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MARK R. AMSTUTZ

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INTRODUCTION

In a seminal *Foreign Affairs* article in 2006, former Council on Foreign Relations senior fellow Walter Russell Mead argued that, since the end of the Cold War, American Evangelicals' political influence had increased significantly. Previously, mainline Protestants were the dominant religious voice in American politics. But the growth of conservative Protestant churches shifted power from the mainline to Evangelicals. Mead wrote: "The more conservative strains within American Protestantism have gained adherents, and the liberal Protestantism that dominated the country during the middle years of the twentieth century has weakened. This shift has already changed U.S. foreign policy in profound ways."[1]

This shift in influence mirrored a larger demographic shift. Between 1960 and 2003, mainline church membership fell from 29 million to 22 million, while its market share declined even more precipitously—from 25 percent of all religious groups to just 15 percent. During this same time period, Evangelical churches expanded dramatically. For example, in 1960, the Methodist Church had almost 2 million more members than the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC); but by 2003, the SBC had more members than the combined totals of the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Episcopalian Churches and the United Church of Christ.[2] A report by the Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals (ISAE) estimated that at the beginning of the new millennium, there were between 70 and 80 million Evangelicals in America, or about 25 to 30 percent of the population. Yet since this estimate does not include African-American Protestant churches, which generally share evangelical theology, the ISAE report concludes, "a general estimate of the nation's [E]vangelical population could safely be said to average somewhere between 30–35 percent of the population, or about 100 million Americans."[3]

The growing Evangelical engagement in politics, especially in international relations, is an important development in American religious and political life. Throughout much of the twentieth century, Evangelicals avoided public affairs, concentrating instead on religious work. This disregard of public affairs coincided with the emergence of fundamentalism. When mainline Protestant churches—under the influence of biblical criticism, scientism, and progressivism—began to drift away from the teachings of classical Protestantism, orthodox believers responded by forming a movement that emphasized the "fundamentals" of traditional Protestant Christianity. As this movement developed in the early twentieth century, it increasingly emphasized religious beliefs, biblical teachings, and the priority of spiritual matters over temporal concerns. To ensure authentic faith, Fundamentalists called for separation from liberal church denominations. Orthodox believers thus increasingly followed a separatist strategy where religion took precedence over political and social life.

Fundamentalists' disengagement from the social, cultural, and political concerns of society—a theological perspective that H. Richard Niebuhr calls "Christ Against Culture"—represented a radical departure from the more holistic Protestant faith that had dominated American culture throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Challenging this separatist model, a group of orthodox Protestants began calling for a new (or neo) Evangelicalism based on a return to traditional Protestant belief and practice. Although the new movement shared fundamentalism's commitment to core doctrinal beliefs, it differed in its desire to be fully engaged in temporal affairs and to cooperate with other Christian groups in advancing common moral and social concerns. Some observers suggest that the real difference between Fundamentalists and Evangelicals is the latter's willingness to collaborate with mainline Protestants and Roman Catholics.

Evangelicals and Global Engagement

This book examines the impact of American Evangelicals on international affairs. While government officials regard foreign policy as a means to advance the national interests of states, Evangelicals view global affairs as a means of caring for the spiritual and temporal well-being of people in foreign lands. In pursuing this task, Evangelicals focus on preaching and teaching the gospel as well as on meeting human needs, especially those of people in impoverished societies. To promote evangelism, Evangelicals have built churches and seminaries, taught biblical and theological studies, and translated Scripture into indigenous languages. And to enhance human dignity, Evangelicals have established schools and promoted literacy, built clinics and dispensaries, promoted agricultural development and distributed food aid, created orphanages, and propagated values about the inherent worth of all persons. Thus, Evangelical global engagement has involved both spiritual and humanitarian dimensions, with spiritual concerns providing the primary motivation.

Evangelical global engagement first emerged in the early nineteenth century with the rise of the missionary movement. Although the primary missionary task was evangelism, this religious work spawned a variety of humanitarian services to meet people's social, educational, and medical needs. Thus missionaries served both as foreign emissaries of the gospel and as agents of international humanitarianism. In addition, missionaries served as agents of cultural transformation by teaching and modeling values and practices conducive to human dignity. Some of these values included the inherent worth of persons, freedom of conscience, the equality of persons, and the moral autonomy of individuals. Missionaries also were at the forefront of American internationalism, disseminating information about foreign societies and encouraging interest in international affairs. Finally, because American missionaries had the greatest expertise in foreign languages and cultures, they helped to educate government and business leaders traveling to foreign lands, especially in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, Evangelical missionary activity continued to expand. With the rise of the new Evangelicalism in the mid-1940s, the breadth and depth of Evangelicals' global reach increased still further with the development of humanitarian organizations and increased concern with public affairs. Although Evangelicals expressed few concerns about global politics, one issue animated them greatly—opposition to atheistic communism.[4] Throughout the Cold War, Evangelicals remained adamant critics of Soviet communism, not simply because of its totalitarianism but also because of its opposition to transcendent religion. Because Evangelicals regarded communism as a "counterfeit" religion,[5] they viewed the Cold War as a dispute between two conflicting religious worldviews. As a result, Evangelicals strongly supported the United States' containment policy.

Evangelical anticommunism spawned a secondary concern: support for victims of religious persecution. Because freedom of religion was curtailed in communist regimes, the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), the informal association of some forty-five Evangelical denominations, adopted several resolutions expressing concern about rising religious persecution.[6] Yet the collapse of Soviet totalitarianism in 1990 did not end religious repression.

Indeed, the post–Cold War era has witnessed increased religious persecution from intolerant tribal, ethnic, and religious groups. As a result, the NAE has continued to champion the cause of religious freedom.

Beginning in the 1970s, Evangelicals became more overtly political. The issues that first animated them were domestic social issues like abortion and prayer in public schools. These and other related concerns were fueled by a perception of increasing secularism and materialism within American society. But as the Cold War wound down, Evangelical political concerns shifted toward global affairs and in particular toward issues such as religious persecution and related human rights concerns. As Mead noted, Evangelicals have played a more important role in influencing U.S. foreign policy since the early 1990s. At the same time, their advocacy has raised concerns about the efficacy of such initiatives and, more significantly, about the church's shift in priorities from spiritual concerns to temporal affairs. Some thoughtful observers have reminded religious activists that the church is not an interest group, and that it risks losing its spiritual and moral authority when it begins to function as one.

Evangelicals have thus participated in America's global engagement in two principal ways. First, missionaries have contributed directly to peaceful, humane international relations through their religious and humanitarian work. In particular, missionaries have provided expertise on foreign societies, nurtured the ideal of a morally integrated international community, and fostered awareness of global society. Evangelicals have been at the forefront of U.S. internationalism. More recently, however, Evangelicals have supplemented this direct global engagement with public policy advocacy on foreign policy concerns. Beginning in the post–Cold War era, Evangelicals have become more involved on a number of foreign policy concerns and have sought to influence foreign policy decision making. They have done so by emphasizing fundamental religious and moral values and by mobilizing grassroots support for specific public policy initiatives on issues like religious freedom and human rights.

Unlike the Roman Catholic Church, which has a well-established doctrine of social and political thought, Evangelicals have no social doctrine to guide political action. Nevertheless, Evangelicals have established a general theological framework that influences how believers approach public affairs. Fundamentally, the Evangelical strategy gives precedence to spiritual life over temporal concerns. This does not mean that the individual salvation of persons will inevitably resolve the world's social and material problems. Rather, it suggests that the moral reformation of individuals provides the foundation for a just and humane political society.

Given the diffuse, grassroots nature of American Evangelicalism, defining the movement's evolving impact on U.S. global engagement is difficult. Not surprisingly, some dubious claims have been advanced about the past and present role of Evangelicals in international relations. One of the goals of this book is to provide a more complete account of the extraordinary role of Evangelicals in global affairs by challenging prevalent misconceptions. Some of these are the following:

- *The rise of American Evangelicalism is a recent development,* following World War II. This claim is false since the emergence of Evangelicalism in the 1940s was not a new development but a return to the traditional Protestant faith—the religion that had prevailed in the United States before liberal religion emerged in the late nineteenth century.
- *Evangelical concern with social and political affairs is a modern development*, dating from the 1950s and 1960s. Neo-Evangelicalism emerged in the mid-1940s in response to fundamentalism's separatism and neglect of social and cultural life. Yet classical Protestantism—the American Evangelical religion of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—was fully engaged in the social, cultural, and political issues of the day. It is therefore untrue that Evangelical social and political engagement began in the aftermath of World War II.
- *Evangelicals' limited participation in public affairs is due to an underdeveloped and incomplete political theology.* This is a half-truth. To be sure, pietism—giving priority to personal religious beliefs and individual spirituality while deemphasizing formal church doctrines—undoubtedly inhibited Evangelical engagement in public life, especially in the first half of the twentieth century. But to the extent that Evangelicals deemphasized domestic and international public affairs, this was due less to an incomplete political theology and more to a deliberate strategy that gave precedence to spirituality over political action.
- *Evangelical global engagement is ineffective because of its weak institutions.* Unlike the Roman Catholic Church or mainline Protestant denominations, Evangelicals are an informal, grassroots movement. Evangelicals have no pope, and the associations that facilitate coordination among its member denominations have little authority. While the movement's informal institutions have impeded the capacity to influence public affairs, Evangelicalism's decentralized character has also ensured a vibrant, entrepreneurial faith that, when mobilized, can exert significant influence on social and political life.

- *American Evangelical engagement in international affairs began in the aftermath of the Cold War.* According to this view, Evangelicals first became politically and socially active in the 1970s and 1980s, in response to domestic social issues and subsequently over global concerns. In 2002, *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof argued that Evangelicals were the "new internationalists" because of their important humanitarian contributions in developing nations.[7] But contrary to Kristof's claim, Evangelicals have been at the forefront of global humanitarianism for nearly two centuries. Indeed, Evangelical missionaries were involved in humanitarian projects long before the U.S. government began its foreign aid programs. It is not an exaggeration to suggest that Evangelical missionaries were the first American internationalists.
- *Evangelicals support Israel because of "end-times" theology.* Although this claim has some truth, it exaggerates the role of prophetic religion among Evangelicals. To begin with, only a small percentage of Evangelicals accept the prophetic teachings of dispensationalism—a theological perspective that emphasizes Israel's role in the events surrounding Christ's Second Coming. The far more convincing reasons for Evangelical support of Israel are based on God's covenants with the Jewish people and common democratic values. Evangelicals believe that, as God's chosen nation, Jews play an important role in salvation history. Supporting Israel is thus a way of affirming God's providential order. Equally important, however, Evangelicals sympathize with Israel because it shares with the United States common ideals and democratic institutions rooted in a Judeo-Christian worldview. The view that prophetic teachings explain Evangelical sympathies toward Israel is unconvincing.
- *Evangelicals are shifting their political identity from a conservative worldview to a more liberal worldview.* In an article in *The New Yorker*, Frances Fitzgerald claims that a new movement of moderate to left-center Evangelicals is gaining influence.[8] In recent decades, progressive Evangelical leaders like Jim Wallis, Tony Campolo, and Ron Sider have challenged the conservative politics of Evangelicals. Now, however, these leaders are being supported by a growing number of pastors, writers, and professors. This shift toward the political center is evidenced by the declining influence of the Christian Right and the advocacy of more progressive public policy concerns. The analysis in chapter 8 suggests that issues like climate change and immigration, however, do not reflect the concerns of rank-and-file Evangelicals. Notwithstanding the initiatives of progressive leaders, Evangelicalism remains a conservative theological and political movement.

- *Evangelicals do not support the political and economic development of nations.* This view derives in great part from the conventional wisdom that state-centered planning is necessary to foster economic development. But Evangelicals do care about development, but they do so by emphasizing decentralized, civil society initiatives and by giving precedence to the moral transformation of persons as a prerequisite to economic growth.

A major goal of this book is to provide a more compelling account of Evangelicals' influence on America's role in the world. The book describes how Evangelicals have influenced international affairs, both directly through missionary and humanitarian service and indirectly through reflection and action on global concerns like Third World poverty, Middle East politics, religious persecution, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The book also assesses and critiques the growing political advocacy of Evangelicals. As noted above, the declining membership and influence of mainline Protestant churches and the growth of Evangelicals has shifted political influence from the mainline to Evangelicals. This increasing role in American public life has provided Evangelicals with an opportunity to help advance important international concerns such as religious freedom and humanitarian relief. But rising political advocacy involves significant risks, since it can undermine the independence and moral authority of the church. Because religious groups make their most important contributions to the moral life of nations when they relate transcendent norms to domestic and international social, political, and economic concerns, public affairs advocacy can shift the church's focus from its mission of proclaiming the good news of the gospel. The challenge for Evangelicals is to engage public policy concerns without losing their focus on religious matters.

The Plan of the Book

This book is divided into two major sections. The first, chapters 1–4, explores the nature and rise of Evangelical global engagement. It examines the role of religion in foreign policy, the nature of Evangelicalism, the impact of the missionary movement, and the nature of Evangelical political ethics. Chapters 5–8 apply the Evangelical worldview to international relations, focusing on global poverty, America's ties to Israel, and several specific foreign policy issues, such as international religious freedom, human trafficking, climate change, and immigration. After identifying a number of shortcomings in Evangelicals' political advocacy, the concluding chapter 9 offers a number of suggestions for developing a more credible strategy of global engagement.

Since this book is about Evangelicals, it is important to say a word about the identity of this group of Christians. Although there is no consensus among theologians as to the definitional boundaries of Evangelicalism, I shall assume that Evangelicals are a distinct group of orthodox believers who share common beliefs and practices. Such Christians are to be found in mainline Protestant churches, nondenominational churches, independent congregations, and large associations like the Southern Baptist Convention and Pentecostal churches. Because of the distinctive nature of Evangelicalism, I capitalize *Evangelical* throughout this book. This decision is in keeping with the suggestion of "An Evangelical Manifesto," issued in May 2008, which correctly observes that the term needs to be uppercased like the names for other religious groups, including Roman Catholics, Orthodox, and Protestants.[9]

1 CHRISTIANITY AND FOREIGN POLICY

In order to illuminate the nature and impact of Evangelical global engagement, we'll begin by exploring the context in which such foreign policy initiatives are developed—in particular, by examining the nature and role of moral values and religious norms in the conduct of foreign relations. My aim is to describe the context in which Evangelical faith has influenced, and continues to influence, American global engagement. The chapter addresses four major issues: morality and foreign policy, religion and the development of the American nation, Christianity and foreign policy, and the integration of moral values with governmental decision making.

Morality and Foreign Policy

Before we examine the role of religion in international affairs, and more particularly the role of Evangelicals in American foreign policy, it is important to briefly address the question of whether and how moral values influence global politics.

Because of the evident cultural pluralism in the world, some theorists and government officials have gone so far as to conclude that international political morality does not exist.[1] But the view that the world has no common moral values is unpersuasive. This book is rooted in the assumption that norms, especially moral values, are an inescapable element of all human actions, whether individual or collective. As A. J. M. Milne notes, a complete diversity of values would be incapable of sustaining global social and political life. Some minimal morality is necessary. According to Milne, this global morality includes such norms as respect for human life, pursuit of justice, fellowship, social responsibility, freedom from arbitrary interference, and civility.[2]

Similarly, political theorist Michael Walzer argues that the international community is sustained by a thin global morality. He distinguishes between a developed or "maximal" morality and a less developed or "minimal" morality. Moral minimalism is "thin," he observes, not because it is unimportant or because it makes few claims on humans but, rather, because its claims are broad and diffuse.[3] Thus, while societies may differ in their beliefs about "maximal" values such as women's rights, distributive justice, criminal justice procedures, and the nature of marriage, they can agree on fundamental norms such as the peaceful settlement of disputes, the sanctity of human life, and protection of the environment. In his classic *Just and Unjust Wars*, Walzer offers a persuasive defense of moral minimalism. He argues that throughout history, leaders have validated the existence of moral values in wartime through their arguments and justifications. Walzer writes: "The clearest evidence for the stability of our values over times is the unchanging character of the lies soldiers and statesmen tell. They lie in order to justify themselves, and so they describe for us the lineaments of justice."[4] Thus, although international moral standards may be weak and at times difficult to discern, a thin body of moral norms exists.

In *The Moral Sense*, political scientist James Q. Wilson similarly claims that an underdeveloped political morality sustains all social and political life. This moral sense, writes Wilson, "is not a strong beacon light.... It is, rather, a small candle flame, casting vague and multiple shadows, flickering and sputtering in the strong winds of power and passion, greed and ideology. But brought close to the heart and cupped in one's hands, it dispels the darkness and warms the soul."[5]

Even if we accept the claim that a thin moral code exists in the world, we are still left with a question: How should political morality influence the international behavior of states? Fundamentally, moral principles can contribute to the development and implementation of foreign policy by (1) helping to define goals and purposes, (2) providing a standard for judging action, and (3) offering inspiration for action.

First, moral principles serve as a beacon, as a light guiding a ship through the stormy waters of international relations. They provide a constant reference point without which consistency in foreign policy would be impossible. Moral principles—justice, protection of the innocent, caring for those in absolute poverty—can play an important role in defining the fundamental aims of foreign policy. This does not mean that morality should be used to establish specific foreign policy goals. Rather, the purpose of political morality is to help structure the general contours and perspectives of foreign policy. According to international affairs scholar Alberto Coll, while transcendent norms cannot be applied directly to the actions of states, they can serve as "a guidepost, as illumination, and as a potential source of human action."[6] Historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., similarly emphasized the important but limited role of moral values in defining foreign policy objectives. Indeed, he argued that moral values should play a decisive role in foreign policy only in questions of last resort. In his view, the chief purpose of moral norms in foreign affairs is "to clarify and civilize conceptions of national interest."[7]

Moral norms also provide a basis for judgment. Without some notion of right and wrong, good and evil, it would be impossible to condemn horrific acts like genocide and ethnic cleansing or to support initiatives calling for greater human rights and increased religious freedom. In the aftermath of the 1994 Rwandan genocide, for example, President Bill Clinton expressed regret that the United States, along with other countries, had not done more to protect innocent Tutsi civilians from Hutu mass killings. Similarly, when it became clear that Serbs were carrying out ethnic cleansing and other human rights abuses against Muslims in the 1992–95 Bosnian civil war, there was widespread international condemnation of these atrocities. And when Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi threatened mass killings in 2011 against the citizens of Benghazi after rebel forces had taken control of that city, the UN Security Council authorized collective military action to protect civilians. In short, despite the "thin" nature of international political morality, moral norms were indispensable in providing a basis by which to judge governmental behavior. Without some idea of what constitutes a humane, just world order, identifying and critiquing political evil is impossible.

Finally, moral norms serve to persuade and motivate foreign policy action. In effect, morality provides the "fuel" for the governmental "engine." Since persons share a universal commitment to uphold human dignity and to demonstrate compassion for those in need, there is a widely shared presumption that governments should provide humanitarian assistance when calamities occur. For example, when Americans saw television footage of thousands of malnourished Somali children and learned that the bitter fighting among Somali warlords was preventing the distribution of food to those suffering from starvation, public opinion began to shift, calling for some type of humanitarian action in response to the crisis. Consequently, the U.S. government called on the United Nations to address it. In December 1992, soon after the UN Security Council had authorized military action, President George H. W. Bush ordered U.S. military forces to intervene to restore minimal order so that food could be distributed to some 300,000 persons facing death from starvation. Similarly, even though North Korea is a totalitarian communist nation that has misused scarce resources to maintain a formidable military, the U.S. government has provided food aid. It has done so despite the fact that such aid is contrary to the strategic goal of constraining the North Korean regime. In his important study of foreign aid, David Lumsdaine shows that morality was the principal motivation for the substantial aid given by Western developed nations to poor countries. He writes that donor countries' "sense of justice and compassion" was the chief inspiration for economic assistance.[8]

Integrating political morality with U.S. diplomacy has been difficult, in great part because "political realism" has been the dominant approach to international affairs among American scholars and government officials. According to this school of thought, since international politics is chiefly determined by the distribution of power among states, a prudent foreign policy needed to be guided by a country's interests, not by its moral aspirations. And since the world lacks a central authority, each country is ultimately responsible for its security and well-being. Not surprisingly, this realist perspective places a premium on economic and military power and deemphasizes moral values.

One of the most articulate exponents of realism during the Cold War was George Kennan, a distinguished U.S. diplomat and leading diplomatic thinker. In many of his writings, Kennan argued that moral values could contribute little to the making and implementation of foreign policy—first, because there were no widely accepted norms of international political morality, and second, because governmental decision making had to be based on political considerations, not moral values. Kennan expressed his skepticism about the role of morality in foreign affairs:

> Moral principles have their place in the heart of the individual and in the shaping of his own conduct, whether as a citizen or as a government official. . . . But when the individual's behavior passes through the machinery of political organization and merges with that of millions of other individuals to find its expression in the actions of a government, then it undergoes a general transmutation, and the same moral concepts are no longer relevant to it. A government is an agent, not a principle; and no more than any other agent may it attempt to be the conscience of its principle. In particular, it may not subject itself to those supreme laws of renunciation and self-sacrifice that represent the culmination of individual moral growth.[9]

Like other American realists, Kennan argued that the only way to pursue a prudent foreign policy was to ensure that the goals pursued in the international community were rooted in the country's vital interests, defined as national security, the integrity of political life, and the well-being of citizens. According to Kennan, these interests had no moral quality but were fundamental purposes that emerged from the decentralized character of international society—a society of distinct sovereign nation-states, each interested in its own security and welfare.[10]

Kennan underestimated the role of morality in foreign affairs for at least two reasons. First, he failed to distinguish between personal morality and political morality. Although the two are related, they are not identical. Individual morality consists of the moral principles and rules that apply primarily to individuals in their private relations. For example, the Sermon on the Mount, the admonition to "love your neighbor as yourself," and the obligation to tell the truth apply primarily to persons and cannot be used directly to devise public policies. Collective or political morality, by contrast, consists of moral norms that apply to the behavior of collectives like neighborhoods, colleges, corporations, cities, and states. Examples of such morality include norms like the right of sovereign independence of states and the corollary right of self-defense, the obligation to not intervene in other states' domestic affairs, the right to control borders, and the duty to settle interstate disputes peacefully. Since Kennan viewed morality through the prism of personal ethics, he failed to appreciate how values like promise-keeping, mercy, and generosity could be integrated into public life. Secretary of State Dean Acheson, an Episcopalian, similarly held to Kennan's narrow realist perspective. "What passes for ethical standards for governmental politics in foreign affairs," he observed, "is a collection of moralisms, maxims, and slogans, which neither help nor guide, but only confuse, decision making."[11]

A second reason why Kennan failed to grasp the importance of moral values in public affairs was his limited conception of government. Whereas many political theorists, including Christian thinkers, have regarded the promotion of justice as the fundamental task of the state, Kennan had a far more constrained view of government. In his view, governing was "a practical exercise" that called for the maintenance of social order, the promotion of economic prosperity, and the protection of society from foreign aggression. Although he, as a Presbyterian believer, undoubtedly believed that government was divinely ordained, he was reluctant to integrate his Christian beliefs with his work as a diplomat. In his view, pursuing moral goals like international justice, human rights, or poverty reduction may be noble, worthy ends, but they were not the fundamental tasks of government in a global society.

Despite Kennan's perceptive analysis of global and diplomatic affairs, his perspective on morality and foreign policy was ultimately unconvincing. Human life involves moral choices. To be human means to make choices every day regarding responsibilities to family, work, local community, and state. Of course, most decisions do not involve moral concerns—dimensions of right or wrong, good or bad, just or unjust hardly ever arise. Such perfunctory decisions are nonmoral. But when citizens address issues like climate change, arms control, protection of innocent civilians, the role of force in halting aggression and genocide, or environmental protection, such concerns necessarily will involve ethical concerns.

Foreign policy, like many aspects of human life, is inextricably a moral enterprise. When a government's goals are partly informed by moral values, the promotion of policy initiatives will necessarily entail ethical analysis—weighing competing moral goals and devising policies that advance the desired objectives in the most effective and least costly manner. Since moral values are often foundational for public policy decisions, the issue is not whether moral values will influence the conduct of foreign policy but, rather, which values and in what ways. As a result, foreign policy is not and cannot be a value-free enterprise. Arnold Wolfers, a noted Cold War international relations scholar, offers a sound perspective on this issue: "The 'necessities' in international politics, and for that matter in all spheres of life, do not push decision and action beyond the realm of moral judgment; they rest on moral choice themselves."[12]

After the Soviet Union introduced nuclear intermediate-range ballistic missiles into Cuba, the Kennedy administration was faced with the challenge of defining the nature of the threat and devising a response. In *Thirteen Days*, his account of this crisis, Robert Kennedy argued that moral considerations played a decisive role in how decision makers addressed policy alternatives. Kennedy claimed that, in the early stages of the crisis, officials spent more time weighing and assessing the moral consequences of military action than on any other matter. In his view, the principal reason why the United States did not carry out an all-out military attack against Cuba was that such action would have eroded, if not destroyed, "the moral position of the United States throughout the world."[13] To be sure, taking into account moral principles will not necessarily ensure an ethical response. But when decision makers take time to reflect on the justice and rightness of their actions, they introduce considerations that are likely to result in better foreign policies.

Despite the significant influence of the realist paradigm throughout the Cold War, international relations scholars and public officials now recognize that this perspective offers an incomplete account of what has motivated the American people's international concerns since the nation's founding. In his penetrating analysis of American foreign policy, *Special Providence*, Walter Russell Mead argues that one of the reasons why critics, especially those from Europe, have failed to understand American diplomacy is that they rely on a realist framework that fails to take into account distinctive features of American society. In particular, the tradition of European (continental) realism neglects the role of ideals, gives priority to politics over economics, and disregards the vibrant, participatory nature of American politics. Since the assumptions of European realism do not reflect American reality, using this approach will inhibit understanding of American global engagement. Mead writes: "It is like using a map of Oregon to plan a road trip in Georgia; there is no way to avoid getting lost."[14]

Not only has realism lost its singular appeal in the United States, but scholars have similarly lost faith in the prevailing secular assumptions that dominated the analysis of international relations. Throughout the Cold War, most of the Western intelligentsia believed that political development and economic modernization would inevitably result in a secularized global community where reason would displace faith. Because of the pervasive influence of the secularist perspective, scholars disregarded religion, viewing faith as irrelevant to the analysis of international affairs and even inimical to peace and global order. The secularization paradigm, however, has not been validated by historical experience. Indeed, since the second half of the twentieth century, religion has become more important in national and international affairs; only Europe has followed the predicted path of secularization.[15] As a result, scholars have begun to acknowledge the shortcomings of the secularization thesis and to analyze religion as an important phenomenon in global politics.

Religion and the Development of the American Nation

Although the impact of religion on public life varies from country to country, in the United States, religion has played a very important role from the start. Religion not only provides values and beliefs to define national identity but also sets forth goals and motivations for the country's policies and actions. As Walter Russell Mead observes:

> Religion has always been a major force in U.S. politics, policy, identity, and culture. Religion shapes the nation's character, helps form Americans'