

EVANGELICALISM AND CAPITALISM IN TRANSATLANTIC CONTEXT²

Abstract

This article is a critical engagement with political scientist William Connolly's book *Christianity and Capitalism: American Style*. Connolly's analysis of the ways in which evangelical Christianity and capitalist agendas interrelate in the US context is outlined and critiqued in terms of its tendency to homogenise the US evangelical movement and overstate its incorporation of right wing political interests. Its theoretical framework is also critiqued, but developed in light of its potential to generate insights into the global context of evangelical influence, including as a vehicle for capitalist values. This is explored in terms of US influence upon British evangelicalism and what this reveals about the circulation of evangelical-capitalist ideas within a transatlantic context. A case study is offered of the Willow Creek sponsored Global Leadership Summit by way of illustration.

Key words: Capitalism, Evangelicalism, Fundamentalism, New Right, Spiritualities.

Introduction

Max Weber's *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1958) remains one of the most influential volumes produced in the sociology of religion. Weber's argument forged a historical and conceptual link between Protestant Christianity and forms of disciplined individualism and entrepreneurialism associated with early capitalism that sociologists are still unravelling a century after the book was first published. Moreover, as capitalism evolves, so sociologists are able to make use of a pre-established theoretical framework for examining how religious movements have evolved with it; how economic systems have triggered religious responses, how religion becomes a bearer of capitalist values (Carrette and King, 2005) and how changing economic conditions generate novel forms of individualism which in turn foster new forms of religious expression (van der Veer, 1995: 19). Weber's work has also heightened a scholarly perception that Protestantism and capitalism are comfortable bed-fellows, an observation that feeds into cynicism about the role that Protestant Christianity plays vis-à-vis the capitalist agenda, a cynicism that is often well founded. A striking example is found among advocates of the Prosperity (or 'Faith') Movement, for whom material wealth

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is a sign of divine favour, and the persistent acquisition of wealth a divinely endorsed endeavour (Coleman, 2000). Another is the New Christian Right, who have successfully fused values associated with conservative Christianity with right wing social and economic agendas in the USA since the late 1970s. Both represent examples of ideological constructs that depend for their plausibility on the affinity identified by Weber, an affinity that has profound implications for the cultural development of western nations and those they influence.

In recent years this affinity between Protestant Christianity and capitalism has been subjected to closer critical scrutiny because of an apparent rise of Evangelical Protestant sympathies among the echelons of power in the USA. A concern for some since the Reagan years, this trend became most explicit and most strident during the Bush Administrations of 2001-2009. The radical policy initiatives of George W. Bush, especially the second Iraq War, tax reforms favouring the wealthy, a ban on public funding for stem cell research, and the withdrawal from international treaties on climate change, angered many who viewed Bush's regime as a backward cultural step. The president's apparently uncritical and public affiliation with evangelical Christianity, together with a series of pro-faith reforms rooted in the Administration's indebtedness to the evangelical electorate, bolstered the views of critics who came to associate the failures of the regime with the evangelical movement and its influence. This has in turn reinforced the convictions of secularist commentators in academia, politics and the media, whose claims that religion has no place in the public square, at least not in advanced western societies, have achieved new levels of support among the general public, especially in western Europe, but also in the US itself, which has witnessed the emergence of its own champions of the 'new atheism'.

Against this background has emerged the work of William E. Connolly, a renowned American political theorist and philosopher. An outspoken agnostic in a society infused with Christian conviction, Connolly has resisted the temptation to be drawn into the secularist camp, refusing to reinforce the polarisation that feeds the cycle of mutual misunderstanding between believers and non-believers in the United States. In his 1999 volume *Why I am Not a Secularist*, Connolly sets out his perspective on religion, advocating a kind of critical pluralism in which all religious and non-religious parties are honoured participants in a pluralistic culture, each implicitly acknowledging the rightful place of the other while not diluting their own cherished beliefs and values (Connolly, 1999: 6). His is a model for inter-perspectival conversation, in which there is an implicit acknowledgement that each party may learn from one another, however their convictions concerning religion might coincide or differ.³ Connolly pursues his interest in the place of religion in the public square in his more topical volume, *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style*, which was published in 2008. Here Connolly joins the chorus of other left-leaning critics in exposing how Christian and capitalist agendas converge in the contemporary United States, focusing on developments since the establishment of the New Christian Right in the 1970s. However, in keeping with the subtlety characteristic of his earlier work, Connolly does not use his analysis as a vehicle for advocating secularism; rather, his aim is to understand the cultural power

3 A similar ethos underpins a wide-ranging project in ecumenical dialogue among churches, directed by my colleague Prof Paul Murray at Durham University, UK, under the banner of 'Receptive Ecumenism'. See Murray (2010).

or momentum behind the Christian-Capitalist affinity in the US, and engage critically with its negative consequences by encouraging an alternative coalition of social, moral and religious forces that might together combat them. Using Connolly's language, he is interested in understanding how the 'evangelical-capitalist resonance machine' works, and in thinking through whether an 'alternative resonance machine' might be formed as a critical counter response.

What follows is not an attempt to engage with all of the elements of Connolly's outstanding monograph, but a focused examination of some aspects of his argument that carry significance for the sociology of contemporary evangelical Christianity. In particular, I am interested in Connolly's analysis in so far as it points to the loci of evangelical-political engagements in terms of ideologies operative at a global level, rather than party-political concerns operative at a national or local one (Steger, 2008). In this respect he is right in suggesting the relevance of his argument extends well beyond the USA, and Connolly's analysis can be usefully deployed as a framework for understanding the relationship between evangelical movements on either side of the Atlantic. However, it is suggested here that Connolly's depiction of evangelical Protestantism and its cognate ideological associates risks homogenising (and possibly demonising) what is actually a diverse and complex movement. Moreover, if an examination of US expressions reveals diversity, the extension of such concerns into the transatlantic context reveals an even greater degree of evangelical variety. Taking Britain as a case study, his approach will be critically evaluated in light of recent empirical evidence, which points to a political alignment with capitalist interests, but one that is multi-faceted and adaptable, rather than fixed or dogmatic.

Capitalism and Christianity, American Style: The Argument

Connolly's argument is subtle and complex. In one sense, he is navigating territory well trodden by sociologists of religion, and his debt to Max Weber in grappling with the beguiling relationship between Protestant Christianity and capitalist economics is clear and acknowledged. Connolly is perfectly comfortable straying from his home turf as a political scientist, and deftly draws into his discussion critical engagements with Saint Augustine, Gilles Deleuze and William James, in addition to Thomas Jefferson, Marx and Nietzsche. As such, his is an argument that deals with the history of ideas, and which charts patterns of cultural and ideological affinity that transcend the normal boundaries of academic disciplines. Ambitious, complicated and – occasionally – rather opaque, Connolly's thesis is difficult to convey in simple terms. One reason for this is methodological: according to Connolly, the complexities of his subject matter are so subtle and elusive that they demand an approach, and a language, that has considerable elasticity. An arguably negative consequence of this becomes apparent in Connolly's style of writing, which is remarkably dense and, while at times beautifully eloquent, makes his relatively brief volume a highly demanding read. In the opinion of one reviewer, his use of specialised jargon renders much of his valuable discussion inaccessible to a non-academic audience, thereby undermining the book's potential to reach those best placed to campaign for the cultural changes Connolly presents as so desirable and so urgent (Krueger, 2009). In light of this frustration, it is important to attempt a concise summary of Connolly's argument.

In simple terms, Connolly is concerned with the relationship between capitalism and Christianity in the contemporary United States, how best to understand this relationship, and how to challenge the power structures constituted by it. On one level, then, his book is about a contemporary politico-cultural phenomenon, his moral objections to it, and his mission to replace it with an assemblage of values that, while not inconsistent with late capitalism, would be more egalitarian, more environmentally responsible, and more respectful of religious and cultural diversity. This is the book in broad brush strokes; as a political theorist, Connolly approaches issues of cultural stasis and change with notable subtlety. His notion of an 'evangelical-capitalist resonance machine' captures his recognition that an account of the phenomena he is interested in and their wider influence demands conceiving cultural communication in a way that transcends national, institutional, and individual boundaries, but which somehow captures all three. Hence his use of the term 'assemblages', referring to loose clusters of economic, cultural and religious phenomena, and which he uses to characterise forms of capitalism and forms of evangelical Christianity. His book argues that the latter functions in a servile relationship to the former, at once justifying, maintaining and perpetuating late capitalist configurations of power and associated values. Hence the relationship between Leaman Brothers, the Republican Party, News International, Jerry Falwell and the *Left Behind* series of apocalyptic novels, 'heretofore unconnected or loosely associated elements' which '*fold, bend, blend, emulsify, and resolve incompletely into each other*, forging a qualitative assemblage resistant to classical models of explanation' (Connolly, 2008: 40, emphasis in original).

Connolly is not entirely in agreement with Max Weber's argument in *The Protestant Ethic*, concurring with Hans Blumenberg, for example, that the origins of capitalism are more complex and more deeply rooted in history, with hospitable cultural conditions fostered by medieval Roman Catholicism, several hundred years before John Calvin (Connolly, 2008: 17-18). However, in advocating a complex, multi-directional analysis of the Christian-capitalist relationship, Connolly claims to be following Weber's lead.

While Weber sometimes talks as if it is the beliefs of the devotees which inspire a specific mode of conduct, a closer reading of his text reveals that a complex set of beliefs, habits, techniques of induction, and larger institutional processes complement each other, creating a complex reducible to no single element alone. (2008: 18)

Connolly goes on to suggest that this approach is validated with reference to cases where old habits of conduct or convention are practised long after the beliefs to which they were originally attached have been superseded or relinquished. Here he appears to be referring to something approximating what Pierre Bourdieu calls *habitus*, a set of dispositions which are embodied and often held in pre-critical or unconscious mode, a root of individual action but one that by its embeddedness in a social context may also, more or less, be shared among those operating within this context (Jenkins, 1992). Connolly also suggests that such habits of conduct will in time diminish unless they become attached to 'other disciplinary techniques' (2008: 18). He offers the example of Benjamin Franklin. Franklin's father instilled in him a strong set of Calvinist dispositions – thriftiness, efficiency, etc – which he continued to practice in his later business dealings, even though he did not share his father's religious beliefs as an adult. Evidence

for the same process was found in an inter-generational study of the families of clergymen in late twentieth century England, undertaken by the present author. Even when rejecting the Christian faith of their fathers, the children of clergymen often embody and affirm values of altruism and self-sacrifice learnt in the childhood vicarage, even if they justify them differently as adults (Davies and Guest, 2007). This approach to social influence allows Connolly to highlight the significance of Christianity, capitalism and the Christian-capitalist assemblage, even in contexts in which their presence is covert, implicit or unacknowledged. A pressing challenge, one that Connolly does not altogether embrace, is the identification of the 'disciplinary techniques' most effective at perpetuating and reinforcing the capitalist-Christian assemblage.

Connolly's analysis of evangelicalism and its relationship to capitalist agendas emphasises formal complexity – how the parties and ideas interrelate – while remaining strident in outlining its substantive content – the values that are actually affirmed. Referring to the published ideas of Christian capitalist apologists like Michael Novak and George Gilder, and popular Christian authors like Tim LeHaye, amongst others, Connolly paints a picture of a worldview that emerges from the evangelical capitalist resonance machine, one that can be summarised in six (overlapping) points of substantive belief or conviction:

- (a) a fierce optimism (i.e. about the fate of the world and their place in it) – (19)
- (b) a politics of exclusion based around a vilification of 'nomadism' in favour of the 'tranquillity' of the nuclear, heterosexual family (29)
- (c) a binding together of national myths, sexuality and the nuclear family (p. 30), including 'warrior' constructions of masculinity (32)
- (d) the association of capitalist creativity with the creativity of God (31, 47)
- (e) the insistence by leaders of this movement that 'they are being persecuted *unless* they are thoroughly in power....' (44, emphasis in original), leading to perceptions of special entitlement (this is described by Connolly as the 'element of identity most significant to this movement....' (44))
- (f) an ethos of resentment and revenge, centred around a particular interpretation of the Second Coming based on the Book of Revelation, which resonates with notions of entitlement that undermine principles of ecological responsibility (49), and of inevitability that associate submission to the market with submission to God (52)

In a sense, Connolly's identification of links between certain forms of Protestant Christianity and capitalism is entirely unoriginal. As mentioned earlier, he is heavily indebted to Weber, and his suggestion that the theological agendas of present-day evangelicals have often reinforced neo-liberal, market-oriented economic values has also been argued in more recent publications (e.g. Carrette and King, 2003; Coleman, 2000; Roberts, 1992), while ideological synergies that correlate evangelical piety with a neo-conservative imperialistic orientation to the world have been examined across disciplines (e.g. Brouwer et al., 1996; Northcott, 2004). What distinguishes Connolly's treatment are two things. First, his thoroughgoing determination not simply to describe or take account of this phenomenon, but expose its moral shortcomings and propose some socio-political solutions. His sense of moral outrage is measured but never in doubt, and he spends a large section of the book outlining measures that could be taken by US politicians and the general public to construct an 'alternative

resonance machine' in workable, practical strategies. His call for a collaborative engagement with capitalism, drawing in the full range of religious and non-religious parties in a constructive conversation, is not, strictly speaking, new, for example a similar sentiment is advocated in John Atherton's theological work, which emerges from the Anglican social gospel tradition (Atherton, 2008). However, it is an approach that is unusual among social scientists, and his formulation of mutual engagement, which depends upon a reflexive recognition of contestedness on the part of all parties involved, while not demanding they dilute core beliefs or accommodate them to a dominant social centre, has much to commend it. Second, Connolly works with a very loose, subtle conception of religio-social influence that successfully opens up his analysis so that evangelical Protestantism is properly addressed as a participant in processes of exchange and imposition that proceed beyond conventional boundaries of locality or nation. It is this quality that invites further applications of the analysis within a global context.

Critique and Comment

Much has changed since the publication of Connolly's book in 2008. Christianity remains closely connected to North American politics, but the connections are subtle and complex, and far from fixed. In the 2000 presidential election, religion was by far the strongest predictor of voting behaviour, whether one voted for George W. Bush or Al Gore (Norris and Inglehart, 2004: 94). In the subsequent years of the Bush administration, concerned commentators lamented its apparent indebtedness to evangelical voters, seeing a consequent shift of the US government further to the right, while evangelicals enjoyed something of a political renaissance, successfully exerting influence over more and more segments of the American government. Such lamentations are not without base, and the evidence suggests that the Christian Right has not only maintained its established levers of power, but has discovered new ones as well, especially under the Bush presidency (Lindsay, 2007). To take one example, the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, established by George W. Bush's first executive order, effectively channelled financial support to faith-based organisations engaged in charitable work, whilst freeing them from state regulations. This innovation had serious consequences: aside from amounting to a challenge to the constitutional separation of church and state (the government was effectively financing religious initiatives), in practice, what emerged was a government endorsement of organisations such as The Silver Ring Thing, promoting sexual abstinence among American teenagers, and Operation Blessing, led by the controversial fundamentalist campaigner and TV personality Pat Robertson (Einstein, 2008: 188-9). While limitations on funds and some legal challenges (on the constitutional basis mentioned above) have prevented this scheme from achieving its full potential, it has not been without influence, and has also served as a barometer of the power that classically evangelical agendas have achieved within government circles in recent years.

However, the latter years of the Bush presidency saw evangelicals increasingly unconvinced that their loyalty at the polling booths was being matched by policy reform at the centre. Barack Obama's lengthy presidential campaign saw the Democrat candidate openly courting evangelical voters, including a highly publicised meeting

with Rick Warren, author of the bestselling book *The Purpose Driven Life* and pastor of Saddleback Church in southern California, one of the largest single churches in the USA. During the 2008 presidential election campaign, there was noticeable indecision among evangelicals over which candidate most deserved their support and most reflected their values. The Republicans could certainly no longer assume the unqualified support of white evangelicals (78% of whom had voted for George W. Bush in 2004), and many evangelicals were apparently considering Barack Obama, who, according to evangelical author Ronald Sider, 'understands evangelicals better than any Democrat since [Jimmy] Carter' (Kennedy, 2008: 28). Obama was also observed by many on either side of the political divide as willing to speak openly and comfortably about issues of faith, including his own Christian convictions and the thorny moral issues that divide the heartlands of North America. This contrasted markedly with his opponent, John McCain, whose chequered history with the Religious Right and apparently more private spirituality caused many prominent evangelicals to think twice before lending him their support. While analyses of voting behaviour in 2008 cannot attribute Obama's gains in traditionally Republican areas to evangelical switching – Obama increased support for the Democrats across a wide range of demographic groups so that the variables are difficult to disentangle (Caswell, 2009) – evangelical support did increase, and reflects wider changes in the political loyalties of the movement. John Stackhouse (2008), in an article reviewing a range of recently published books written by prominent US evangelicals about political issues, notes a growing diversity within the evangelical camp and a reconfiguration of the allegiances of the past. This includes a greater willingness to prioritise issues traditionally associated with the Left, including climate change, poverty and war, an open acknowledgement of America's religious pluralism and willingness to accommodate to it, and an urge to decouple the evangelical movement from the Republican Party, even among authors coming from a right-wing position. Therefore, the world of politics offers an insight into how the US evangelical constituency has diversified in recent years. If there remains some uncertainty about the precise relationship between grassroots evangelicals and evangelicalism as a political force, there is also a sense in which the evangelical electorate are no longer as predictable or as homogeneous a political voice as they once were.

This points to one of the main difficulties with Connolly's analysis. While he cannot be held accountable for shifts within the evangelical movement that occurred subsequent to his book being published, the changes outlined above reflect subtle adjustments rather than a sea change. Indeed, the diversity and complexity of the US evangelical movement did not break out of a relatively monolithic tradition with the appearance of Barack Obama at Rick Warren's door; rather, the movement has always been complex, and historical and sociological studies of evangelicalism in recent decades portray a movement that is diverse and dynamic, with no singular trajectory. Connolly seems only minimally aware of progressive – rather than politically conservative – strands, and those he mentions, he presents as fringe and new (2008: 60). Jim Wallis, of the Sojourners campaign group, gets a brief mention, but his wide-ranging influence – directly challenging the presumed association between evangelicalism and conservative or pro-market politics – does not feature in Connolly's discussion. Neither does the social justice and ecologically sensitive work of evangelicals like Tony Camolo, Rob Bell or some representatives of the 'emerging church' (Bielo, 2009). Studies

of evangelical political activity suggest that even the New Christian Right has evolved and responded to changing times, including periods of diversification and a softening of previously dogmatic positions (Penning, 1994).

There is a sense in which, for all its theoretical subtlety, Connolly's argument is lacking, particularly in its failure to engage with meaning-making at the popular level. True, the examples cited in support of his argument are drawn from a variety of sources, including film, Christian literature, radio and politics, not to mention highly influential evangelical commentators active in the public sphere. Such arenas of social and religious expression impact upon US popular culture on a massive scale, but the nature of this impact is largely assumed rather than explored in light of the sociological evidence available. For example, Connolly does not engage with the considerable range of survey data on the professed values and beliefs of the American people, evangelicals, non-evangelical Christians and non-Christians. Within the evangelical world alone, major studies have been carried out since the 1970s on the shifting identities of US evangelicals as the movement has evolved during the eras of Carter, Reagan, Bush Snr, Clinton, and beyond. Empirical studies present a picture that sits uncomfortably with the stereotype often rehearsed in more journalistic or popular descriptions of the movement.

Evangelicals are revealed as far from homogeneous and as less conservative – both in religious and political terms – than one might imagine. Reporting on a national study of evangelical Christians across the USA in the mid-1990s, Christian Smith finds a movement that is hesitant and diverse, including in matters of politics and business, with widespread suspicion of the New Christian Right and uncertainty about how far systems of US government might advance Christian values. Smith concludes that 'only a minority of evangelicals represent anything like the political threat that evangelical antagonists fear' (Smith, 2000: 128; cf. Kellstadt and Green, 2003). More recent empirical study (well into the Bush presidency) is no more emphatic in identifying evangelicals as a militant, right-wing political force.

Reporting on the national Baylor surveys undertaken between 2005 and 2007, Rodney Stark finds that, while a majority (58%) of self-identifying evangelicals support the Republican Party, when asked about campaign contributions, working on a campaign and attending meetings and rallies, evangelicals were actually *less* politically active than liberal Protestants, Roman Catholics and the non-religious. On sympathies with the ideological characteristics at the heart of Connolly's portrayal, evangelicals were also found to be far closer to the national norm than might be expected, with a majority supporting closer regulation of business, only slightly fewer evangelicals than other Christians supporting the suggestion that government should do more to distribute wealth more evenly, and a clear majority (76%) saying more should be done to protect the environment (Stark, 2008: 155-6). Evangelicals are also by no means a static entity, despite their reputation for a rigid dogmatism. James Penning and Corwin Smidt, drawing from survey data from 1982 and 1996, chart an evolving movement, and find that while between these two dates, evangelicals appear increasingly likely to identify politically as both conservative and, in party political terms, as Republican, they also appear to have moved in a more liberal direction with respect to many social and moral issues, including American support for Israel, abortion, and equal rights for women (Penning and Smidt, 2002: 125-30).

One may respond to this criticism by arguing that Connolly's aim is to examine

forces at work at a higher level of culture, that his book highlights patterns in cultural expression not reception, or that his argument repays in theoretical subtlety what it lacks in empirical evidence. All fair enough. But a book that rests on a central theoretical claim about resonance needs to at least consider what popular attitudes reveal about how evangelical assemblages resonate with the people whose lives have, apparently, been so profoundly affected by them. Discussing the apocalyptic theology affirmed in popular media such as the *Left Behind* series,⁴ Connolly comments that the 'combination of a terrible fate reserved for most and the radiant promise for a few doubtless triggers feelings of anxiety among the faithful – who may worry whether they are faithful enough to end up on the right side' (2008, 47, my emphasis). While this argument resonates with rather tired Marxist arguments about Christianity's exploitation of the masses, it is by no means clear whether it resonates in this way among the US population. Indeed, in her analysis of how readers of apocalyptic fiction negotiate their way through the text, Amy Johnson Frykholm discovered that the *Left Behind* novels are read by evangelicals in a variety of ways, on their own terms as fiction, and with an evident sense of irony (Frykholm, 2004). The anxiety of liberal opponents, that Christian conservatives will not have the critical facility to negotiate these stories responsibly, conveys a misguided impression that they serve as political manifestos or textual plausibility structures for an already worryingly subversive worldview. As Crawford Gribben has argued, 'by totalizing audiences and ignoring readerly negotiation, liberal commentators confirm the marginal status of dispensational believers' (Gribben, 2006: 117). As a consequence, they risk – as Connolly does – reinforcing the sense of beleaguered alienation from mainstream culture characteristic of such parties. This can then act as a confirmatory mechanism for dispensationalists whose theology depends on a perception that end-times Christians exist as a persecuted remnant.

Quite aside from the empirical evidence that counts for or against Connolly's claims about the 'evangelical-capitalist resonance machine', it is useful to consider his understanding of socio-religious influence in theoretical terms. Might the metaphor of 'resonance' be unpacked further, so as to increase its capacity to capture the full complexity of the situation under study – e.g. when does resonance become open advocacy? When does it become resistance? Are there patterns whereby resonance achieves conscious recognition in some contexts but depends on being implicit and unconscious for its full power to be felt in others? Here I argue that Connolly's discussion revolves around an unstable notion of 'spirituality' which, while successfully circumventing the religious and political sensitivities of the US context, actually generates a rather porous account that struggles to delineate specific lines of influence outside of the dominant discourse at the heart of his polemic.

4 *Left Behind* was the first in a best-selling series of novels written by Tim LeHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins in the style of apocalyptic fiction. The series recounts through an adventure thriller the 'last days' according to a sequence of events understood to be foretold in the Bible, proceeding from the rapture, through the tribulation, to the rise of the antichrist, the battle of Armageddon, and the millennial rule of Christ on earth. The authors openly endorse this vision of the end times, and understand their role as both novelists and promoters of truth.

'Spirituality' and the Politics of Religious Influence

Connolly's take on 'spirituality' is a curious feature of his analysis. Much has been made of this term in recent scholarship, from those who highlight its masking of insidious forces working in concert with late capitalist agendas (Carrette and King, 2005), to those keen to emphasise individualism and personal empowerment (Heelas and Woodhead, 2005). Most acknowledge its slipperiness as a category of analysis. The US literature is less cynical than its UK equivalent, and arguably less critical, leading to fewer efforts to categorically distinguish spirituality from religion as such (Guest, 2007). Connolly makes more use of 'spirituality' in formulating his specific argument than he does 'religion', but his definition of the term, while not entirely clear, appears to be sociological. An extended passage illustrates his generous understanding:

A large cultural constellation can also emphasize one spirituality over another. I call a shared spirituality an ethos. An ethos of engagement is a set of constituency dispositions that informs the shape and tone of its relations with others. And it is more than shared: once a few elements are in place, the parties act upon each other through church assemblies, neighbourhood gossip, TV programs, electoral campaigns, casual sports talk, films, and so on, to amplify, dampen, or modulate that ethos. A central theme of this book is that every institutional practice – including economic practices – has an ethos of some sort embedded in its institutions. The institutions would collapse into a clunking hulk if the ethos were pulled out. Of course the ethos might display considerable ambivalence, uncertainty, and points of contestation. (2008: 2)

Effectively, Connolly conflates the term 'spirituality' with 'ethos'. He does not rule out the possibility of a non-shared, i.e. individualistic, spirituality that would not deserve this epithet, but for the purposes of his argument, which is entirely about that which is shared, collective and co-ordinated, spirituality and ethos are one and the same. Indeed, at times he explicitly uses the terms as if they were interchangeable (e.g. 2008: 13) and in this echoes other authors who associate spirituality with that which cannot be constrained by the confines of institutions, that spills out, and can flow freely among those multiple agencies that constitute social life (Verter, 2003). That is not to say that it is entirely unconstrained. Connolly refers to the amplification, dampening, modulation of an ethos – qualifying verbs suggestive of a subtle process that defies simple lines of causality and influence. Taking a view 'from above', an ethos is held delicately, among a variety of stable but unfixed entities, which sustain and define it as a set of dispositions and reference points impinging upon human action. In highlighting 'engagement', Connolly conceives of 'ethos' as a phenomenon oriented to human behaviour, not unlike Boudieu's notion of 'habitus', which refers to a set of dispositions and tendencies (Jenkins, 1992). In the foreground is the relevance of ethos as a constitutive shaping influence on human behaviour, and an available framework of justifications for it.

This is an intriguing feature of Connolly's discussion, and one is tempted to view it as a device for fostering dialogue among those arbiters of religious and secular difference who might stymie the social change that the author so passionately advocates. Throughout the book, the word 'spirituality' is used to denote that which binds together those who might differ at another level. Secular economists may not share the religious doctrines of others amongst their colleagues, but both are connected 'across those differences by bonds of spirituality' (2008: 8). This is important to Con-

nolly's case, because his vision for positive reform depends on the possibility of religious and non-religious progressives putting aside their differences for the good of an eco-egalitarian agenda for US society (and, by extension, the world), on them forging a common *ethos*, even when not sharing the same creedal beliefs (2008: 16). Hence it is interesting that he chooses to conceptualise their potential commonalities as 'spiritual' rather than merely moral or political, and this may have much to do with the widespread suspicion of secularism across US culture. Moreover, this is a suspicion that could easily impede positive change, especially if mobilised by the evangelical right. One could also argue that, by foregrounding the 'spiritual', rather than the socio-moral, Connolly avoids controversial issues likely to divide the constituency he is intent on uniting. Neither abortion, homosexuality nor gay marriage are addressed, and none appear as items in the index of his book. These issues have shaped Christian identity markers in the US for the past 40 years and any call for a co-ordinated effort among progressives needs to tackle this obstacle.

But 'spirituality', for Connolly, is not merely a diplomatic gloss; most notably, it denotes the relational and non-institutional, that which by its force binds and unites into common bonds of communication and interaction those who might, by dint of expressed belief or established allegiance, not be obvious comrades. Moreover, unlike some uses of the term, Connolly's is not exclusively positive; rather, it refers to a level of social engagement the outcomes of which may be evaluated independent of their originating mechanics. In this sense, 'spirituality' for Connolly, is morally and politically neutral. For example, in elaborating on the precise relationship between Christianity and capitalism, Connolly argues that 'cowboy and evangelical spiritualities are not the same. Rather they resonate together' (2008, 48). Again, it is a 'spiritual element' that draws Republican politics and evangelical Christianity into a 'theo-political assemblage' (2008: 54). Hence, spirituality also forms the social bond that drives the 'resonance machine' that Connolly is so keen to challenge.

In a second kind of usage, Connolly uses 'spiritual' to highlight a religious dimension to public life, one that needs to be engaged with if injustices are to be effectively remedied. He calls on 'radicals, liberals and secularists' to 'appreciate the role that a spiritual ethos plays in politics and economic life' (2008: 61).⁵ Taking a more – dare I say it? – evangelistic tone, Connolly urges us to appreciate how 'spiritual work is demanded by the contours of contemporary life, partly because of the critical role that spirituality plays in the defining institutions of contemporary life' (2008: 67). It is unclear whether Connolly is saying a spiritual dimension is important because it informs the motivations of those in a position to shape the economic and political landscape of the USA, in which case it is important in needing to be taken into account and taken seriously, or, whether the nature of the debate in some way demands a 'spiritual' solution of some kind. If the latter, there is no suggestion that Connolly's argument is theological (his self-confessed 'naturalism' arguably precludes this – 2008: 79); rather, it uses 'spiritual' to denote specific kinds of second order social processes and relationships.

At another point in the book, Connolly uses the term 'spiritual' in a third way, to describe the disposition to the world apparently shared among those he counts within

⁵ See a comparable, but more cautious, recommendation by James Beckford (2005: 148-9).

the 'evangelical-capitalist assemblage':

....the parties share a spiritual disposition to existence. Their ruthlessness, ideological extremism, readiness to defend neoliberal ideology in the face of significant counter-evidence, and compulsion to create or condone scandals against any party who opposes their vision of the world – all express a fundamental disposition toward the world. The interinvolvements between them then function to amplify the spirituality. To the extent that they succeed in installing new structures and legal avenues, the pressure to support these practices now becomes more imperative institutionally, even to those who do not share the spirituality. (2008: 42, my emphasis)

Here it appears that 'spiritual' is not being used to denote merely form without substantive content, but hints at an equivalence to a particular kind of worldview, one commonly associated with fundamentalist Christianity. Indeed, the description of a 'fundamental disposition' presumably alludes to this comparison. However, it remains unclear exactly what is specifically spiritual about this disposition, and why it would not be captured using a different category, one that does not rule out non-religious referents. One might contrast use of the term 'fundamentalism', which while rooted in 19th century millennialist theology, took its clearest form in the anti-modern conservative Protestantism that emerged in the US during the second decade of the twentieth century, acquired distinctive political overtones during the 1970s, and has since been used to describe strident, doctrinaire protest movements within Islam, Indian religions and among non-religious political groups affirming an anti-western agenda. The point I am trying to make is that the connotations of the term 'fundamentalism' have been specific enough to capture what unites these movements, without imposing upon them a necessarily religious (or spiritual) character. It is intriguing that Connolly is so keen on using this term in expressing his argument.

Sociologists of religion could learn much from Connolly in developing an understanding of 'spirituality', one that allows for a critical understanding of the distribution of power. In this way, Connolly's engagement is well suited to an analysis that seeks to place religious and social processes in a broader global context. However, his use of 'spirituality' to capture social and religious influence is too vague and multi-vocal to capture the specific flows of influence that characterise global evangelicalism. Moreover, global evangelicalism and global capitalism, even if retaining a dominant locus of activity in the USA (Wuthnow, 2009), are not a simple mirror image of the US context (still less the New Christian Right), and as such demand a more subtle account of their complex mutual engagement than that offered in Connolly's analysis. While pointing to the global reference points of North American evangelical engagements with capitalism, Connolly does not see how this constellation of global flows fosters a diverse range of evangelical-capitalist permutations both within and outside of the USA. The following section will explore just one of these, focusing on the exportation of an American, evangelically-rooted resource into the context of the United Kingdom.

Wider Global Implications: Capitalism and Christianity, British Style

The picture of 'Christian-capitalist assemblages' painted by Connolly is so utterly American that it is tempting to limit the implications of his argument to the territory guarded by the officials at US border control. However, life in a global age undermines

any such simplicity; Connolly acknowledges this, identifying several reasons why the resurgence of the US Christian right has significant implications for Christianity the world over (2008: 28-9), noting also that some 'trends and tendencies commonly identified as global receive much of their impetus from the priorities of the United States' (2008: 14).

Not least, the USA in many ways sets the global economic agenda, and as such, other developed and developing nations are likely to follow suit, even if reluctantly or through gritted teeth; even those states whose inclination is to resist US influence are obliged to configure their resistance as a response to America's dominant status (consider the example of South American nations with left-leaning governments like Venezuela in recent years, or that of France within the context of its opposition to the Iraq war). Connolly also points to the rise of Christianity in Eastern Europe, and although he does not develop this avenue of discussion, it is not difficult to see how US-shaped global capitalism might be a factor in emerging economic, social and religious agendas across the former Eastern Bloc, especially considering the relationship between Christian heritage, national identity, and the political vicissitudes surrounding campaigns for inclusion in the European Union. A third factor relates to the rise of Islam, and particularly the impact of Islam upon a collective sense of Christian identity in Europe and, by extension, the non-European advanced western nations. It is useful here to rehearse Steve Bruce's argument that even in a secularised Europe, religion acquires a powerful role within contexts in which it is called upon as a means of cultural defence (Bruce, 2002). Setting aside Bruce's sympathy with a rather strident version of the secularization argument, this notion of cultural defence appears to resonate with Connolly's impression that a perception of the intrusion of Islam – in a crude, territorial sense but also as an impingement upon cultural identity – may trigger a renewed sense of the importance of Christianity as a marker of western identity. If this is a plausible possibility, then we may expect the Christian-capitalist assemblages noted by Connolly to achieve a particular attraction within a non-US context, not least because they convey a constellation of 'Christian' identity factors that appears to carry economic and political force.

But this is to beg far too many questions. Globalisation may open up the borders previously defined by national allegiance and affinity; it has not removed the local cultural filters that influence how global flows are received (Coleman, 2002). To take the example of the UK, the 'special relationship' that has been associated with transatlantic foreign policy since the time of Winston Churchill does not equate, and never has amounted to, an uncritical absorption of US ideas and commodities. US influence, while striking in scale and profundity, is not indiscriminate nor does it come unfiltered by unmistakably British sensibilities. One case study raised repeatedly by Connolly relates the association of capitalism with the creative acts of God. Referring to the work of George Gilder, Rush Limbaugh and Michael Novak, Connolly cites their insistence that 'capitalist creativity is the one and only site in the mundane world that legitimately copies the creativity of God' (2008: 31, emphasis in the original) Connolly rightly acknowledges that this rests on a very particular, tendentious understanding of capitalism, one centred on a sense of unpredictability, of free flow of risk and challenge, of a blissfully unhindered field of dreams, constrained only by the shifting energies of entrepreneurial agents eager to harness its inherent power.

Such free market idealism is a dangerous notion in a context in which misadventure and injustice are often not allowed to be in the script, and in which, by logical implication, alternatives to capitalism are presented as constraining impositions and infringements on individual (including religious) freedom. Putting things more concretely, Connolly comments that those who connect entrepreneurial activity with Divine providence are thereby enabled to 'disparage welfare programs and collective efforts to curtail global warming' (2008: 47-8). Such ideological entanglements are well established in the USA, even in the age of Barack Obama, as he is finding all too often in the contemporary debate on healthcare reform. But could they conceivably gain purchase in the UK? Could certain forms of Christianity – perhaps those closest in character to US Protestantism – serve as effective channels, however subtle, for ideas that tessellate with neo-liberal free market agendas on the North American model? The example cited above seems highly unlikely once re-imagined within a UK context, for several compelling reasons. Not least, such a deft and developed conflation of the religious and the economic sits very uncomfortably within a nation used, in most cases, to relegating religion to the private sphere. If Christianity has a public role, it is one that is muted, tolerated by most only when it is submerged beneath the surface of everyday life; as a repertoire of cultural reference points, it is put to use, but mainly for reasons of tradition or occasionally to imbue issues of moral import with an existential dimension. Christianity is lent more respect as a historical, architectural and ceremonial resource – an occasional one for many citizens – than as a tradition self-consciously tapped for truth and moral guidance in the public square (Davie, 2000).

Furthermore, unlike the USA, the UK-based mass media are for the most part highly critical of economic agendas, including those affirmed by the residing government, whether this is explained in terms of a strong public service in holding those in power to account, or as a cynical (and sometimes sensationalist) marketing strategy. This is by no means a uniformly endorsed policy, and public service broadcasting sits closer to this description than the more commercial channels, but the partisan, overtly tendentious perspectives loudly proclaimed, especially on US talk radio and certain news networks, for example, are notable for their complete absence. Add to this the laws against featuring evangelism in religious broadcasting, at least on terrestrial channels, and the fact that the media industries appear to foster an insidious secularism which may predispose programme makers towards a sceptical perspective on religion (Martin, 2005: 67). The 'resonance machine' that Connolly finds to be pervasive in US culture has, in the UK, no obvious outlet in the national media.

However, it is dangerous to assume that UK-based Christianity is in any way immune or indifferent to the kind of 'evangelical capitalist resonance machine' that Connolly identifies in the US context. Cultural differences notwithstanding, the complexities of globalisation warn against underestimating flows of influence that increasingly transgress traditional boundaries, including those that take advantage of commercial markets accommodated by global capitalism.

The Global Leadership Summit: A Case Study

According to its website, 'The Global Leadership Summit is a trusted, high-calibre event that's designed to transform Christian leaders on behalf of the local church with

an annual injection of vision, skill development and inspiration'.⁶ It is conceived and run by the Willow Creek Association, the not-for-profit organizational wing of Willow Creek Community Church, the Chicago-based megachurch that now has a network of like-minded evangelical churches across the USA and the world, following its own approach to church growth and nurturing leadership. This approach has evolved from the genesis of the church growth movement in the 1970s, leading to the seven point 'seeker' approach for which Willow Creek is well known, with its emphasis on bringing unbelievers to Christ through friendship and events that exhibit cultural familiarity (Pritchard, 1996). While Donald McGavran's 'homogeneous unit principle' (the principle that 'like attracts like', used to justify the nurturing of culturally distinctive churches with specific target audiences) remains influential, it is implicit and open to rethinking, and Willow Creek have openly distanced themselves from the 'one size fits all' approach to church growth that it was known for in its early days (Branaugh, 2008). Nevertheless, its identity as a seeker church remains intact, and its ambitions have been extended into a global context, and given the organisational necessities associated with exporting influence and 'best practice', it is unsurprising that its activities retain a programmatic style. The Global Leadership Summit was first launched in 1995 as a means of training and inspiring church leaders through a conference event. The summits are held every August at Willow Creek's South Barrington campus in Chicago, with tens of thousands of church leaders from across the USA benefitting from the teaching *via* a live satellite broadcast of the 2-day event. High demand led to the effective franchising of the event, with lectures made available on DVD, alongside glossy delegate packs, featuring recommended interactive activities for delegates to do in small groups. Local churches purchase the franchise from Willow Creek and then hold the 'Global Leadership Summit' on their own premises during the following October, showing the Chicago lectures via a video projector and structuring discussions, worship and associated activities according to Willow Creek guidelines. By 2009, the summit was convened in cities in 55 countries in 26 languages, apparently reaching 120,000 church leaders across the globe, for the first time training more leaders outside the USA than within it.

In keeping with the church growth thinking that inspired Willow Creek, the Global Leadership Summit is based on an underlying philosophy that is instrumentalist and utilitarian, valuing above all methods of doing church that are seen to 'work' and seeking to harness these methods in a way in which other churches might benefit. In explaining the genesis of the summit, founder Bill Hybels cites his observation that churches which flourish share a 'common denominator', and that is 'great leadership'.⁷ Summit speakers (and, it is hoped, audiences) are drawn from across the churches and from outside of the Christian context altogether, on the understanding that leadership skills that work are worth sharing, whatever their originating context. Consequently, the language used in describing the aims of the event resonate strongly with mainstream business; one key aim states that delegates will 'Tackle issues unique to leaders, including casting vision, motivating others, self-management, team building, manag-

⁶ <http://www.willowcreekglobalsummit.com/> (accessed 14/7/10).

⁷ See <http://www.willowcreekglobalsummit.com/video.asp> (accessed 16/7/10).

ing volunteers, problem solving, decision making, and much more'.⁸

At each Summit, a variety of guest speakers are invited, some well known across the US churches, others well known outside of them. They are united only in having expertise and/or experience in leadership that, in the opinion of the Willow Creek Association, could positively resource church leaders. The speakers for 2009 included Tim Keller (Founder and Senior Pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan), Jessica Jackley (co-founder of Kiva, the world's first peer-to-peer micro-lending website), Chip and Dan Heath (business consultants and authors of *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die*), and Wess Stafford (President and CEO of Compassion International, a Christian child advocacy charity). The programme also included an interview with Bono, of rock band U2, about his thoughts on how far the churches had effectively responded to third world poverty since his 2006 Summit talk, in which he was less than hopeful. Political speakers have also been included on the programme, such as former US army general and Secretary of State Colin Powell, and former British Prime Minister Tony Blair. The Global Leadership Summit does not peddle a neo-conservative agenda that uncritically praises late capitalism as a manifestation of Christian freedom. Indeed, several of the 2009 speakers acknowledged the looming global economic crisis and made no apologies for Wall Street; the speakers who were ministers also placed the alleviation of poverty – domestic and third world – at the heart of their Christian teaching as a responsibility shared by all. Bill Hybels cites one of the key values driving the project by saying they are 'serious about diversity and justice issues'.⁹

And yet the message conveyed by the event draws unapologetically from the business world. In an introductory video to the Summit and its aims, the inclusion of business leaders as participants and contributors is openly welcomed, with Willow Creek cited as a case study used on a course taught at Harvard Business School.¹⁰ There is a sense in which business and the church are set alongside one another in a process of mutual enhancement. Speakers at the Summit fuse Christian and business language, using expressions like 'God's economy' and 'doing business with God' and God's work is invoked as proceeding through the work of inspiring business leaders.¹¹ Christian ministers refer to business consultants and managing directors such as Apple's Steve Jobs as authorities, reflecting the Summit's encouragement of co-operation and co-alignment beyond traditional boundaries. Each Summit event includes a bookstore with titles recommended by the Willow Creek Association, and in 2009 these included business writer (and confirmed 2010 speaker) Jim Collins' *How the Mighty Fall, and Why Some Companies Never Give In*, leadership expert and best-selling author John C. Maxwell's *The 360 Degree Leader*, and *Leading the Revolution* by Gary Hamel, described on amazon.co.uk as 'a world-renowned business thinker and co-author of *Competing for the Future*, the book that set the management agenda for the 1990s'.

The dominant message of the Summit revolves around the inspiring power of human potential, harnessed through determination, inventiveness, building relation-

8 <http://www.willowcreekglobalsummit.com/> (accessed 14/7/10).

9 See <http://www.willowcreekglobalsummit.com/video.asp> (accessed 16/7/10)

10 See <http://www.willowcreekglobalsummit.com/video.asp> (accessed 16/7/10)

11 A similar tendency was found among US leaders of evangelical mission organisations, who "model their evangelism around commercial marketing strategies." (Hunter and Yates, 2002: 340).

ships, and an entrepreneurial approach to problem solving. Moreover, there is a clear emphasis upon the individual as the key to success: solutions to social problems are conceived in individual, rather than collective, terms. Clearly, there is a strong evangelical Christian framework to all of this, but themes of Biblical faithfulness and moral propriety are to a large extent either sidelined or left implicit, beneath a thoroughgoing call to leaders to learn from the experiences of those who have overcome the limitations of life by sheer persistence and a willingness to think outside of the box.

The Global Leadership Summit also illustrates how US evangelicalism is enabled by the contexts of globalisation to exert influence on cultural constituencies across the world. In 2009, 812 churches across the UK and Ireland were members of the Willow Creek network, and as such receive a monthly leadership audio resource, a quarterly publication on church leadership, access to free downloads and a range of discounts on Willow Creek events and resources. The 2009 Global Leadership Summit included 14 venues across the UK and Ireland which together attracted over 3,100 delegates from across the churches. The author was able to observe the presentation and consumption of the Global Leadership Summit event at two church locations in the south of England during October 2009, and to speak to participants and facilitators at these venues. While some aspects did not translate and highlighted cultural differences between the UK and USA (the Tony Blair interview was met with open cynicism and amusement, contrasted with the unquestioning reverence of the American interviewer), most of the content was received warmly and viewed as articulating *universal human principles*.

As several attendees commented, the cultural contexts are different, but the principles are global. These may be summarized as the power of human potential, the benefits of entrepreneurialism beyond traditional boundaries, and the rejection of programmatic solutions (reflecting an attempt by those steering the Summit to manage the heritage of the church growth movement). The most marked cultural difference related to frustrations felt by some UK-based church leaders about the structural features of the UK that held them back from realizing the potential of their communities. One pastor had spent 9 years trying to find land for a new church building for his 200-strong Baptist church, and had been held back by legal complications, even while his congregation had no problem finding the necessary funds. As he commented to me, 'a lot of these things are a lot easier in America'. And while the 'myth of evangelical success' is not affirmed here uncritically – failure and humility celebrated as educational and spiritually enhancing experiences – the UK participants still view their American cousins as blessed with the 'can-do' attitude in a culture more hospitable to religion. Thus while they yearn for the voluntarism and grassroots creativity distinctive of the US context, they see the UK as presenting more impediments than opportunities.

The Global Leadership Summit is about inspiring leaders and in the British context is operative as a means of training church leaders and leadership teams. While the principles taught are viewed as universal, they come with a distinctively North American flavour, and participants welcome them as tools for the raising of standards within the UK context. Key to this process is an acknowledgement that Christians can learn and take much of value from the business world. David Vardy, a prominent evangelical businessman who has promoted the Summit in the North East of England, commented that his business background allowed him to 'see the difference these leadership

qualities will make in raising the bar....', adding the Summit is not about theology as such, but about training, reflecting a categorical distinction which lends itself to justifying a closer engagement between church and business. Commenting on the suspicion some have of bringing the methods of business into the church, he responds,

the church is populated by highly gifted, highly qualified, talented people, who invariably leave their brains at the door when they walk in on a Sunday morning, and the God-given talent they use to great effect during the working week just doesn't get to see the light of day when they get to church and as a consequence. . . we put up with a much inferior experience in church than we could have if we used those same sort of gifts and talents to present the Gospel and to promote the Christian faith. . . we have people, Christians in the pews, who have expertise in marketing, in selling, in training, in all sorts of professions and if their skills were used to greater impact, the church would be in a different place to where it is today.¹²

In other words, it is in engaging with best practice in spheres of life outside of the church – especially business – that church leaders will be empowered and enabled to thrive and realize the potential they see in their communities.

There is a pattern of importing capitalism-endorsing Christianity into the UK context, but this appears to flow not primarily from the US – at least not directly, but from western Africa and mainland Europe in the form of the 'health and wealth' or prosperity Gospel. What we are witnessing with the Global Leadership Summit is something quite different: a positive but critical engagement with the tools of secular business as resources for Christian leadership. Wealth is not celebrated, but the 'virtues' identified in business – notably efficiency, creativity and determination – are held up within models of leadership to be emulated (cf. Witton, 1995). This borrowing from the business world is in evidence elsewhere in the UK evangelical movement. Theological College Wycliffe Hall (in conjunction with the Oxford centre for Christian Apologetics) now offers a course in evangelism and apologetics for business leaders, which includes an 'opportunity to interact with Christian business leaders and evangelists whose ministries focus on the business world'.¹³ Many of the larger independent evangelical churches are increasingly being run explicitly on a business model, often offering conference and business related courses as a sideline and significant income stream. Xcel church in Newton Aycliffe, County Durham, advertise on their website their provision of 'many different courses to help people achieve their potential', including 'lifestyle courses' and 'Leadership and Event Management qualifications'.¹⁴ Abundant Life Ministries, based in Bradford, Yorkshire, now has its own Leadership Academy, its website inviting interested individuals to "experience a dynamic and life-changing opportunity that will empower the leader inside you", describing its mission in terms of 'equipping those who tomorrow will be leaders in their field – church, business, home - wherever you do life'.¹⁵ In these innovations, the evangelical movement appears to draw upon the cultural values associated with the 'turn to the self' more

¹² Interview with the author, 1/10/09.

¹³ See <http://www.wycliffehall.org.uk/content.asp?id=205> (accessed 21/7/10).

¹⁴ See <http://xcelchurch.com/release-potential> (accessed 23/7/10).

¹⁵ See <http://www.alm.org.uk/academy/> (accessed 23/7/10).

commonly associated with alternative spiritualities (Heelas, 1999), foregrounding both the human resources that can be found 'within', but also extolling the way in which the business world puts such resources to work in an effective and creative manner.

Conclusions

The recent global economic downturn has cast all of the inter-relationships highlighted by Connolly in a new light. While many elective affinities remain intact, widespread cynicism towards systems of capitalist wealth creation could seep into a cynicism towards the cognate evangelicalism that Connolly identifies in the USA. Pending the generation of appropriate empirical data, we wait with anticipation to see whether the economic downturn effectively weakens the evangelical capitalist resonance machine, or whether its power enables it to transcend these challenging circumstances. Developments like the Global Leadership Summit suggest the exchange of resources associated with discourses of individualism, entrepreneurialism and pragmatic efficiency after the fashion of business is capable of proceeding in subtle ways via communication media and interpersonal networks exploited by evangelical power brokers, without necessarily being uncritical of capitalist exploitation, especially with respect to third world poverty.

Moreover, while the more striking Prosperity or pro-capitalist teachings attract more attention from the media, the more subtle appropriations of a personal aspiration discourse reflective of the broader business world go unnoticed by Connolly. Perhaps this is to be expected, given their relative congruence with wider cultural assumptions about selfhood and personal ambition, but their embodiment of some of the values of late capitalism at the very least suggests the 'evangelical capitalist resonance machine' is more complex than Connolly makes out. It also suggests that the trans-national, cross cultural flow of this development – as exemplified in the Global Leadership Summit – constitutes a cluster of religious-cultural ideas and values that is more portable and therefore more culturally resonant than the hard-line pro-capitalist agenda at the heart of Connolly's analysis. The evangelical-capitalist resonance machine that has the capacity to be truly global in its influence is less about neo-conservatives, millennialism and ruthless individualism, and more to do with subjective empowerment, a business-like pragmatism and an openness to any cultural resources that effectively serve the goals of evangelical communities.

Nevertheless, Connolly's analysis presents some insightful theoretical resources that cast the global dimensions of the trans-Atlantic evangelical movement in a new light. His determination to focus on channels of influence that transcend national boundaries and which locate ideological flows among interrelated nodes of corporate and cultural capital takes seriously the complex ways in which evangelical Christianity continues to develop in tandem with the modern project in western nations. Moreover, the 'disciplinary techniques' that Connolly posits (although does not develop) as vehicles for cultural-religious values, may be conveyed by the multi-media channels of commodification exemplified in the ambitious programmes of Willow Creek. Here, ideological affinities are forged via networks within an evangelical market, while not finding articulation in an uncritical advocacy of free market capitalism. Capitalism offers a ready-made model of global exchange, but the evangelicals taking advantage

of it are by no means duped into embodying the free market ideology associated with the New Christian Right.

Studies of voting patterns in relation to religious identity suggest Britain may have fostered a set of predispositions particularly receptive to these conditions. Religious background is no longer a reliable indicator of party political allegiance but religion *per se* remains “associated with an increased chance of identifying with *any* party rather than none.” (McAndrew, 2010: 101, emphasis in original; cf. Kotler-Berkowitz, 2001). Moreover, individuals are more likely to vote for parties matching their own ideological convictions if they are more knowledgeable and more aware of the relative positions of parties (Anderson, et al., 2005: 287), suggesting a particularly important role for the media and for the public discourse of religious leaders in shaping religious orientations to political matters. If old political allegiances are breaking down, in their place is a less predictable pattern of negotiation that transcends conventional loyalties, and as such lends itself to being resourced from a global constellation of ideas and influences more broadly available via mass media and interpersonal networks. Within the evangelical movement, this in large part amounts to US influence, and much of this is caught up in assumptions about individual identity shaped by late capitalism. It appears the relationship between Protestant Christianity and capitalism remains relevant and influential, but far from homogeneous and perhaps less predictable than it ever has been.

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Метју Гест

ЕВАНГЕЛИКАЛИЗАМ И КАПИТАЛИЗАМ У ТРАНСАТЛАНСКОМ КОНТЕКСТУ

Резиме

Овај чланак је критички осврт на књигу политиколога Вилијама Конолија *Хришћанство и капитализам: Амерички начин*. Конолијева анализа начина како евангелистичко хришћанство и капиталистичке агенде узајамно утичу једни на друге у америчком контексту приказана је критички у смислу тенденција да се хомогенизује амерички евангелистички покрет и преувелича његово укључивање у десничарске политичке интересе. Његов теоријски оквир је такође критикован, али се развио у светлу сопственог потенцијала за генерисање увида у глобални контекст евангелистичког утицаја, укључујући ту и средство капиталистичких вредности. Ово је истражено у погледу америчког утицаја на британски евангелизам и онога што он открива о ширењу евангелистичко-капиталистичких идеја у трансатланском контексту. Ради илустрације, понуђена је студија случаја од стране Самита за глобално лидерство спонзорисаног од Вилоу Крика.

Кључне речи: капитализам, евангелизам, фундаментализам, ново право, духовности.

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