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Commentators who fear and loathe evangelical Protestants, and there are not a few who fit that description, oscillate between, on the one hand, warning us about the theocracy that the "religious right" is determined to impose and, on the other, reporting that the evangelical enemy is a spent force;
While We're At It;
Brief article

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* Commentators who fear and loathe evangelical Protestants, and there are not a few who fit that description, oscillate between, on the one hand, warning us about the theocracy that the "religious right" is determined to impose and, on the other, reporting that the evangelical enemy is a spent force. In sharpest contrast to such partisan excitements is D. Michael Lindsay's *Faith in the Halls of Power: How Evangelicals Joined the American Elite* (Oxford). Lindsay is a sociologist at Rice University, and he examines with care the ascendancy of evangelicals in four sectors of the American elite: politics, the academy, arts and entertainment, and corporate leadership.

Lindsay is aware that having a place at the table, as it is said, does not necessarily mean that you're making a difference. Many of the evangelicals who have made it to "the halls of power" seem indistinguishable from the people who have long been at home there. But, to a striking extent, the story of the past thirty years is that of people who, as Lindsay puts it, "because their religious identities are so important to them, have brought faith to bear on their leadership, changing the very institutions they lead in the process." Although some observers are still stuck there, we are in fact a very long way from Jimmy Carter in 1976 and the flood of media puzzlements under the generic title "Where did these people called evangelicals come from?" *Faith in the Halls of Power* avoids both boosterism and debunking in its straight forward description of the ways in which evangelicals are redefining leadership in America.