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Funding the Culture Wars

Philanthropy, Church and State

By John Russell
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FUNDING THE CULTURE WARS: PHILANTHROPY, CHURCH AND STATE

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Philanthropy

FUNDING THE CULTURE WARS: Philanthropy, Church and State

John Russell¹

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national committee for
responsive philanthropy

About NCRP: The National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy is an independent nonprofit organization founded in 1976 by nonprofit leaders across the nation who recognized that traditional philanthropy was falling short of addressing critical public needs. NCRP's founders encouraged foundations to provide resources and opportunities to help equalize the uneven playing field that decades of economic inequality and pervasive discrimination had created. Today NCRP conducts research on and advocates for philanthropic policies and practices that are responsive to public needs. To obtain more information about NCRP or to make a membership contribution, please visit www.ncrp.org or call (202) 387-9177.

1. Introduction

In March 2004, NCRP published a report on the grant-making activities of America's largest conservative foundations. *Axis of Ideology: Conservative Foundations and Public Policy* detailed how the dedicated support of private foundations has helped foster the success of a wide variety of conservative causes, updating other NCRP research on this topic from the late 1990s. These foundations, through their aggressive and creative grantmaking, were able to bring what were previously considered radical policy ideas into the political mainstream. The current political debates surrounding recent massive tax cuts, Social Security privatization, missile defense, school choice (e.g., vouchers) and others can be traced to the organizations and individuals supported and promoted by conservative philanthropy.

The *Axis of Ideology* report divided conservative policy grantmaking into 13 broad issue areas, each with its own implications on public policy and American society in general. Most of these areas represent traditional conservative causes, including unregulated markets, lower taxes and a greatly expanded national defense. Political conservatives' use of private foundations as a mechanism for protecting and promoting their economic interests, documented in earlier NCRP reports,² is not new; it can be traced back to former Supreme Court Justice Lewis Powell's famous 1971 memorandum (issued before he joined the court) calling for the mobilization of business, foundation and media resources to fight against attacks on the free-enterprise system.³

For this report on evangelical conservative grantmaking, the important finding in *Axis of Ideology* is the sizable amount of grant dollars flowing from foundations to religious organizations advocating extreme socially conservative causes and policies. Political scientists and social commentators have often written of the alliance

between religious conservatives and economic elites that became a driving force behind the resurgence of the Republican Party.⁴ In researching the grantees in the *Axis of Ideology* sample, the connection between religious conservative causes and philanthropy began to take on added significance because of the political and constitutional issues surrounding the separation of church and state, and current concerted efforts to erode this separation.

Hidden amid the conservative foundation grants to well-known right-wing think tanks, such as the Heritage Foundation and American Enterprise Institute, were donations to overtly religious organizations with political aspirations. Organizations like Toward Tradition, the Family Research Council and James Dobson's Focus on the Family received approximately 10 percent of the grant monies studied in *Axis* to promote what has come to be popularly known as "traditional family values." This "Culture War" and its issue battlefields of abortion, school prayer, public displays of the Ten Commandments, stem-cell research and most recently same-sex marriage are all issues with which conservative foundations engage.

This relatively large level of foundation support for religious conservatism raises substantial questions about philanthropy, politics and religion. To further explore these connections and issues, NCRP decided to expand its research on conservative philanthropy to the more specialized area of foundations that support Christian evangelism—with an emphasis on grantees that either directly or indirectly attempt to impact public policy. In looking at the magnitude and variety of grantmaking within this subsector of philanthropy, knowledge of the successful strategies applied by conservative grantmakers can be expanded. But equally important is the desire to examine the larger issues relat-

ed to church and state, and how philanthropy factors into the equation.

WHO ARE THE EVANGELICALS?

In seeking to learn more about evangelical philanthropy, it is necessary to determine what exactly the term evangelical means. As news coverage of social issues has surged in recent months, the word evangelical has been used collectively to describe a rather amorphous set of believers. Several surveys have tried to quantify this group and determine its influence as a political constituency. While evangelicals make up between 23 percent⁵ and 40 percent⁶ of the U.S. population, the exact beliefs they espouse and how those beliefs are often translated into political stances are rarely discussed. The fact is, evangelical Christians are not all alike, but there are some basic characteristics that can be used to better understand their faith.

Large portions of the evangelical movement identify themselves as Baptist, Methodist or Pentecostal, but there are also many from smaller and lesser-known Protestant denominations. In evangelical circles, loyalty to a denomination is seen as secondary to building a relationship with God. It is for this reason that many evangelicals will refer to themselves with the generic label of “Christian.” This is to connote an individual connection with Jesus and not a larger belief system like Catholicism or Judaism.

Evangelical faith can first be defined as tremendously individualistic, with a focus on personal salvation through acceptance of Jesus Christ. While other faith traditions require some combination of personal good deeds and faith to enter into heaven, evangelicals rely solely on belief. This is often evidenced by believers who can remember the exact date, place and time of their “rebirth”—hence the term “born again.” Being born again can be as simple as stating one’s faith in God and can happen several times over the course of a person’s life.

A second characteristic is a desire to spread their belief in Christ to others. As the name “evangelical” implies, teaching and encouraging others to accept Jesus is seen as one of the primary concerns of the global church. Both domestically and internationally, this has resulted in a tremendous amount of investment in missionary work. Some of this work is coupled with other social services investments, but much of it consists of door-to-door or other personal encounters aimed at conversion.

The final, and probably most politically important, characteristic of evangelicals is a belief in the Bible as

the infallible, inerrant word of God. It is out of this belief that some of the most controversial political stances spring, and is what makes their support or opposition to such issues so adamant. The individual connection with God that is necessary for rebirth can only be possible if He can communicate with the faithful. The Bible fills this role by serving as a resource for both spiritual and historical truth.⁷

The questions of whether the Bible can be seen as a historical document and what its literal meaning is have been debated for centuries. As such, one evangelical’s definition of the “word of God” may differ from others who also call themselves evangelicals. There are distinct theological differences within the movement, particularly in the realm of eschatology, the study of the end times, but what ties them together is the vehement defense of the text as divine and incontrovertible. It is this moral rigidity that has become a major part of the public perception of evangelicals, often because the movement’s leaders have fostered just such an image.

FROM FALWELL TO BUSH

Because of their commitment to proselytizing, the movement has a long tradition of preachers taking to the airwaves. These “televangelists” have come and gone over the last 30 years. Some like Jim Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart have done so under great public and legal scrutiny. But the first and most famous of these is Jerry Falwell.

Started in 1958, the Old Time Gospel Hour program and its host, Falwell, grew in popularity through the 1960s and ’70s. In 1980, Falwell used the success of his program and connections with other leading evangelicals to start the Moral Majority, a political action committee focused primarily on opposition to abortion, gay rights and the Equal Rights Amendment. Falwell organized thousands of pastors and registered millions of evangelicals to vote. In the 1984 election alone, the group raised \$11 million for conservative candidates. However, Falwell ran afoul of tax-exempt laws by funneling money from his nonprofit radio ministry into campaign coffers and was fined \$50,000 in 1993.⁹

Falwell’s role in electing President Reagan and winning GOP seats at all levels of government in the 1980s solidified evangelical Christians as a major part of a new conservative political coalition. Their beliefs were supported and magnified by several “pro-family” think tanks and advocacy organizations that were born during the early years of the Reagan administration. This connection was only strengthened over the next decade by the success of other evangelical leaders. Pat Robertson,

another televangelist, ran for the GOP presidential nomination in 1988, falling well short of the votes needed to win. But his campaign spawned the Christian Coalition, started by Robertson in 1989.

The Christian Coalition picked up where Falwell left off by building a national network of local and state affiliates able to raise tremendous amounts of money and mobilize voters. The Coalition was especially famous for its voter guides that were mailed to millions of voters in advance of congressional and presidential contests. The guides painted Republican and Democratic candidates in such favorable and unfavorable lights that they ran afoul of Federal Election Commission regulations on nonpartisan activities.¹⁰

Throughout the 1990s, the Coalition was the leading political voice for religious conservatives. Its leadership passed from the theologically trained Robertson to political operative Ralph Reed. Reed was widely credited as one of the masterminds behind the GOP's landslide victories in the 1994 midterm elections by bringing evangelical Christians to the polls as an organized voting block. Shortly after the election, Reed was quoted in *Christianity Today* as saying, "This was not just a victory for the Republican Party. This was a landslide for a particular kind of Republican Party: pro-life, pro-family, unapologetically positioned in support of religious conservative themes and values."¹¹

The recent rise of same-sex marriage as the premiere controversial social issue has sparked yet another wave of political activism within the evangelical movement. The most prominent opponent of same-sex marriage has become James Dobson of Focus on the Family. Traditionally seen as a specialist in Christian family advice, Dobson has been quietly involved in politics for the past two decades. But the recent announcement that he would start a 501(c)(4) political organization to battle gay-marriage advocates has brought him fully into the political arena.¹²

RELIGION IN POLITICS TODAY

With religion being pushed to the forefront in one of the most contentious presidential elections in history, the issue of religion in society has come to the forefront. Major news outlets are writing about an electorate split equally along political and religious lines. A recent survey by the National Survey of Religion and Politics at the University of Akron found that church attendance has become the most important predictor of partisanship. Weekly churchgoers voted 68 percent to 32 percent for President Bush in 2000, and those who never

attend church voted 65 percent to 35 percent for Al Gore.¹³ In 2004, the numbers were almost identical, with President Bush getting 69 percent of weekly churchgoers' votes.¹⁴

Nearly two decades of efforts by a few influential religious leaders to connect their beliefs with political positions has yielded substantial results. Christian causes and issues have become key elements of President Bush's agenda more than any previous president. And years of electoral organizing has helped elect a Republican Congress with a distinct evangelical flair. Past conservative leaders like Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush and Newt Gingrich paid lip service to evangelicals while remaining relatively quiet about their personal persuasions. The second President Bush and House Majority Leader Tom Delay (R-Tex.) make no secret of their faith and its influence on policymaking.

This agenda includes the traditional social issues of abortion, stem-cell research, pornography, sex education and, above all, gay marriage. The last of these has become the rallying cry for a renewed political mobilization by evangelicals across the country, culminating in the recent Senate debate on a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage. For evangelicals, positions on these issues can be traced back to their belief in what they perceive to be biblical truths.

But beyond these moral issues, the Bush administration has moved to change the very role of religion in society. Mirroring the attitude of many evangelicals, Bush believes that the constitutionally protected separation of church and state was meant to protect churches from government intervention rather than keep church morality out of the machinations of the state. He said in a speech in Detroit in 2001, "We respect the separation of church and state, and the constitutional rights of religious people. But the days of discriminating against religious institutions simply because they are religious must come to an end if we want to heal America."¹⁵

The president's Faith-based Initiative, most of which has been enacted through executive order without the consent of Congress, is hailed as the central tenet of "compassionate conservatism." By arguing that religiously oriented social service providers are victims of discrimination because public administrators favor secular social and human service providers when making grants to nonprofits—even though groups like Lutheran Social Services, Volunteers of America, the Salvation Army and Catholic Charities are some of the largest nonprofit recipients of government funds—Bush echoes the feelings of evangelical Christians.¹⁶

RELIGION IN PHILANTHROPY TODAY

The *Axis of Ideology* study laid out the political accomplishments and aspirations of 79 foundations that spent more than \$250 million on policy-related grantmaking from 1999-2001. Within this grantmaking, just as within the conservative movement, there is a vein of evangelical attitudes and leaders. Upon further examination of the *Axis* data, it became evident that several foundations made grants to evangelical organizations and leaders like Falwell and Dobson. Given the increased political profile of evangelical Christianity, this type of grantmaking deserved additional attention.

2. Methodology

In the *Axis of Ideology* report, NCRP established a methodology for measuring the financial and political impact of conservative philanthropy. By mining grant information from the IRS Form 990-PF filings, we were able to establish categories of support based on political issues. Grants were selected for their direct impact on the political process, while social service or educational grantmaking that could be interpreted as a step toward political change were excluded.

In looking at the evangelical subsector of conservative grantmaking, the same data-gathering procedure was implemented, but with a larger scope. As the evangelical movement becomes more and more synonymous with conservative politics, we wanted to view its grantmaking with a wide lens in an effort to document all possible political implications. But despite this wide lens, it was necessary to make decisions about certain terminology. Most importantly, the question of what constitutes an evangelical grantee provided a challenge, since evangelical Christianity is a broad term used to describe a diverse population. We chose to include two types of organizations in a list of evangelical grantees.

The first, and most easily identifiable group, are organizations that have a “Statement of Faith” posted on their Web site. This is a formal declaration of the religious doctrine of the organization. It includes elements of the three main characteristics of evangelism: personal salvation, biblical infallibility and commitment to evangelism. The second, less concrete, category includes organizations that prominently declare themselves “faith-based” or “Christ-centered.” This category was intended to include social service organizations with an overtly religious focus, as opposed to mainline religious charities such as the Salvation Army or Catholic Charities.

These two criteria were applied to the 1999, 2000,

2001 and 2002 Form 990-PF grants lists of the 25 largest conservative funders in the *Axis of Ideology* study, which yielded 533 grants to evangelical organizations. Additionally, a less rigorous assessment of the grantmaking of other conservative funders in the *Axis* sample yielded six more evangelically oriented private foundations. With this as a base, we moved outside the conservative policy-oriented foundations in search of more religiously committed foundations. By concentrating on the largest evangelical grantees from the *Axis* foundations, we were able to identify an additional 11 foundations that were specifically interested in funding evangelical activities. These completed a sample of 37 foundations and a total of 3,162 grants totaling \$168 million that were distributed to approximately 700 organizations within the predetermined definition of evangelical. The Foundation Center estimates that nearly \$500 million in foundation grants were given to religious organizations in 2002 alone.

It should be noted that in addition to these grants, there were a large number of grants to individual churches and denominations that were excluded. While an argument can be made that individual church congregations have become more politicized in recent years, it is difficult to determine the political impact of one church in relation to any other. Also, churches are not required to file with the IRS—although some do—so it would be difficult to obtain a representative sample of churches in the United States. Finally, any organization that we could not identify using a Web search was excluded, which included many small grantees.

GRANTMAKING CATEGORIES

In going beyond overtly political organizations in our analyses of conservative grantmaking, the evangelical grants sample provided a wide range of organizations

with political, charitable and evangelistic purposes. These purposes were divided into four distinct categories:

Domestic missions: These are organizations devoted to spreading evangelical Christianity within the United States. They range from efforts to start prayer groups in a particular area to multimillion-dollar media empires like Dobson. Some may have involvement with social services or advocacy work, but are primarily devoted to evangelism. They are distinct from churches, as they usually do not have geographically specific congregations.

International missions: Around the world, evangelicals are applying tremendous resources toward proselytizing. Primarily in developing nations, organizations are seeking to bring Muslims, Jews, Hindus and mainline Christians—as well as Communists—to Jesus. They utilize both religious and humanitarian tactics.

Social services: The Christian tradition also extends to social services, primarily aid to the homeless and hungry. This category includes those services as well as many others related to psychological and physical health, youth development and corrections. The connection between faith and service is not clear in all cases, but the grantees share an evangelical worldview that values the spread of the gospel—or, at least, that spreading the gospel makes their services more effective.

Policy and advocacy: In addition to the advocacy organizations highlighted in the *Axis of Ideology* study, there are many organizations working on political causes of interest to evangelicals. Some may have overt religious intentions and statements of faith, while others simply promote a Christian worldview or heritage.

3. Data Observations

GRANTMAKING DIVERSITY

Grants to each of the four categories were pretty evenly divided according to purpose. While likely a result of the broad criteria for inclusion in the sample, there is evidence that evangelical grantmakers have diverse interests. Twenty of the 37 foundations made grants in all four categories and another eight had grants in three categories.

GRANT SIZE

The average grant size for evangelical foundations was \$53,227. This is comparable to the average size of conservative public policy grants analyzed in *Axis*. From the sample of evangelical funders, it appears that larger grants are more common for domestic than international missionary work. The evangelical policy grantmaking category also receives considerably smaller grants than social services. This finding, combined with the smaller overall value of grants for policy and advocacy, would seem to indicate that evangelical funders see social services as a higher priority than policy work. However, further examination shows that a number of very large gifts in the social services category are inflating the grant average. If gifts of more than \$1 million are excluded, the average gifts for policy and social services are \$46,767 and \$31,019, respectively.

TYPES OF FUNDING

One of the defining grantmaking strategies highlighted in previous NCRP research is the use of general operating support grants that offer flexibility to conservative advocates. The evangelical data offer even more evidence of this strategy. Fully 41 percent of grants were for general operating support, while only 16 percent went to program-specific grants. This large discrepancy may be evidence of a commitment and trust felt by evangel-

TABLE 1: Dollar value and number of grants by category, 1999-2002

Grantmaking category	Dollar value	Number of grants
Domestic missions	\$62,087,373	1,102
International missions	\$37,917,686	809
Social services	\$41,602,056	701
Policy and advocacy	\$26,697,691	550
Total	\$168,304,806	3,162

Source: NCRP data collection and analysis from IRS Form 990-PFs, 2004.

TABLE 2: Average grant value by category, 1999-2002

Grantmaking category	Average grant value
Domestic missions	\$56,340
International missions	\$46,869
Social services	\$59,346
Policy and advocacy	\$48,541
Average Grant Size	\$53,227

Source: NCRP data collection and analysis from IRS Form 990-PFs, 2004.

ical funders for their grantees. The sample also revealed that the percentage of grants with insufficient information to determine the type of support increased dramatically between conservative funders and their evangelical counterparts from 27 percent to 41 percent. It is very

TABLE 3: Type of support by category, 1999-2002

Grantmaking category	Operating support	Program support	N/A	Other
Domestic missions	\$22,681,825 (37%)	\$14,774,256 (24%)	\$23,155,742 (37%)	\$1,475,550 (2%)
International missions	\$10,145,077 (27%)	\$6,576,850 (17%)	\$19,020,553 (50%)	\$2,175,206 (6%)
Social services	\$21,060,555 (51%)	\$2,742,396 (7%)	\$16,281,105 (39%)	\$1,518,000 (4%)
Policy and advocacy	\$14,794,368 (55%)	\$3,003,800 (11%)	\$8,874,523 (33%)	\$ 25,000 (.1%)
Total	\$68,681,825 (41%)	\$27,097,302 (16%)	\$67,331,923 (40%)	\$5,193,756 (3%)

Source: NCRP data collection and analysis from IRS Form 990-PFs, 2004.

likely that many of the grants that could not be classified follow the 41 percent/16 percent ratio and are, in fact, designated as general operating support.

The data also show that evangelical grantmakers are less likely to use operating support grants for missionary work than for policy or social services grants. In contrast to much of the social service grantmaking done by the federal government and mainline foundations, a minuscule 7 percent of the total went to program support, while a full 51 percent went to operating support.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF GRANTS

A large portion of the private foundations and their grantees selected for this sample of evangelical grantmaking are based in relatively few states, suggesting that the evangelical movement and its prominent organizations and leaders are concentrated in a few areas of the country. Most prominent of these are Grand Rapids, Michigan; Colorado Springs, Colorado; and Orlando, Florida. In Colorado and Florida, extremely large organizations receive wide foundation support. Campus Crusade for Christ, the single largest evangelical grantee, is based in Orlando, while Focus on the Family (ninth largest) and Young Life (11th largest) are in Colorado Springs. In Michigan, an abundance of foundations have focused their giving on some rather large local causes. Eight foundations, including the second, fifth and sixth largest in the sample, are located in Michigan.

TABLE 4: Top five states by grants awarded, 1999-2002

State	Dollar amount	Number of grants	Percent of total dollars
Florida	\$50,714,947	332	30%
Michigan	\$44,561,258	874	26%
Texas	\$20,024,054	283	12%
Washington	\$16,553,876	514	10%
Colorado	\$11,305,649	197	7%

Source: NCRP data collection and analysis from IRS Form 990-PFs, 2004.

TABLE 5: Top five states by grants received, 1999-2002

State	Dollar amount	Number of grants	Percent of total dollars
District of Columbia	\$23,453,956	176	14%
Michigan	\$23,254,010	573	14%
Florida	\$22,682,400	388	13%
Colorado	\$21,605,688	306	13%
Illinois	\$11,293,528	134	7%

Source: NCRP data collection and analysis from IRS Form 990-PFs, 2004.

4. Grantmaking Highlights

Underneath the broader lessons learned from examining the evangelical grants database, there are more specific observations to make about the relationship between these funders and the political process. Within each category, there are organizations or subcategories of funding that are pertinent to the current political situation as well as possible future government programs or funding.

DOMESTIC MISSIONS

The effort to evangelize Americans constitutes the largest form of evangelical grantmaking in this sample, which is not surprising considering the basic tenets of evangelism. Whether through youth groups on college campuses, radio and television broadcasts, or traditional traveling revival shows, spreading the gospel is a top priority. While these efforts are not innately political,

the success of these domestic missions in recruiting adherents and a demonstrated desire to connect those adherents to political causes do warrant attention.

CHART 1: Domestic Missions: Subcategories

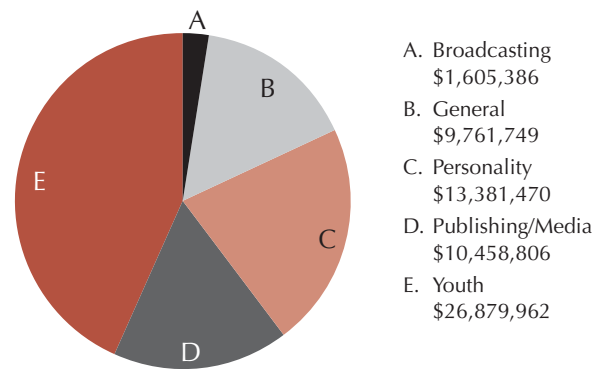


TABLE 6: Top 10 Domestic Missions Grant Recipients, 1999-2002

Grant recipient	Dollar amount	Number of grants	Percent of total dollars
Campus Crusade for Christ International	\$17,271,852	178	28%
Gospel Communications International	\$7,417,100	24	12%
Young Life	\$5,915,754	97	10%
Focus on the Family	\$5,675,000	32	13%
Life Action Ministries	\$3,068,605	8	5%
Luis Palau Evangelistic Association	\$2,522,666	29	4%
Billy Graham Evangelistic Association	\$1,504,500	14	4%
Fellowship of Christian Athletes	\$1,104,315	45	2%
Wall Builder Presentations Inc.	\$1,100,000	2	2%
Coral Ridge Ministries Media	\$1,087,340	10	2%

Source: NCRP data collection and analysis from IRS Form 990-PFs, 2004.

But often these organizations do not garner the attention that their size and influence may deserve. The most obvious example of this is Campus Crusade for Christ International. Started in 1951 on the campus of UCLA by Bill Bright with a goal of recruiting a new generation of Christians through university outreach, CCCI has grown into the world's largest Christian ministry as well as one of the largest nonprofits in the U.S. With total receipts of \$346,681,000 in 2003, they are the 21st largest nonprofit, according to *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*.¹⁷ The ministry employs 26,000 people worldwide, the majority of which work in the field recruiting believers.

The historical core of CCCI operations is campus ministry. There are CCCI chapters on 1,029 campuses nationwide, with 46,000 students involved in the organization's programs. But in addition to this, there are at least 20 additional ministries that focus on various segments of the population like elected officials, executives, doctors, lawyers, members of the military or families.¹⁸ One such ministry, The Jesus Film Project, is an effort to distribute a film interpretation of the life of Jesus to as many people as possible. CCCI estimates that since the inception of the project, the film has been seen by 1 billion people.¹⁹

CCCI is the largest and most supported organization in the evangelical sample, with \$17,271,852 in grants. But it represents only a portion of the foundation investment in youth evangelism. Four other ministries, Young Life, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship and Youth for Christ, combined to receive an additional \$8,130,000 in grants. The combined budgets of just these five organizations reach \$686 million.

As evangelical missionary organizations, these youth ministries are naturally conservative in their theological perspectives. Their literature regarding marriage and relationships focuses on the distinct roles that each gender plays in a relationship, with a focus on the male as leader and protector. This is played out on the CCCI Board of Directors and Officers, where there are 27 men and one woman—Vonette Bright, the wife of the founder.

Generally, these conservative social attitudes have yet to manifest themselves publicly in the policy arena, but the issue of gay rights and same-sex marriage has begun to change this. Family-Life, the CCCI ministry devoted to marriage and parenting, released a "Family Manifesto" listing a biblical defense of marriage as between a man and a woman.²⁰ Chapters of InterVarsity at Tufts and Rutgers universities have drawn fire in recent years for their policies against openly gay mem-

bers holding leadership positions. In response to complaints by gay members, university officials revoked the privileges of InterVarsity chapters. InterVarsity sued Tufts, arguing that the policy against gays was no different from the College Democrats excluding conservative members. University officials backed off in both cases, allowing the policies to continue.²¹

CCCI and Coral Ridge Ministries, a Florida-based ministry, both have subsidiaries that tend to the evangelism of elected leaders in Washington. CCCI's Christian Embassies and Coral Ridge's Center for Christian Statesmanship (CCS) coordinate prayer circles and Bible studies among congressional staffers, civil servants and members of Congress. CCS organizes a monthly "Politics and Principle" lecture designed to address "the challenges of living out Christian faith in today's political environment." Previous speakers include Attorney General John Ashcroft, House Majority Leader Tom Delay and U.S. Senator Rick Santorum.²²

In addition to the personal evangelizing done by youth organizations like CCCI, another major area of funding involves the personality-driven ministries that have been the hallmark of evangelical Christianity. Jerry Falwell's success 30 years ago has spawned a wide variety of television and radio preachers that have garnered large audiences, mailing lists and sometimes political clout.

The undisputed king of religious broadcasting is currently James Dobson. His Focus on the Family media ministry has created a very large pulpit from which to preach. According to Focus, the daily broadcast of his Focus on the Family radio program reaches 7 million people and his monthly newsletter has a circulation of 3 million. The organization's Colorado Springs headquarters has become a tourist attraction, with an estimated 120,000 visitors per year. The facility includes a children's park and exhibits based on the radio dramas that Focus produces. The cafeteria alone yields \$527,285 in revenue.²³

The Focus empire also includes a wide array of magazines targeted to various audiences, especially children and teens. In 1986, Focus launched *Citizen Magazine*, a current events and political publication with an evangelical focus modeled after more mainstream publications such as *Time* or *Newsweek*. Headlines from the May 2004 issue include "How to: Use Zoning Laws to Deter Pornographers" and "Moms and Dads Want Schools to Teach Abstinence." The convergence of "family values" and politics is also present in the magazine's Web site, which is part of the general Focus Web site. It includes position papers on issues

such as public education, abortion, homosexuality and gambling.²⁴

Dr. Dobson's following is no doubt tied primarily to his perceived expertise on parenting, which makes up the majority of his writings and on-air advice. But outside of the media ministry, Focus on the Family has developed an extensive lobbying and advocacy component. Although no longer active in the organization, Dobson founded the Family Research Council (FRC) in the 1980s to rally support for a constitutional amendment banning abortion. FRC, with an annual budget of nearly \$10 million, has since grown into the country's premier research and advocacy organization specializing in socially conservative issues. Former FRC President and Dobson protégé Gary Bauer ran for president in 2000 on a platform that mirrored the organization's positions. Bauer is currently president of American Values, a nonprofit that takes up the typical evangelical mantle of protecting "life, marriage, family, faith and freedom," according to its Web site.²⁵

Focus on the Family and FRC have also nurtured a network of "Family Policy Councils" in 34 states. These advocacy organizations lobby in state capitals and have succeeded in passing informed consent abortion laws and anti-gay marriage legislation, and they have influenced localities on such issues as the teaching of creation in public schools. While Focus on the Family does not provide financial assistance to these groups, their combined budgets for 2002 total \$13,162,000, a number comparable with the combined budgets of the State Public Interest Research Groups, a prominent liberal advocacy organization with affiliates in 26 states.

Beyond policy and lobbying, Focus is also making attempts to enter the social services arena through its support of Pregnancy Resource Centers. These clinics provide counseling and support to pregnant women who are considering abortion, but do not offer abortion services. Focus assists these organizations in finding pro-life physicians to staff their facilities, providing written materials aimed at dissuading women seeking abortions and acquiring ultrasound equipment. Focus has pledged to purchase 650 ultrasound machines by 2010 in the hopes that women who receive ultrasounds will be less likely to have an abortion.

Not far behind Dobson in terms of influence is Presbyterian minister R. James Kennedy of Coral Ridge Ministries (CRM). Kennedy, with a congregation of 10,000 in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, leads one of the nation's largest mega-churches. His sermons are broadcast on more than 600 television stations as well as 125 military ships through the Armed Forces Network. His

radio program, "Truth That Transforms," airs on 700 stations, and CRM claims that the ministry reaches 3 million people per week.²⁶ CRM received \$1,087,340 in grants from 1999 to 2002.

Truth That Transforms can best be described as a political talk show, with Kennedy expounding on the issues of the day from a Christian perspective. Kennedy focuses on the same basic issues as Dobson, including opposition to same-sex marriage, abortion and pornography and support for God in the public square. He emphasizes public education as the root of society's ills. This includes campaigns to return prayer and even Bible study to taxpayer-funded curricula. After the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, Kennedy published a booklet called "America Attacked: Answers for a Nation at War," which discusses biblical justifications for war and the possibility that God in some way willed the attacks as punishment for immoral behavior in the United States. CRM also operates a voter registration site called christianvotes.org, which aimed to register 1 million Christians for the 2004 election.

A third variety of domestic mission is the revival meeting made so popular by the Rev. Billy Graham. These are meetings of thousands of Christians, often held in professional sports arenas, who gather to pray, sing and be in community with each other. Three such ministries, Luis Palau Evangelistic Ministries, Billy Graham Evangelistic Ministries and Promise Keepers, received \$2,522,666, \$1,504,500 and \$520,000 in grants, respectively.

Of these three, Promise Keepers has been by far the most controversial because of its exclusion of women. Founded in 1991 by former University of Colorado Head Football Coach Bill McCartney, the organization believes that making men better fathers and husbands through faith in God will help stem what they see as a tide of societal decay. The organization surged in popularity, attracting 1.1 million attendees to its conferences in 1997, and was a popular target for protests by feminist organizations.²⁷

McCartney recently stepped down as president of Promise Keepers in 2003 and new president Tom Fortson has made it clear he sees the organization as more than a series of rallies. In April, Fortson released a statement declaring a change in focus for the organization toward societal issues and politics. The organization plans to make political arguments a larger part of its conventions and produce literature on issues like abortion, same-sex marriage and pornography. "It's time to get out of the arena and into the marketplace," Fortson said. "Our stand is not political; it's moral. We are call-

ing Christian men to change society by living under biblical authority and teaching others to do the same."²⁸

INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

Evangelical efforts to spread the gospel at home are closely matched overseas, with organizations using direct appeals and humanitarian assistance to reach potential converts. Some organizations rely solely on the message of the gospel to proselytize, while others provide needed services like food, housing or medical assistance. Both strategies have interesting ties to both domestic and international policy.

Along with his Faith-based Initiative, the other major element of President Bush's effort to put the "compassionate conservatism" slogan into practice is the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). The White House pledged \$15 billion over five years to stop the spread of HIV infection and provide anti-retroviral drugs to people who have the disease. And in the process, evangelical leaders and relief organizations have inserted themselves into a debate over sexual health policy.

PEPFAR will distribute \$180 million in grants for abstinence-only AIDS prevention programs in 2005, and several evangelical relief organizations will be eligible for money. In fact, these groups have been receiving federal grants for international projects for some time. President Bush's drug czar, Randall Tobias, clarified the administration's attitude toward the global AIDS fight when he said, "Statistics show that condoms really have not been very effective. It's been the principal

prevention device for the last 20 years, and I think one needs only to look at what's happening with the infection rates in the world to recognize that has not been working."²⁹

Samaritan's Purse, headed by Billy Graham's son Franklin, is one of the most active evangelical aid organizations. With \$6,571,900 in grants, it is the largest international organization in the evangelical sample, and its annual budget of \$165,256,744 ranks 73rd on the Philanthropy 400.³⁰ The organization is not shy about its primary purpose of evangelism, stating on its Web site that it seeks to "meet the needs of people who are victims of war, poverty, natural disasters, disease and famine with the purpose of sharing God's love through His Son, Jesus Christ."³¹

Samaritan's Purse, along with other evangelical

CHART 2: International Missions: Subcategories

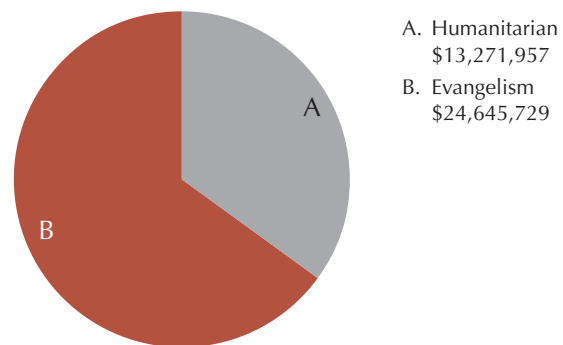


TABLE 7: Top 10 International Missions Grant Recipients

Grant recipient	Dollar amount	Number of grants	Percent of total dollars
Samaritan's Purse	\$6,571,900	15	17%
Child Evangelism Fellowship	\$5,414,945	4	14%
Haggai Institute	\$2,737,600	24	7%
Evangelism Explosion International	\$1,773,800	18	5%
Mission Aviation Fellowship	\$1,440,000	15	4%
Servant Leadership Foundation	\$1,315,000	4	3%
Wycliffe Bible Translators	\$1,117,000	10	3%
Word of Life International	\$925,000	3	2%
World Relief Corp of the National Association of Evangelicals	\$870,000	15	2%
Reach the Children Foundation	\$750,000	1	2%

Source: NCRP data collection and analysis from IRS Form 990-PFs, 2004.

grantees World Vision, CCCI, Prison Fellowship Ministries and MAP International, is pursuing PEPFAR grant funding for abstinence-only education.³² While Samaritan's Purse has yet to win grants for these programs, its IRS Form 990s indicate it does receive government grants for other work. Samaritan's Purse reported \$4,722,672 in government grants in 2002. World Relief Corporation of the National Association of Evangelicals showed that 37 percent of its \$44 million budget was from government sources.³³

The impact of such large-scale investment in Africa by evangelical funders has led to more evangelicals as well as more religious tension in the region. The percentage of Africans attending Pentecostal churches is now 20 percent, up from just 6 percent in 1970. In Uganda, church leaders claim to have converted

between 20 percent and 40 percent of the country's 26 million citizens. But at the same time, these gains are confronted by the evangelizing efforts of Muslims. The governments of Libya, Saudi Arabia and Oman have been investing heavily in efforts to convert Africans to Islam. The result has been a surge in religious violence in places like Nigeria, Zambia and Kenya. In 2000, fierce fighting between Muslims and Christians left 1,000 people dead.³⁴

SOCIAL SERVICE

Axis of Ideology focused on the aggressive public policy advocacy work supported by conservative foundations and, therefore, did not examine their seemingly more policy-neutral social service grantmaking. However, much of the advocacy work analyzed was

centered on promoting privatization and outsourcing of government services. Some funders, such as the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, sought to build a model for such policy strategies through their grantmaking in Milwaukee. Bradley funds community groups and service providers of both secular and religious affiliations.

The provision of social services is where the marriage between traditional small-gov-

CHART 3: Social Services: Subcategories

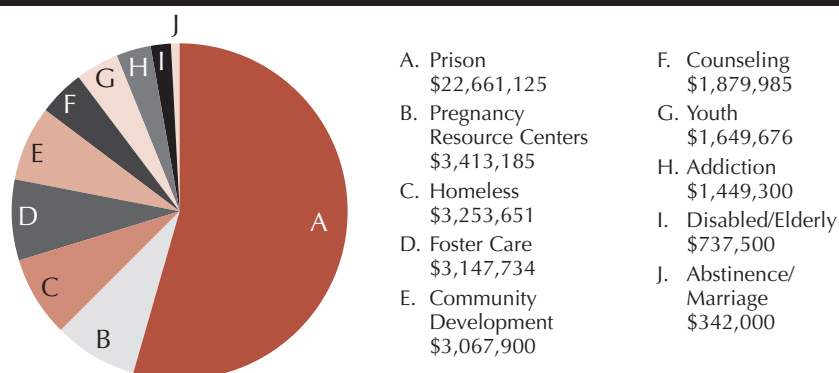


TABLE 8: Top 10 Social Service Grant Recipients

Grant recipient	Dollar amount	Number of grants	Percent of total dollars
CEO Foundation	\$3,647,681	4	9%
Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty	\$2,200,500	56	6%
National Coalition for the Protection of Children and Families	\$2,112,340	6	6%
Institute on Religion and Public Life	\$1,800,000	23	5%
Family Research Council	\$1,748,450	21	5%
CEO America	\$1,425,000	4	4%
Institute on Religion and Democracy	\$1,350,000	22	4%
Becket Fund for Religious Liberty	\$1,152,500	20	3%
National Fatherhood Initiative	\$1,117,500	14	3%
Michigan Family Forum	\$984,280	17	3%

Source: NCRP data collection and analysis from IRS Form 990-PFs, 2004.

ernment conservatives and evangelical Christians—started by Falwell in 1980—is most apparent. The level of government intervention is limited; religious charities get a new source of funding, and the president scores political points with both factions. But opponents of the administration’s policy are concerned that the most defenseless members of society will be unable to reject the religious advances of evangelicals and thus lose their religious freedom. Bush frames the issue as a defense of the freedom of faith-based organizations to compete for such grants, saying, “The federal government should not ask, ‘Does your organization believe in God?’ They ought to ask, ‘Does your program work?’”³⁵ Examining the social service providers funded by evangelical foundations makes it clear which kinds of programs the president thinks are working—and which aren’t.

A report by the Texas Freedom Network, an alliance of 7,500 religious and community leaders, evaluated the success of the faith-based programs instituted by Bush when he was governor of Texas and found several examples of proselytizing and professional misconduct. The Bush administration in Texas cut back on regulation and licensing of faith-based organizations, leading to increased rates of confirmed abuse and neglect at religious child-care facilities. Teen Challenge, a drug-treatment facility for youth, was cited for numerous violations related to counselor credentials and the illegal handling of medications.³⁶ The same group also received \$168,000 in grants from evangelical funders.

Leading the list of grantees for social services are prison ministries that do outreach to inmates and parolees in an effort to convert them to Christianity. The largest and most politically connected of these is Prison Fellowship Ministries (PFM), which was founded by former Nixon aid Chuck Colson. In 1973, Colson served seven months in federal prison for his involvement in the Watergate scandal and in the process became a born-again Christian. He used this experience to start the ministry that has grown into a \$48 million enterprise.³⁷ The evangelical foundations in the sample contributed \$13,249,325 to his efforts.

PFM started as a simple visitation program that helped local churches conduct Bible-study programs with inmates but has grown into an international organization with advocacy and service functions. PFM currently runs round-the-clock programs, in cooperation with corrections officials in four states, that place inmates under direct supervision of their staff. The programs are voluntary for inmates, and PFM receives no compensation from the government. However, its Web

site states that if the programs can be proven to reduce recidivism, government support is forthcoming.

Prison Fellowship also has an advocacy component in the form of the Wilberforce Institute, a think tank that allows Christian scholars to comment on the issues of the day from a biblical perspective. It also serves as home to BreakPoint, through which Colson offers daily radio commentaries seeking to “communicate Christian worldview messages that offer a critique of contemporary culture and encourage and equip the church to think and live Christianly.” His commentaries include his opinions on a range of political issues, as well as his outspoken support for the Bush administration.

PFM is by no means the only evangelical grantee involved in prison ministry. The Institute in Basic Life Principles (IBLP), which received \$8,770,000 in evangelical foundation grants, also runs similar programs, but for the private sector. In March, IBLP partnered with Corrections Corporation of America, the nation’s largest private prison operator, to start a pilot program at six facilities with more than 1,000 inmates. Concerned Americans for Religious Expression, an organization not included in the grants database, has partnered with the state of Florida to form the nation’s first entirely faith-based prison: the 800-man Lawley Correctional Facility. Florida Gov. Jeb Bush was quoted as saying that he and his brother, President Bush, believe the best way to rehabilitate prisoners is to “lead them to God.”³⁸

The second most prominent form of social service grantmaking goes to pregnancy resource centers (PRCs). These local offices offer services to pregnant women, including pregnancy tests, counseling and adoption, but do not offer them abortion services or referrals. While not usually employing trained physicians, the centers often promote themselves as alternatives to Planned Parenthood offices in local communities.

While offering services that exclude the option of abortion is in no way illegal, state attorneys general in New York and Ohio are investigating PRCs for providing fraudulent medical information.³⁹ One such office in Louisiana, Causeway Center for Women, was shut down by court order after its proprietor, William Graham, was sued for false advertising and fraud. Graham allegedly would pose as an abortion referral service and make appointments for pregnant women. He would then repeatedly reschedule the false abortion for months until it was too late to receive one legally.⁴⁰

Bethany Christian Services of Grand Rapids, Mich., and Heidi Group of Fort Worth, Tex., both run networks of PRCs and were generously funded by evangelical philanthropy. Together they have received \$1,399,110

since 1999. Bethany has more than 70 offices in 30 states.⁴¹ Heidi Group was founded by Carol Everett, a born-again former abortion provider. Its Web site includes her video testimonial and accusations that abortion providers are only “in it for the money.” The site also boasts that at Heidi Group PRCs, 10 percent to 30 percent of women chose Jesus Christ as their personal savior.⁴²

The third largest social service funding category in the evangelical sample is agencies that assist homeless populations. This category consists primarily of “rescue mission” homeless shelters in urban areas. These are the traditional inner-city homeless shelters with the neon “Jesus Saves” sign posted outside. They are also where opponents of faith-based government contracts see the most danger because the populations they serve are deeply in need of assistance.

Rescue missions primarily feature a homeless shelter and programs that help people get back on their feet, including substance abuse counseling and job training programs. The largest mission grantee, Holland Rescue Mission, which “exists to glorify God by proclaiming and demonstrating His love through Christ-centered programs of excellence for the homeless and less fortunate of our community,” received \$870,500 from the foundations studied.⁴³ Holland’s Web site features testimonials from clients who were able to find Jesus through the services of the mission. Another evangelical grantee, Mel Trotter Ministries, was praised by current Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham for its program’s emphasis on “spiritual support” for addicts.⁴⁴

The line between medicine and religion is also sometimes thin at evangelical grantees that provide counseling services. Evangelical Christianity is traditionally skeptical of the social sciences and especially psychology. Because of this, there are specialized agencies that call themselves “Christian counselors.” Most are fully accredited and provide a legitimate service to a unique population. However, there are examples of Christian counseling that are fraudulent and downright dangerous.

Counseling agencies that practice “reparative,” or “ex-gay,” therapies received \$283,000 in grant funding from the foundations in this sample. Although the American Psychological Association declared that homosexuality is not a mental illness and that efforts to reverse it were ineffective, there are organizations devoted to such practices on religious grounds. In fact, the APA found that such “therapies” could even be harmful to patients’ health, stating in 1998 that “psychiatric literature strongly demonstrates that treatment

attempts to change sexual orientation are ineffective. However, the potential risks are great, including depression, anxiety and self-destructive behavior.”⁴⁵

The most prominent “ex-gay” ministry is Exodus International of Orlando, Florida. A relatively small organization with a budget of less than \$1 million, Exodus serves as a referral services and speakers bureau for the “ex-gay” movement. They also take an active role in opposing gay rights. In July, Exodus placed a full-page ad in the *Los Angeles Times* under the headline, “I Questioned Homosexuality. And when I discovered a way out, I took it.” The group’s Web site also includes a series of press releases decrying what it sees as the advancement of a “gay agenda” in the media.⁴⁶

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

The characteristic of conservative philanthropy that is often cited as a reason for its success in the policy arena is the investment of large sums in a small group of influential organizations. This is also the case in evangelical funding circles, with the general policy think tank being the most popular policy grant recipient. The top two organizations, the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty and the Family Research Council, collected \$2,200,500 and \$1,748,450, respectively, to promote a wide range of conservative causes from a “Christian” perspective.

The Acton Institute takes an academic approach to Christian conservative thought, seeking to demonstrate the relationship between free-market principles and theology primarily through publications aimed at religious leaders, business leaders and academics. Their Christian Social Thought Series includes titles like “Liberating Labor: Do labor unions offer the best protection for the worker?”⁴⁷ The Family Research Council, which was founded by James Dobson, is more politically active than Acton, focusing much of its efforts on “pro-family” legislation like the partial-birth abortion ban and the Defense of Marriage Amendment. FRC, like Focus on the Family, has a 501(c)(4) political arm. The two recently teamed up to purchase print ads condemning senators who voted against the amendment to ban gay marriage. The text of the ads included the statement, “Senator X’s vote is a slap in the face of every American child.”⁴⁸

Beyond these think tanks there is also considerable foundation support for single-issue advocates that represent the broad spectrum of political issues. These, of course, include opposition to policies that they find biblically immoral such as abortion, stem-cell research, gay marriage and the teaching of evolution. These stances

are an understandable outgrowth of Christian evangelism’s literal interpretation of the Bible. However, there are also a number of advocacy organizations that move beyond opposition to individual policies and toward opposition to societal institutions.

Nowhere is this more obvious than in evangelical attitudes toward public education. The Southern Baptist Convention—the governing body of the largest evangelical denomination in the U.S., representing more than 17 million members—debated a resolution at its 2004 national convention calling for all members to withdraw their children from public schools in favor of religious or home schooling. The resolution stated in part, “Whereas the government schools are by their own confession humanistic and secular in their instruction, the education offered by the government schools is officially Godless.”⁴⁹ Although the resolution was eventual-

ly voted down because of concerns that Baptists of lesser means couldn’t afford private school, the sentiments of the convention are widely shared.

The largest evangelical policy grantee in the sample is CEO America, now called Children First America, which was founded in part by the benefactors of three major evangelical foundations, John Walton (Walton Foundation), Richard Devos (Devos Foundation) and James R. Leininger (Covenant Foundation), as a private demonstration project for school vouchers. It now funds 88 separate programs in 35 states and Washington, D.C., that allow low-income youth to attend Christian and other private schools.⁵⁰ It has also benefited from \$7,072,681 in grants from the founders.

Evangelical opponents of public education are also encouraging a recent rise in the number of home-schooled children. The movement is led by Michael Farris, founder of the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), the main evangelical homeschool advocate. HSLDA fights for limited government regulation of homeschooling, with the ideal that children are not required to attend school or take tests and parents are not required to receive any formal educational training. They also deal with other legislative issues that relate to the lives of homeschoolers, like the elimination

CHART 4: Policy and Advocacy: Subcategories

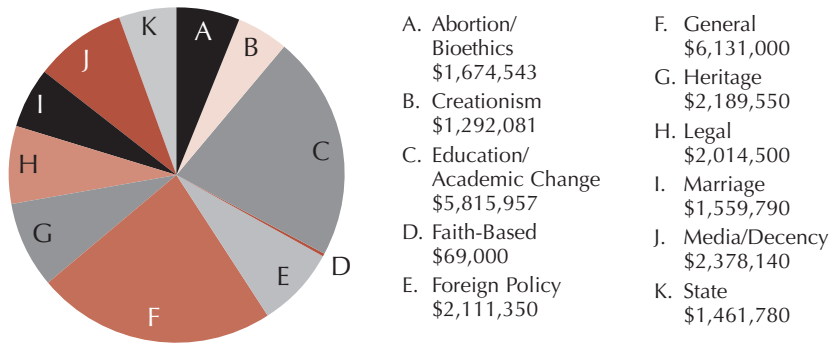


TABLE 10: Top 10 Policy and Advocacy Grant Recipients

Grant recipient	Dollar amount	Number of grants	Percent of total dollars
Prison Fellowship Ministries	\$13,249,325	48	35%
Institute in Basic Life Principles	\$8,770,000	5	23%
Colorado Christian Home	\$3,106,900	4	8%
CRISTA Ministries	\$1,651,000	28	4%
Holland Rescue Mission	\$870,500	8	2%
Bethany Christian Services	\$849,110	20	2%
Mel Trotter Ministries	\$590,000	11	1%
Heidi Group	\$550,000	4	1%
Wedgwood Christian Youth and Family Services	\$547,500	18	1%
JAF Ministries	\$518,500	8	1%

Source: NCRP data collection and analysis from IRS Form 990-PFs, 2004.

of the so-called marriage-penalty tax and even the loosening of child labor standards, to allow homeschooled children to find employment during the school day.⁵¹ HSLDA received only one grant for \$6,000 from our sample of evangelical funders, but Farris' other interests received much more.

Notably, he is the founder of Patrick Henry College, the nation's first college for homeschooled Christians and a recipient of \$5,195,000 in grants. While not specifically categorized as an advocacy organization, the college has policy implications that go well beyond those of a more traditional Christian college.⁵² Only 4 years old, the school was founded with an eye toward building a new generation of politically minded evangelical leaders. "We are not homeschooling our kids just so they can read," Farris said. "The most common thing I hear is parents telling me that they want their kids to be on the Supreme Court."⁵³

Farris also has the connections to make such ambitious goals a reality. He was one of only five evangelical leaders invited to watch President Bush sign the partial-birth abortion ban. Attorney General John Ashcroft's wife, Janet, is a trustee on the college's board. But more impressive is that in one semester, a school of only 2,500 students had seven out of the 100 possible internships at the White House, a student interning in Karl Rove's office, and another with the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq.⁵⁴

While advocates for private or homeschool education do so because they want to teach biblical morality in schools, there is another group of grantees that focus on the "Christian Heritage" of the country and the importance of biblical morality in the policy process. These organizations are led by the Institute on Religion in Public Life, which received \$1,800,000 in grants, primarily to produce its monthly magazine, *First Things*. Articles analyze the true meaning of the separation of church and state, the religious intentions of the Founding Fathers, and the supposed evils of secular culture.⁵⁵

On more specific policy issues of interest to evangelicals, the National Coalition for the Protection of Children and Families (NCPCF) was the third largest grant recipient, receiving \$2,112,340 over four years. One issue that has consistently drawn the wrath of evangelicals is pornography. Some evangelical organizations, including NCPCF, have tried to argue that there is a correlation between exposure to pornography and the incidence of anti-social behaviors like sexual abuse and pedophilia. They have led the charge with legislative and legal efforts to limit the availability of sexually

oriented material. One of the group's main campaigns has been to use lawsuits at the state and local level to keep strip clubs and pornographic bookstores from operating.⁵⁶

5. Policy Implications

Through this examination of the grantmaking of foundations that support evangelical nonprofit organizations, it is apparent that religiously conservative organizations are well connected, active and effective within the public policy process. Whether through mass evangelization at home or abroad, the provision of social services or more traditional advocacy efforts, this subsector of nonprofits and its foundation backers seek to connect religion and politics in a variety of ways. This connection has far-reaching implications not just for the government, but also for the nonprofit sector itself. Whether it's a colossus like Focus on the Family or a local faith-based counseling center, these evangelical grant recipients are raising compelling questions about philanthropy, nonprofit organizations and religion.

ACCOUNTABILITY: THE STATUS OF RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

The hard-fought gains of philanthropic reform over the last 40 years have greatly improved the level of accountability at foundations and nonprofit organizations. For all its faults and problems with enforcement, IRS Form 990 gave the public and the government a first glimpse into the operations of the organizations that benefit from substantial tax breaks. But in the process of these reforms, efforts to maintain the separation of church and state may have weakened the ability of both government and the public to keep some organizations accountable.

In writing the Tax Reform Act of 1969, legislators took great care to protect churches from state intervention, while still allowing for their tax-exempt status. This resulted in special circumstances for churches in dealing with the IRS. Churches are not required to submit Form 990, are exempt from notification requirements

related to recognition of nonprofit status and receive special considerations in the event the IRS decides to investigate that status. While the exemptions for churches appear to be a reasonable means of avoiding unfair government intrusion, the lack of clarity in defining what a church would be for tax purposes has allowed all sorts of organizations to enjoy a lower level of accountability.⁵⁷

One such organization, Campus Crusade for Christ International, happens to be one of the largest nonprofits in the country. Although it brings in nearly half a billion dollars every year for its ministry work, little is required of it as far as reporting to government, other evangelical leaders or the general public about how it spends that money. To its credit, CCCI does distribute a detailed annual report, including audited financial statements, but it does not include a host of details that would normally be required on a 990 form. These include staff and board salaries, listings of outside contracts, detailed investment information and lobbying expenditures. All of these elements are critical to ensuring that the tax exemption is being used responsibly.

JAMES DOBSON—SELF-DEALING AND PERSONAL ENRICHMENT?

The rise and fall of televangelists like Bakker and Swaggart in the 1980s demonstrated both the power of religious messages in raising funds and the potential for fraud. The evangelical community responded by forming its own watchdog organization, the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability. The council functions as a sort of Better Business Bureau by monitoring and accrediting members, which allows organizations to use the council's name as a seal of approval in an effort to attract donors.⁵⁸ The council's standards include avoiding conflicts of interest among board and

staff members, disclosing audited financial accounting statements, posting a clear statement of the evangelical nature of the organization and its programs, and making sure that fundraising is done ethically and legally.

Although this type of reporting and accreditation service helps bolster the transparency of evangelical organizations, it does not provide the public with enough information to assess the integrity of these groups. Similarly, shortcomings of the IRS Form 990 that plague all types of nonprofits also conspire to hide questionable financial arrangements within tax-exempt evangelical organizations. For example, although James Dobson mentions often on his radio program that he does not receive a salary from Focus on the Family ministries, he does not mention that he has become a multimillionaire by selling his books and videos through his own personal publishing company, James Dobson Inc.

While it is possible that Dobson could have built a career as an independent self-help author, it would not have been nearly as lucrative without the constant stream of publicity generated, tax free, from Focus on the Family. In reality, the nonprofit organization serves as a free publicity service for Dobson's for-profit publishing endeavors.⁵⁹ Yet this arrangement is not evident from a review of Focus on the Family's latest IRS 990 filing or its review on the council's Web site.

CHURCHES AND ELECTIONEERING

While the advocacy of nonprofit religious organizations in favor of policies that blur the line between church and state may be disturbing to progressives, their right to advocate should be defended. What should not be condoned is the use of evangelical nonprofits and even churches as partisan political actors, which is what some evangelical leaders and the Bush administration appear to be endorsing. In June, the *Washington Post* reported that Bush/Cheney campaign officials were recruiting a network of pastors and evangelical organizers to get out the vote for the ticket in November. The effort even included requesting that churches send their member directories to the campaigns, ostensibly so they could be contacted with partisan information.⁶⁰

This behavior is questionable because churches are still subject to the same electioneering limits as other nonprofits. However, evangelical leaders in Congress have been seeking to make electioneering by churches legal under certain circumstances. For example, an amendment to an unrelated jobs bill this summer would have made it legal for churches to engage in partisan electoral activity three times in a year without losing their nonprofit status. While the amendment was

removed from the bill, it showed the willingness of some evangelical leaders to compromise the integrity of churches for political gain.⁶¹ That willingness was also on display during the 2004 presidential election, with religious leaders playing a large role in mobilizing their parishioners on behalf of both major candidates. To protect the integrity of both religion and politics, Americans United for Separation of Church and State has been publicly calling attention to the various churches and other houses of worship that became involved—on behalf of George W. Bush or John Kerry—in the 2004 presidential election. The IRS is investigating these religious organizations, in addition to investigating the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, putting many nonprofit organizations on edge.

6. Conclusion

The rise of evangelical Christianity has had a profound impact on American politics in the last 20 years. Going from a small network of radio preachers to the most coveted voting block in the country has created unprecedented debates over the role of religion in society and contributed to the continued polarization of the electorate along religious lines. In some ways, this is just another success of the right and its philanthropic and nonprofit allies.

But from a broader perspective, it's a much more significant development, with long-term and far-reaching consequences—especially in a country that has freedom of religion as one of its founding principles. Specifically, many of the leaders of evangelical Christianity—supported substantially by the foundation community—have a completely different view of religion's role in society, one that blends “biblical values” with political advocacy. But making sure that the organizations in this study—and others—have the freedom to operate in society needs to be balanced with a person's ability to receive nonreligious services from nonprofits that are substantially supported directly or indirectly by public (or even quasi-public) revenues. Similarly, leaders of these organizations need to accept the public accountability requirements that are tied to such sources of public revenue.

This analysis of foundations that fund evangelical Christian organizations shows that the foundations use many of the same strategies that have proven successful in other conservative philanthropic circles. The most important of these is a general alignment of priorities and goals between grantmakers and grant recipients. While the range of grantees in this study is quite broad, there is an obvious consensus of support for certain organizations, programs and strategies. Just as the Heritage Foundation, American Enterprise Institute and

Cato Institute were the dominant players in Washington-based research and lobbying, there are equivalent organizations in evangelical circles. Groups like Campus Crusade for Christ, Prison Fellowship Ministries, Focus on the Family, Coral Ridge Ministries and Family Research Council have been chosen to carry the evangelical banner, whether through ministry, social service or overt political advocacy.

The foundations in this study also support and develop another important grantee strength that Axis identified as vital to conservative success: media savvy. Conservatives have shown that winning in the policy arena is more than just lobbying—it is also marketing. Getting their ideas into the public domain through the media is a hallmark of conservative think tanks. It's not surprising, then, that some of the biggest evangelical grantees are media personalities. Dobson, Kennedy and Colson are all on the radio with access to tens of millions of listeners around the world, and the donor base that those listeners provide. This has leveraged foundation resources both financially and politically, as they are able to build a constituency through their radio and other outreach functions.

While these strategies are similar to more secular conservative causes, their use in an overtly religious context makes them particularly potent and possibly threatening to both religion and the state. In the case of the former, the blurring of the line between politicians and clergy makes it more difficult for churchgoers to separate the two. People who attend religious services or tune into radio shows seeking spiritual growth or comfort but instead receive political indoctrination could develop negative opinions of a specific religion or religion as a societal institution. As for the state, there are a variety of problems with evangelical's entry into politics, most notably the fundamentalist view of the

Bible. If a public figure like Dobson believes that gay marriage is immoral because that is God's will, there is absolutely no room for the compromise and debate necessary for a democracy to function.

Despite these challenges, the role of evangelicals in politics is not likely to diminish any time soon and, in fact, should increase in the coming years because of the very nature of evangelical organizations. A calling to spread the faith has resulted in large religious demographic changes both at home and abroad. Also, the tremendous resources being put into campus missions, another hallmark of conservative philanthropy, are unmatched by any other group or cause, political or otherwise. This recruiting effort should be seen for what it is—the expression of religious freedom in a democracy. But the incursion of partisan politics into that expression must be treated differently.

While evangelicals in Congress are attempting to make churches less accountable for their political neutrality, policymakers should be moving in the opposite direction. The ambiguities in the tax code that exempt “religious organizations” from reporting and accountability requirements should be clarified with an eye toward protecting legitimate community houses of worship. Allowing religious organizations like Campus Crusade for Christ or a local rescue mission to keep their finances secret is a recipe for financial malfeasance—or in a worst-case scenario, physical or psychological harm to people seeking services from these organizations—in the name of religion.

Additionally, the political activities of religious organizations are another example of the overarching need for enforcement across the philanthropic sector. Whether it is the use of foundations or nonprofits for personal enrichment, or the partisan activities of churches, there is much to oversee. But while the IRS is charged with protecting the public interest granted through tax exemption, previous NCRP work has shown that it does not have the resources to do this job adequately.⁶² The hamstringing—or total elimination—of the IRS has long been a goal of many conservative activists,⁶³ and in the context of evangelical activism, it has helped develop a powerful and committed political force.

The concerted effort by conservative philanthropy over the last 30 years to weaken, dilute or shrink the government has proven tremendously successful. The power of the private sector over government has increased dramatically in the past three decades. Now, whether planned or as a side effect of that weakening of government, evangelical Christian leaders seek to sub-

ordinate government to religion. Based on the previous success of their supporters at conservative foundations, it is not unimaginable that they might succeed.

7. Notes

1. John Russell was an NCRP research intern/assistant during the summer of 2004, and is currently finishing his master of nonprofit management at New School University. Former NCRP Research Associate Meaghan House and current NCRP Research Assistant Elly Kugler provided significant research support to this report.
2. In addition to *Axis of Ideology* (2004), see Sally Covington's *Moving a Public Policy Agenda: The Strategic Philanthropy of Conservative Foundations* (1997) and David Callahan's *\$1 Billion for Ideas: Conservative Think Tanks in the 1990s* (1999).
3. See Lewis Powell's "Attack on American Free Enterprise System," Aug. 23, 1971.
4. See, for example, Mary C. Brennan's *Turning Right in the Sixties: The Conservative Capture of the GOP* (University of North Carolina Press, 1995) or Duane M. Oldfield's *The Right and the Righteous: The Christian Right Confronts the Republican Party* (Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1996).
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7. The preceding definition of evangelical Christianity is not grounded in any one theological text. It also is not widely agreed upon, as is the case in most denominations or religious sects. The basis for the definition is gleaned from social commentaries and materials from avowed evangelical groups. The two main sources of understanding of evangelical thought and doctrine are: (1) Jacobs, Alan. "Apocalyptic President?" *Boston Globe*. April 4, 2004. (2) Alexander-Moegerle, Gil. *James Dobson's War on America*. Prometheus Books, 1997.
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APPENDIX A: Foundation Sample

Foundation	State	Total evangelical giving 1999–2002
Arthur S. DeMoss Foundation	CO	\$45,079,314
Covenant Foundation	TX	\$19,721,954
Richard and Helen DeVos Foundation	MI	\$19,411,434
Stewardship Foundation, The	WA	\$16,598,876
Edgar and Elsa Prince Foundation	MI	\$12,167,700
Tyl Foundation	CO	\$9,256,149
Orville D. & Ruth A. Merillat Foundation	MI	\$6,935,420
Festus and Helen Stacy Foundation	FL	\$5,635,633
Chatlos Foundation Inc., The	NY	\$5,486,796
Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation	WI	\$4,508,000
Generation Trust, The	OH	\$2,646,500
Dick and Betsy DeVos Foundation	MI	\$2,573,491
Richard D. and Lynette S. Merillat Foundation	IL	\$2,408,000
Scaife Family Foundation	PA	\$2,145,500
Jay and Betty Van Andel Foundation	MI	\$1,678,400
Anschutz Foundation	CO	\$1,589,500
Randolph Foundation	NY	\$1,453,000
Christian Evangelical Foundation	MI	\$1,361,640
Douglas and Maria DeVos Foundation	MI	\$1,005,423
Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation	OK	\$897,500
William E. Simon Foundation	NJ	\$864,450
F.M. Kirby Foundation	NJ	\$787,500
Sarah Scaife Foundation	PA	\$775,000
John M. Olin Foundation	NY	\$769,000
Walton Family Foundation	AR	\$610,621
William H. Donner Foundation	NY	\$566,905
Castle Rock Foundation	CO	\$460,000
Earhart Foundation	MI	\$427,750
Huizenga Foundation	IL	\$381,250
Gordon and Mary Cain Foundation	TX	\$302,100
Roe Foundation	SC	\$235,000
Bill and Bernice Grewcock Foundation	NE	\$232,000
Phillip M. McKenna Foundation	PA	\$130,000
Shelby Cullom Davis Foundation	NY	\$116,000
D&D Foundation	IL	\$87,000
Smith Richardson Foundation	NC	\$25,000
Barre Seid Foundation	IL	\$15,000

Source: NCRP data collection and analysis from IRS Form 990-PFs, 2004.

APPENDIX B: Nonprofit Recipients of Evangelical Grantmaking¹

Organization	State	Total foundation grants received, 1999–2002
Campus Crusade for Christ	Varies ²	\$17,456,852
Prison Fellowship Ministries	DC	\$13,249,325
Institute in Basic Life Principles	IL	\$8,770,000
Gospel Communication International	MI	\$7,417,100
Samaritans Purse	NC	\$6,571,900
Young Life	Varies ³	\$5,915,754
Focus on the Family	CO	\$5,675,000
Child Evangelism Fellowship	MO	\$5,414,945
CEO Foundation	DC	\$3,647,681
Colorado Christian Home	CO	\$3,106,900
Life Action Ministries	MI	\$3,068,605
Haggai Institute	GA	\$2,737,600
Luis Palau Evangelical Association	OR	\$2,522,666
Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty	MI	\$2,200,500
National Coalition for the Protection of Children and Families	OH	\$2,112,340
Institute on Religion and Public Life	NY	\$1,800,000
Evangelism Explosion III International	FL	\$1,773,800
Family Research Council	DC	\$1,748,450
CRISTA Ministries	WA	\$1,651,000
Billy Graham Evangelistic Association	MN	\$1,504,500
Mission Aviation Fellowship	CA	\$1,440,000
CEO America	DC	\$1,425,000
Institute on Religion and Democracy	DC	\$1,350,000
Servant Leadership Foundation	CO	\$1,315,000
Becket Fund for Religion Liberty	DC	\$1,152,500
National Fatherhood Initiative	MD	\$1,117,500
Wycliffe Bible Translators	FL	\$1,117,000
Fellowship of Christian Athletes	Varies ⁴	\$1,104,315
Wall Builder Presentations Inc.	TX	\$1,100,000
Coral Ridge Ministries Media	FL	\$1,087,340
Michigan Family Forum	MI	\$984,280
Word of Life International	NY	\$925,000
Holland Rescue Mission	MI	\$870,500
World Relief Corp of National Association of Evangelicals	MD, WA	\$870,000
Bethany Christian Services	MI	\$849,110
Institute for American Values	NY	\$754,000
Leading the Way	GA	\$751,200
Reach the Children Foundation	FL	\$750,000
InterVarsity Christian Fellowship	FL, WI, MI	\$714,000
SAT-7 North America	MD	\$640,000

Organization	State	Total foundation grants received, 1999–2002
World Vision International	WA	\$628,500
Discovery Institute	WA	\$620,000
Human Life Alliance of Minnesota	MN	\$615,593
Youth for Christ	Varies ⁵	\$607,100
Mel Trotter Ministries	MI	\$590,000
World Impact	CA	\$584,200
Christian Legal Society	VA	\$575,500
Bible League	IL	\$563,634
Heidi Group	TX	\$550,000
Wedgwood Christian Youth and Family Services	MI	\$547,500
Christian Reformed World Relief Committee	MI	\$546,802
Interdev	WA	\$532,500
Promise Keepers	CO	\$520,000
JAF Ministries	CA	\$518,500
Milwaukee Rescue Mission	WI	\$500,000
Compassion International	CO, OK	\$484,028
Kingdom Building Ministries	CO	\$471,000
Pregnancy Resource Center	MI	\$461,825
Right to Life Michigan Educational Foundation	MI	\$430,000
First Priority of America	TN	\$417,100
Life Education Fund of Colorado	CO	\$400,000
Save Our Youth	CO	\$396,050
Justice at the Gate Ministries	TX	\$375,000
African Enterprise	CA, NY	\$347,500
Inner City Christian Federation	MI	\$345,000
Peter Deyneka Russian Ministries	IL	\$342,000
Latter Day Saints Charities	UT	\$340,000
Back to the Bible	NE	\$333,736
Life Ministries	CA	\$325,000
Market Street Mission Inc	NJ	\$320,000
Youth for Christ	Varies ⁶	\$318,900
Overseas Council for Theological Education and Missions	IN	\$315,500
Operation Mobilization	GA	\$311,500
Crystal Cathedral Ministries - Hour of Power	CA	\$310,000
Seeds of Hope	CO	\$302,500
Dominion Broadcasting Inc.	OH	\$300,000
Teen Ranch	MI	\$300,000
International Bible Society	CO	\$299,500
Pennsylvania Family Institute	PA	\$295,000
Rafiki Foundation	TX	\$294,460
International Outreach Ministries	AL	\$290,000
Bible Literature International	CO, OH	\$285,000

Organization	State	Total foundation grants received, 1999–2002
John Stott Ministries	IL	\$282,000
Intercessors for America	VA	\$280,000
English Language Institute in China	CA	\$270,000
Free Congress Research and Education Foundation	DC	\$270,000
Christian Reformed Home Missions	MI	\$260,000
Genesis Foundation	MI	\$260,000
Joy of Jesus	MI	\$260,000
American Bible Society	NY, DC	\$251,000
Doulos Ministries	CO	\$250,000
National Day of Prayer Task Force	CO	\$246,000
Navigators	CO	\$241,800
World Harvest for Christ	MD	\$240,000
Foundation for Traditional Values	MI	\$236,800
Toward Tradition	WA	\$236,000
Alliance Defense Fund	AZ	\$235,000
Cross Roads Prison Ministries	PA	\$230,000
Americans United for Life	IL	\$227,000
Derek Prince Ministries	NC	\$225,000
Northwest Leadership Foundation	WA	\$220,176
Pathfinder Resources	MI	\$217,500
National Right to Life Educational Trust Fund	DC	\$217,000
Clebe McClary Evangelistic Association	SC	\$210,000
Creation Research Society	AZ	\$204,000
International Aid Inc.	MI	\$204,000
CareNet	VA, MS	\$202,000
Gateway Community of Outreach	FL	\$201,750
American Family Association	MI, MS, TX	\$200,550
Medical Institute of Sexual Health	TX	\$200,000
Pittsburg Project, The	PA	\$200,000
Presbyterian Media Mission	PA	\$200,000
Providence Network, The	CO	\$200,000
Foundation for Individual Rights in Education	PA	\$197,000
Pioneers Inc.	FL	\$193,900
American Tract Society	TX	\$187,601
HCJB World Radio	CO	\$186,950
Scripture Union	PA	\$185,000
Fellowship Foundation Inc.	DC	\$177,500
Atlantic City Rescue Mission	NJ	\$175,000
Dawn Ministries	CO	\$175,000
Open Door Mission Foundation	TX	\$175,000
Cure International	MI, PA	\$172,667
Center for Religion and Diplomacy	VA	\$170,000

Organization	State	Total foundation grants received, 1999–2002
Champions for Life	TX, GA	\$170,000
URBI et ORBI Communications	KY	\$170,000
Teen Challenge International	FL, PA	\$168,000
National Institute of Youth Ministries	CA	\$165,000
First Priority of Broward County, FL	FL	\$161,780
BEE International	TX	\$160,000
Educational Services International	CA	\$160,000
New Horizons Ministries	WA	\$158,000
Covenant House	NY, NJ	\$156,000
Back to God Hour	IL	\$155,100
Cary Christian Center	MS	\$155,000
Northwest Family Life	WA	\$154,500
Acts 29 Ministries	MI	\$150,000
Christian Reformed World Missions	MI	\$150,000
Concerts of Prayer International	NJ	\$150,000
Dayspring International	VA	\$150,000
Every Home for Christ	CO	\$150,000
Faith Works Milwaukee	WI	\$150,000
Frontline Foundation	FL	\$150,000
Gleanings for the Hungry	CA	\$150,000
Heartlove Place	WI	\$150,000
Institute for Global Engagement	MD	\$150,000
Lord's Place Inc.	FL	\$150,000
Daystar US	MN	\$147,500
Christian Research Institute	CA	\$145,145
Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood	IL	\$145,090
Sheridan House Family Ministries	FL	\$141,985
Partners International	CA	\$140,000
American Christian Television Service	CA, OH	\$135,000
Christian Counseling Center	MI	\$135,000
Open Air Campaigners International	FL	\$135,000
House of Hope	FL	\$133,000
Mission to the World	GA	\$130,500
Health Intervention Services	MI	\$128,100
Gospel Films	MI	\$126,000
Russell Kirk Center for Cultural Renewal	MI	\$125,750
Atlanta Union Mission Corporation	GA	\$125,000
International Students Inc.	CO	\$125,000
Youth With a Mission	Varies ⁷	\$124,727
Caleb Project	CO	\$124,000
Venture Middle East	WA	\$122,000
Howard Center for Family, Religion and Society	IL	\$121,000

Organization	State	Total foundation grants received, 1999–2002
Family Educators Alliance of South Texas	TX	\$120,426
Crisis Pregnancy Center of Pierce County	WA	\$120,000
Luke Society	SD	\$120,000
Only a Servant Ministries	TX	\$119,600
Morality in Media	NY	\$119,000
Chosen People Ministries	NY	\$118,500
Faith Inc.	MI	\$115,500
Jim Wilson Evangelistic Association	FL	\$113,500
Words of HOPE	MI	\$111,000
DAWN Projects for Jesus	OH	\$110,620
Texas Home School Coalition	TX	\$110,500
The Gathering	TX	\$110,250
Ligonier Ministries	FL	\$110,100
Jews for Jesus	CA	\$110,000
Midtown Pregnancy Support Center	NY	\$110,000
Neighborly Evangelism Ministry	CO	\$106,000
OC International	CO	\$106,000
City Rescue Mission	OK, PA	\$105,000
Gospel to Unreached Millions	TX	\$103,000
John Guest Evangelistic Team	PA	\$103,000
Crossroads Christian Communications	NY	\$100,000
Family Awareness Center	MI	\$100,000
Family Guidance Inc.	PA	\$100,000
Girls Hope of Pittsburgh Inc.	PA	\$100,000
Henry Blackaby Ministries	GA	\$100,000
Hope Pregnancy Center of Broward County	FL	\$100,000
Light of Life Rescue Mission	PA	\$100,000
Lumiere Medical Ministries	NC	\$100,000
Miracle Hill Ministries	SC	\$100,000
National Bible Association	NY	\$100,000
World Challenge Inc.	TX	\$100,000

Source: NCRP data collection and analysis from IRS Form 990-PFs, 2004.

NOTES FOR APPENDIX B

- i. Due to space limitations, listed here are only those organizations that received \$100,000 or more in grants from the foundations in the sample. More than 700 organizations are in the full sample analyzed.
- ii. Funds are allocated to CCC and its affiliates in Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, New York, South Carolina, and Texas.
- iii. Funds are allocated to Young Life and its affiliates in Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Texas, Virginia, and Wyoming.
- iv. Funds are allocated to Fellowship of Christian Athletes and its affiliates in Florida, Illinois, Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Texas, and Wyoming.
- v. Funds are allocated to Youth for Christ and its affiliates in Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Michigan, and Washington.
- vi. Funds are allocated to Youth for Christ and its affiliates in Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Michigan, and Washington.
- vii. Funds are allocated to Youth With a Mission and its affiliates in Arkansas, California, Oregon, and Texas.

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