic individuals" who appeared to be projecting their own personal psychological problems into the public sector. Hofstadter has linked the irrational behavior of the radical right to Protestant fundamentalism.⁹

While political alienation has been identified recently as a general characteristic of the American public,¹⁰ it appears to be most acute among distinct population subgroups such as blacks and young people.¹¹ It has been suggested that this decade is marked by the emergence of highly alienated religious subgroups commonly referred to as an "Evangelical" movement. Thus, for example, in reference to Jerry Falwell and other leaders of the moral majority and the New Christian Right, Richard Neuhaus argues that:

They are capitalizing in a deep resentment. They and their followers believe that in the past they have been excluded from and despised by the leadership elites in American life. They feel this way because in fact they have been excluded and despised. Fundamentalist religion was excluded from respectable circles and made objects of ridicule in the 1920's. Today developments within the Evangelical-fundamentalist world, combined with the growth of the "electronic church," have met with a new

conservative coalition in politics to produce what it believes is a time of opportunity.¹²

A second major model for analyzing political/religious movements was introduced by Max Weber and can be labeled the status politics model. According to Weber "status politics" enables the scholar to conceptually distinguish between groups oriented toward non-material ideals and goals on the one hand, and groups definable primarily in terms of their relation to economic, material forces, on the other. Status groups fall into the first category and can be identified in terms of their common life style.¹³ S. M. Lipset has noted that "The political consequences of status frustrations are very different from those resulting from economic deprivation—for while in economic conflict—the goals are clear—a redistribution of income—in status conflict there are no clear-cut solutions."¹⁴

As an analytical tool status politics has several inherent limitations, most of which have been amply documented.¹⁵ In particular, the assumption that status politics is inherently abnormal, irrational, and interested only in symbolic victories seems unjustifiable. A recasting of this model by Page and Clelland¹⁶ appears to have a greater explanatory power. They argue that life style concern is the proper model to employ in all conflict involving non-economic belief systems. It is possible to look at conflict in non-Marxist (i.e., non-economic) terms and, according to Page and Clelland, symbolic conflict is to be expected from human beings who are "symbolic animals who organize the world in symbolic terms."¹⁷ If a style of life can be maintained only if certain social and moral/religious values are also retained, then those who see their life style threatened by the erosion of old values or the introduction of new ones can be expected to engage in political struggle to maintain their way of life. Moreover, this struggle is not over hollow symbols. The participants may feel that their most cherished values are being threatened and that their only recourse is to enter the public realm. Groups engaged in status politics are not just defending against declining prestige but attempting to defend a style of life.

Methodology

The data for this article were derived from a survey conducted over a period of two weeks during the month of April, 1982. The survey was conducted by telephone using the random digit dialing technique. A list of telephone exchanges was obtained from the local directories of the four counties included in the survey. Random numbers were generated by computer and combined with the exchange prefix. Three call-backs were made at different times to locate respondents who did not answer the telephone. The random digit dialing technique eliminated the problem of unlisted telephone numbers and new telephone subscribers not listed in the telephone directory.

Our survey sample consisted of persons 18 years and older residing in four counties in Southern Missouri—Greene, Vernon, Scott and Cape Girardeau. The number of respondents from each county was allocated in approximate proportion to the population of counties. All four counties fall within the so-called "Bible Belt."

Using Hunter's proposal for operationalizing Evangelicalism,¹⁸ we classified as Evangelical only those respondents who agreed with all three of the following statements: "Jesus is a divine being and not merely a great

historical personage," "the Bible is absolutely true and inerrant," and "salvation is by faith alone." Those who agreed to none or only one or two of these statements were categorized as non-evangelical. Fifty-three percent of those sampled were identified as Evangelical.¹⁹

Three hundred and six respondents were interviewed, representing a response rate of 80%. Almost all of the questions in the questionnaire were closed-ended. Of our sample, 51% of the respondents were from conservative Protestant denominations and 26% from liberal Protestant denominations.²⁰ Of the remainder, 8% were Roman Catholic, 3% Mormons, 6% listed other religions, while another 6% refused to disclose their religious preference.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Demographic Characteristics of Evangelicals and Non-evangelicals Compared

Our data indicate that there is a slight tendency for Evangelical attitudes to increase as age increases while this is not the case with non-evangelicals. Evangelicals tend to be found predominantly in the 36-45 age group (14.7%) and the over 65 group (20.2%), ($X^2 = p < .002$, Cramer's $V = .24$).

Since women are often found in greater proportions than men in church related activity, it was assumed that more women would be identified as Evangelical than men. Sixty percent of the Evangelicals were women, a slightly higher percentage than is the case with non-evangelicals (56%). Similarly, since Evangelicals tend to be more conservative (as that term is conventionally defined), and since the Republican party tends to be the more conservative of the two major parties, one could expect Evangelicals to more readily identify with Republicans than with the Democratic party. However, our data does not confirm this. While 58% of the Republicans identified themselves as Evangelical as compared to 53% of the Democrats, this is not a statistically significant difference.

As education increases Evangelical attitudes tend to decrease. A majority, 53.4%, of the Evangelicals have a high school education or less while a majority, 51.1%, of the non-evangelicals have some college or a college degree. This is statistically significant ($X^2 = p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .23$).

In regard to church attendance and preferred religious denominations significant differences appear between Evangelicals and non-evangelicals. Sixty-nine percent of Evangelicals are concentrated in conservative Protestant denominations, while only 31.2% of non-evangelicals attend conservative Protestant churches ($X^2 = p < .001$; Cramer's $V = .40$). Seventy-three percent of Evangelicals attend church three times a month or more while only 44.6% of the non-evangelicals do so ($X^2 = p < .001$; Cramer's $V = .34$).

Evangelicals also place a much higher value on the role of religion in their daily lives than do non-evangelicals. Seventy-five percent of the Evangelicals felt that religion is very important in their lives while only 50.8% of the non-evangelicals expressed the same feeling ($X^2 = P < .001$; Cramer's $V = .29$).

The rise of the electronic preacher, with his attendant religious messages with a highly political content, has raised the spectre (to some) of a mobilized religious-political army of Evangelicals causing a political "revolution" in the United States. In order to have any influence at all

someone must be receiving these messages from the electronic church. Our data reveal that Evangelicals are much more likely to watch religious oriented programs on television than are non-evangelicals. Forty-two percent of the non-evangelicals never watch religious programs on television while only 22.4% of the Evangelicals reported never watching religious-oriented television productions ($X^2 = P < .001$; Cramer's $V = .29$). This would seem to indicate that there is a potential Evangelical constituency for a candidate or candidates who could address public policy issues in a manner appealing to the Evangelicals.

Evangelicals tend to be drawn from different types of occupations than non-evangelicals. A greater percentage of Evangelicals are either classified as retired or perform unskilled labor than is the case with non-evangelicals ($X^2 = p < .003$; Cramer's $V = .26$). Non-evangelicals tend to be more heavily clustered in the skilled labor, clerical and sales categories compared to the Evangelicals. In short, those demographic characteristics which clearly separate Evangelicals from non-evangelicals appear to be educational level, church attendance, religious denomination, perceived importance of religion in daily life, the extent to which religious television programs are viewed, age and occupation.

Our findings are consistent with Gallup's findings²¹ that Evangelicals include more women, more persons with grade school education and more unskilled laborers. Our research also suggests that Evangelicals tend to be concentrated among the conservative Protestant denominations. The potential mass constituency for Christian conservatism is predominantly among lower and working class persons.

FINDINGS

Alienation Model

To test the explanatory power of the alienation model we asked a series of questions regarding trust in major institutions in American society. Many of the general and specific trust items that have been employed in our study were obtained from Hill and Luttbeg.²² The alienation model hypothesizes that the rise of radical right or Christian conservatism movements, such as the Evangelical movement, is due to significant dissatisfaction with the major institutions of American society. Moreover, this dissatisfaction should be markedly greater than that found among those not belonging to the Evangelical subgroup. If such were the case Evangelical respondents in our sample should show significantly higher levels of alienation than non-evangelical respondents. What does the data reveal?²³

Respondents were asked a series of general questions regarding trust in government. When asked if they trusted the government, "always", "most of the time", or "only some of the time", a majority in both groups reported that they trusted the government only some of the time. The percentage difference between Evangelicals (60.4%) and non-evangelicals (58.2%) was small and statistically not significant. Other items designed to tap trust include the subject of interest group power and the ethical nature of public officials. In response to the question "In whose interest is the government run—for the benefit of all or for a few big interests?" Evangelicals turn out to be somewhat cynical but no more so than the non-evangelicals. Fifty-eight percent of both groups responded that they believed

government (federal) favored "a few big interests" and did not rule in the common interest. A larger percentage of Evangelicals (51%) thought that there were "quite a few" crooks in the government while only 40.6% of the non-evangelicals were willing to so classify elected officials and presumably, career civil servants. This is still not a significant difference, however. Evangelicals seem to entertain a generally jaundiced view of government and politics which may be a measure of the predominant attitudes of Americans at most times but particularly true during the Reagan era.

TABLE 1: LEVEL OF TRUST IN THE MAJOR GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS OF THE UNITED STATES

TRUST IN	EVANGELICAL			NON-EVANGELICAL			N =
	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	
Congress ^a	27 (16.8%)	94 (58.4%)	40 (24.8%)	23 (16.2%)	76 (53.5%)	43 (30.3%)	303
U.S. Supreme Court ^b	61 (39.1%)	66 (42.3%)	29 (18.6%)	64 (45.4%)	57 (40.4%)	20 (14.2%)	297
U.S. Presidency ^c	74 (45.7%)	49 (30.2%)	39 (24.1%)	54 (38.0%)	50 (35.2%)	38 (26.8%)	304
State Government ^d	43 (26.9%)	87 (54.4%)	30 (18.8%)	28 (19.9%)	88 (62.4%)	25 (17.7%)	301
Local Government ^e	46 (28.8%)	75 (46.9%)	39 (24.4%)	30 (21.3%)	79 (56.0%)	32 (22.7%)	301

NOTE: All the "Don't Knows" and "No Answers" have been excluded from this Table.

a $X^2 = P < .5634$; Cramer's $V = .06$

b $X^2 = P < .4426$; Cramer's $V = .07$

c $X^2 = P < .3985$; Cramer's $V = .07$

d $X^2 = P < .2953$; Cramer's $V = .09$

e $X^2 = P < .2259$; Cramer's $V = .09$

When these statements were broken down into specific governmental institutions, no statistically significant differences appear either. Respondents were asked if they had high trust, medium trust, or low trust in the U.S. President, the U.S. Supreme Court and the U.S. Congress. A sizeable percent of our respondents show a high degree of trust in the U.S. Supreme Court. Thirty-nine percent of the Evangelicals and 45.5% of the non-evangelicals indicated high trust in this institution while 42.3% of Evangelicals and 40.4% of non-evangelicals demonstrated a medium level of trust. Since the Supreme Court has handed down abortion, prayer, and Bible reading decisions that have been almost universally decried by Evangelicals, it is surprising to find such a significant degree of trust in the institution itself.

Similarly, the U.S. Presidency enjoys a high degree of trust from all respondents. Forty-six percent of Evangelicals express high trust in the President while 38% of the non-evangelicals do so. Also 30.2% of Evangelicals and 35.2% of non-evangelicals revealed medium trust. Our data hardly indicate a lack of trust and alienation and the difference between the two groups is not statistically significant. The last national institution examined for trust, the U.S. Congress, did not fare as well among our respondents. Only 16.8% of the Evangelicals and 16.2% of the non-evangelicals expressed high trust in Congress. Again both groups seem to be about equally unimpressed with the institution. Congress fared even less well than lawyers in terms of high public trust and barely held its own with organized labor! Such findings should not, however, be misconstrued to suggest a terribly low level of trust in the legislative branch, as 58.4% of Evangelicals and 53.5% of non-evangelicals responded that they do have a "medium" level of trust in this institution.

State government evoked a slightly higher degree of trust than Con-

gress with 27% of the Evangelicals and 20% of the non-evangelicals expressing high trust in those institutions. Fifty-four percent of Evangelicals and 62.4% of non-evangelicals expressed a medium level of trust. Again, we find no significant difference between Evangelicals and non-evangelicals in regard to their trust in state government. Local government does not fare significantly better than did state government. Twenty-nine percent of the Evangelicals and 21% of the non-evangelicals reported high trust in their local officials. No significant differences appear between the two groups.

The same general lack of *high* trust towards institutions of American government is also found in the major institutions of American society and again, there are few differences found between Evangelicals and non-evangelicals in this regard. One exception lies in feelings of high trust towards major business corporations in the United States. More non-evangelicals (27%) have high trust in major corporations than do Evangelicals (16.3%) – ($X^2 = p < .06$; Cramer's $V = .13$). Exactly why this is the case is puzzling unless it is due to the fact many Evangelicals come from working class backgrounds rather than a professional background.

TABLE 2: LEVEL OF TRUST IN THE MAJOR INSTITUTIONS OF THE UNITED STATES

TRUST IN	EVANGELICAL			NON-EVANGELICAL			N =
	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	
Major Corporations ^a	26 (16.3%)	94 (58.8%)	40 (25.0%)	38 (27.0%)	69 (48.9%)	34 (24.1%)	301
Organized Religion ^b	57 (36.3%)	77 (49.0%)	23 (14.6%)	33 (23.4%)	59 (41.8%)	49 (34.8%)	298
Organized Labor ^c	25 (15.7%)	69 (43.4%)	65 (40.9%)	23 (16.2%)	55 (38.7%)	64 (45.1%)	301
Universities and Colleges ^d	70 (45.2%)	71 (45.8%)	14 (9.0%)	70 (50.0%)	58 (41.4%)	12 (8.6%)	295
The Press and T.V. News ^e	46 (28.6%)	60 (37.3%)	55 (34.2%)	38 (27.0%)	64 (45.4%)	39 (27.7%)	302
Doctors ^f	68 (42.0%)	69 (42.6%)	25 (15.4%)	65 (45.8%)	53 (37.3%)	24 (16.9%)	304
Lawyers ^g	34 (21.3%)	86 (53.8%)	40 (25.0%)	31 (21.8%)	70 (49.3%)	41 (28.9%)	302
Public School Teachers ^h	81 (50.3%)	69 (42.9%)	11 (6.8%)	75 (52.8%)	44 (31.0%)	23 (16.2%)	303

NOTE: All the "Don't Knows" and "No Answers" have been excluded from this Table.

a $X^2 = P < .0674$; Cramer's $V = .13$

b $X^2 = P < .0002$; Cramer's $V = .24$

c $X^2 = P < .6998$; Cramer's $V = .04$

d $X^2 = P < .7036$; Cramer's $V = .04$

e $X^2 = P < .3166$; Cramer's $V = .08$

f $X^2 = P < .6458$; Cramer's $V = .05$

g $X^2 = P < .6971$; Cramer's $V = .04$

h $X^2 = P < .0120$; Cramer's $V = .17$

A second major difference in degree of trust towards a major institution in American society comes, not surprisingly, in the case of organized religion. Non-evangelicals generally have low (35%) or medium (42%) trust in organized religion. Only 23% of them express high trust in American religious institutions. In contrast, only 15% of the Evangelicals express low trust in organized religion while 49% express medium trust and 36% say they have high trust in organized religion. The differences are also statistically significant ($X^2 = p < .002$).

Relatively few respondents had high trust in organized labor with Evangelicals reporting only 15.7% high trust and non-evangelicals 16.2%. Large percentages indicated low trust towards organized labor in both groups. Forty-one percent of Evangelicals and 45% of non-evangelicals reported low trust here. This is not statistically significant.

One might anticipate that Evangelical groups would have lower trust in television news and the print media since much of what is reported there could be interpreted as threatening to Evangelical values. However, while neither group had very high trust in the press or TV news, there were no significant differences here either. Twenty-seven percent of the non-evangelicals and 28.6% of the Evangelicals expressed high trust in press and television news while about the same percentages expressed low trust.

An intriguing question is how Evangelical groups, as well as the general public, respond to American colleges and universities as a whole. Are our institutions of higher education hotbeds of atheism and secular humanism or are they trustworthy institutions? Apparently they are not as great a source of concern as some "electronic preachers" would have us believe. Forty-five percent of the Evangelicals expressed high trust in colleges and universities while 50% of the non-evangelicals did so. This is not a significant difference between the two groups.

A surprising discovery occurs when we turn to degree of trust in public school teachers. Given the controversy over public prayer and Bible reading in the public schools one would expect to find low trust among Evangelicals in our public school teachers but a higher degree of trust among non-evangelicals. This turns out not to be the case since both groups have a high degree of trust in public school teachers ($X^2 = p < .01$; Cramer's $V = .17$). A possible explanation for this is that Evangelicals have confidence in public school teachers and do not blame them personally for the national policies which they are required to carry out. Since the Supreme Court enjoys high trust from both groups of respondents, it would appear to be the specific decisions which are disliked rather than the institution itself. The non-evangelical attitude may reflect more of a lack of confidence in the competency of public school teachers. Our data cannot fully explain the reasons for this finding so we can only speculate as to the reason for it.

Finally, our respondents did not differ significantly in the degree of trust they express in attorneys and physicians. While physicians enjoy relatively high trust among both groups of respondents, lawyers always receive only medium to low trust. This may be due to the association of physicians with modern "miracle cures" while attorneys are more identified with lawsuits and rules and regulations.

Overall, the data on alienation in this study do reveal a substantial degree of alienation and distrust among our respondents towards the government and other major American institutions. However, the data do not reveal significant differences between Evangelicals and non-evangelicals in these areas. On the basis of our sample the rise of the Evangelical movement cannot be explained as a product of alienation from the major institutions of American society.

Political Involvement

An additional test of the alienation model is the extent to which Evangelicals and non-evangelicals differ with respect to political involvement. While our examination in this area is not inclusive, we do feel the data provide some useful insights. Evangelicals do not appear to be opting out of the political system by any means. Seventy-eight percent of them identify with one of the two major parties (only 27% classify themselves as Independent and 4% refused to answer). In fact, fewer Evangelicals iden-

tify themselves as Independent than is the case with non-evangelicals, as 32% of the latter group fit this category. What is surprising is the fact that Evangelicals have remained firmly attached to this two-party system despite the systematic castigation of policy makers in both parties by the supposed "spokesmen" of the Evangelical constituency. We feel the strength of party identification among Evangelicals may be partially attributed to the age of this subgroup, as Evangelicals are found in the 36-45 and over 65 age group. Research on partisanship demonstrates that Independents are more likely to be found among young rather than middle aged or older voters; the latter cohorts having acquired a party affiliation prior to the era of partisan atrophy.²⁴

One of the foremost problems allegedly facing Evangelical leaders hoping to have a major impact on the domestic political system has been the low voter turnout traditionally associated with Evangelical constituents. However, our data indicate that 86.4% of the Evangelicals are registered to vote and only 14% are not. In contrast, 76.8% of the non-evangelicals are registered to vote and 23.2% are unregistered. Since one must be registered in most voting districts in order to vote, this must be an encouraging statistic to Evangelical leaders. In any case, we simply do not find that Evangelicals are so alienated or feel so politically inefficacious as to have ceased total participation in the political system.

Life Style Concerns Model

Page and Clelland in their study of the Kanawha County textbook controversy have argued that the politics of life style concerns is the master concept which should be applied to all struggles involving noneconomic belief systems.²⁵ According to the life style concern model, conflict among groups over noneconomic issues should be interpreted not as an attempt to defend against declining prestige but as an attempt to defend a way of life, and to control the means of production of life styles.

Jerry Falwell and other fellow preachers of the New Christian Right have endorsed "Christian issue positions," meaning morally based legislation and policies and a public commitment to religious faith. Recent public policies in the areas of ERA, prayers in public schools and abortion are described as antithetical to Biblical principles and evidence of declining Christian values, decency and morality from public life style. They have argued in favor of a constitutional ban on abortion, the death penalty, prayers in public schools, censorship of books in public libraries, and have opposed the ERA, sex education in public schools and the distribution of "pornographic" material including "X-rated movies".

To test the life style concerns model, we selected issues that the leaders of the New Christian Right have articulated. We would hypothesize that the Evangelical respondents would show more conservative attitudes in these issues reflecting their concerns over life style than would be the case with the non-evangelical respondents.

TABLE 3: POLICY PREFERENCES OF THE EVANGELICAL AND NON-EVANGELICAL RESPONDENTS

ISSUE	EVANGELICAL		NON-EVANGELICAL		N =
	FAVOR	OPPOSE	FAVOR	OPPOSE	
Constitutional Ban on Abortion ^a	88 (60.3%)	58 (39.7%)	36 (27.7%)	94 (72.3%)	276
ERA ^b	53 (37.6%)	88 (62.4%)	55 (46.6%)	63 (53.4%)	259
Death Penalty ^c	113 (77.4%)	33 (22.6%)	85 (65.4%)	45 (34.6%)	276
Sex Education in Schools ^d	90 (57.0%)	68 (43.0%)	117 (84.2%)	22 (15.8%)	297
Constitutional Amendment to permit Prayers in Public Schools ^e	131 (82.9%)	27 (17.1%)	70 (56.0%)	55 (44.0%)	283
Prohibit Distribution of X-Rated Movies ^f	114 (72.6%)	43 (27.4%)	51 (38.9%)	80 (61.1%)	288
Censorship of Books from Public Library ^g	75 (43.9%)	81 (49.4%)	24 (17.3%)	109 (78.4%)	289

NOTE: All the "Don't Knows" and "No Answers" have been excluded from this Table.

a $X^2 = P < .0001$; Phi = .33

b $X^2 = P < .1803$; Phi = .09

c $X^2 = P < .0377$; Phi = .13

d $X^2 = P < .0001$; Phi = .30

e $X^2 = P < .0001$; Phi = .29

f $X^2 = P < .0001$; Phi = .34

g $X^2 = P < .0001$; Gamma = -.56

One of the major political issues in American politics today turns on the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision which legalized abortion for women during the first tri-mester of pregnancy and even during the second tri-mester under certain circumstances. Members of the "Right-to-Life" movement (which includes, among others, such diverse groups as Roman Catholics and Baptists) have supported a federal constitutional amendment which would have the effect of overturning *Roe v. Wade* and prohibiting all abortions save under extraordinary circumstances. This proposed amendment has relatively little support among non-evangelicals. Only 27.7% of the latter favor such a constitutional ban. In contrast, persons identified as Evangelicals overwhelmingly support such a ban. Over 60% of Evangelicals support the proposal ($X^2 = p < .0001$; Phi = .33) - (See Table 3).

Another proposed constitutional amendment which receives strong support from Evangelicals is that which would permit prayer and Bible reading in public schools. Eighty-three percent of Evangelicals are in favor of it while only 56% of the non-evangelicals express a similar opinion ($X^2 = p < .0001$; Phi = .29). Those categorized as Evangelical do not favor the ERA and they are not significantly different in this regard from the non-evangelical. Perhaps this indicates the effectiveness of the campaign waged by opponents of the ERA that at the present time majorities in both groups are opposed to the measure. Thirty-eight percent of Evangelicals favored the ERA and 46.6% of the non-evangelicals did so.

The rightness or justice of the death penalty continues to be a controversial question in America and we asked our respondents their opinion on this question. The New Testament injunction "judge not lest ye be judged"²⁶ might suggest an aversion to such a harsh penalty.

However, the Hebraic injunction "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" or the call for swift and certain punishment seems to appeal to Evangelicals more than the New Testament message. Evangelicals were overwhelmingly in favor of the death penalty for serious crimes. Over 77% favored it. In contrast, only 65.4% of the non-evangelicals did so ($X^2 = p < .03$; Phi = .13). It would appear that the death penalty is popular among both groups but more popular among the Evangelicals.

Sex education is another issue that has long been a target of conservative religious and political groups who attack such programs in the public schools on the grounds that they are transmitting improper values, values which should properly be taught at home. Those taking the opposite point of view have countered with the arguments that venereal disease, teen-age pregnancies, and other undesirable social problems exist precisely because parents did not teach sex education in the home. A majority among both Evangelicals and non-evangelicals favor sex education but a statistically significant difference appears between the two groups. Fifty-seven percent of the Evangelicals favor sex education, but a huge majority, 84.2% of the non-evangelicals favor it ($X^2 = p < .001$; $\Phi = < .29$).

Pornography has long been a matter of concern among conservative religious groups. While pornography is not synonymous with x-rated films, a number of Evangelicals see it as a social problem. When asked if x-rated movies constitute a moral problem for their communities and should they be banned, 72.6% of the Evangelicals wished to do so. A majority of non-evangelicals did not regard x-rated films as a community problem at all. Only 38.9% of the non-evangelicals would ban x-rated films ($X^2 = p < .0001$; $\Phi = .34$).

Apparently Evangelicals are much more willing to approve of removing books from public libraries which they find morally objectionable than are non-evangelicals. Forty-four percent of the Evangelicals said that books with objectionable passages should be removed from libraries while only 17% of the non-evangelicals thought so. Seventy-eight percent of the non-evangelicals disagreed with removing books from libraries and 49.4% of the Evangelicals did so. A significant difference does exist between the two groups ($X^2 = p < .0001$; Cramer's $V = .30$).

In summary, our data does provide support for the life style concerns model. Evangelical respondents do indeed take a significantly more conservative position on life style issues than do non-evangelicals. However, it should be noted that Evangelical respondents do not constitute a monolithic group. On issues such as sex education in public schools and censorship of books from public libraries, Evangelical respondents do show some liberal tendencies, though relative to the non-evangelical respondents, they emerge as more conservative on both of these issues. The life style concerns model provides a conceptually meaningful framework for understanding the issue positions of the New Christian Right leaders and their followers. The politics of life style concerns involves individuals who have definite, expressed policy goals. Their political activity is for all practical purposes indistinguishable from that engaged in by economic interest groups pursuing economic goals through political channels.

Conclusions

The Evangelicals identified in our sample do not fit into the mold provided by the classic alienation model. Evangelicals, while reflecting considerable trust in a few institutions, also display a sizeable amount of general alienation, especially toward government and politicians. However, compared to the non-evangelical population, little difference exists between the two groups. The similarity in attitudes suggests that Evangelicals do not constitute a uniquely alienated subgroup.

When trust in specific governmental and social institutions was ex-

plored, a lower level of alienation was discovered among both populations. This is somewhat perplexing, as one must wonder why the respondents are alienated from government in general, but not the component parts of this structure. Perhaps this is due to the fact that government in the general sense is somewhat intangible, and therefore less worthy of trust and confidence while individual institutions are more readily identifiable. It appears to be the individuals holding governmental positions and the policies they espouse that Evangelicals find unacceptable.

It is the second model tested, the life style concerns model, that is most fruitful in explaining the Evangelical or New Christian Right phenomena. Our data does show significant differences between the Evangelical and non-evangelical respondents in regard to life style issues. Evangelicals consistently take a more conservative stand on these matters than do non-evangelicals. Moreover, Evangelical respondents reflect concerns with those issues that have been articulated by the leaders of the New Christian Right, persons such as Jerry Falwell, James Robinson and others, who urge their followers to defeat the "Humanists" and elect individuals who will put "Christian values" into public policies.

Evangelicals do indeed appear to be defending a style of life through the electoral process. In this sense it is noteworthy that they are behaving much like conventional economic interest groups, using the political process to achieve their goals, although, clearly life style goals are different in nature from economic ones. It is dissatisfaction with public policies affecting individual life style concerns which has motivated Evangelical political activity rather than alienation from major institutions in American society. Life style concerns appear to be the major issue over which a potential constituency can be mobilized. Whether this potential translates into a successful political movement is another issue.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹Seymore Lipset and Earl Raab, "The Election and the Evangelicals," in Herbert Vetter, Ed., *Speak Out Against the New Right* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1982), 60-71.
- ²George Gallup, "Divining the Devout: The Polls and Religious Belief," *Public Opinion* 4 (April/May, 1981), 20-21.
- ³See e.g., Peggy Shriver, "A 'Briefing' On the Right Wing: An Analytical Compilation of Resources," (New York: National Council of Churches, 1978); Thomas McIntyre, *The Fear Brokers* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979); Alan Crawford, *Thunder on the Right* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980); Robert Whitaker, ed., *The New Right Papers* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982); Vetter, *Op. Cit.*, Passim.
- ⁴*Richard Quebedeaux, The Worldly Evangelicals* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978); Louise Lorentzen, "Evangelical Life Style Concerns Expressed in Political Action," *Sociological Analysis*, 41 (Summer, 1980) 144-154; George Gallup, *Op. Cit.*; Irwin Penfield and Natalie Davis, "The Religious Right: A Southern Phenomenon?" Paper presented at the 1982 Annual Meeting of the Southern Political Science Association, Memphis, TN; Kant Patel and Gary Rose, "Youth, Political Participation and Alienation: A Case Study of College Students in the Bible Belt," *Youth and Society* 13 (September, 1981), 57-75; Kant Patel, Denny Pilant and Gary Rose, "Born-Again Christians in the Bible Belt: A Study in Religion, Politics and Ideology," *American Politics Quarterly*, 10 (April, 1982), 255-272.
- ⁵Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor In Society* (Illinois: Free Press, 1933).
- ⁶Eric Fromm, *Escape From Freedom* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1941).
- ⁷Theodor W. Adorno, *The Authoritarian Personality*, (New York: Harper, 1950).
- ⁸Daniel Bell, Ed., *The New American Right* (New York: Criterion Books, 1955).
- ⁹Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays*, (New York: Knopf, 1965).
- ¹⁰See E. G., Ada Finifter, "Dimensions of Political Alienation," *American Political Science Review*, 64 (June, 1970) 389-410; David C. Schwartz, *Political Alienation and Political Behavior* (Chicago: Aldine, 1973); W. Watts and L. A. Free, *State of the Nation*, (New York: Universe Books, 1973); Arthur Miller, "Political Issues and Trust in Government: 1964-1970," *American Political Science Review*, 68 (September, 1974), 951-972; Arthur Miller, "Rejoinder To 'Comment' by Jack Citrin: Political Discontent or Ritualism," *American Political Science Review* 68 (September, 1974), 989-1001; Jack Citrin, et. al.; "Personal and Political Sources of Political Alienation," *British Journal of Political Science*, 5 (January, 1975), 1-32; William Flanigan and Nancy Zingale, *Political Behavior of the American Electorate* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1975); Edward Mueller and Thomas J. Jukan, "On The Meaning of Political Support," *American Political Science Review* 71 (December, 1977), 1561-1595; David Hill and Norman Luttbeg, *Trends in American Electoral Behavior* (Itasca: F. E. Peacock 1980); Paul Abramson and Ada Finifter, "On the Meaning of Political Trust: New Evidence From Items Introduced in 1978," *American Journal of Political Science*, 25 (May, 1981), 297-307; John Pierce, K. M. Beatty and P. R. Wagner, *The Dynamics of American Public Opinion* (Glenview: Scott, Foresman, 1982).
- ¹¹Flanigan and Zingale, *Op. Cit.*, 183..
- ¹²Richard Neuhaus, "Religion and . . . Addressing the Naked Public Square," *World View* (January, 1982), 11.
- ¹³Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968).
- ¹⁴Daniel Bell, ed., *The Radical Right* (New York: Doubleday, 1963).
- ¹⁵Donald Clelland and L. L. Guess, "The Politics of Life Style Concern: A Review of the Literature on Status Politics," Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southern Sociological Society, 1975.
- ¹⁶Ann L. Page and Donald A. Clelland, "The Kanawha County Textbook Controversy: A Study of the Politics of Life Style Concern," *Social Forces* 57 (September, 1978), 265-267.
- ¹⁷*Ibid.* 267.
- ¹⁸James Hunter, "Operationalizing Evangelicals: A Review, Critique and Proposal," *Sociological Analysis*, 42 (Winter, 1981), 363-373.
- ¹⁹Gallup identified as Evangelical those who 1) Described Themselves as "Born-Again" or Having Had A "Born-Again Experience," 2) Had Encouraged Other People To Believe in Jesus Christ, 3) Believed In A Literal Interpretation Of The Bible. Gallup found 19% of his respondents in a national sample satisfied all three conditions. We used Hunter's critique. We found a much higher percentage of Evangelicals in our survey because it is focused on a region where they tend to be concentrated.
- ²⁰We classified as conservative Protestants the Lutherans (Missouri Synod), Southern Baptists, Assembly of God, Holiness, Church of God, Church of Christ, Nazarene, Seventh Day Adventists, and Pentecostal. Liberal Protestant included American Baptists, American Lutheran, Christian, Congregational, Disciples of Christ, Episcopal, Methodist Presbyterian (USA), and Unitarian.
- ²¹Gallup, *Op. Cit.* 20-21.
- ²²Hill and Luttbeg, *Op. Cit.*, Passim.
- ²³For purposes of analysis we have stressed the clearly opposed categories ("High" and "Low"). Respondents who seemed ambivalent often selected the "Middle" categories, making this category less analytically useful.

²⁴Norman Nie, Sidney Verba and John Patrocik, *The Changing American Voter* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979).

²⁵Page and Clelland, *Op. Cit.*

²⁶*New Testament*, Matthew, Chapter 7, Verse 1.