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political roles in electing the presidents they served. Their impressive records in office contrasted with those of other close presidential associates like Griffin Bell, Edwin Meese, and Alberto Gonzales. Richard M. Nixon appointed Elliot Richardson four times to Cabinet or near-Cabinet-level positions, yet that did not stop Richardson from resisting Nixon's intrusions on the autonomy of Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox. These examples may suggest that skill and circumstances are also important, that presidential proximity provides advantages as well as disadvantages, and that the desire to systematically prescribe behavior often must yield to contextual qualifications, here and elsewhere.

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Faith Based: Religious Neoliberalism and the Politics of Welfare in the United States by Jason Hackworth. Athens, University of Georgia Press, 2012. 184 pp. Paper, \$22.95.

American conservatism has long been challenged by the simmering tensions between its libertarian and socioreligious wings. In *Faith Based*, Jason Hackworth examines the merging of these two strands of conservatism into what he calls *religious neoliberalism*, and the consequent policy impact on American social welfare provision. His central thesis is that neoliberalism—with its “overwhelming emphasis on the individual,” a quasi-religious belief in the market, and the conviction that the state will only impede both—has limited appeal as a stand-alone ideology, and can only affect policy when attached to other movements that legitimize it and amplify its influence. Since the Reagan era, one such vehicle has been American evangelicalism. Hackworth weaves together a variety of methods—a reading of National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) policy resolutions, content analysis of *Christianity Today*, and select case studies of faith-based welfare provision—to demonstrate how religious rhetoric and theology have been employed to soften the hard-edged anti-statism of neoliberalism, thus sanctifying neoliberal attacks on our social welfare system. Hackworth's ultimate conclusions are nuanced. While neoliberalism and evangelicalism have been mutually reinforcing, Hackworth finds both to be “partial,” and suggests that inherent contradictions will test their long-term compatibility and limit the future reach of religious neoliberalism.

Faith Based is a valuable, albeit incomplete, portrait of neoliberalism and religious conservatism as convenient if ultimately mismatched bedfellows. It

establishes religious conservatism *on some level* as an energizing force behind neoliberal welfare policies. It raises, and in the process invites future empirical research on, important questions. One is just how deeply true neoliberalism reaches within American evangelicalism. Many evangelicals may generally prefer smaller and more-decentralized government, and wish for more space for religious actors to operate. Yet surveys reveal that sizeable numbers also advocate greater government support for the poor, even if it means higher debt levels or taxes. This suggests something far short of a full embrace of neoliberal welfare policy in America.

Moreover, how successful has religious neoliberalism been in terms of tangible policy results? Hackworth's studies are arguably cherry-picked to validate his thesis, and may overstate the impact of the religious-neoliberal marriage. Case studies of Habitat for Humanity and rescue missions, particularly in the context of post-Katrina New Orleans, may be limited as a measure of the extent of religious neoliberalism. Even if New Orleans was "a vehicle deliberately deployed by neoliberal think tanks, politicians, and some religious figures to institute a more resolutely neoliberal political economy" (p. 130) and not simply governmental incompetence, the unique circumstances facing that devastated city may limit broader lessons to be derived.

Likewise the impact of religious neoliberalism is exaggerated by Hackworth's conflating of the faith-based initiative with genuine neoliberal policy. He characterizes the faith-based initiative as "an obvious attempt to undermine or downsize the welfare state" and "eliminate the state's role in welfare..." (p. 2). While this may fit the neoliberal vision of Marvin Olasky—who repeatedly appears in the book—it needs far greater empirical validation as an apt description of religious sector/government collaborations under President George W. Bush. Faith-based policy, as implemented, typically operated on an understanding of Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) as partners with and enhancements of the state rather than as its replacements. While a decade of concerted faith-based collaboration with government has yielded modest success, neoliberalism has hardly proven to be an existential threat to the welfare state. If anything, contemporary policy debates reveal the neoliberal goal of displacing government to be an abject failure, with the welfare state as firmly intact as ever.

Yet *Faith Based* is a welcome exploration of the complexities and tensions within the economic and social strains of the American right. The future of this uneasy relationship will surely be an important determinant of the future of conservatism in American politics.

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