Evangelical Protestants and Political Trust

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Abstract: Evangelicals in the U.S. tend to support candidates who advocate for a minimal government and significant downsizing, if not elimination, of the welfare state. This phenomenon may be the result of certain components in an Evangelical worldview. Though evangelicals in the U.S. may have higher interpersonal trust, they distrust the government more than non-evangelicals. This research will explore political theories that discuss the political functions of Protestantism and apply such analyses to contemporary American evangelicals. National Election Survey 2004 will empirically qualify some claims in my theoretical discussion.

Key Words: Evangelicals, Trust, Trustworthiness, Trust in Government, liberalism and republicanism.
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Introduction:

Max Weber’s renowned work on the Protestant work ethic inspired me to design this project (Weber 2005). Puritanism, a strong belief in the afterlife and salvation, inspired strong work ethic and professionalism (Weber 2005). My project is a partial application of Weber’s observations—I want to examine the political consequence of an evangelical worldview as expressed in a lowered trust in the government that my empirical tests will confirm. My research question in my project is how evangelical Protestantism influences believers’ trust in government’s ability to do good work. My hypothesis is that in the U.S., evangelical identity tends to make believers trust fellow citizens and simultaneously distrust the government more than non-evangelicals do.

I want to explore how evangelical belief by itself can reduce trust in the government. I am interested in the “…influence of those psychological sanctions, which originating in religious belief and the practice of religion, gave a direction to practical conduct and held individual to it” (Weber 2005). If a belief in predestination strengthened the Protestant work ethic and had economic consequences, I believe that an accompanying belief in the afterlife must have political consequences, even today. A belief in eternal salvation can adversely affect trust in matters of this life, especially trust in the government, the supreme authority in charge of the profane affairs in this life.

Evangelism is a form of Protestantism which emphasizes the Christian duty to convert the elect in the whole world (Smith 2000; Weber 2005). It is not the same as Conservatism (political or theological) or fundamentalism (a tradition of literal interpretation of the Bible, ranging from very literal to heuristic and contextual analysis.) This tendency, as defined here, is
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not to be confused with affiliation with the Republican Party. I choose evangelicals as my focus because:

1. About 25% of the U.S. population is comprised of self-identified Evangelicals, as shown in the Religious Landscape Survey, by the Pew Forum on Religious and Public Life in 2008.

2. They still believe in the pressing need to evangelize the world.

3. As a tradition, it is dominant among Protestants and prominent in politics.

Mainline Protestants, Catholics, or Mormons and members of Jehovah’s Witness churches also share their faith extensively and thus expand the scope of their outreach efforts. Jehovah’s Witness churches boast the highest rate of growth and vitality, even more than that of many evangelical churches. The same is the case for Mormons. Both Mormon and Jehovah’s Witness churches are very interesting outliers, but they are too marginalized in the overall population. I have to classify them as missing cases in my empirical tests.

My project will focus on modern political theories, as specified in the first part of my reference section. I mostly draw my ideas from works of Max Weber (“Social Psychology of World Religions,” excerpts from Economy and Societies, “Science as a Vocation” and “Politics as a Vocation”), Tocqueville’s Democracy in America and ideas from Locke, Madison and Jefferson. Weber offers useful historical arguments to explain the rise of Protestantism and the socioeconomic consequences of Puritanism. Tocqueville offers insightful and cohesive analyses of American Protestantism, which, he believed, helped Americans live for goals larger than life and individual happiness. Madison and Jefferson’s views on religion resonate with the ideas of Locke as described in “A Letter Concerning Toleration:” so long as religions incur no civil offenses and are not subversive or seditious, the government should leave that group alone.
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Religious liberty as expressed in toleration, Locke believed, is the foundation of civil liberty.

I will also address John Stuart Mill’s (in “The Utility of Religion” and “On Liberty”) staunch opposition against the utility of organized religion. Along with Mill’s idea, I will selectively cite Rousseauian ideas to address issues relevant to the political influences of Protestantism. I will argue that the utilities of evangelism outweigh its negative consequences.

In addition I have utilized three primary sources. First, Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America*, serves as an ethnographic observation of American politics. Second, *Autobiography of George Muller*, a diary of a famous Christian minister in the nineteenth century, shows how an evangelical identity instilled trust in a higher power. Third, I will use the National Election Study 2004 to statistically support my hypothesis.

I employ both theoretical and empirical methods of investigation. This project by design is primarily theoretical and incorporates empirical components. Chapter I to IV will focus on theoretical discussions and Chapter V will provide statistical test results that may support or negate the applicability of my hypothesis in the theoretical discussion.

Too many topics are relevant; following are the topics that I will not discuss at length in this paper: any theological arguments, public justification, the nature and different forms of trust and trustworthiness, the nature and acceptable exercises of power, different forms and exercises of authority, the general role of Protestantism or evangelism in politics, the exact meaning of democratic or republican citizenship, the meaning of republicanism and the politics of identity. I will selectively explore the aforementioned topics or other relevant ones, but never at length. The focus of this project is strictly on the relationship between evangelical identity in the U.S. and trust in the government.
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Trust in this project is defined as a belief in the trusted to fulfill a promised obligation. Trustworthiness is the quality that qualifies someone or something to be trusted. Trustworthiness also implies characteristics such as stability, consistency, predictability and reliability. Trust in the federal government is defined as political trust and trust in the general population as interpersonal trust. The term “liberal” or “liberalism” means a set of political beliefs that emphasize the need for tolerance, limited government (by a set of fair and due procedures) and respect for unalienable individual rights. “Republic” or “republicanism” mean a strong notion of the public, the public man, the public affairs, the public good and the need for a capable and deserving citizenry to manage public affairs. The noteworthy aspect of republicanism is that public good, by implication, is collective. A republican notion of citizenship also requires clear definitions of civic virtues.
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Theoretical Overview

I am interested in one political consequence of evangelism in the U.S.—how evangelical faith by itself may have lowered political trust among evangelicals as compared to that of non-evangelicals (74% of the U.S. population). I will base my analysis on the theoretical frameworks set by Max Weber and Alexis De Tocqueville.

Weber’s *Protestant Work Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* shows how the threat of uncertain salvation drove early Protestants to live ascetically and to seek monetary success. The Puritans did so because the growth of wealth could indicate God’s favor and thus confirm their salvation. This historical fact indicated a strong sense of belonging to the afterlife and implied a heightened trust in Providence and potentially a lowered trust in money or the government. After all, if salvation is of God, as the Puritans believed, the signs of salvation, earthly wealth, are not trustworthy by themselves.

Tocqueville’s work *Democracy in America* is the most helpful source because his notes function as comparative observations, that is, the convergence of European and American views. His discursive accounts of American society gave me a comprehensive understanding of how the public mores and spirit of religion are intertwined, and how individualism was checked by local associations (political, civil and religious). Tocqueville’s observations explain how the institution of religion in the U.S. exerted its political influences. In fact, many of his conclusions have the same depth as those of Weber. His theory provided a nice background for me to analyze how religion used to provide basic values that supported a republican notion of citizenship (self-sacrifice, self-governance, a self-oriented citizenry to defend its rights against government interventions). Since the republican strain of liberalism emphasized the assumption that
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government is not trustworthy, its values have been compatible with evangelical doctrines and propagated by them, it is reasonable to hypothesize that evangelical Protestants trust the government less.

Chapter I will first establish that religion is the first institution to provide answers to the unknowable and thus satisfies human curiosity and alleviates fear. This account will discuss the root of religion’s political power: its profound ability to shape its believers’ worldviews. In Weber’s terms, religion provides a narrative to rationalize, explain, justify and account for meanings of one’s status in this world or even in the afterlife. Afterwards, the political influence of religion will be discussed. Weber concludes that religion can provide criteria for value judgments. Thus it influences how much obedience and trust one should grant to an authority, however legitimate it already may be. Lastly, the chapter will end with a discussion of the benefits and negative consequences of religion.

Chapter II will discuss how Protestantism as a dominant religion affects public opinion. The complication stems from the fact that religion and politics mutually influence each other. When political influence enters the religious realm, political appeals become hypocritical for politics is never meant to safeguard timeless truth. Religious influence in politics, likewise, incurs negative consequences—it aids the arbitrary persecution against any unconventional minority. The influence of religion by itself is, however, subtle and more lasting than that of transient political affairs. Religion reinforces customs and ideas that may aid or impede the rise of useful political culture.

Chapter III is the analysis of evangelical identity’s influence on political trust. Evangelical Protestants’ religious conviction inspires distrust of this world of flesh. Historically,
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the emphasis on individual salvation, consent and accountability before God all translate into
support for a more republican notion of citizenship. Namely, the capacity for citizens to self-
govern and a “laissez-faire” government in general are crucial to an evangelical agenda. A big
government, aside from being capable of depriving people of self-government, is not easily held
accountable and does not represent each individual. Sandel’s Democracy’s Discontent offers a
historical narrative of the decline of a republican notion of citizenship that is tied to evangelism.
As a more democratic notion of citizenship gains prominence, the emphasis on neutrality and
freedom of choice also takes center stage. This trend may contribute to a heightened sense of
insecurity among evangelicals, which can be translated into distrust of the government.

Chapter IV argues that a strong belief in the eternal salvation lowers trust in the
government. To evangelicals, matters of this world are more phenomenal compared to the
salvation they expect to receive at the end of times. Amongst the secular matters, the most
profane of all is the government, the supreme authority in charge of the affairs of the land.
Government should be respected and honored, but not fully trusted as being capable of acting in
accordance with Christian ethics. After all, government cannot be transformed by salvation,
which is based on personal consent and applies individually. The implied benefit and
shortcomings of this particular view on politics are foreseeable: distrust in the government
strengthens the alertness of the civil society to monitor governmental performance and potential
encroachment on both personal and collective rights; the drawback is the lack of willingness to
initiate dialogue and make compromises, both of which are at the heart of daily political affairs.

If evangelical Protestantism has ceased to be a vital force as it is, the repercussion might
help bring a slow demise of the spirit of liberty. It is true that certain political values have been
enshrined in this religion for the sake of convenience, to avoid constant doubts and debates.
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Once this stronghold is gone, it is hard to quickly find another alternative. If the citizens are incapable of self-governing, bureaucratic despotism will be unstoppable.

That is, government in this world is only a specific instrument for higher good, and political trust should only be granted when specific issues arise such as abortion, prayer in public schools, definition of marriage, and national defense. Religions that emphasize the afterlife and eternal salvation are likely to result in distrust of this life, which is regarded as a temporary phenomenon for an eternal end. Therefore, the government becomes a symbol of profanity for it is the supreme authority of this world. To evangelicals, government is only reliable for specific purposes such as providing education, national defense, and law enforcement. Thus, I suspect that evangelicals tend to support candidates who advocate for a minimal government not because the substance of such policies necessarily benefits them, but because such platforms echo their distrust of this life.
Chapter I

The Political Influences of Protestantism

Religion has been an integral part of political society. I must clarify that in this paper the “religion” I have referred to is primarily Protestantism, but not necessarily Methodism, Calvinism or Pietism. I will not discuss at length how religion is developmentally a “natural” institution in human society as developments take place. My argument starts Weber’s idea that religion is a necessity and addresses Mill’s opposition, by responding with Tocqueville’s ideas. This chapter concludes with an analysis of political benefits and negative consequences that Protestantism generates.

Religion: an Early Exercise of Rationalization

Weber explains how religion and politics separate from each other as if they were once so inextricably intertwined. In “Sociology of Religion” from Economy and Societies, Weber depicts how religion gradually separates itself from political philosophy as the process of rationalization continually progresses in politics (Weber 1992, 1946). To clarify Weber’s analysis for the purpose of research, rationality here is not the same as what American Founding Fathers and thinkers of the Enlightenment era assume. Such thinkers tended to assume that rationality is the ability to construct the most useful, logical and constructive narrative to explain this world and solve political and philosophical problems. There is an assumption of moral and intellectual superiority embedded in this version of rationality, which does not match Weber’s definition. To Weber, the process of rationalization is the exercises of human reasoning to make sense of the social world based on traditions, personal values, goal-oriented planning (which tends to be logical) or emotional motives.
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That is, rationalization is systemic justification to legitimize every action and intent. Such a process needs not to be completely logical. Rationalization, in Weber’s term, is a process of systemizing values and evidence to defend a belief, setting boundaries and sanctions to distinguish the permissible and instill motivational commitment among followers (Weber 1993). Rationalization may result in successes to various degrees, depending on the criteria employed in the process. For instance, compared to the West, Chinese civilization never quite separated moral values and religious values in its academic discourse, until very recently. In other words, a Confucian worldview is based on traditional and personal values (both have a propensity to maintain the existing status quo) more than logically examined goals (Weber 1946, 1997).

In “Social Psychology of the World Religions,” Weber puts forth a simple justification for religion as an absolute necessity: people need to explain phenomena in this world, especially the pressing ones, such as life, death, suffering, diseases, class differences, and social inequality (Weber 1946). People, thus, actively engage in the process of rationalization in the name of religion: they construct, adopt and instill motivational commitment to justify different worldviews in a particular social arrangement. To Weber, different interpretation of religious doctrines and worldviews are a function of social status. Therefore, to make something meaningful, a religion must address the sources of anxiety for each social class. It must justify one’s place in the present world for the rich or emphasize, especially for the poor, that a particular status or stratum of the society serves an irreplaceable and thus inherently noble purpose in the grand scheme (Weber 1946).

This rule applies to all religions, even to Protestantism. The privileged minority at the top of the social pyramid prefer ways interpretations that justify their success and current status (Weber 1946; Weber 1997). The intellectuals always prefer a conception of God, as an
amorphous order. The middle class, or the status group that is neither poor nor rich, need a God that alleviates their sentimental stress and strengthens their sense of purpose in living a life in the middle (Weber 1997). They might even resort to ascetic measures as a result. Lastly, the poor want to know that their existence and encounter with undesirable circumstances serve a greater purpose. Politically, Protestantism is especially versatile to create stability and answer existential questions for all social classes by providing all the aforementioned images of God to each class (Weber 1946, 1995, 1997).

As a result, Weber observes that religion can be motivated by sentiments such as curiosity, resentment and an urgent sense of spiritual security (Weber 1946). Curiosity is a simple need to understand this world coherently. Fear of the afterlife, a common answer to the origin of religion, is not a very strong motive in the early stages. Instead, a need to know an explanation of life, death and what comes after death creates a special notion known as “salvation,” the path to transcend the present world. This is the motive to create worldviews based on redemption into a better afterlife. The notion of the afterlife is a later concept to answer the unanswerable question of what awaits each person. Resentment or discontentment to various degrees of intensity, serve as strong drives to rationalize experiences religiously (Weber 1946). The poor especially feel the need to appease their discontent over their standing by adopting religious worldviews which endow their present situation with a sense of purpose. As for those who fare better-off in this life, they seek a sense of security. Religion offered narratives that justify their gains, social prestige, wealth, fame, and influence in this world and secure their entry into the afterlife, which is hopefully at least as equally desirable as this on (Weber 1946).

Weber concedes that religions incorporate irrational components that later distinguish them from philosophy and politics, both of which have become more goal-oriented and less
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based on traditions and personal values (Weber 1946). That is not to say that religion is irrational by nature; religion just tended to include more irrational components that in the long run could be regarded as superstitions. Religion in its pure and rationalized form increasingly concentrates on answering the questions concerning the unexplainable, all of which are value questions. For instance, what is the true meaning of life, or, how meaningful a life has to be to qualify as a happy one in the end. Depending on the believers’ socioeconomic and cultural status, religion might offer different narratives to imbue believers’ lives with existential meaning. According to Weber, so long as there is a society, there will be the institution of religion to answer for existential questions. The need for religion, thus, is indispensable.

For Weber, the power of religion is in its ability to answers value questions. Historically, religion is often confused with science and politics, the other two institutions that often borrowed religious lingo and public appearance. However, as the process of rationalization progresses, both science and politics become distinct vocations from religion (Weber 1993).

Due to the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment, science in Europe increasingly became a powerful tool to understand the world. However, science is still limited. It cannot answer value questions because it is a tool for examination that lead to many phenomenal discoveries. Science cannot bear the moral weight of giving social meanings, for only humans can create meanings and morally regulate the uses of science. Eventually, Weber concludes that only faith can answer existential questions (Weber 1946).

As politics became more rationalized and acquired its own set of ethical value, politics became a profession in itself as well, rather than an extension of religious duty (Weber 1946). Political affairs gained independence from Christian ethics and have become technical and based
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on rational laws. Both parts of rationalized politics required less aid from religion—both the charismatic and the bureaucratic needed no administrative help from religion. For instance, the mundane bureaucracy relies on sets of consistent protocols and file keeping to justify their official duties; the charismatic leadership relies on mass media and a capable bureaucracy. Politics has become bound to the rational modern law that supports rational legal authority. As a result, political figures no longer bear religious duties, for religion is no longer the primary factor that stabilizes the society (Weber 1946, 1997). Christian ethics remain useful in cultivating civic virtues and respect for the rule of law, but are no longer a prerequisite for conducting politics.

Weber, thus, implies that religion is the primary institution that shapes worldviews by offering existential answers to fundamental questions in life (Weber 1946). Distinct from both politics and science, the institution of religion shifts its focus from additional functions (promoting education and science) and semi-related duties (promoting civic virtues). Indeed, religion can perform such functions, but it is most powerful when it focuses on explaining the unknown and unexplainable.

**Tocqueville and Mill on Religion**

Tocqueville believed that belief and faith are part of the permanent state of political and social affairs. Humans long to reconcile their desire to live and fear of death. Religion provides a channel to manage such sentiments and a worldview to answer questions concerning the unknown—the meaning of time, existence, space, life, death and the afterlife. The pursuit of liberty and republicanism in this life, therefore, is unavoidably intertwined with religion. Tocqueville’s argument is similar to that of Weber (Tocqueville 2000). To Tocqueville,
“Disbelief is an (historical) accident; faith is the only permanent condition of mankind” (Tocqueville 2000).

Tocqueville emphasizes the need for religion to remain independent as an institution in charge of matters beyond temporal affairs. When religion is independent, its political influence also reaches its maximum capacity. Religion can be politically useful by sanctifying many necessary values. For instance, it is practical to assume that there is a benevolent Creator who operates the universe in the eternity; such an assumption give the believers hope and can help sustain a notion of possible progress (because such a benevolent God certainly wants humans to better their own conditions).

Tocqueville observed that in the U.S., the Spirit of Liberty and the Spirit of Religion mutually reinforce each other. The emphasis on individual liberty to make judgments based on personal rights and experiences needs to be limited by precepts and moral codes of Protestantism. Liberty enables Americans to imagine all things, and Protestantism stops men from imagining everything. Religion sets the basic tone of moral assumptions which were taken for granted in the early Republic. That is not to say that religion was meant to exert that much political influence, it just happened to propagate values critical to the continuation of democratic practices. Religion supplies firm answers that endure and sound values for democratic government.

Mill also points out that religion’s greatest political influence resides in its ability to shape believers’ worldviews. In Mill’s view, religion can direct human passion and regulate human desires (Mill). Mill and Tocqueville agree on the power of religion; however, they hold very different views concerning its political and social impact. Mill implied that Christianity, as it appeared in its evangelical form in England, silenced critical thinking and sound reasoning.
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That is, to proselytize more converts, evangelicals in England at the time had to ignore any questions concerning certain Biblical passages that appeared to logically contradict their faith. For instance, how could an all-loving God bear to execute eternal torture? Some Christians at Mill’s time may have simply appealed to the fact that supernatural matters are beyond human comprehension. This response frustrated Mill, who saw little utility in such an answer, which he judged only slightly better than believing in anything or nothing at all (Mill).

Benefits and Negative Consequences—A Balance Sheet

Protestantism, like all things, entails positive and negative consequences. Its benefits include: justification and enhancement of the rule of law, cultivation of a work ethic, and promotion of valuable social goods that stabilize the nation politically and socially, such as tolerance, meekness and charity, as shown in “A Letter Concerning Tolerance.” The negative consequences include: intensification of political instability due to factious doctrines and sectarian strife, stifling liberty of thought by promoting mass conformity, and eviscerating civic virtue through promoting hypocrisy. The positive qualities deserve to be called benefits because they do outweigh the negative consequences religion creates for political society.

Protestant sects that had a strong evangelical propensity typically produced enough social goods to outweigh the negative consequences. Any religion can be utilized for subversive ends. English Puritans (who were a constant concern for Hobbes and Locke) were not the most evangelical Christians at the time, but the most politically active. The most evangelical sect at the time were Pietists (the sect led by Count Zinzendorf), who in Eastern Europe promoted charity, meekness and tolerance by uniting dissenters and believers of various sects into a common religious community (Weber 1997). Such unification is difficult today and was even
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more so in the 18th century. Above all, they held anti-authoritarian beliefs that all Christians do (such as government was not trustworthy), but had no anti-government tendency (Weber 2005). Perpetual intolerance and factional strife only rose when religious groups also became political factions due to unjust persecutions (Locke 2003).

Any religion adopts different measures to minimize such hypocrisy. Rousseau raised this issue at the end of “The Social Contract” (Rousseau 1987). Given that he wrote the book to flatter the citizens of Geneva, it is reasonable to consider that his focus was not necessarily Calvinism but perhaps a general tendency in Christianity, more embodied in Catholicism at Rousseau’s time (Rousseau 1987). However, hypocrisy cannot foster a good and lasting work ethic. Rousseau might have ignored certain phenomena during his time—the Pietists by Count Zinzendorf and Calvinists (including Puritans and Methodists) had great work ethics because they wanted to confirm their holy status in the afterlife through pious deeds in this life (Weber 2005). Later, Methodists too showed the same tendency and promoted an upright lifestyle conducive to the advent of industrial age. The cultivation of a work ethic sprang from the same source of hypocrisy that Rousseau vehemently attacked—an ardent belief in the afterlife (Rousseau 1987; Weber 2005). Rousseau, estranged from organized religions, perhaps did not want to acknowledge that living for the afterlife may improve one’s life on the earth. For the aforementioned Protestants, the afterlife is only meaningful if it is expressed and experienced today. Thus, the issue of hypocrisy is limited to inconsistency in the interpretation of religious doctrines, not in the moral actions of the believers.

Protestant values help solidify and justify the rule of law, and this benefit greatly outweighs its potential to stifle liberty of thought (Tocqueville 2000). Mill was reacting to massive evangelical movements at his time, which more or less aligned with Victorian
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Conservatism and traditional influences. Mill worried that by stifling critical reasoning, organized religions can enervate the liberal spirit of the laws. His sharp criticism of religion embodied the hostility that all intellectuals have for superstition and logical fallacy. For instance, in “The Utility of Religion,” he specifically illustrated how doctrinal inconsistency may stifle critical reasoning. Mill could not reconcile the fact that an all-loving God could also wrathfully throw many lives into eternal perdition or torture. Mill was perhaps too critical—for a religion such as evangelical Protestantism, justification based on common sense as established by Paul and John sufficed. Since both the afterlife and the second death are unknowable in this life, church leaders only have to highlight the universal need for redemption and a life of holiness. Those who live a holy life will be able to stand before God Almighty and be freed from second death and justification.

Mill was also worried about religious influence in the form of popular opinion that stifles liberty of thought. Mass conformity and opinion can be based on anything, religion just happened to be one of such bases (Hamilton et al, 1938). Most of the time, the populace misquote whatever religious values they base their arguments on. To blame popular ignorance on an institution that is specialized to offer reasonable (not necessarily logical) answers to human existence and the afterlife is unfair and only reflects Mill’s own time.

Tocqueville is friendlier than Mill to religion as a political institution. Protestant values provided a solid moral grounding for a democratic republic and saved citizens from incessant debates over the meaning of basic values (Tocqueville 2000). If particular religious values, as propagated by evangelicals at the time, could strengthen the moral grounding of the republican values (bonds of family and domestic order), Tocqueville believed in the value of such religious
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values. Protestant values naturally limited Americans from thinking licentiously against the law and losing faith in the republic.

Religious values in Protestantism elevate human mind and compel each man or woman to personally seek answers from God—which fundamentally works against the tyranny of mass conformity. Tocqueville well knew that tendency of decentralization among Protestant churches. He observed that since God is personal and there were so many churches, there was a fair degree of tolerance and liberty for personal preferences within Protestantism. Above all, he observed that evangelical Protestantism elevates the soul from the particular in this life, to promote a life of piety that suffices to outweigh its negative consequences.

Conclusion

Evangelical Protestantism in the U.S. remains influential because it is not part of the official establishment, as Tocqueville vividly shows in Democracy in America. Its political influence is profound, indirect and subtle—Protestantism has never done well when it is supported by government. When left on its own, Evangelical Protestantism enhances the rule of law, promotes critical social goods and cultivates a work ethic, which can be translated into domestic order. Such a commitment to a redeemed life on earth and a share in the coming afterlife raises the moral standards of believers and cultivates moral sentiments conducive to the rule of law and a republican notion of citizenship. The negative consequences can be remedied by the practices, cultures and flexible interpretations of the religious doctrines. Such beneficial values ultimately help foster democratic instinct and serve crucial functions to further liberal practices. By instilling work ethic, a sense of distrust and a firm belief in possibility of progress, Protestantism has been instrumental in aiding the furtherance of democratic values.
Chapter II

Religion’s Influence on Public Opinion in Politics

Religion’s influence on public opinion is so pervasive that political theorists have to engage this issue seriously. The selected theorists discussed here have all worked in management positions or political offices themselves, and as a consequence their views on religion represent different viewpoints of state management. Starting with Madison’s Federalist view of religion, then to moving on to Madison and Jefferson’s justification of non-establishment policy, then to Mill’s critique on religion and concluding with Tocqueville’s justification for the use of the Spirit of Religion—for state management, a religion that emphasizes progress, continual growth and endeavour is very useful.

Madison as a Federalist: Religion is Not a Concern

As shown in the entirety of the Federalist Papers, religion is not a grave concern for the federal government. In No. 10, Madison did not even regard religion as the major source of the formation of political factions. This was an unconventional insight even in the age of the Enlightenment; perhaps, Madison adopted Locke’s view that only unjust persecution and oppression forced religious factions to emerge. Factions may have formed in the name of religion, but they only arose in response to the repeated unequal treatments and unjust persecutions in previous decades (Locke 2003). Madison was not worried that religion by itself could become a major reason to encourage the tyranny of the majority. On the contrary, the mob without properties worried him most. He was primarily concerned with factions based on social classes, for “…the most common and durable source of factions has been various and unequal
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distribution of property” (Hamilton et al 1934). Therefore, the primary cause of factional strife was political or economic, not religious.

As a framer who stood for a procedural republic, Madison believed that the state should be concerned with executing reasonable procedures, rather focusing on the negative consequences of religion. At the federal level, Madison believed that the republican principle of representation is enough to minimize factional influences. By employing both proportional and equal representation in each house, factional interests are minimized while regional interests are well represented in national politics. The American version of republican government is meant to create as many factions as possible (which, ironically, is a Rousseauian idea) so that no faction is ever powerful enough to become the majority. In Federalist Paper No. 51, Madison made it clearer that specific methods of representation can balance various interests and divide factions, mostly based on class interests. Madison seems not bothered with Rousseau’s critique of private interest. To Madison, the sum of all interests and the process to pursue the balance of power and representation is enough to justify this procedural republic’s existence. The direct expression of the General Will is not pertinent—for the right mechanism might lead the people of the U.S. infinitely close to it.

Madison must be aware of religious pluralism in the U.S. Different sects of Protestants had tolerated each other or even cooperated in political association. This had been unprecedented, compared to the constant strife, if not bloodshed, in the name of religion in the previous centuries in Europe. His historical context supported Madison with live evidence that religious tolerance was possible and pluralism was practicable. Madison, informed of religious affairs in the Old World, also alluded to the corruption within Catholic Church and nations in “Memorial and
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Remonstrance.” He cherished religious pluralism as much as the separation of the church and state.

**Madison and Jefferson on Religious Freedom**

Madison, at the state level, shared much in agreement with Jefferson as shown in the “Memorial and Remonstrance against Religious Assessment” (Madison 1785), “The Wall of Separation Letter” (Jefferson in 1802), and “A Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom” (Jefferson in 1775). They believed that government should let religion be by legislating nothing concerning faith. Likewise, religion should not receive governmental help. Both writers were familiar with Lockean and Rousseauian thoughts. They adopted a view very similar to that of Locke, as expressed in “A Letter concerning Toleration.” They unanimously declare that laws of humans only govern human obligation to society and fellow people, not personal obligations to the Creator. It is agreed that government cannot change personal opinion, and political influence in religion will only introduce corruption and hypocrisy, as Madison emphasizes in “Memorial and Remonstrance,” alluding to Catholicism in the Old World.

This is the difference between Rousseau and the two Americans—Rousseau was perhaps biased because he was not familiar with the American model. Rousseau only saw the hypocrisy in organized churches and did not have the opportunity to witness what religion can be when left to its own power of persuasion, piety and good deeds. When religious believers had to do everything on their own, it was possible to live up to Christian expectations.

Madison and Jefferson agreed that the pressing need to protect political liberty from mass conformity was to separate the state and church. For them, it was especially urgent to protect religion from governmental influence because religion is the most personal matter in the world.
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If the government has a legitimate right to interfere with, influence indirectly or directly or legally regulate the most intimate decisions one makes, there is no political liberty left. Thus, religious freedom was such an exigent issue because it encapsulated the need to define the liberty of thought. So long as a religion does not lead to civil disturbances (rioting), treasonous acts (subverting federal government) or even deterioration of republican virtues (for example polygamy, which tends to create destabilize domestic relationships), such a religion should be left alone.

The clear message from Madison in 1785 was to leave civil life to the magistrates and spiritual life to the churches. What Madison feared was that government could utilize religion to sustain a tyranny of the majority through selecting teachers favorable to a certain sect. Teachers should not be assessed on any religious terms because government presence in the sphere of education. Even with the best intention, such an intervention seriously endangers political liberty by introducing possibilities of extensive censorship in state educational system. Religious liberty is the indicator of civil liberty. Religion, thus, would be degraded to a tool to promote mass conformity and tyranny of the majority. It would lose its power to elevate the souls of citizens.

It is hard for pluralists like us to comprehend Madison and Jefferson’s staunchness in defending religious freedom from governmental influence. When tolerance is a prerequisite, it is difficult to draw the boundary for religious liberty. In Mill’s word, such a freedom is the liberty of thought. Once this liberty is taken away, no possibility for intellectual enlightenment and political reforms can remain, for the start of liberty is enlightenment and liberation of thought from ignorance. If a government can intervene and regulate matters of the afterlife, that government rules all things in this life. If majority can judge the right and wrong on issues of personal faith, it is the true tyranny of the majority.
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Mill on Liberty of Thought

Mill’s critique of religion, especially evangelical Protestantism and political liberty, should be taken with a grain of salt. After all, Mill was reputed as a free thinker and regarded himself as the champion of science and critical thinking. Unfortunately, the majority of Protestant sects in his day tended to advocate for a more gradual change and even a significant minority tended to advocate for no change at all. That is, religious forces tended to align with the Conservative Party, Mill’s staunchest enemy.

One of the fundamental assumptions in Mill's philosophy was that one's pursuits and action are meant to achieve the greatest happiness (greatest pleasure), in which feelings and poetry have the same weight as reason and rationality. Mill also assumes that the differences in the quality of an experience can result in drastically better or worse end results. That is, Bentham's rigid and impersonal calculation is too narrow for Mill to apply to daily life. The implication of Mill's philosophical ideas is that the unquantifiable and intangible factors in personal experiences should be seriously weighed in one's pursuit for Greatest Happiness in the end (Mill 2009). Mill believed that one should make his pursuit of pleasure compatible to that of the collective.

In “On Liberty,” an anti-religion propensity is not clear, but is much clearer in “The Utility of Religion.” Mill's critique against the tyranny of the majority should be read in both contexts together. First, Mill was attacking the tyranny of Victorian Conservatism, which was partially supported by Methodists and other Conservatives. Second, Mill, in "On Liberty," was establishing a foundation for his argument for women's rights.
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There are two key principles in “On Liberty.” The first principle is the Principle of Harm, which states that the only reason for the collective or an individual to violate the sovereignty of another is to prevent that person from harming others. However, harm is defined quite broadly in Mill's work (Mill 2009). As Mill states later in the Offense Principle, all offenses can be tolerated, so long as no psychological and social harm (as expressed in a grievous, verifiable and collective consequence) is imposed on others due to a display of personal opinion. With these two principles combined, we can see that Mill wants to protect the liberty of thought above all else. It is clear that without liberty of thought, there is no true political liberty (Mill 2009). To Mill, these absolute and sacred barriers between the individual and the collective are constructed because such policies are conducive to produce the greatest amount of utility and pleasure for all in the end.

Mill's critique of religion is in "The Utility of Religion." Mill believes in the basic utility of religion, for it regulates human passion and can direct it toward somewhat constructive ends. However, Mill makes it clear that having a religion is only slightly better than not having one. To him, religions only generate a basic amount of utility, barely better than having no religion at all. If people have no religion at all, it is very possible that they will not have any hope in the long term development of themselves or their nation. Mill agrees with Tocqueville that those who believe in no God are more prone to regard themselves as gods and treat others brutishly (Tocqueville 2000). Thus, their moral expectations in daily life and the public mores they generate will subsequently be of much lower quality than those of religious people.

Mill believes that only the Religion of Humanity (capitalized by Mill, a belief in the human capacity for enlightenment and self-perfection) can bring greatest happiness to mankind. Such a religion can lead to a collective pursuit of a positive direction, and in the process generate
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high quality experiences. For instance, individuals with such a belief will not only have higher moral standards, but also a strong belief in fellow mankind and the possibility of an ideal society (Mill). Compared to the Religion of Humanity, no religion is truly useful. It is fair to infer that Mill wants all religions to direct human passion to believe in human perfectibility.

Mill is very clear that the only difference between religious and irreligious people, at this point, is that the religious impose higher moral expectations upon themselves that the irreligious might not. Mill’s reluctance to approve of religion’s utility comes from his observation that religious zeal can also dull critical reasoning. For instance, Mill highlights the irreconcilable tension between the doctrine of predestination and eternal perdition. In this regard, traditional religion actually is a burden upon society. If liberalism itself, which suspiciously resembles the Religion of Humanity, can perform all the functions of traditional religions, especially Christianity, traditional religions can gradually phase out of human development, due to their lack of utility (Mill).

A further implication of "The Utility of Religion" is the rise of civil religion, a set of deliberative, self-critical political procedures as embedded in liberalism. Mill believes that this is the religion through which mankind can find greatest happiness. It does not, and will not arbitrarily impose its will on the minority based on the rule of the majority. Such a religion will also not fall victim to religious zeal and conservative influences. Finally, such a religion will promote science and critical thinking.

**Tocqueville’s Nightmare: The Tyranny of Helplessness**

Tocqueville believed that Protestantism was instrumental in safeguarding a democratic political culture against the tyranny of the majority and individualism. To rebut Mill’s critique
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one must start by briefly clarifying of Tocqueville’s nightmare: Tyranny of the majority and individualism describe the same phenomenon—the loss of agency. On the one hand, Tyranny of the majority is the loss of agency at a macro level. When conditions are more equal for each citizen, individuals become weaker in the society and take refuge in influential groups. They see the power in the majority and cling to dominant factions, which in fact impede and can destroy the exercise of political liberty by ostracizing minority opinions. Tyranny of the majority, in other words, is the end result of an inherent evil in equality—mass conformity. It is much easier to feel empowered by equality than to endure the chaos in a corporate pursuit of individual liberty. In the long run, liberty is the solution for potential tyranny, but, people, being myopic and tied to temporary profits, prefer equality, which leads to tyranny (Tocqueville 2000).

On the other hand, Individualism is the substance of tyranny of majority. It is a mass tendency in a democracy that monotonously loves well-being and material enjoyment to abandon the public sphere. Citizens turn to furnishing their private lives. People lose agency not just because they trust the collective judgment of the groups they belong to. They withdraw from politics and stop defending their rights because the pursuit of an individual life is more compelling. Thus, they delegate factions to perform their political duties. Tocqueville believed that individualism is the tyranny selfishness within the majority that drains the public spirit and destroys civic virtues.

Madison’s seemingly bizarre emphasis on the tyranny of the minority completes this puzzle (Hamilton et al 1934). No tyranny is mass tyranny, for there must be a capable minority that capitalizes the detrimental and unreasonable demands of the mass to further their political gains. To sustain a tyranny of the majority, a capable leader, or a group of manipulative politicians, must be in place to routinize such a tyranny. After all, as Tocqueville emphasized,
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Tyranny is mostly clear and never prone to employ arbitrary power unless it is necessary. Since the masses mostly seek private comforts and personal gains, it is never politically efficacious. There must be a group that ties their own utility to maintaining the interest of the masses. The substance of a rising despotism or tyranny is a sense of deteriorating agency. Such a sense can arise from a strong love for equality or strong Individualism, which drains public spirit and leaves politics to the care of a mediocre bureaucracy. Thus, the three evils (the evil of Individualism, the tyranny of majority and the tyranny of minority) introduced by prevalent equality of conditions are mutually reinforcing and part of the same phenomenon.

Tocqueville and later sociologists show that religion, which supports local associations, be they civil, political or religious, is the greatest weapon against the rising tide of bureaucratic despotism, in the name of both Individualism and equality. Religion facilitates the use of liberty and sustains public faith in law, morality and political liberty. Those who go to church more are more likely to associate themselves with friends of other sects (Putnam 2010; Tocqueville 2000). Religious association fosters love for morality and liberty, tolerance for differences and perseverance in the pursuit of long term endeavors (Christian growth never stops). Religion also teaches the importance of authority and instills a sense of belonging and purpose to the believers. Such a sense of purpose can be translated into a common belief that men are on earth to pursue highest happiness within the limit of law, morality and free will. Religion, that is, can enshrine key values of republicanism, place them beyond daily debate, promote arts of association and thus help turn the tide against coming evils (Tocqueville 2000). Throughout *Democracy in America* Tocqueville did not depart from one theme—faith in the possibility of that improvement is often enshrined in religion. Thus, religion is a vital political institution that fosters sentiments and habits conducive to the exercise of political liberty.
The Spirit of Religion: Cultivation of A Work Ethic and A Democratic Instinct

The Spirit of Religion and the Spirit of Liberty, as Tocqueville emphasizes in the beginning of *Democracy in America*, mutually reinforce each other. Tocqueville witnessed the symbiosis of the Spirit of Liberty and the Spirit of Religion and argued to justify Protestantism as a positive political influence. To Tocqueville, the Spirit of Liberty is a common impulse to seek fulfillment in the promised political liberty vested in each law-abiding citizen. This particular Spirit of Liberty is actually a common faith in the perfectibility that will make citizens worthier to bear political freedom as time goes on. The Spirit of Religion can elevate the moral state of human souls, place goals far beyond the reach of human endeavors, lead humans to obey the divine law and secular laws both and believe in the need of exercising freewill and personal choices (Tocqueville 2000). At an individual level, the Spirit of Religion cultivates a work ethic; collectively it creates a heightened democratic instinct, i.e. a willingness to associate with others, a habit to safeguard one’s own rights and a wariness about the exercise of personal consent.

Weber’s theory of the Protestant work ethic converged with Tocqueville’s observation of honor in an American sense—a work ethic is highly honored in the U.S. Tocqueville also discovered that religion could indirectly help with the cultivation of a work ethic, by lowering the desire to consume. Both Tocqueville and Weber agree that religion greatly helped formation this work ethic. Weber emphasized how the theologically incorrect doctrine of uncertainty about eternal salvation drove Puritans to accumulate wealth on earth, an external sign of eternal salvation, and live an ascetic lifestyle. Translated into economic terms, it was a life of constant investment and reinvestment. When Tocqueville visited the U.S., Tocqueville still observed the Puritanical legacy—by pursuing an entry into a worthy afterlife, one had to abandon minor pleasures and focus on long term goals. Thus believers secured success in this life (Tocqueville
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2000; Weber 2005). That is, religion cultivates critical resilience and perseverance among citizens and elevates a work ethic to an honorable status so that such crucial qualities can be reproduced without serious disruption of critical debates.

The Spirit of Religion, which operates the institution of religion, politically functions to curb tyranny of the majority and individualism. Tocqueville meant, by the Spirit of Religion, that Americans had an ardent curiosity to understand the supernatural. In their collective pursuit of understanding the supernatural, believers developed vital habits of exercising personal consent (consenting to accept salvation and to remain in the religious community), fostered skills of association (attending meetings and becoming active leaders), and cultivated faith in the collective pursuit of liberty (that the day of salvation and complete freedom will arrive). Above all, such a faith incentivized believers to engage in long-term endeavors (Christian growth never stops, neither does obligation to the religious community). Religion is another arena for individuals to cultivate civic virtues (Tocqueville 2000; Putnam 2000). Religion, as Tocqueville implies, can sanctify certain republican virtues and thus become the very foundation of political stability.

Conclusion

Mill's contribution to this dialogue is that religion, if capable of furthering liberty of thought, should direct believers' passion to hold faith in human improvement. His critique against traditional religion might have gone too far, for his Religion of Humanity is still quite abstract and cannot be implemented in practical policies. Perhaps Mill was pointing to liberalism based on utilitarianism, something he championed life long as the Religion of Humanity. Also,
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Mill's discussion pertains too much to the British and European context—he did not have the opportunity to experience the benefits of religious pluralism in the U.S.

Madison and Jefferson, on the other hand, cherished the tradition of pluralism in the U.S. and put forth their genius idea—non-establishment at all levels of government. At the federal level, they thought, government should utilize mechanisms designed to minimize the influences of private and factional interests, which are mostly economic or political. Madison agrees with Locke’s attitude of toleration and pragmatic focus on eliminating unreasonable persecution, in political and economic terms. Religion is never considered a major cause of political instability at a national level. Religious sects may be so degraded that they become a political faction, but economic disparity and class differences, the two forces most often employed for persecuting minorities, are the real causes of civic unrest and political upheaval. Thus, the republican principles of separation of powers and direct representation and the democratic practices of voting and deliberation can sufficiently minimize the evil of political factions. All factions should be limited by the system of representation and separation of powers, so that no faction, in the name of economic, religious or political causes, can completely control the U.S.

Likewise, government should refrain from making any explicit or implicit endorsement of any religion or particular sect(s) of any religion. At the state and local level, Madison and Jefferson agree that the state should not make any establishment in the sphere of religion. Religion can be a threat because state governments can potentially abuse religion for various purposes beyond the jurisdiction of civil laws. Jefferson opposed official endorsement of a particular sect and Madison, ten years later, further opposed religious assessment to determine a teacher’s fitness to teach. In their minds, local and state politics can become occasions for an ambitious minority to abuse religion to further their private gains. If the obligation of the federal
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government is to grant even-handed treatment to all sects with no endorsement and thus remain neutral, state and local government should restrict themselves from utilizing religion for any political purposes, however well-intended it may be. In short, Jefferson and Madison do not want political strife or religious feuds to spill over into another sphere. Whatever contention there may be within one sphere, it should remain there.

Overall, religion can be utilized for its ability to forbid doubts and questions against basic values of republican virtues and democratic practices. Tocqueville had this point right—liberty cannot rule without religion, for faith in liberty in itself has a religious dimension and can be harmed by incessant debates. Moreover, in each human mind, a supreme authority should still be installed—if not the government in this life, which is prone to corruption, then God Almighty in the afterlife. People should also exercise the art of association in daily life at a local level, and religion is the best incentive for such exercises. If people do not have the habit of associating with each other for their own salvation from eternal perdition, they might not associate much with others to defend their political rights or to promote civic goals and charitable causes. Protestantism, in other words, is the best way to lead citizens to cultivate democratic instincts and mentalities in preparation for political events.
Chapter III

Evangelical Belief and Political Trust

This chapter will first clarify who evangelicals are, before the benefits and negative consequences of evangelical influences in politics are analyzed and the major causes of distrust of the government are explored. Such a lack of political trust in an increasingly liberal and neutral age, as represented by shifting images of the government, is qualified by the way it is a political issue, rather than a religious one. At the heart of this distrust lies the tension between a republican notion of citizenship and a vision of the U.S. opposed to a more neutral and universal version of democratic citizenship.

Who Are Evangelicals?

Serious Christian historians define the “evangelical” as both a movement and a particular group. The movement was started by early Pietists in the late 17th and early 18th century. For those in the English world, the first and most renowned evangelists to come to mind are the Wesley brothers (Bebbington 2008). The Wesley brothers focused their efforts on furthering a methodical way of living a Christian life prescribed in the Bible. What characterized the Methodist movement was their emphasis on outreach, especially to the lower, and often the lowest, social strata— the drunkards, illiterates, those who had little and knew little. This is the common mark that distinguishes evangelical sects from other traditions.

Overall there are four characteristics that define evangelicals. For research purposes, I adopt David Bebington’s definition, and label any Protestant group that fits these characteristics as “evangelical” (Bebbington 2008). Though his definitions were created for evangelicals in Britain, the following beliefs characterize evangelicals from the British Methodists in the 1770s to modern fundamentalists in the U.S. today:
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A. Conversionism: The pressing need for personal conversion to accept eternal salvation. This emphasis is often phrased as being “Re-born” or having experiences of “Re-birth.”

B. Biblicalism: A serious and high regard for Biblical authority. Literal interpretation is not necessary, but the Bible is treated as the ultimate authority and a record of the voice of God.

C. Crucicentrism: The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the central teaching and functions as the appeal to the believers and unbelievers alike.

D. Activism: Active and continual efforts are invested in furthering the presence of the gospel. Evangelicals regard such efforts as sharing the gospel.

Evangelicals, in plain terms, are active Christians, who take the initiative to share their faith to others. In Christian Smith’s term, any Protestant who preaches Jesus Christ to others is an evangelical (Smith 1998, 2000). Evangelicals do not have to be fundamentalists, who are actually a minority. Most evangelicals are not theologically conservative (which often leads to a literal interpretation of Bible), but do regard Bible as the ultimate authority, a record of God’s speaking (Smith 1998, 2000; Wilcox 2005). That does not mean that they necessarily support government intervention in deciding such private matters, but they do prefer social conventions remain to complement their values. After all, evangelicals already distrust this world of flesh—the more liberal the state of affairs becomes, the more distrusting evangelicals feel in response.

Tractable Shortcomings—Why Religiosity in Politics Is Still Beneficial

It is important for groups in the political arena to stand for their values because values cannot be compromised even though policies can. Different values can and should clash in the
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process of deliberation, but interest groups learn to tolerate the existence of opposite values, build consensus and make reasonable compromises. Surveys have shown that the longer Christian Right activists are in politics, the more willing they are to make compromises on finalized policies (Wilcox 2005).

Political participation generates two effects (Wilcox 2005). Those who have become capable of making compromises on technical issues stay in politics. Those who insist on furthering a moral agenda only and are not willing to separate moral principles from technical issues, either leave the political arena or never enter into politics. If activists stay active in the political arena for more than ten years, their insistence on “One correct Christian view” will drop from close to 60% to 32% (Wilcox 2005). Thus, overall, evangelical participation in politics is beneficial. Evangelical and Christian Right activists learn to negotiate and compromise with their opponents.

In a procedural republic like the U.S., participation is more likely to be beneficial than detrimental. If participation occurs, ideas of all camps are defended and do not appear flabby and weak due to complacency and lack of challenge (Mill 2009). Also, each party needs to carefully weigh their agenda, their interests and the consequences of each of their courses of action. As political participation takes place, evangelicals adopt a more tolerant attitude to opposing values and become more willing to be flexible on policies.

Two characteristics evangelical Protestants have may invite criticism; however, such criticism in the media may be exaggerated. Evangelicals, as Smith observes, often appear to be a group that possesses a strong sense of moral superiority and urgency to evangelize others (Smith 2000). Any active and vocal group in the political sphere has such characteristics, and groups
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such as Emily’s List or ACLU demonstrate similar traits in their propaganda. When groups on
the Left attack reasonable proposals put forth by groups on the Right, they behave in exactly the
same manner. They believe that their attacks are morally justified based on their values’
superiority and what they believe is the good news to be received by all, which is what the
Gospel represents for evangelicals.

What makes evangelicals an easy target for attack is their willingness to express less
tolerance for opposing values (Smith 2000; Wilcox 2005). Evangelicals, as Wilcox shows, are
more willing to believe that there is no need to tolerate opposing ideas they view as wrong. In
NES 2004, Wilcox found that 48% of the Core White Evangelicals (the most religious and active
evangelicals) agreed that they “Don’t need to tolerate those with opposite values,” 30% higher
than the rate among average Americans. This can be interpreted as a sign of moral complacency,
which is bad for political negotiations and the real reason why an evangelical stance in politics is
problematic. Such a stance may have more to do with the lack of political education for there are
more evangelicals prone to take technical issues as moral and ethical than members of similar
attitudes in other groups. Political participation is an educational process and can make more
evangelicals flexible in policy crafting and savvy in articulating ideas that possess an universal
appeal.

Causes of Distrust

As they are portrayed in media, evangelicals in reality are not the most politically
expressive and savvy group. When they express their distrust of “dominant culture” or “the
World,” they disapprove of many social trends simultaneously. They each of their courses of
action. As political participation takes place, evangelicals adopt a may not articulate such ideas
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well enough to build consensus with possible allies on the Left. At least 5 plausible causes may lead to higher distrust of the government among evangelicals.

1. Calvinist Legacy

Evangelicals inherit the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, as shown in their the need to discover the “sons of peace,” who have been designated for redemption through evangelization. If predestined salvation is not important, there is no pressing need to proclaim the Good News worldwide. Weber’s detailed analysis of Calvinism complements Tocqueville’s discussion in diary entries. Weber, in *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, concludes that there are three crucial components in the Calvinist creed and the doctrine of other Protestant sects influenced by Calvinism:

a. Transcendentality of God: God is not just an all-loving Jesus, an all-understanding Father and an omnipresent Holy Spirit. God, as emphasized in Calvinism, is an eternal being beyond human conception that predestines all things. The transcendentality of God is what the Doctrine of Predestination highlights. God is so mysteriously powerful that He can arrange all things beforehand in a manner conducive to allow all events to take place the way they do. As the powerful and all-wise architect, He also has the full knowledge of each course of action in His design. This component heightens a sense of insecurity among believers, for it is impossible for humans to attain full knowledge of God in this life. This also means that only God, the glorious eternal being that lives in unapproachable light, is the ultimate confidant worthy of trust in this life. The sovereignty of this invisible God is the only trustworthy matter in this universe.

b. Importance of Individuals: As much as the Puritanical creed and atmosphere resulted in religious oppression against dissenters (often ending in expulsion), the respect of each
individual rose dramatically, compared to attitudes in the Old World. Every believer was an appointed heir of salvation and thus upheld a notion of equality before law (the law of God), as well as in the political affairs in the dominion of the true Church. This was a revolutionary step toward a truly democratic rule of law—though shrouded in religious lingo and atmosphere.

The most influential change wrought by this religious atmosphere was the rise of an individual work ethic. Each person is no longer measured according to birth and social privileges attached to lineages, but rather according to each one’s own work. Work is considered a measure against sinful nature, a path that leads each believer to actualize individual redemption and the medium that brings forth the confirmation of salvation in the afterlife—earthly wealth (Weber 2005). Thus, work and the individual work ethic began to be exulted; indolence in any form was despised. Everyone has equal opportunity to work and demonstrate individual worth based on their work ethic. Citizenship is tied to self-reliance and individual accountability. Individual participation in politics, which is regarded as a moral obligation (just as work is ethical), becomes highly valued. This is the foundation of the notion of republican citizenship in the U.S.—each person works to further his or her own pursuit of happiness and participates in politics in person. As Tocqueville observed, the most honored part of this worldview was the individual work ethic (Tocqueville 2000). While individuals realized their own pursuit of happiness, government is an instrument that may help only occasionally. In short, the rise of the Puritan work ethic (and its immediate secularized derivatives) implied that government is not an absolute necessity in the pursuit of individual dreams and happiness.

c. Individual Consent: It may seem ironic that a sect that emphasized predestination also valued individual consent. If everything is predestined, consent should be unimportant. The Puritans did not advocate for eternal security, that salvation is given once and for all, which
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dominate current theology. Because salvation is strictly individual, unless a person expressly consents to receive redemption, no one is sure that particular person is an heir of salvation. Predestination is only fulfilled in this life when one voices his or her consent.

The emphasis on consent reinforces the prominence of the individual work ethic—if one consents to enter into God’s chosen community, one should work to remain qualified for such a privilege. The political implication is that citizenship is a privilege and the qualification to deserve such a privilege must be maintained through individual effort (Sandel 1996). A more profound implication is that individual citizens define the worth of citizenship, just as individual believers define the quality of the chosen church (Mill 2009). Government is an instrument for citizens, whose quality also decides the quality of the representative government.

A contextual factor to remember is that evangelism is historically tied with republicanism and a republican notion of citizenship (Sandel 1996). Republicanism and a republican notion of citizenship, of course, are not straightforward terms. What they are is a complicated question that deserves its own paper. For the purpose of this discussion, however, Sandel’s view of republicanism and republican citizenship as follows will suffice. Republicanism is a family of political narratives that emphasize the need for civic virtues and self-government; however, such a focus never implies that the form of government must be democratic. Republican governments range from aristocratic rulers in Venice, the theocracy in Geneva during Calvin’s tenure, and the military government of ancient Sparta. However, republicanism in the U.S. often implies an urgent need for local citizens to decide their own policies and retain their revenue. That is, American republicanism often exhibits a tendency toward decentralization and advocacy of a weaker federal government.
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The notion of citizenship connected with this tendency toward decentralization strongly emphasizes self-government, self-reliance and individual accountability. Citizens are expected to be active, willing to participate in political affairs and to hold each official’s personal and public conduct accountable to the ethical standards the government is expected to represent. The self-reliance component of this view implies relative economic equality—citizens should be able to stay financially independent and the earning gap between social classes is assumed to be relatively small. Evangelism, influenced by Calvinism, has been especially connected with a republican notion of citizenship. It is little wonder that most evangelicals are politically conservative and prefer the Republican Party’s appeals based on individual liberty, rather than many of the Democratic Party’s aspirations to egalitarianism.

2. The Neutral Court

Sandel’s Democracy’s Discontent gives a detailed depiction of how the rise of neutrality in legal interpretation and the notion of “procedural republic” have eliminated the civic dimension of political discourse. His extensive discussion of how neutrality in the rule of law affects religious policy sheds much light on my topic. Sandel’s book is a narrative of decline, the decline of republican citizenship and a communitarian democracy. Amongst all the signs of decadence, the decline of the notion of freedom of conscience is the most prominent feature. The rise of a voluntarist view of religious freedom, which assumes an unencumbered self, in Court opinions may be another major cause that explains Evangelical distrust in government.

The Supreme Court has moved away from the notion of republican citizenship and laws as norms to help inculcate virtues, to a more liberal vision of citizenship that views laws as the basic norms that uphold universal, minimal and neutral principles. In the process, freedom of conscience has lost prominence in the Court’s case opinions. In Reynolds v. U.S., the Court
Evangelical Protestants and Political Trust emphasized that monogamy is more conducive to virtuous citizenship, and that freedom of conscience only pertains to belief, not to harmful acts, such as bigamy. In *Thornton v. Caldor Inc.*, the Court ruled that the right for Jewish employees to designate a day off for religious reasons violates equality and freedom of choice. Namely, the Court has gradually moved toward attaining neutrality in dealing with every religion and non-religious set of beliefs. The Court no longer regards itself as an institution to safeguard citizens’ virtue through indirect means, but rather as a rational reviewer to assure neutrality in the application of the Constitution.

This tectonic shift in legal philosophy is beyond the technicality of framing the freedom of religion. The focus of religious liberty has shifted from self-government to self-expression. Freedom of religion has come to be regarded, as Sandel implies, as another form of freedom of speech, as the Court moves away from the notion of freedom of conscience. Individuals are no longer assumed to be compelled by personal conscience and social obligations to practice a certain faith. Instead, individuals are assumed to voluntarily choose to adopt one religious view or another, somewhat like adhering to a political party, in an unencumbered manner. This shift in depicting individuals as unencumbered and rational choosers has broad implications. First, such a shift may ignore the webs of relationships and social obligations one has. To assume that rational choices can be made in an unencumbered manner is irrational in itself. Second, freedom of choice, the voluntarist view, leaves too much leeway for the government to define neutrality.

To assume that one has a right to express one’s choice freely, a high degree of neutrality must be maintained beforehand. That is, freedom of choice requires an impartial arbiter. By definition, government, the convergence of every group’s and citizen’s interests, is the most neutral institution on earth. Letting government define neutrality, however, is just another way to limit the freedom of religion and speech. Such an act allows government to exercise implicit
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censorship (to silence minority views) and suffocates liberty of thought. If the government
becomes a quasi-religious, half-sacred institution, a symbol of fairness and neutrality in this
world, it can only be bested by God Almighty in the afterlife.

The real political issue at stake, as Sandel states, is self-government v. self-expression. The right to self-expression is easy to safeguard, but the ability of self-government is difficult to maintain. Freedom of conscience is much more akin to self-government for it assumes that there are moral and social obligations one has to follow. Freedom of choice, on the contrary, assumes the image of an unencumbered self. Choice implies personal rights only, while conscience implies both personal rights and the ensuing obligations. Therefore, in the age of free-willed and unencumbered individuals, freedom of conscience has gradually been forgotten. Rights, not obligation, are the dominant concept in the present political discourse. The freedom to fulfill obligations of conscience is fading away from public discourse.

The rise of a neutral court is just a signal of an ongoing trend. Evangelical Protestants may feel threatened by a government that starts to emphasize neutrality and equality more and more. This is not to say that the government is a deadly threat, but evangelicals are aware that a representative government stands for the majority opinion, which often expresses itself in the dominant culture.

Diversity in the U.S. increases, and the government, to represent such a diverse nation, starts to emphasize neutrality as the basis for freedom of choice. The notion of citizenship based on a set of neutral values, is often called liberal or democratic citizenship. Such a notion of citizenship does not assume the need to define virtues, unlike the republican notion of citizenship does. The Left is historically more friendly to a notion of democratic citizenship and, therefore,
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supports such a trend. The Right (many of them evangelicals) still adheres to a more republican notion of citizenship (self-government, self-reliance and individual accountability and obligations). Evangelicals especially do so because their heritage and doctrines emphasize individual accountability for every action in this life. To them, accountability not only remains binding in this life, but its effects also extend well into eternity (Sandel 1996).

3. An Ever-Thinner Wall of Separation

Madison and Jefferson never mentioned neutrality, only due obligation to maintain a necessary separation of church and state. At least they did not regard maintaining neutrality as an absolute necessity because both were brilliant statesmen and architects of the early Republic. They knew that it is impossible for a representative government to remain neutral in any decision-making process. The best thing the government can do for citizens is to leave citizens alone, as exemplified by the non-establishment policy in the First Amendment regarding religion. To them, even claiming what is neutral and what is not is dangerous. The best course of action, paradoxically, is non-action, for Madison “non-establishment” (Madison 1785) and for Jefferson a “Wall of Separation” (Jefferson 1802).

The term the “Wall of Separation” comes from a letter that Jefferson wrote in 1802 to a group of ministers. In it Jefferson reaffirmed his stance, as the President of the Republic, to uphold the non-establishment policy. He assumes the government is to refrain from any action in the sphere of religion so that both government and religion can be saved from the undesirable misery of the Old World. Jefferson’s assumption echoes that of Madison and Tocqueville—all three of them agree that the union of government and religion tends to destroy government by fostering tyrannical rule and a hypocritical political culture. Such a union also degrades religion
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with too many political compromises and relegates religion to serve mundane purposes only. This wall requires non-action for both religious and political institutions toward each other.

The first piece of the “Wall of Separation” is temperance on the part of religious institutions. Religious institutions should restrain themselves from making political comments in an explicit manner. As Tocqueville keenly observed, American ministers tried not to make political comments or endorsements. By doing so, ministers attained greater freedom to influence politics in an indirect manner. For instance, they could pray on behalf of the Polish people for Biblical reasons without making such prayer political. Yet, such a public prayer in itself generates political effects and in reality functions as a comment on international affairs. In other words, pastors can make social commentary based strictly on Biblical reasoning and wording, but anything beyond this is a breach on the “Wall of Separation.”

The second piece of the wall is non-interference. Government should simply stay out of religious affairs, unless there is a civil offense. Religion’s greatest power is to direct and regulate human passion, while government’s purpose is to achieve the most reasonable political, legal arrangement for the land. Once the two institutions intermingle, tyranny unavoidably arises. Even Locke emphasizes the futility of civil magistrates intervening religious affairs. Civil laws are only effective for matters of this life and can never truly alter one’s obligation to his or her Creator (Locke 2003).

Part of the reasoning behind the distrust among evangelicals for government may derive from a sense of insecurity that the “Wall of Separation” is disappearing. In reality, they are right. In recent years, there are problematic signs that signal this Wall is thinning in the public discourse; both the Left and the Right are equally guilty.
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Some ministers on the Right may be guilty of publicly endorsing conservative values not in a strictly Biblical manner, which is highly politicized, especially during elections. Political organizations (especially PACs) on the Right are also guilty for contacting pastors to submit member lists (Wilcox 2005). Such actions undermine the strength and legitimacy of religion, and give a wrong impression that God sides with Republicans. The most harmful acts, as Wilcox points out, are pastors publicly endorsing Republican candidates who advocate for conservative values. These actions also undermine Biblical authority, for if the God who has spoken through Bible has sided with the Republicans, such a partisan book is not worth reading.

While the Right is undermining their own credibility, the Left also has become more forgetful of the usefulness of religion. Organizations such as ACLU tends to advocate for complete neutrality in political discourse so that every group feels politically comfortable. Evangelical Protestantism and Christian expression is useful because they enshrine basic democratic and republican values. Religion places certain values beyond the constant debates and incessant doubts that critical reasoning inevitably introduces (Sandel 1996; Tocqueville 2000). Once such values are enshrined in religion, the citizenry can focus on setting the most reasonable agenda, instead of engaging in endless quibbles.

The thinning Wall of Separation may be another major cause of distrust. Its causes are complicated and the trend may be irreversible. Evangelicals express in media their distrust in the representative government that represents this particular trend. They actually mean to put forth a vital political argument, although, perhaps, too often in an awkward manner.
4. Rising Tolerance of the Unthinkable

In a procedural republic, unless a crime is civil, that is, explicitly harming others and menacing the liberty of the absolute majority, all actions are tolerable. Tolerance for what was unthinkable in the 1950’s has risen dramatically. Abortion, gay-marriage and pre-marital sex are no longer regarded as taboo, rather just as politically charged topics. I will only use the change in the attitude toward pre-marital sex as an illustration, for there has been copious research written on the other two issues.

In *Century of Difference*, Claude and Fischer in Figure 4.12 show that among the most conservative of all groups, conservative Protestants, attitudes toward premarital sex have softened since the 1970’s. From about 20% of conservative Protestants thinking “nothing wrong” of the practice, in three decades, the rate rose to about 25%. The change among mainline Protestants is even more dramatic. The tolerance rate rose from about 23% to well above 30%.

Rising tolerance for matters directly contradicting Biblical values can also make evangelicals nervous and distrusting. Given that the government stands for the dominant culture, this trend can be another reason for distrusting the government’s ability to uphold wholesome morality. After all, the government has gradually shifted its rhetoric from cultivating civic virtues to asserting equality of legal rights and neutrality. Rising tolerance for non-civil behaviors should not be a surprise to evangelicals and their rising sense of insecurity. Tocqueville observed that democracies tend to embrace pantheistic ideas (a more cosmopolitan worldview) that is most neutral to diverse social groups (Tocqueville 2000). This cosmopolitan trend of diversity perhaps is what alarms evangelicals the most.
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5. Fragmentation of Communities and the Rise of Individualism

To evangelical Protestants, the most alarming sign that inspires distrust in government may be the fragmentation of communities. The government may not have publicly endorsed this trend, but it has played an indirect role in furthering lifestyle arrangements not conducive to civic associations. In past decades, the government has often encouraged suburbanization, a popular trend after World War II (Putnam 2000). Suburbanization and urban sprawl fosters the nightmare of a free people, individualism. If at Tocqueville’s time, local community and associations were still strong, today we do not enjoy the same checks against nihilistic individualism. Individualism drains citizens’ energy from promoting public and social good, and redirects such efforts to furnish private life instead (Tocqueville 2000). One is only responsible to keep a good life within one’s property boundary. All the rest are secondary concerns, even the public good and eternal salvation (Putnam 2000; Tocqueville 2000).

It is little wonder that evangelicals distrust the culture derived from suburbanization and the government that indirectly accelerated the fragmentation of communities. They know that a republican and communitarian government is more conducive to the continuation of religious communities. Mass urban sprawl and the rise of individualistic culture supported by a more democratic form of government naturally inspires distrust among evangelicals.

In *Bowling Alone* Putnam succinctly summarizes how religion is the cradle of civic virtue. In *American Grace*, Putnam and Campbell further highlight the importance of religious association. Those who are active in religious networks are also much more likely to participate in civic or political associations. Citizens who do not associate with others on behalf of their eternal salvation are less likely to associate with others to promote a good cause in this world. In
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general, as their research shows, the highly religious are at least 150% more likely to participate in three or more groups, and participate in political or civic associations. Tocqueville’s terse observation is confirmed: religion indeed facilitates the use of liberty.

As beneficial as evangelical Protestantism is, the problem is that community building takes time. Communities in the latter part of the previous century tended to fragment faster than the rate at which they formed. Not only families and civic associations suffered, religious communities suffered as well. If the pace of church planting and urban development were about even, the Protestant population would have grown much faster. In fact, according to the Religious Landscape Survey conducted in 2008 by Pew Forum on Religious and Public Life, the Protestant population has become a thin majority, 51.6% of the total population. While no one would expect that the rate should remain an absolutely dominant majority, it is remarkable that it is no more than a thin majority if the growth rate of church membership corresponds to the population growth.

What exactly has happened? Putnam in Bowling Alone has proposed three factors: TV, suburbanization and tertiary association. The worst enemy against the good habits of association is suburbanization, a lifestyle of prosperity. The increase of spatial distance between home and work is the primary factor that limits available time for active private and civic association. Half of the nation lives in suburbs. The resulting commute time takes away one to two hours a day and plenty of energy from Americans who want to associate with others in their neighborhood. This is a factor that churches live with, especially suburban churches.

On top of commuting time, TV takes away the best hours left for the Americans, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., if respondents watch TV. Most people exercise good restraint on TV viewing,
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but one to an hour and half per day of TV further eliminates time for civic and religious associations. What churches have to fight against are TV and, now, other online entertainment options.

The mentality of tertiary association is also detrimental to religious association. Primary association is the association among members of a family, extended family, religious communities, or members of other traditional institutions. Secondary associations, also known as “professional associations,” are relationships formed at work. Both of these associations foster civic and religious activism because they are based on human interactions. Tertiary association is impersonal and useless in fostering interpersonal and civic skills. One simply pays the member fees and becomes a card-carrying member of advocate groups. The rise of this pattern of association is a sign of individualistic mentality rising to prominence. Individuals can gain rights by paying a desirably minimal fee.

In *Bowling Alone*, Putnam shows that attendance to religious services is lower among young people precisely for this reason—because young people are just as religious as their parents. They, however, have not formed the habit of primary association. Since World War II, as figure 12 shows, church membership has also declined according to Gallup poll, from 75% to 68%. This slight change showed a generational shift (after the Greatest Generation, people went to church less) and the rise of privatized and individualistic conceptions of faith. Such conceptions of faith require loose affiliation without obliging believers to conduct serious and continual commitments.
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Primary Source: George Müller and His Faith in Providence

Faith in an all-benevolent God in the afterlife can generate a profound sense of trust. George Muller an example that shows how faith in the divine can make government in this life irrelevant. Admittedly there is a difference between increasing distrust and making trust in government a trivial matter in comparison to the afterlife. The first scenario increases discretion among the citizenry; the second simply means that evangelicals may care less about politics. At worst, they may even become apathetic. That is to say that evangelism may not bear a direct relationship in increasing distrust in the government, but it heightens the frequencies of one’s choice in trusting in God’s sovereignty instead of the government’s potential to be good.

As I mentioned in the introduction, George Müller is a famous leader among the Open Brethrens (Müller 1984). Müller is most famous for his charity efforts and his audacity in founding orphanages while he had little means. All his life, he was renowned for strictly relying on prayer in all matters, from his own stipend and daily food to the revenue of institutions under his direction. Müller’s trusting attitude in Providence and complete disregard of human and governmental agency is why his case is instructive.

To evangelicals, he was an epitome of living on God’s promise. In retrospect, he happened to utilize the power of Christian willingness to do charity and sponsor progressive efforts in the name of their faith, especially at the height of the industrial age (Müller lived from 1805-1898). Both views of Müller are true. Objectively, an industrial society allows individuals, especially middle and lower-middle class employees, to invest part of their disposable income in progressive endeavors. Also, social scientists, especially historians, would say that governments in the 19th century were mostly in charge of war, commerce and postal services only. Müller
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found the process of waiting for timely aid a lifelong trial of faith, as do many heads of charity organizations today. The only difference is that Müller was more religious than many of today’s charity CEOs. The force that ultimately allocated the money or material to Müller at miraculously the right time is beyond any scientific inquiry. Regardless, his state of mind shows how evangelical faith can make a person completely disregard the importance of all human agency in this life and turn to God Almighty’s timely provision from the other world.

In an excerpt from his diary, Müller concludes with an affirmative statement concerning his lifestyle (solely relying on the timely provision according to God’s sovereignty):

Some may say that such a way of life leads a Christian away from the Lord and from caring about spiritual things. They say it may cause the mind to be occupied with questions like, ‘What shall I eat, what shall I drink and what shall I wear?’ I have experienced both ways and know that my present manner of living by trusting God for temporal things is connected with less care... In this freedom I am able to say, ‘My Lord is not limited. He knows my present situation and he can supply all I need,’...living by faith alone in God keeps my heart in perfect peace. This way of living has often revived the work of grace in my heart...It is not possible to live in sin, and at the same time, by communion with God, draw down from heaven everything one needs for this life. Frequently, a fresh answer to prayer quickens my soul and fills me with great joy (Müller 1984).

In this passage written on Jan 28th in 1830, Müller exhibited all the characteristics discussed earlier in this chapter. This passage shows an elevated state of mind and stronger emphasis on an upright lifestyle, for this life determines the connection with God Almighty in the next one.

Lastly, the latent implication is that Müller believed God would mobilize everything, mostly His believers, to supply his needs and those of his institutions. After all, God has to pay for what he started through His own agents. God is the initiator of everything good and the ultimate confidante in the times of trial.
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Müller stands apart from many CEOs of other charity organizations for he fully trusts in God’s sovereignty and does not mention government aid or subsidies. Nowhere in his whole diary, which ended in 1860, did he emphasize or barely mention any extensive fund raising efforts. Müller shows more concern for communion with God in the other world and a lifestyle in faith, rather than caring for mundane necessities in this life. He trusted divine sovereignty much more than human agency, be it governmental aid or private efforts for fund raising. Governmental help, or any trust in government became irrelevant to him — for they were all part of God’s sovereign predestination, which in time would take place according to his prayers. Müller’s focus was the glorification of God through receiving timely and anonymous aid in faith, right in this life. To a devout evangelist living on faith like Müller, the government, the supreme authority in this world, simply became irrelevant and untrustworthy.

Conclusion

The real question at stake is what kind of citizenship and nation do evangelicals support. As all facts have shown, the majority of them tend to support the conservative policies because the majority of evangelicals are socially conservative. That is, evangelical values are much closer to those of Republican citizenship.

Evangelicals distrust the government because they do not believe in government’s ability to be good. To them, humans individually have the ability to be good and promote good through divine redemption and participation in religious community. The government, an institution for secular needs, is far from glorifying God and beyond the cure of individual redemption. The government is not bad or evil, just untrustworthy.
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It is hard to imagine how serious evangelicals, whose religious values are close to communitarian and republican virtues, can believe in a government representing and managing a nation with fragmenting communities, including religious ones. Protestants, who believe in the afterlife in a personalized and serious manner, have good reasons to distrust a government following current trends. A republic forgetting the meaning of republican citizenship, a government inching toward “neutrality (which never exists),” fragmenting communities and the rising tolerance of the unthinkable only inspire further distrust among evangelicals. Such trends compose a bleak and declining narrative, which only inspires further distrust in this life, especially in government and the dominant culture.
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Chapter IV

Conclusion—The Political Influence of a Religion of the Afterlife

In the past sixty pages, how an evangelical belief in the afterlife can weaken trust in government has been discussed. The exact mechanism of declining trust is subtle, for the belief in the afterlife might inspire outright distrust or just make government a less relevant matter in the pursuit of eternal glory. This chapter summarizes the previous discussions and transitions the focus to the empirical findings in the National Election Study 2004. After all, a theoretical discussion does not constitute a full account of this scientific inquiry.

First, from Weber and Tocqueville, we learn that religion is part of the constant state of affairs. Disbelief in a higher power is temporary, for all natural and scientific signs indicate that there are many powers higher than the operation of human reasoning, as precious as it seems to mankind (Tocqueville 2000). Religion is an absolute necessity, especially in the earlier stages of human society, because only religion possesses the capacity to give a full narrative with rich meanings to explain the universe (Durkheim 1995; Weber 1946). This fact still stands true today, except that many religious narratives have been rejected due to the excessive number of superstitious components that they contain. This is a natural result of rationalization and does not render religion less powerful in endowing human understanding with ethical meanings. Superstition and less rational arrangements gradually fade away, and faith only becomes more powerful because of its exclusive focus on the unknowable matters, such as the afterlife, meanings of life on earth, death, the purpose of human existence and time.

Second, from Weber’s Protestant Work Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, we learn that an ardent belief in the afterlife may make matters of this life less important and more transient. It
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was so in the eyes of Puritans and their ideological descendents. Calvinism, in the form of
Puritanism, increases individual incentive to work more, save more, reinvest more, and moderate
desire for consumable goods. The Puritans did such things because wealth on earth is a
confirmation of divine salvation.

This picture of hard working Protestants differs from to hard working Chinese who
believed in Confucianism. The Chinese also have a reputation of industriousness, but
Confucianism does not purport a firm belief in the afterlife. Protestants (from the Puritans to
devout evangelicals today) live earthly lives to make their existence in the next world meaningful.
This strong sense of belonging to the next world means that all earthly things, however good, are
not trustworthy. If only eternal life and everlasting glory are worthy end goals, even governments
are just transient phenomena. However enlightened a government or a church may be, its days
will pass and its best qualities fade into memory. Providence, God’s predestination and wisdom,
is the only trustworthy objective in this universe. Thus, God is the ultimate authority and
confidant to turn to, not the government. Ultimately, believers live on earth to glorify and praise
the wisdom of God’s predestination. God’s wise sovereignty is trustworthy, unlike that of
transient human agencies.

The most vulgar of all things is human government, the conglomerate of all political
interests that sway mundane affairs. Given that government most of the time does not glorify
God (churches have enough difficulties doing so), there are even fewer reasons to trust it. All
have sinned, falling short of the glory of God. Government, if not upholding values close to
Protestant values, is even more likely to provoke distrust among evangelicals. Evangelical
Protestants may use the government instrumentally in fighting for their policies on some issues.
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There are benefits of evangelical distrust for government. In a state labeled by political scientists as liberal, political discourse starts with the assumption that government is prone to act selfishly and incur undesirable consequences at the expense of its citizens. Bureaucracies, especially large ones such as governments, are nations within nations. They pursue their own interest, as Rousseau discussed in “The Social Contract” (Rousseau 1987). If citizens are not alert to defend their own rights, the substantial enjoyment of their rights may be swallowed up little by little by bureaucratic and legal procedures.

It is healthy to have a thriving religion that enshrines values which portray the government as untrustworthy. It is beneficial that such a religion trains citizens not to trust anything in this temporary world, especially in politics. This training makes citizens possess the basic level of distrust against government which is required to promote voluntary associations, especially political ones. General distrust in this world is also helpful, for political procedures change often for technical reasons—most of the news in politics is merely phenomenal and less factual in nature than the public may think.

The negative consequence of an evangelical belief that results in distrust in government may be the spillover of moralistic attitude in political dialogue. Politics, as Weber points out in “Politics as a Vocation,” specializes in two parts, the bureaucratic and the charismatic. Neither part necessarily requires moral excellence, but both rely on the successful execution of many technical details. Such a spillover often results in evangelical voters’ inflexibility to make policy compromises, which the voters on the Left might be more willing to make. On issues such as access to birth control or abortion, or even sex education, moralistic tones in dialogue only alienate potential allies on the Left.
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However, since Evangelicals may trust government less to start with, this shortcoming is surmountable. Active citizens, who are conscious of their own political interests, do not want to rely on the government’s goodwill. They eventually find the right allies through a series of failed associations. Since conservatives tend to be better at the art of associations (they go to church more and participate in more civic and religious groups), the educational power of political participation should be able to take care of this inflexibility.

It is healthy to distrust the government, or Tocqueville’s nightmare, in which every citizen embraces the bureaucratic tyranny of mediocrity, can arise (Tocqueville 2000). When the government of a large nation does everything for its people, citizens lose ability to exercise self-government. When Individualism reigns, such a tyranny arises. Tocqueville keenly observed that religion enshrined the most necessary democratic instincts and institutionally enhanced the art of association at the local level. The utility of religion, aside from elevating human minds, is to place basic and useful political assumptions beyond daily debate. Evangelism serves to place distrust against government beyond such debates. Without this distrust, the bureaucratic despotism becomes the reigning force. The Spirit of Liberty thrives along with the Spirit of Religion, but so does its demise.
Chapter 5

Empirical Tests

My theoretical inquiry has indicated that evangelicals trust everything on earth less, especially the government’s power to do good. Compared to Providence, which they think has wisely predestined everything in this life, all else become less trustworthy. Government is not necessarily evil, nor does it lack the ability to perform good works. Before God almighty, nevertheless, even one of the most enlightened liberal democracies pales in trustworthiness. In my empirical test, I found that evangelicals trust their fellow citizens more and the federal government less than non-evangelicals do. I employed two models in my regression test and showed that the empirical results from National Election Survey 2004 (NES 2004) indeed confirm my theoretical prediction.

Literature Review

Gervais and others have discovered that the often perceived “discrimination” of evangelicals (and conservative Christians) against more liberal groups and atheists and their ideas is due to evangelical distrust of these groups (Gervais et al 2011). This observation illustrates how anti-religious and atheistic ideas inspire distrust among Evangelicals. Such seeming intolerance is a result linked more strongly with distrust rather than dislike. Distrust is based on the idea that people behave better if they believe that God is watching over them. Such findings imply that even the tendency toward religious neutrality, as found in most liberal democratic governments, may inspire distrust among evangelicals.

Putnam and Campbell find that Protestant fundamentalism decreases trust while the church attendance increases trust (Putnam 2010). That is, the networking in religious
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organizations, especially churches, heightens interpersonal trust. Even though Fundamentalists have lower trust than that of fellow evangelicals or mainline Protestants, frequent church attendance suffices to keep their trust in fellow citizens above the national average.

Lewis and Bernardo’s analysis also sheds light on my classification for Protestant denominations (Lewis & Bernardo 2010). They classify evangelical identity into three categories: self-identification only, religious tradition only, or a combination of both religious tradition and self-identification. On the one hand, they find that self-identification as an evangelical is a useful indicator of party affiliation, particularly the Republican Party; “self-identification may measure the salience of respondents’ commitment to the political values of evangelicalism” (Lewis & Bernardo 2010). On the other hand, the membership in particular evangelical denominations indicates preferences for certain political issues. Self-identification and membership in evangelical sects together create the most conservative type of evangelicals. The typology in Lewis and Bernardo’s paper captures both the evangelicals in evangelical traditions and mainline Protestant sects. Such a method truly captures the meaning of being “evangelical”: active Christians who engage in the world where they live.

Christian Smith points out that evangelicals are not more intolerant than average Americans in most issues. Based on their faith, they prefer not to have unconventional (especially atheistic and anti-religious) ideas around them, such as atheist or Communist books. In the 1996 General Social Survey, close to half of the self-identified evangelicals did not want anti-religious and homosexual authors’ books in public libraries. This indicates that their willingness to exercise censorship was at least 10% higher than those of average Americans at the time. This result might be due to the framing effect (how questions were asked). If the General Social Survey had asked about nationwide censorship, the answer might have been
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different. In terms of belief in equality and cultural assimilation, evangelicals score higher than other Christians and average Americans (Smith 2000).

In fact, in the same survey, evangelicals especially disliked the idea of excessive government control. For instance, military government (the military ruling the nation) was a highly unpopular idea: 50% of Evangelicals wanted to remove any book that advocated a military government in public libraries, which is 10% higher than the opposition among average Americans. Sixty-two percent of evangelicals opposed advocates for a military government teaching at universities, which is 15% higher than that of average Americans. Evangelicals, much as they dislike unconventional practices and ideas against Biblical values, are the staunchest champions of democratic government (Smith 2000).

Theory

The empirical part of this project was based on statistical analysis of the National Election Study 2004. The diagram below shows my model:

My own theory for this model is that evangelical identity instills distrust of overarching authorities. Evangelicals may distrust the federal government more than non-evangelicals, since they already hold less trust for authorities and distrust any earthly institution that cannot be transformed by individual salvation. I hoped to find direct relationship between evangelical identity and political trust; if not, I hoped to find interpersonal trust to be a moderator that relates
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both evangelical identity and political trust. Mediation means that evangelical identity by itself might not have any direct interaction or relationship with political trust. It might be only related to political trust through another variable—interpersonal trust.

My justification for the expected findings is based on Tajfel’s reference group theory that explains evangelicals’ distrust through ingroup/outgroup dynamics (Turner et al 1969). Tajfel observed that the mere identity of being an ingroup or outgroup member reinforces the existing favoritism toward group members. The opposite group simply becomes a symbol to reinforce existing stereotypes, myths, and narratives that motivate group members to hold fast their identities based on membership. Lewis and Bernardo (2010) have suggested that evangelical identity may be as foundational as other social identities, such as party affiliation. For evangelicals, the only thing left in the world to trust is the Church, comprised of fellow evangelicals and Christians. The non-evangelicals, due to their lack of “re-birth” experiences, may be temporarily beyond the active operation of salvation and thus appear less trustworthy compared to fellow evangelicals. This may explain why evangelicals, as tests will show, have lower interpersonal trust. Thus, evangelicals appear more trustworthy among themselves, while they trust non-evangelicals less. Government is not a member of the evangelical community predestined by God and thus appears untrustworthy as well. My first regression test investigated whether evangelism lowers interpersonal trust and reference group theory confirms my prediction.

I expected to find that interpersonal trust is a moderating factor. To confirm my prediction, I conducted a linear regression test of two stages. In the first stage, I tested the relationship between evangelical identity (the independent variable) with interpersonal trust (the dependent variable), controlling for other factors (political ideology, marital status, income, race,
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education, and gender). Afterwards, in the second stage, I then placed interpersonal trust among the control variables and tested the relationship between evangelical identity and trust in the government (political trust). The model in the first stage is Model I, and the one in the second stage is Model II. The comparison group for both regression models is non-evangelicals.

**Methodology**

I selected following variables as the dependent variables in each model: interpersonal trust (whether the respondents thinks that most people can be trusted) for the first model and trust in the government (whether one trusts the federal government in D.C.) for the second model. The independent variable in both statistical models was evangelical identity. I created two versions of each regression model in the test—one comprehensive with all the control variables, one parsimonious, only with the significant independent and control variables. In this discussion, I will only show the parsimonious version, excluding all insignificant factors.

I have selected typical control variables to hold other factors constant. As my regression models show, many of these variables become insignificant because they either are irrelevant or measure the same phenomena as the significant ones do. The control variables are as follows: marital status, race, gender, income, party affiliation, political ideology (conservative or liberal), importance of religion, education, attendance, attending religious services more than once a week, major religious denominations and census region. For specific details of recoding, please refer to Table 1 in the Appendix.

My method of recoding for the independent variable, “Evangelical or Not,” is reasonable according to Christian Smith (1998, 2000) and Lewis and Bernardo (2010). To be considered an evangelical, the denomination just needs to have evangelical tendencies. I cross-checked the list
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of denominations used by the Religious Landscape Survey in 2008 and the full list in NES 2004. Generally, I followed the rule that Baptists are more evangelical than Methodists, who are more evangelical than Presbyterians and Congregationalists. I inspected the full list in NES 2004 of all religions denominations and classified Protestants as evangelical or mainline. I then recoded the evangelical sects or sects with Evangelical tendencies as Evangelicals (1) and the rest of the respondents as non-Evangelicals (0) and named that variable “Evangelical or not.” In this process, many mainline Protestant sects appear to show evangelical tendency. As a result, my classification is different from that of Wilcox and the Pew Forum’s Religious Landscape Survey, but it is much in line with Lewis and Bernardo’s idea that self-identification and religious tradition and the combination of both should all be considered. My classification still fits Christian Smith’s definition—evangelicals are just active Christians willing to influence the world by sharing their faith. I will discuss the implication of the difference in the next section.

Data Description

The National Election Study 2004 (NES 2004 from now on) was a cross-sectional study. Its sample pool was all the U.S. eligible voters. The investigators gathered all the data through face to face interviews. It has about 1200 cases from a national survey for my project, depending on the variables in the comparison. The sample size is sound. For a layered crosstab, there is always a desirable sample size; the number of valid cases may drop, but the sample size generally remains above 600. For instance, I created a crosstab between interpersonal trust and “Evangelical or not (to compare both evangelicals and non-evangelicals)”, controlling for church attendance. The sample size is 640 respondents.
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The score for interpersonal trust and political trust are different, due to the original coding in the NES 2004. For interpersonal trust, one either trusts in others (1) or believes that one can never be too careful (0). For political trust, the scoring is more sophisticated. It ranges from Never (0), to Always (3). However, most respondents some of the time (1) or almost always (2) trust the government.

In my test, evangelicals compose 40.6% of the total valid cases in the NES 2004, which has 1056 useable samples. When I control for other factors, such as interpersonal or political trust, the number of valid cases drop, but always remains above 500. The survey’s 40.6% is much higher than the 25.1% reported in the *Religious Landscape Survey* conducted by the Pew Forum on Religious and Public Life in 2008. The *Religious Landscape Survey* had both the self-identification question, “do you identify as an Evangelical or a ‘born-again’ Christian?” and the denominational list. That is, I might have included half of the mainline Protestants with evangelical tendencies in my sample of evangelicals. This classification is loose, and incurs double jeopardy on my models. However, if even this broad measure can render my expected finding, evangelical identity can truly lower political trust.

Before I report my tests and comparisons, I must clarify that being an evangelical does not equate with being a Republican. In fact, “Evangelical or not” and “Party ID” did not pass the independent T-test. In the crosstab for that T-test, evangelicals even have 2% higher distribution in the Independent category. The overall distribution among evangelicals and non-evangelicals are similar, about one third for each category: Republicans, Independents and Democrats.

On the other hand, most evangelicals are conservative, as stereotypes state. “Evangelical or not” and “Political Ideology” passed the T-test relationship at .0001 level significance. The
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crosstab shows that the majority of the conservatives (including the very conservative) groups are evangelicals. Chi-square, Somer’s d and Cramer’s V are all highly significant at least at .05 level. That is, being evangelical or having an evangelical tendency indeed makes one more conservative. Evangelicals, however, do not in particular prefer any party more than non-evangelicals do, but rather base their preference on particular values in the debates. For details concerning this result, please refer to Table 2 in the Appendix.

Further tests showed that this counter-intuitive finding is very reasonable. Among those whose political ideology ranges from Conservative to Moderate, evangelicals are more prone to identify as Independents. These test results together show that even though evangelicals are drawn by conservative appeals, they are the conservatives who are willing to break from any party or specific platforms. This is a distinction between evangelicals and a typical socially conservative voter—evangelicals, however prone to support policies based on conservative values, more or less consider themselves independent of this world because of their citizenship in the afterlife.

**Results**

Preliminary tests yield the expected results. The relevance of my first model, evangelical identity and interpersonal trust, passed independent T-test with significance at .0001 level. Interpersonal and political trust bear a significant correlation—the bivariate correlation test yields a weak but consistent R (.068) significance at .005 level. That is, having higher interpersonal trust means having higher political trust as well. Being evangelical Protestants or not bears no direct relationship with political trust. Because of this, I have a reason to investigate the potentially mediated relationship, as described in my diagram in the theory section.
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Also, I expected education to be a significant factor in both models because the T-test between education and both political and interpersonal trust yield significant results. Because the regression test confirms all the trends shown in controlled comparison, please refer to both versions of my regression models in the appendix for further details. I only included the two bar charts, the controlled comparison for model I and model II. Bar chart I shows the controlled cluster bar graph for model II—when people trust their fellow Americans more, they trust the government more. However, most evangelicals, more so than the average Americans, prefer to be safe rather than sorry. Bar chart II, the controlled comparison for model I, further illustrates the unclear trend in bar chart I—the evangelicals who trust government some of the times (the majority) trust fellow Americans significantly less than non-evangelicals do.

Regression Test

My predictions have been partially confirmed by my regression tests. Once other factors have been held constant, evangelical identity appears to lower both interpersonal and political trust. The following table will demonstrate how much influence each significant variable exerts. Model I is the test between evangelical identity and interpersonal trust; model II is the test between evangelical identity and political trust, controlling for interpersonal trust as well. I have tested most of the control variables and created parsimonious versions for each model; therefore, each model has two versions, comprehensive and parsimonious. I exercise discretion and decided to use or abandon repetitive measures that measure the same phenomenon—for instance, political ideology and party ID often confound each other. I created parsimonious versions by taking away wildly insignificant control variables in the comprehensive versions. The following table on the following page shows the comprehensive versions. The coefficients with
Evangelical Protestants and Political Trust

“***” means significant at .001 level, with “**” at .01 level, with “*” at .05 level and with “#” at .1 level. For the parsimonious versions, please refer to the appendix.
### Evangelical Protestants and Political Trust

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model I (R=.348)</th>
<th>Model II (R=.46)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.165 (.132)</td>
<td>2.365 (.547)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical or Not</td>
<td>-.099 (.039)*</td>
<td>-.262 (.154)#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Attainment</td>
<td>.045 (.019)*</td>
<td>-.008 (.047)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Education is significant in the parsimonious version at .001 level.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party Affiliation</td>
<td>.012 (.024)</td>
<td>-.313 (.076) ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-.015 (.038)</td>
<td>-.222 (.101)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Income</td>
<td>.038 (.014)#</td>
<td>-.059 (.048)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective Class</td>
<td>.077 (.030)**</td>
<td>-.063 (.082)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Education is significant in the parsimonious version at .05 level.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Religious Groups</td>
<td>-.033 (.037)</td>
<td>-.017 (.129)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>-.055 (.031)#</td>
<td>.112 (.069)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Trust</td>
<td></td>
<td>.082 (.114)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Interpersonal trust is significant in the parsimonious version at .05 level.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.024 (.013)#</td>
<td>-.008 (.041)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>.008 (.019)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Ideology</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.013 (.056)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Census Region</td>
<td></td>
<td>.012 (.057)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do most people try to be fair?</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.104 (.138)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending service more than once a week?</td>
<td></td>
<td>.036 (.113)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evangelical Protestants and Political Trust

The narrative told by both models partially confirms my hypothesis: evangelism reduces trust in both the general population and the government. By itself, evangelism suffices to almost wipe out a basic level of interpersonal trust. Model I also confirms all the previous research—interpersonal trust shows more of one’s social class and income above all else. Those who are richer tend to be more trusting, as confirmed by the model. The noteworthy fact is that it takes an evangelical respondent to self-identify as “middle class” to cancel the effect of evangelical identity.

The mediated relationship is confirmed—interpersonal trust moderates the relationship between evangelical identity and trust in the government. In model II, interpersonal trust, as the regression test shows, can almost cancel the effect of evangelical identity by increasing political trust. However, because most evangelicals have lowered interpersonal trust, they automatically lose .194 points out of three points, 6.5% of the total score for political trust. The only factor more powerful than evangelical faith in reducing political trust is education. That is, if an evangelical earns an advanced degree, he or she is likely to be more distrustful toward the government than a non-evangelical respondent with similar background. Party affiliation is another major factor contributing to distrust in government among evangelicals. If an evangelical is a Republican, he or she is likely to trust government more than his or her peer. I admit that I coded “Part ID” backward because I expected democrats to trust the government more. For specifics of each version of both models, please refer to the Appendix.
Evangelical Protestants and Political Trust

**Conclusion**

Evangelicals trust both people and government less than non-evangelicals do. Their lowered interpersonal trust actually fit my theoretical premise—evangelicals trust everything in this world of flesh less. That is, my statistical prediction for interpersonal trust was inaccurate. The regression tests confirm my other expected finding that evangelical identification alone can reduce trust in government in a statistically significant manner. This distrust may in some way correlate with a heightened rate of forming voluntary association. Other research has shown that church attendance promotes religious and civic associations (Putnam & Campbell 2010). Brehm and Wrahn have observed that voluntary associations contribute to a heightened sense of interpersonal trust more so than interpersonal trust to voluntary associations. That is, if evangelical faith promotes voluntary association, it is a factor that combats individualism, as Tocqueville observed.

My theoretical argument is that evangelical faith emphasizes the urgent need to evangelize the world and sinful nature of human beings. Such a strong other-worldly emphasis tends to make matters of this world, however enlightened and well-intended, untrustworthy. Compared to Providence, nothing in this world is worthy of trust, especially the government, which is subject to dramatic changes every four years. Moreover, compared to the Puritans, evangelical doctrines assert that the signs of salvation are the experiences of re-birth, rather than just earthly wealth (even though it is so among those who preach gospel of prosperity). Thus, the need to focus on reproducing evangelical identity is ever more urgent and trust in human goodwill and governmental aid accordingly declines. Following the model of mediation confirmed by statistical tests:
As counterintuitive as it may appear, such a democratic instinct of distrust is indispensable in a democracy. If it is healthy to distrust in government in a liberal democracy, evangelical identity is a help to promote voting turnout, voluntary association and awareness of citizens’ rights. This heightened sense of distrust can be translated into political efficacy and increase political participation. Evangelism incites and inculcates a basic level of distrust and thus serves to combat individualism. Tocqueville’s prediction still stands confirmed—religion does facilitate the use of political liberty. The political benefits of distrust may have been overlooked. The most frequent use of liberty should be the freedom to exercise discretion and doubt against the central government. Evangelism promotes such an instinct and should be considered as a necessary force in politics. The political implication of evangelical Protestantism is more profound than lowered political trust. Further research in how evangelism can lower political trust in each specific policy issue, corresponding to the political ideology and values such issues engage, may shed more light on this subject.
## Appendix

### Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Recoded Label</th>
<th>Recoded Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>V043299</td>
<td>Race as indicated by the Respondent</td>
<td>1. White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V41109a</td>
<td>Gender of the Respondent</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td>V043250</td>
<td>Age of the Respondent</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. 26-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. 31-39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. 40-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. 50-59</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6. 60 and above</td>
</tr>
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<td>V04085</td>
<td>Political Ideology</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Somewhat Conservative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Somewhat Liberal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. Liberal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V043293x</td>
<td>Party ID</td>
<td>1. Republican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Independent</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Democrat</td>
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<td>V043293x</td>
<td>Income</td>
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<td>2. $11,000-$39,999</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>3. $40,000-$49,999</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. $50,000-$79,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. $80,000-$104,999</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Evangelical Protestants and Political Trust

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V043220</td>
<td>Importance of Religion (I.V)</td>
<td>0. Not Important, 1. Somewhat Important, 2. Important, 3. Very Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V043254</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1. High School or Less, 2. Some College, 3. BA Level Degree, 4. Advanced Degree, including LLB</td>
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<tr>
<td>V043224</td>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>0. Never, 1. A few times a year, 2. Once or twice a month, 3. Almost every week, 4. Every week</td>
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<td>V043252</td>
<td>Interpersonal Trust <em>(D.V. for Model 1 &amp; I.V. for Model 2)</em></td>
<td>0. Cannot be too careful, 1. Yes, they can be trusted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. $105,000 or more
| V045179 | Trust in Government (D.V. for Model 2 and this research project) | 0. Never  
1. Only some of the times  
2. Almost always  
3. Always |
|---|---|---|
| V041205 | Census Region | 1. North  
2. North Central  
3. West  
4. South |
| V043251 | Marital Status | 1. Married  
2. Divorced or widowed  
3. Separated  
4. Never married |
## Table 2

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<tr>
<th>Evangelical or Not</th>
<th>Conservative</th>
<th>Somewhat Conservative</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Somewhat Liberal</th>
<th>Liberal</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Evangelicals</td>
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<td>63</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>353</td>
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<td>% within Evangelical or Not</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>33.4%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>% within Political Ideology</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
<td>55.3%</td>
<td>50.6%</td>
<td>60.3%</td>
<td>68.4%</td>
<td>50.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evangelicals</td>
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<td>51</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>345</td>
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<tr>
<td>% within Evangelical or Not</td>
<td>35.9%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>% within Political Ideology</td>
<td>62.9%</td>
<td>44.7%</td>
<td>49.4%</td>
<td>39.7%</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
<td>49.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Evangelical or Not</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>33.4%</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Political Ideology</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Model Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>.121</td>
<td>.107</td>
<td>.47040</td>
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### ANOVA

<table>
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<th>df</th>
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<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 Regression</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>1.924</td>
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<td>Residual</td>
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<td>633</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>643</td>
<td>.221</td>
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### Coefficients

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 (Constant)</td>
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<td>.132</td>
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<td>Evangelical or Not</td>
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<td>.039</td>
<td>-.100</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>.013</td>
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<td>-.019</td>
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<td>-.015</td>
<td>-.393</td>
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<td>Party Affiliation</td>
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<td>.020</td>
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a. Dependent Variable: Can most people be trusted?
Evangelical Protestants and Political Trust

Model I Parsimonious

### Model Summary

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<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
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<tr>
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<td>.125</td>
<td>.111</td>
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### Coefficients\(^a\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>95.0% Confidence Interval for B</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
</tr>
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<td>(Constant)</td>
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<td>.137</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Evangelical or Not</td>
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<td>.050</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Respondent Gender</td>
<td>-.008</td>
<td>.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respondent's educational attainment</td>
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<td>.018</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Household Income</td>
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<td>.014</td>
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<td>.028</td>
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<td>.018</td>
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<td>Status</td>
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\(^a\) Dependent Variable: Can most people be trusted?
Evangelical Protestants and Political Trust

Model II Comprehensive

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficients&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>95.0% Confidence Interval for B</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
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<td>.016</td>
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Model II Parsimonious

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<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
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a. Predictors: (Constant), Major religious groups?, Respondent Gender, Party Affiliation, Can most people be trusted?, Respondent's educational attainment, Evangelical or Not

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a. Dependent Variable: Trust in Government
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Reference

Major Theories:


Evangelical Protestants and Political Trust

Complementary Works:


*The Holy Bible* (Darby Translation)


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For the Empirical Test:


