

# M E T A P H Y S I C S    O F   T H E    M O R A L   M A J O R I T Y

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The basic distinction between Left and Right, to oversimplify, would be the response to social need: The Left perceives a problem and proposes action to resolve the problem -- the Right reacts to the proposal. From this basic distinction language grows concerning groups and parties and coalitions and political process: progressives vs. conservative\$, liberal vs. reactionary, humanist vs. evangelical, etc. We begin our overview with relevant moments of history.

History: The First Moment. During the French crisis of 1789 to 1800 the masses of the people of this once-Catholic nation were threatened by famine and were totally frustrated by the unreasonable expenditures of the royalty, especially those of Queen Marie Antoinette. But even without her or the threat of famine, the nation would have been in dire straits economically.

Two privileged "Estates" -- the royalty and the clergy -- had chosen to ignore the masses of the citizenry, the Third Estate. The Third Estate was comprised of some 26 million persons who had virtually no voice in governmental action. The king alone had the power to call the Estates to parliament and he alone had the power to veto any actions they might take. In the compromise of the 1780's the king was forced by Monsieur Jacques Necker, his minister of finance, to call the assemblage of the Estates General for May 1, 1789. This was the first convention of the Estates in one hundred seventy five years. This was the Catholic Kingdom of France.

As a palliative to the aroused masses -- awakened to their corporate misery by the American revolution fifteen years previously and the role of French heroes in the American war of independence -- the king made concessions to the Third Estate. The tradition held equal representation to be appropriate for each of the Estates: three hundred for the First Estate, the royalty and the nobility; three hundred for the Second Estate, the clergy; and three hundred for the Third Estate, the common people. King Louis XVI conceded that the Third Estate might have as many representatives as the total of the First and Second combined. And so the call went out: some 600 delegates would be permitted to the Third as well as to the Second and First combined.

In the placement of this enormous assembly the language of Left and Right developed, the Royalty and the Clergy being seated to the right, the Third Estate to the left.

In the opening sessions all the elements were disposed toward some reforms. But with the passage of the Declaration of the Rights of Man <sup>(1789)</sup> the reforms turned into revolution. The Left became the place of demands for sweeping changes: reduction of taxes, the abolition of feudalism, a more just distribution of land from nobles and from church to the ordinary citizen, and so on.

All of this led to bloody conflict in which the Reign of Terror took the lives of thousands of Frenchmen, including Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette and thousands of clergy and religious and many Catholic laity who had protected the religious. All of this became the foundation for the Republic of France replacing the Kingdom. The American Declaration of Independence and the success of the American colonies <sup>had</sup> inspired much of the thinking in France, but with totally different results.

During these same years the Emancipation of Jews in France was being progressively pursued. (Cf. Arthur Hertzberg, The French Enlightenment and the Jews, 1968) French Jews, Sephardic in Bayonne and Bordeaux, and Ashkenazic in Franch-Compte and the border territories with Germany, saw themselves becoming the beneficiaries of this complex history.

Without detailing these developments, we might keep in mind that the Jacobins were one of the political factions, comprising a party of the Left, using the Dominican convent on St. Jacques Street in Paris for their meetings. They were pro-revolutionary and radical in their demands for change. The Sans-culottes were another radical pro-Republic group. On the other hand, the Girondins were generally from the middle class, favoring the monarchy and encouraging war with France's neighbors. With the Royalty they comprised the Right. But all three were destroyed in the aftermath and only Napoleon and the army survived the turmoil.

Second Moment. The second selected moment for our overview comes much later -- within our own nation, within our own time. More than twenty years ago the Anti Defamation League published Danger on the Right (by Arnold Forster and Benjamin E. Epstein. Random House, 1964). The book presents a documented overview of the radical right as developing at that time in the John Birch Society and other angry elements. It included exposure of extreme conservatism as seen in William Buckley and The National Review and other leaders of the wave of new conservatism.

It was at that time (1961-1964) that I wrote two different presentations on the Right, "The John Birch Society: A Moral Evaluation," and "The Roots of Rightism," the latter published by the University of Dayton Press. My position attracted some national attention at that time and contributed to the debate on the orientation of the Far Right, especially as proposed by that "dynamic leader" Robert Welch.

Some time later the term "Evangelical" was appropriated by the Christian leadership of the Right.

In 1972 the Libertarian party, to which we shall refer later, was founded as a political expression of the New Conservatism.

Third Moment. We want to identify the contemporary right wing as it has been associated with President Ronald Reagan. The Moral Majority was chartered in June 1979 by Jerry Falwell. In January 1986 Falwell summarized the accomplishments of these seven years and announced the charter of the Liberty Federation with a goal of bringing 20 million voters to the polls to accomplish their targets. Among the startling statistics cited by him "conservative Roman Catholics constitute the largest single block of membership (30%)" within "the six and one half million Americans ...united with the Moral Majority."

I follow Charles Silberman on this topic. Author of Crisis in Black and White (1964) and Crisis in the Classroom (1970) he recently visited Christian leadership in New York City (Jan.29, 1986) in order to speak for his book A Certain People: American Jews and their Lives Today (1985). His host was Rabbi A. James Rudin of the



American Jewish Committee. The central thesis of his work is a basically optimistic reading claiming that American Jews have become comfortable in the pluralism which has characterized American history and political activity in our nation. Silberman champions pluralism as the American way.

The terms Left and Right do not appear in the excellent Index of this book. But he examines briefly the interaction of the Moral Majority and the American Jewish people. He describes the phenomenon of the Moral Majority, recently (Jan. 3, 1983) relocated within a new charter, The Liberty Federation. Silberman is highly critical of the Evangelical Right and the political philosophy which it expresses. On specific issues he sees the Right as 1) favoring the property rights of the wealthy; 2) favoring prayer in the public schools; and 3) supporting an increasing role for denominational (Christian) political action (cf. pages 344-359).

It becomes clear that in the political process the Right 1) favors the status quo by supporting minimum intervention by the federal government in social matters; 2) favors maintenance of a strong military force in opposition to Communism; and 3) opposes abortion as a legalized form of "murder of the innocent."

Silberman perceives Jews as being traditionally aligned with the agenda of the Democratic party. He demonstrates that Jews have remained in sympathy with that agenda, showing that only about one third (35%) of Jews who voted in ~~1974~~ the 1984 Republican landslide voted for Ronald Reagan.

He favors with his Jewish colleagues a secular purpose for government, especially as espoused by the Democratic party. He also expects a clear support for Israel from either party, as indeed do most Jews, but the Democratic party seems to have an edge here even though the Reagan administration has continued massive support for Israel.

Another source of information on the Right, from a different author, is The Neoconservatives by Peter Steinfels (Simon Schuster 1979). Steinfels as Silberman is quite critical of the Right; but he is reported to be more kind in that he sees the neoconservatives

as useful within our traditional American pluralism.

Jerry Falwell summarizes the situation well: the Moral Majority "was chartered as a political organization of religious conservatives who were pro-life, pro-traditional family and who supported a strong national defense and the State of Israel." (From the Official Statement of Jerry Falwell of January 3, 1986.) At the same time<sup>the</sup>/historical moment of the Liberty Federation arrived with this statement.

All of these historical moments should now be useful in a sociological analysis of the Right and its alignments and propensities.

### Sociology: Alignments

Traditionally certain elements of society align themselves with the Right: the wealthy, the religious element, the military, and the medical professions. Farmers are also more aligned with the Right. Let us glance at three of these: religion, the military and the medical professions.

- 1) Religion has a high regard for tradition and for the preservation of values. These values seem to be the preservation of the status quo as a vehicle of good, and in this sense every person ought to have a conservative side. The religious element, especially the clergy and men and women under vows, usually has a strong disposition to favor the good in the establishment.
- 2) The military and police elements are usually aligned with preservation of the existent structures of authority: government, education, social services such as sanitation and civic facilities. For the conservation of life and the exercise of authority the military aligns itself, with rare exceptions, with the existent order. Exceptions occur when governmental abuse of power generates opposition capable of revolution as in our recent experiences in the Philippines and Haiti (February 1986).
- 3) The medical professions are concerned with the preservation of life through their own skills and their own tradition against violence. These forces are usually aligned with the Right, except in those cases where the medical professions have been alienated from authority by abuse of military and police power, or by manifest corruption of the power dynamisms.

A few other factors may enable us to see the social alignment of the Right more clearly. First the wave of legalized abortions over the last thirteen years constitutes a scandal of murder of the innocent. SEcondly the present soaring divorce rate elicits from the Right a mighty roar of anger. And thirdly the current wave of single parent families is very threatening to the traditional family.

To these problems the Right puts itself forward as the champion of a stable nuclear family. It expresses the anger of God for all those who refuse to walk in the virtuous pattern of the traditional family.

### The Libertarian Party

Sociologically the Right is more clearly identified than the Left: 1) it is comprised of better than average income people, with no visible membership among the poor; 2) it includes persons in visible support of "law and order," persons often identified by uniforms or in roles supportive of authority; 3) it may include academicians but they are probably a minority in the university at this time; 4) and it may include many farmers but they often fall into the categories just mentioned.

It excludes secular humanists and social activists of the past even if they claim to be motivated by prophetic insight. Clearly it is developing activists of a new breed.

One example of how the Far Right may be highly visible is the Libertarian Party. I cite here from my brochure on The Roots of Rightism (p.1):

The popular sentiment of reaction to the Left has become widely known as 'the new conservatism.' Another name, however expresses more perfectly the roots in human nature from which this movement has drawn its popular support. This name is 'libertarianism,' which expresses more accurately the psychological origins of the movement. This name places it more perfectly within its radical liberal orientation than the term 'right' can do.

The term libertarian is not common, yet it is in more general use than is recognized and it is generally acceptable to rightists. Senator John Tower, conservative Senator from

Texas, identifies the philosophy of government of today's conservatism in these terms: "conservatism" is basically "libertarian" with emphasis on maximum individual freedom and enterprise (from A Program for Conservatives). His chapter entitled "American Conservatism Defined" is a clear and concise statement of this viewpoint.

The Libertarian Party was founded in 1972, bearing out the use of this term. This political party has placed candidates and party platform before the American public for these years. It has placed candidates on several levels in several elections. The central thrust against government was expressed in the lead of an article in The New York Times which covered the philosophy of Edward E. Clark, candidate for the presidency in 1980. The lead read simply, "Government Elimination is Goal of Libertarian Party's Candidate" (by Warren Weaver, Jr., Jan 22, 1980).

The main thrust is expressed in the aphorism, "The less government the better!" Few persons recall that this was the favorite phrase of Robert Welch, founder of the John Birch Society in his infamous Blue Book.

The Right then is not merely a reaction to the scandals of schools without prayer and families without parents, but constitutes a new philosophy of negativism, or at least a new set of attitudes on the functions of government.

To summarize and comment on this sociological overview: The basic distinction between "progressives" (the Left) and "reactionaries" (the Right) is attitude toward change. Progressives favor change to meet identifiable problems. Conservatives oppose change in order to keep the status quo. The Center must work for a dynamic homeostasis of two opposing propensities. But both sides are relative to the social order, both terms are relative to the spectrum of political organization.

Extremes on either side help us to understand the Center. "After an interval of 20 to 30 years, the Left of one period becomes the Right of the next." (Barbara and Robert North). Perhaps a pertinent example may be the issue of abortion, where the right of the woman to her body was a high priority in 1973; the life of the unborn but viable fetus may become the concern for political action in 1990.

This overview hopefully has prepared us for our more difficult task, the examination of the metaphysics of the Moral Majority.



## Metaphysics of the Right

To state the metaphysics of a social fabric is a difficult task. We attempt here to make three points about a social group:

- a) from traditional philosophy (in terms of substance and accident);
- b) from legal philosophy (in terms of "the moral person");
- c) from contemporary philosophy (in terms of vital process).

Secondly we attempt to identify the epistemology of the Evangelical Right as non-critical, simplist, inadequate, *absolutist*.

Social philosophy changes as experience and reflection on the social order changes. Some changes come unexpectedly and cause the rejection of time-honored categories.

An example of a major change in Catholic social philosophy is the great step from conceiving of certain societies as perfect -- unchanging--finished, to match the conflictual realism of our experience. Human societies are never perfect, never unchanging, never finished -- unless dead. They always live in a context of struggle. (Cf. Gregory Baum, "Catholic Inconsistencies" in The Ecumenist, Jan-Feb. 1986, p. 25)

Another example of change in Christian social philosophy would be the Synod's recent action asking for a review of the principle of subsidiarity and its application to the life of the Church. (The Final Report, II C 8 c)

- a) Taken more generally however, a metaphysics of social movements can be more objective by examining classical models of social thought. Let us try now to identify how some philosophers have thought about society and its dynamisms. When asked the basic philosophical question, "What is it?" the Greeks had <sup>only</sup> two categories, substance and accident, as fundamental terms in which to think about reality. A substance is something that stands by itself, and in it a number of modifications may inhere; these latter are called accidents. An accident is some aspect of the being which inheres in or modifies the nature of the thing in non-essential ways: these are quality, quantity, place, posture, motion, color, action or operation, passion, etc. Thus a brown horse is essentially a horse: the brownness inheres in the substance of horse. Thus voting is essentially an action, therefore a non-essential operation of a person.



A difficulty arises in that Plato and Socrates do not seem to have used their basic diptych in thinking about the republic. So at first reflection social structures do not appear to be either substance or accident.

Thomas Aquinas in general follows Aristotle on the social nature of man, his need for government, the nature of ethics, justice, politics, etc. Human society and the state are seen as natural to man in the western tradition, even if they do not satisfy the supernatural end of man. As centuries went on philosophers have raised the matter of society without clearly defining society or the state or the group as a substance or an accident.

In time it became clear that the state must somehow serve the human person. I call this "the person principle," though I confess that I have not heard this terminology elsewhere. The social encyclicals have been quite explicit about this relationship of society or state to the person. Pope John Paul clearly supports this traditional concept that the state and all social organizations must serve the person.

Failing on this ground, the totalitarian state is clearly disallowed.

But on the other hand, in the dialog over the individual good and the social good, it is clear that the end of every society is the common good of that society. So it becomes self-evident that the common good must include both the social good and the personal good, even if there is admittedly a tension between the social and the personal.

The good of the individual then, must <sup>at times</sup> subject itself to the common good when there is a conflict of interests. The individual submits to and supports the common good at many levels, by his active and rational involvement in the development of appropriate social structures. But the common good of the state disallows an individualism which would place the good of the individual before the common good of the social structure.

There is no suggestion however within the Catholic tradition that society or state constitute "substances," in the usual sense of beings which stand by themselves. The social organization of men <sup>and women</sup> is a different kind of being.

If we disallow substance, then the social aspect must become an accident of man's existence -- even though this is difficult to imagine. We must be honest in recognizing that <sup>we</sup> ~~man~~ does not usually think of society in these terms and so has no adequate philosophic categories in which to think of society. And being honest to the point of embarrassment one needs to admit that most persons have no explicit metaphysics of society or state. Certainly there is no adequate statement of this intuition from the radical Right.

If we say that society is not a substance but an accident, it must inhere in something else, i.e. in the human beings who make up the social body. The accidental relation which places them in some sense together may be place (geography) or movement or will. Thus a political organization is a social being, a special kind of being belonging to many and sharing with them in a common good as perceived by the membership. Every society is a special kind of accident in that it joins and brings together all who share in the common good of the individuals who comprise it. The state and political organizations have this kind of precarious being, dependent on the wills of those who bind themselves to uphold the social entity which affects all the membership.

The accident of society is the will and action of the members to move together, i.e. it is an operation or action of the membership towards the social good. It is within this society that the personal and individual good is assured. Society is then the dynamism by which persons collaborate and respond to seeking something perceived as good. Society is a very special kind of accident, unlike color or posture. It is a conjoined shared disposition of wills to participate in tradition and mores and common action.

AS the poet FRancis Thompson has put it, "In the whole alone the part is blessed."

The Moral Majority and the Liberty Federation then are social accidents, organizations or movements which depend on the will of their membership and the operations to which they are committed.

b) Is there any other category by which we may reflect about a group of persons who have some common goals and some common actions? Perhaps legal philosophy will offer us a tool.

For the purposes of the law, it was necessary to invent language which permitted the legal authorities to take action with respect to an organized body. Any group which needed to be recognized by the legal powers had to have some language by which this body could be described, identified, honored or prosecuted. In one case it might be to honor the founders, in another to be able to prosecute organized crime, and more often to be able to legislate appropriate responses to initiatives taken by the group. The group is called a "moral person" before the law to distinguish it from an individual person. *"corporate person"*

For example, what are the commitments of the Christian Study Group with respect to its membership? It is clear that the CSG is a voluntary organization of its members who have been recognized as knowledgeable individuals who wish to study and to learn together. This is a group of individuals who may be identified for privilege or burden. This "being" is a moral person, a corporate entity which can be recognized for all the purposes of the NCCJ which pertain to it.

This group is made up of individual persons. The group is not a person in the usual sense of an individual who can be held responsible for his actions or his legal procedures. The group is "considered" as if it were an individual person for the purposes of law.

The value of such language is that it enables us to speak about the group as if it were a human being, to give credit and to place blame. For example the signatures of the group are more easily recognized and identified for meaning when the signatures are sent together rather than singly as individuals. I recall the difference at Oberammergau when the officers of the village recognized the group in me of Christians, members of the Christian Study Group, for whom I was speaking. Each of you was there morally with me as I addressed the Producer, the Mayor and the Pastor.

In many instances legal recognition is not necessary for the existence of a moral person. When a committee is formed and a secretary reports back for the committee, it is for the total group that

the secretary acts. There is a moral person in any group that has a common purpose or task.

WE see then that the Moral Majority and the Liberty Federation is legally a moral person, chartered before the law, and capable of being prosecuted and exposed under the law, but also sharing all that our term moral person implies such as the public understanding of this person.

c) Is there any other way of thinking about society? It is just possible that in contemporary thought, with its emphasis on dynamism, there is openness to thinking about society as an organism, i.e. from its dynamic aspect rather than in substantialist terms or in legal terminology. This leads us to perceive organization as a vital process. This insight enables us to see the political party and every other membership group as being transient beings, dependent on the will of its membership, vulnerable as having a beginning and developments (events) and termination. To understand where a group is at any historical moment, one would have to slice through it -- in the metaphor of Henri Bergson -- and examine the detail of its history at that moment.

Personally I find that this term process is a better way of thinking about social change than to use the traditional category of accident or moral person. The process category may enable us to see the vital relations of its dynamisms -- its events and its potentiality for evil or for good. It may enable us to distinguish better between the common good and the personal good, e.g. it may allow us to give a better defense of eminent domain (a legal technicality for condemnation of property in order to create a public good).

AT the same time we must admit that sometimes the personal good is impacted by such action, e.g. when the construction of the highway comes through my living room.

Applying these insights to the Moral Majority one is able to discern various ways in which the social organism grows -- flourishes -- or dies. So long as a high level of communications and



achievement fuel the motivation, the organism grows. If one were able to cut into that communication, the organism might be "satisfied" (the term is Whitehead's) and die. An example would be the demise of the John Birch Society, for all practical purposes, around 1965.

Another insight: two goods are involved in the dynamic between the individual and the corporate body: the personal good and the social good. These two goods give us a clue as to why there will always be two orientations, a Left and Right. The Right is concerned about personal property primarily. It is threatened by consideration that this kind of property is granted to the individual only as society is willing to recognize the acquisition of such property and to support the claims. It is threatened by the thought that this private good is assured only by the social context of law and order.

The criterion by which we are able to determine the goodness or evil of a given social mechanism is property -- a personal good. But the personal good is supported only by the social structure within which it is held: property is a support for the dignity of the person.

Most persons like to think in terms of absolutes, without any qualifications. But claims to possession are always relative, never absolute, property being granted to individuals as stewards of the goods of mankind. While this has always been true the perception is anguished by a context of great social change in which there is a threat to the property holder.

Some indication of where the value system of the Right has been constructed is given in their attitude towards income tax and their opposition to restructuring the tax system to favor the less fortunate.

There are then two orientations of political structures, towards the common good or towards the personal good. First in time for the Left as the communal needs are assessed and a mechanism to attain these needs is considered; secondly for the Right as personal property and the structures which defend property are envisioned. These are the two poles of the metaphysics of society, the community and the individual.



There are two foci in every social structure, two interlocking goods. The tension between these goods can be a creative tension and it is creative within the homeostasis of the Center. As personal property increases, the prospect of gain motivates every member to seek to participate add to share. This increase in private gain is one of the greatest motivators; it assists every member of the social fabric to discover motivation and it empowers him to improve his condition. This is one side of the coin.

The community's common good is the motivation for the other side of the coin: as the general welfare is improved, my personal and family welfare are improved. If there are good highways my access to the services of health, education, and communications is improved. The common good does guarantee my private good, Sometimes however it may demand a sacrifice from me of my wellbeing and even of my life.

In summary the Moral Majority is a social accident which must be dealt with legally as a moral person. Realistically it is a vital process which has tremendous power to captivate the public sentiment and to do enormous harm.

It seems to me that in a free society the principal means of coping with such extremism is the public forum. In the public forum this phenomenon can be studied and analyzed. With publicity and reflection by the best powers within us we can cope with this terror.

We move now to the last part of this paper: some reflections on the matter of Evangelical Epistemology.

# The Metaphysics of Knowing: Evangelical Epistemology

"Now I see....Any one who fears God and does what is right is pleasing to God." (Acts 10:34) This statement of Peter may be a good starting point for reflection on the epistemology of the Evangelical Right. a) The first aspect of metaphysics is the quest for knowledge about what is known. b) The second aspect of metaphysics is how this knowing process takes place. We are now ready to take up the second question.

In the fourth century before the common era, Plato, Socrates and Aristotle were deeply concerned over what men know and how. But they assumed that we do know, in contrast to the skeptics and the cynics about them.

Most of us have been exposed to Plato's legend in The Republic (or was it Socrates?) of the prisoner and the cave. We have some idea of how the lonely figure, locked in darkness, escapes his shadow world into light. He knows reality of the highest order in his escape from the cave and in his experience of truth in the light of the sun. Unfortunately when he returns to the cave no one will believe him nor his description of what has happened.

The story is an allegory demonstrating how man passes from knowledge of shadows or opinions (doxa--eikasias--pistis) to knowledge of true forms (episteme--archai--noeta). However in The Republic a more technical explanation precedes the story of the cave -- it uses the simile of the line. It is more explicit on the process of knowing. In both examples the validity of real knowledge is simply assumed. (An excellent summary of this metaphysical theory is found in Copleston's History of Philosophy Vol. I, Ch.19, pp. 151-161).\*

In practical matters such as politics we know and we know that we know: we assume the same as did the philosophers, aware that we are continually going from shadows (doxa- opinions) towards clarity (episteme - knowledge)

\* The Cave in The Republic 514-518 (Bk. VII at the beginning)  
The Line in The Republic 509-511 (Bk. VI toward the end).

On the other hand in complex political matters we go from sometimes conflicting data toward more certain convictions, from hypotheses to more firm insights, but our knowledge is always limited and conjectural. Thus we are neither skeptics nor cynics about the social process nor about our limitations in coming to truth.

We have long known that evangelicals think differently from liberal journalists, but it has not been clear just how they are different.

The practical difference may be seen in this well-known statement from an eminent politician: he knows that prudence and judgment are at the heart of good government:

The legitimate object of government is to do for the community of people whatever they need to have done but cannot do at all, or cannot so well do for themselves in their separate and individual capacities. In all that the people can do as well for themselves, government ought not to interfere.

The citation is from Abraham Lincoln, probably from July 1, 1854.

The struggle of government to determine what can and should be done for the people is a real struggle. It offers no simple solutions to complex problems. It has none of the facile answers offered by Evangelicals.

The epistemology of the Evangelicals is not as modest as the classical philosophers. It has ready answers for the most complex questions. The evangelical knowledge proceeds with sudden forcefulness in the light of revelation and offers simple truth which is self-evident, apodictic, clear, absolute.

Peter's statement shows us this. The Right is not critical nor reflexive about the epistemology of the Right. It has a certitude which transcends doubts or tests for accuracy. Recall for example, the public statement of Rev. Bailey Smith in 1980, "God Almighty does not hear the prayers of a Jew!" He was very sure.

For Evangelicals in their traditional style, no problems of knowing or certitude are permitted. No doubts are acceptable. Scientific attitudes about the knowing process are not thinkable. Evangelizing appeals to the simplest of truths in the most self-evident way: God is good and I know His care for me in my experience of being saved. It follows immediately that God loves me and communicates his truth to me. God assures me of personal care and personal salvation. Evangelists are sure of themselves and act with confi-

dence on the divine power within them.

What does the scripture have to say about such an attitude? While there may be no one place in scripture that this evangelical attitude is described for our reflection, confidence in the Name of Jesus is a good example of how this knowledge surmounts all obstacles. For example Peter says to the cripple, "In the Name of Jesus Christ, arise and walk!" (Acts 3:6) "In the Name of the Lord Jesus only can you be saved!" (Acts 4:11) There is no salvation in anyone else, for "there is no other Name in the whole world given to men by which we are to be saved" (Cf. McKenzie on "Name" in the Dictionary of the Bible).

In the Tanach this same evangelical attitude is already present if we but sort out the passages where the prophets speak with full assurance: "The word is near you, on your lips and in your hearts (that is the word which we preach)." (Deut. 30:14) "Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved." (Joel 3:5)

IN Paul's Epistle to the Romans he repeats this evangelical statement of the prophet Joel but uses a new Name as source of salvation, "Everyone who calls on the Name of Jesus Christ will be saved." (10:13)

Applying this thought to the new insight of Peter, what a surprise it is to see the transfer in psychology of Peter as he acknowledges his own <sup>mental</sup> conversion. He who had assumed that only in the divine Name of ADONAI or ELOHENU could be the force which saves. Now he speaks his change of mind with surprise, "Now I see....I begin to see....TRULY I see...." (depending on which translation one is using.) Even Gentiles may have revelation granted to them: "anyone of any nation who fears God and acts uprightly is acceptable to him." (Acts 10:35)\*

\* It is true that Peter's conversion of thinking is directed to the insight that all may call on the name of Jesus, whether Jew or not. Within the context of the entire incident this is clear. My point is that as man is free, he may be able to discover that God also is free, and that God is certainly able to speak to anyone and to reveal truth to anyone.

We recognize the freedom of God in speaking his message to all religions. We must not restrict the freedom of God nor limit his freedom to those to whom we are speaking. My point is that as revelation is ongoing, our insights must be ongoing.

Greater faith is needed, it seems to me, for this perception.



New revelation is granted in reflection. And for us as we reflect on events of our century, especially the Shoa, new insights are available. Thus we recall the words of a Church council which declared that outside the Church there is no salvation, Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus. Contrast this attitude with that of Nostra Aetate where the FAthers express their faith that God is working within the religions of the world. A great change is necessary in our attitude toward truth. A much more modest, less assuming, less absolutist attitude about how this certitude is arrived at, and how faith is to be fed within this changed epistemology.

Peter the Jew is speaking to non-Jews when he utters his surprise -- or perhaps he is speaking to both Jew and Gentile. "Now at last I begin to see...that anyone who fears God and seeks to do what is right is pleasing to God." We too must speak to our day with this same kind of evangelical conviction about the freedom of God to speak to every human being who seeks to do what is right.

In critically evaluating the social philosophy and the epistemology of the Right we run the risk of being inadequately critical of the Left. Contrasts will be useful for us: to see strength and to know it to be the opposite side of weakness is to be able to assess both sides of the coin. On the Right there is an assessment of human nature as fallen, malicious, callous. In the sinistral opposition there is a contrast in the assessment of human nature as beautiful, sensitive, creative. Both assessments have their element of truth.

Where the one says that revelatory truth is so clear that it does not need criticism, the other risks criticizing until the examination is destructive of faith. Both sides need to be maintained, with cautions on each as potentially destructive.

Silberman has called for us to <sup>examine</sup> recognize the pluralism which has characterized the American experience: Knowing that Evangelicals recall an expression of the Supreme Court that "we are a Christian people," (1931) he calls for us to oppose that oversimplification with the practical and generally accepted notion that in fact we are not and we never were a Christian nation, whatever that might mean. WE were founded by men of varied experiences and they made their DEclaration of belief that "all men (i.e. all white men) are endowed by their Creator with life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness...."



These founders had no special evangelical proclivity which launched them into intimate contact with a loving Father, but they knew from history that other formulae had not worked, had not been adequate to religious peace and harmony. While the term pluralism may have been unknown to them, they articulated in the first amendment to the Constitutions their conviction from experience that the Congress should support the exercise of human freedoms, including the freedom of religion, and should not establish any national religion.

We need to make the word pluralism widely and generally used as a term to cut through the threatening use of gospel language. Every religious group has access to truth, but no grouping may deny to others their freedoms. Pluralism is the in word to best describe American freedom of religion.

If the evangelical mentality is "Only in this Name," the American experience supported by the insight of Peter is "Any one .. can be pleasing to God."

What we must not do in this problem is to fall into the trap of the shallow category of epistemological quicksand in which the Evangelicals do their ministry. We must allow for reflection, evaluation and critical interpretation. We can evangelize the truth that our God is free and the source of all freedom. We need to vigorously support the pluralism which is foundational for the exercise of religion in America.

The experience of the religionist involved in interfaith work is that (s)he must grow in faith, knowing that God-revealing calls each of us in the words of Micah (6:8) "to walk humbly" in greater faith with our God.

The cynic-Rightist says: Those who have weak faith will consort with those who have no faith to wallow in their malice. The Ecumenist says: God invites us all to join with others of faith in order to grow in faith -- for God invites us all to tikkun olam, to rebuild and re-order God's world.

Some summary thoughts:

The Right and the Left are not new on the political spectrum. We are experiencing a moment of powerful reaction.

Clear identification of the Right and its social components is available to us.

Personal good and social good produce two poles (Left and Right) which are always present in human organizations.

A political movement is not a substance but rather a social accident, legally a "moral person" and an organic vital process.

The certain knowledge of the Evangelical Right is different from the guarded epistemology of pluralism.

The only means which a democracy has to defend itself against irresponsible radicals is the public forum. By bringing the issues to the public media the scholars and responsible public servants can analyze and debate the issues of the day.

Only within a system of pluralism can Evangelical Politics be assessed and properly directed to creative purposes.

WE are called to tikkun olam, to grow in faith and thus to participate in the creative process of making the world better.

John J. Kelley, S.M.

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## OFFICIAL STATEMENT BY JERRY FALWELL

National Press Club  
Washington, DC

January 3, 1986 - 10 a.m. Eastern Standard Time

The Moral Majority was officially chartered in June of 1979 by a small group of Americans who were deeply concerned over the social, moral and political dilemmas into which this country had wandered during the past two decades. It was chartered as a political organization of religious conservatives who were pro-life, pro-traditional family and who supported a strong national defense and the State of Israel.

In nearly seven years six and one half million Americans have united with the Moral Majority. Seldom, if ever, in history has one organization so impacted a nation. Millions have been politically educated, registered to vote and involved in America's political process. Fifty state chapters have been organized; 110,000 pastors, priests and rabbis have become actively involved; a national newspaper and radio network have been established. While conservative Roman Catholics constitute the largest single block of membership (30%), Protestants, Jews, Evangelicals and Fundamentalists have also learned to coalesce with fellow Americans with whom they have theological disagreements for the purpose of effecting moral and social change.

During this same seven years, dozens of groups like Norman Lear's "People For the American Way" have been organized to counter the Moral Majority. Books and booklets have been written to oppose us. Newspapers and magazines have been obsessed with the accomplishments of Moral Majority.

Likewise, many new conservative groups have possibly been spawned and generated by our lead--like the American Coalition for Traditional Values, Concerned Women of America, the Rutherford Institute, and the Freedom Council.

But now, we have arrived at another milestone. In the course of the past seven years, we have found ourselves drawn into issues and conflicts which were not anticipated in 1979. We have defended the Strategic Defense Initiative. We have opposed an immediate, unverifiable nuclear freeze. We have supported the Balanced Budget Amendment. We have supported financial aid for the Freedom Fighters in Nicaragua. We have openly opposed possible Communist takeovers in Taiwan, South Korea, the Philippines, South Africa and all over the world. We have helped sponsor the Jerusalem Bill in order to move our embassy to Jerusalem.

Many persons have felt that the Moral Majority name and charter are not broad enough to cover many of these domestic and international issues. We have therefore spent months discussing this problem with our national and state leaders. The end result has been the formation of a new organization which we have named The Liberty Federation.

The Liberty Federation with a very broad charter will be our parent organization. Moral Majority will be a subsidiary and will continue functioning in the "strictly moral" areas where we labored in earlier years. We have also formed a new lobbying and educational entity called The Liberty Alliance, which is a subsidiary of The Liberty Federation. Filing for the two new corporations was done this morning here in Washington, DC by our attorney, Mr. Alan Dye.

Our first official activity for The Liberty Federation will be the conducting of a National Summit in Washington, DC January 23-24. All 50 state chairmen and 500 Liberty Federation national leaders will participate. Vice President George Bush will bring the major address. Several U. S. Senators and Representatives will participate. President Reagan has been invited.

In the general sessions and workshops at the Summit, we will major in several areas: the 1986 Senatorial races; the education, registration and mobilization of one million new voters during this year; the recruitment of new grassroots support of The Liberty Federation; education of the American public on the importance of SDI, a Balanced Budget Amendment, continued strong national defense, and support for the State of Israel; and informing all Americans on Soviet-Cuban expansionism in Central and South America; and other areas involving the Reagan Agenda.

Our continued campaigns against abortion, pornography, the stifling of religious freedoms, and traditional family values will be reinforced, or course.

But with The Liberty Federation, we will be advancing to another level of involvement. We will also be challenging many of our people to run for office at the local, state and national levels. Whereas in 1979, we only had a handful of capable spokesmen in the conservative religious community, we now have hundreds. We now sincerely believe that it is possible to form a coalition of religious conservatives in this nation, including The Liberty Federation and scores of other similar groups, which can bring 20 million voters to the polls nationally by 1988. This is our goal.