Report of the Symposium on Evangelicals and Foreign Policy
March 28, 2007

A project of the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs and the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University

Supported by the Henry R. Luce Initiative on Religion and International Affairs
Evangelicals and Foreign Policy

On March 28, 2007, the Luce/SFS Program on Religion and International Affairs convened a major symposium on Evangelicals and Foreign Policy, the first in a series designed to explore the religious sources of foreign policy. Leading representatives of evangelical associations and prominent policy experts were participants.

Panelists addressed crucial questions about the increased evangelical agenda in development and foreign policy issues over the last decade, as well as the specific issues that have most galvanized the evangelical community. Lively discussion ensued about the nature of religious freedom, evangelical support for Israel, the meaning of “family values,” and evangelical organizations’ work to prevent human trafficking, poverty, and genocide. Across the range of issues, participants explored how evangelical leaders mobilize public support for their positions and collaborate with other religious—and secular—advocacy organizations.

The symposium was a collaborative project of Georgetown University partners, including the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Mortara Center for International Studies, and the Program for Jewish Civilization.

“Full-fledged advocacy and lobbying is still relatively new among evangelical relief and development organizations.”
Serge Duss, World Vision

“The liberal Jew, the black in the inner city, the Hindu and the Buddhist will discover, despite all the terrible stereotypes about this movement, that we care about their freedom and their rights.”
Richard Cizik, National Association of Evangelicals

**SYMPOSIUM PARTICIPANTS**

**PANEL: Relief, Development, and Evangelical Engagement**

**Chair:** Professor Carol Lancaster  
Director, Mortara Center, Georgetown

Rachel McCleary, Harvard University

Serge Duss, World Vision

Chris Seiple, Institute for Global Engagement

**PANEL: American Foreign Policy and the Evangelical Moment**

**Chair:** Professor Jacques Berlinerblau  
Director, Program for Jewish Civilization, Georgetown

Luis Lugo, Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life

Richard Cizik, National Association of Evangelicals

Richard Land, Southern Baptist Convention

**RELIGIOUS SOURCES OF FOREIGN POLICY**

The March 2007 symposium is part of a broader project on the Religious Sources of Foreign Policy within the Luce/SFS Program on Religion and International Affairs. The program addresses the impact of religion on the foreign policies of key states around the world, placing the US case in an international context. Its key components include new undergraduate and graduate courses, and symposia that bring together scholars and policy experts around emergent issues, such as the mobilization of religious groups around foreign policy, the intersection between religion, migration, and foreign policy, and the politics of international religious freedom.
“Evangelical communities have a heightened awareness of human rights abuses and suffering in many parts of the world as a consequence of their far-flung foreign mission enterprises.”

Richard Land, Southern Baptist Convention

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### Evangelicals in the US

**Evangelicals are a prominent and large segment of the United States population**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Religious Landscape, Spring 2004</th>
<th>Evangelicals tend to vote for candidates from the Republican Party</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ALL</strong></td>
<td><strong>Population</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical Protestant</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditionalist Evangelical</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centrist Evangelical</td>
<td>10.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Modernist Evangelical</td>
<td>2.9</td>
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</tbody>
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### Evangelicals tend to favor support for Israel

“Compared to other Americans, a survey by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life found that white evangelical Protestants were...

- significantly more sympathetic to Israel than to the Palestinians—55% sympathized more with Israel, only 6% with the Palestinians (versus 41% and 13%, respectively, of all those surveyed).
- significantly more likely to say that religious beliefs were the single biggest influence in leading them to sympathize more with Israel—46% versus 26% of all those surveyed.”

*Source: Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life report on American Evangelicals and Israel (http://pewforum.org/docs/?DocID=80)*
Panel 1: Relief, Development, and Evangelical Engagement

This panel focused on the changing picture of faith-based organizations in development work and the rapid expansion of the role of evangelical churches in this process. Panelists touched on several emerging issues, including: debates about proselytizing as part of development work; issues around finance (especially government versus private funding); relationships and coordination among different kinds of faith-based organizations; how evangelicals see the forces of globalization; and the lines between operations on the ground and broader policy advocacy roles. Of particular concern were important facts about financing, including the sharp increases in government funding channeled to evangelical organizations and the relatively high per capita charitable giving by members of evangelical churches.

Core questions addressed:

To what degree has evangelical engagement around development agendas increased over the last decade, and how do you account for the increase?

Serge Duss, World Vision

If the size of operating budgets is an accurate indicator of increased engagement by evangelical relief and development organizations, then it is safe to say that engagement has more than doubled in the last decade, although it is weighted more toward humanitarian response than toward development. World Vision’s budget alone has almost tripled in eight years, from $360 million in 1998 to $950 million in 2006. Other major evangelical organizations, such as Compassion International, World Relief, and Samaritan’s Purse, to name a few, can report similar increases in funding for programs.

Rachel McCleary, Harvard University

With globalization comes increased communication on and awareness of global issues, and the evangelical community has, like other religious communities, become involved. As global poverty became an issue highlighted by public figures such as Bono, who were able to use religious language, for example, in the Jubilee 2000 debt relief campaign, evangelicals were able to connect anti-poverty initiatives to their personal faith. Other leaders such as Jim Wallis and Rick Warren have taken up this mantle and advanced the idea of poverty as a social justice issue.
Chris Seiple, Institute for Global Engagement
There has been a re-awakening of evangelicals in the last two decades, and especially the last few years, to the holistic role that they are called to play in God’s world. Instead of asking “What would Jesus do?” they now ask “What is Jesus already doing, and how can we best come alongside that work, at home or abroad?”

What issues and priorities do evangelical groups bring to global development policy, and how do they arrive at them?

Serge Duss, World Vision
Relatively few American evangelical relief and development organizations engage in development policy discussions because the bulk of their programs are designed for disaster response and short-term rehabilitation. After any major catastrophe subsides, such as the South Asian tsunami, relatively few NGOs remain—secular and faith-based—to carry on long-term rehabilitation and development programs. Only a handful of evangelical NGOs have the luxury of funding to devote exclusively to policy analysis and advocacy with the executive and legislative branches of the US government. These few evangelical NGOs are more integrated with the cross-section of relief and development NGOs in the InterAction community, where there is an ongoing dialogue on relief and development policies.

Rachel McCleary, Harvard University
Being mostly at the conservative end of the political spectrum, evangelicals have traditionally favored ideas of self-sufficiency. They tend to support projects that are especially sustainable, so as not to foster dependency.

Chris Seiple, Institute for Global Engagement
Global engagement for evangelicals is necessarily rooted in their understanding of God and His son, Jesus. This baseline foremost recognizes the sovereignty of God in all issues and His gift of dominion over His creation—a gift that also includes that first part of wisdom: naming. In other words, American evangelicals believe that they are called to steward (i.e., develop) the whole earth—its peoples and its environment, as well as the gift of their American citizenship…all of which begins with naming the interrelated dynamics at play with accuracy and accountability.

What form of advocacy coordination exists across evangelical groups, and in collaboration with other religious and non-religious organizations?

Serge Duss, World Vision
Full-fledged advocacy and lobbying is still relatively new among evangelical relief and development organizations. Fewer than five have offices in the Washington, DC area. World Vision opened its Washington, DC office in the mid-1980s for a dual purpose: expand public sector program funding and advocacy. Few other sister NGOs
have followed a similar path. As a result, the bulk of advocacy coordination by the few evangelical relief and development organizations is conducted along religious lines when possible, but largely in collaboration with NGOs whose advocacy goals are the same.

Rachel McCleary, Harvard University

A variety of organizations exist that represent the evangelical social and political agenda. The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) and World Relief, the Interfaith Stewardship Alliance (ISA), and the Association of Evangelical Relief and Development Organizations (AERDO) are important associational vehicles. Some evangelical international relief and development agencies also belong to InterAction. Many evangelical churches are parachurches like Saddle Back and Willow Creek. When they decide to take up a cause, they don’t need to coordinate with a larger denominational network. As far as advocacy coordination, World Vision is a significant player. This agency is simultaneously trusted by the evangelical community and also a major player in the development field. Finally, the role of missionaries and missionary work is integral to the international work of evangelical churches. Missionaries keep the local congregations informed and in touch with the international projects of their churches and evangelical associations.

Chris Seiple, Institute for Global Engagement

In the context of my own organization, the Institute for Global Engagement, we seek to advocate through relational diplomacy, serving as an advocate for our organizing principle, religious freedom, as well as the host government and the United States. Through this approach we seek to convey respect to all parties—who are each made in the image of God—and love and serve them in a language and logic that they each understand.

ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

Serge Duss is Senior Advisor for Global Affairs at World Vision, a major Christian relief, development and advocacy organization committed to alleviating poverty among children, families, and communities.

Rachel McCleary is Director of the Religion, Political Economy, and Society Project at the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University. Her current research centers on organizational change among US-based NGOs.

Chris Seiple is President of the Institute for Global Engagement, a DC-area NGO that promotes sustainable environments for religious freedom worldwide through a variety of publications and outreach programs.

(Panel Chair) Carol Lancaster is Associate Professor and Director of the Mortara Center for International Studies. She is a leading expert on development policy and its links back to domestic US politics and author, most recently, of Foreign Aid: Diplomacy, Development, Domestic Politics (University of Chicago Press, 2006).
Panel 2: American Foreign Policy and the Evangelical Moment

This panel focused on the new dynamics of evangelical churches in US foreign policy and international affairs. The discussion explored the sharply increased role that evangelical organizations are playing in US foreign policy and the phenomenon of new alliances taking shape among very different kinds of organizations around issues such as trafficking of women. Topics included: the role of evangelical churches and organizations on Israel-Palestine issues (panelists suggested evangelicals tend to think they have a covenant to support Israel); evangelical attitudes towards the United Nations (panelists stated that their relationship to the UN is pragmatic at best); the global trends which are heightening power and focus on Christianity; and the emerging links among evangelical beliefs and the movement towards social entrepreneurship.

Core questions addressed:

When did evangelicals begin to make foreign affairs a priority, and why?

Richard Cizik, National Association of Evangelicals

Evangelicalism is a movement that has learned from its failures in the 1980s. We failed often enough to know how to do it right. It is a movement that has honed its techniques to be able to, yes, go to the Congressional Black Caucus when it is needed to pass the Sudan Peace Act, and to the gays to pass an HIV/AIDS bill, and to Tibet and the Buddhists to pass the Religious Freedom Act, and to go to apolitical North Koreans to pass the North Korean Freedom Act.

Richard Land, Southern Baptist Convention

Evangelicals were adamantly opposed to Communism and Soviet attempts to spread that philosophy by force around the world. This strong anti-Communism, coupled with the birth of the Jewish state of Israel in 1948, propelled evangelicals into the world of foreign policy in new and unprecedented ways. This was especially true for the large and growing segments of American Evangelical Christianity which believed the Jews to be God’s chosen people and perceived the reestablishment of the Jewish state in the Holy Land as the fulfillment of biblical prophecy. Having mobilized to oppose Communism and to support Israel, evangelicals also were increasingly energized on human rights issues, including the right of Russian Jews to leave the Soviet Union.

Luis Lugo, The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life

Evangelicals didn’t really exist as a distinct religious movement in the US until after World War II, and didn’t become deeply engaged in politics until the 1970s. While it was domestic “culture war” issues—from prayer in the public schools to abortion—that triggered the evangelical surge of political activity at that time, foreign policy issues quickly became part of the evangelical agenda. Three foreign policy issues moved to the
foreground of evangelical policy concerns: the struggle against Soviet communism; the global persecution of Christians and the promotion of religious freedom; and the defense of the state of Israel.

**What specific issues have most galvanized the evangelical community (religious freedom, support for Israel, family values, human trafficking, poverty, genocide, etc.), and why?**

**Richard Cizik, National Association of Evangelicals**

American foreign policy hasn’t seen anything yet. The people who are impressed by the six major landmark bills we passed are only seeing the initial edge of what will be the twenty-first century movement that will reshape America. Why? Number one, it comes down to the belief that every human being is born with the image of God. Number two, you can succeed in life with two conditions: the political and social freedom to make the choices to pursue the life that you want, and laws and social institutions modeled to allow you to choose responsibly, with moral limits.

**Richard Land, Southern Baptist Convention**

The evangelical community has been galvanized (in addition to anti-Communist and pro-Israel policies) by numerous issues of foreign policy, most notably around a cluster of issues best described as “human rights”: religious freedom, political freedom, sex and human trafficking issues, genocide, etc. One reason for the greatly increased involvement with these issues has been the inadequately-noticed huge expansion of Christianity in the last half of the 20th century in parts of the world where it has not until recently been prevalent (i.e. China and sub-Saharan, Africa). Evangelicals have risen to the defense of fellow Christians in these areas of tremendous expansion when their basic human rights have been attacked. Large segments of the evangelical community have been among the most enthusiastic backers of intervention to stop genocide in places like Bosnia, Kosovo, and Darfur. In addition, evangelicals like Rick Warren have spearheaded significant attempts at dealing with issues like AIDS and poverty in Africa. It should always be remembered that evangelical communities have a heightened awareness of human rights abuses and suffering in many parts of the world as a consequence of their far-flung foreign mission enterprises with tens of thousands of career and short-term missionaries serving in nations around the globe.

**Luis Lugo, The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life**

Evangelical political activity is not animated by an elaborate political philosophy or social doctrine (as is the case, say, with the official policy advocacy of the Roman Catholic Church) but by a fairly straightforward, biblically-informed vision of individual and social morality. In this vision, moral and social ills that the Bible is believed to condemn unambiguously receive preponderant attention by politically engaged evangelicals. These evils include abortion on demand, the social and legal promotion of homosexuality, legal and political restrictions on religious freedom and especially the freedom
of churches to promote the Christian message, abject poverty and human suffering, and failure to pray for the peace and prosperity of Israel. How evangelicals interpret the Bible, and the perceived salience of moral and social issues in the Bible, thus helps explain why some specific issues have most galvanized the evangelical community.

**How do Evangelical leaders mobilize public support for their positions and collaborate with other religious—and secular—advocacy organizations?**

**Richard Cizik, National Association of Evangelicals**
I agree with Bill Clinton, who said that when the evangelicals who are big in tsunami relief understand that you can’t begin to think about dealing with the refugees of the twenty-first century without dealing with climate issues, then watch out. I’m perhaps three or five years ahead of my constituency. But we moved into international issues because there was nothing to be done in eight years with Bill Clinton in the White House. The Berlin Wall came down. All of a sudden, everybody said, ‘A whole new world out there,’ and thought, ‘A good new world, without the Soviet Union,’ only to discover all sorts of other problems.

**Richard Land, Southern Baptist Convention**
Evangelical leaders use the communications means at their disposal to make rank and file evangelicals aware of abuses or crises and to motivate them to involvement. The most powerful weapon for impacting public policy in the evangelicals’ arsenal is the ability to appeal to a highly motivated grassroots membership that has shown an increasing willingness to get involved and to make their voices heard both with their elected representatives and with the media.

**Luis Lugo, The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life**
There is a lot of evidence that evangelical leaders have mobilized public support and pursued collaboration with other advocacy organizations much like other leaders and activists—that is, they very pragmatically seek outside support and cooperation whenever they can find it. One of the major founders of the postwar American evangelical movement, Carl Henry, founder of Christianity Today magazine, strongly urged evangelicals to seek out “co-belligerents” on the issues they cared about in order to get important things done. And they seem to have taken his advice.

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### ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

- **Richard Cizik** is Vice President for Governmental Affairs of the National Association of Evangelicals, the largest organization of its kind in the United States, encompassing 61 denominations, 45,000 churches, and 30 million adherents.


- **Luis Lugo** has been the director of the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life since 2004. The Forum, based in Washington DC, sponsors a variety of programs designed to promote a deeper understanding of issues at the intersection of religion and public affairs.

- **(Panel Chair) Jacques Berlinerblau** is Associate Professor and Director of the Program for Jewish Civilization at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown. He has published widely on issues ranging from the composition of the Hebrew Bible, to the sociology of heresy, to modern Jewish intellectuals, to African-American and Jewish-American relations.
About the Luce/SFS Program on Religion and International Affairs

Religion is a critical but neglected factor in world affairs. The Henry R. Luce Initiative on Religion and International Affairs, announced in 2005, seeks to deepen American understanding of religion as a factor in international policy issues. The Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University is the recipient of a two-year grant that funds the Luce/SFS Program on Religion and International Affairs, implemented in collaboration with the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs at Georgetown University.

The Luce/SFS Program focuses on two thematic areas: religion and global development and the religious sources of foreign policy. Luce Foundation support enables innovative teaching, research, and outreach activities in both areas, as well as innovative publications and web-based knowledge resources.
THE EDMUND A. WALSH SCHOOL OF FOREIGN SERVICE

Founded in 1919 to educate students and prepare them for leadership roles in international affairs, the School of Foreign Service conducts an undergraduate program for over 1300 students and graduate programs to the Master’s level for some 750 students. Under the leadership of Dean Robert Gallucci, the School houses sixteen regional and functional centers and programs, most of which offer courses, conduct research, host events, and contribute to the intellectual development of the field of international affairs. A 2007 survey of over 1,000 faculty in the US and Canada featured in Foreign Policy magazine ranked Georgetown University as having the #1 Master’s and #4 undergraduate programs in international relations.

THE BERKLEY CENTER

The Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, created within the Office of the President in March 2006, is part of a university-wide effort to build knowledge about religion’s role in world affairs and promote interreligious understanding in the service of peace. Through research, teaching, and outreach activities, the Center explores the intersection of religion with four global challenges: diplomacy and transnational relations, democracy and human rights, global development, and interreligious dialogue. Thomas Banchoff, Associate Professor in the Department of Government and the School of Foreign Service, is the Center’s first director.

MORTARA CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

The Mortara Center for International Studies is a critical partner in the implementation of the Luce/SFS Program on Religion and International Affairs. Located within the School of Foreign Service, the Center is at the heart of campus-wide activities centered on foreign policy and international relations, one of Georgetown’s research and teaching strengths. Center Director Carol Lancaster is a leading expert on development policy and its links back to domestic US politics. She is author, most recently, of Foreign Aid: Diplomacy, Development, Domestic Politics (University of Chicago Press, 2006).
About The Berkley Center Religious Literacy Series

This paper is part of a series of reports that maps the activity of faith-based organizations around key development topics. These reports explore the role of religious groups in addressing global challenges as a way to bridge the coordination gap between secular and religious organizations in the common effort of international development work.

Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service
301 Bunn InterCultural Center
37th & O Streets, N.W.
Washington, DC 20057
202.687.5696
http://sfs.georgetown.edu

Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs
3307 M Street NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20007
202.687.5119
http://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu

The Luce/SFS Program on Religion and International Affairs
http://sfs.georgetown.edu/luce_program.html

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