

Evangelicals in Canadian National
Television News, 1994-2004:
A Frame Analysis of Reports from Global,
CBC and CTV Television Networks
and a Survey of National Television
Journalists

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ABSTRACT

This study employed two primary research techniques: a frame analysis and a survey. The frame analysis examined the portrayals of evangelicals and evangelicalism in national, nightly news reports airing between 1994 and 2004. For the survey, national television news personnel were questioned about their attitudes towards religion in general and evangelicals in particular. A comparison of the findings from the frame analysis and the survey was conducted to determine if linkages exist between how national television journalists feel about evangelicals and how they report on evangelicals.

The frame analysis of the reports determined that neutral and positive frames combined were virtually equivalent in strength and number to the negative frames used, resulting in an overall, averaged rating of balanced for the coverage.

While overall the coverage was balanced, the frequency and exclusivity of certain negative frames elevated their saliency considerably. For example, the “evangelicals as intolerant” frame alone appeared in one quarter of all reports; evangelicals were also frequently framed as politically-threatening and criminally-minded. Other research has shown a correlation exists between repetitive viewing of specific, similar content on television and the holding of specific perceptions or beliefs about the world. By extension, concentrated depictions of evangelicals as intolerant, politically-threatening, and criminally-minded, might lead to viewers’ acceptance of those messages as valid.

The survey showed that a strong majority of the responding television journalist have no religious faith or do not actively practice the faith they say they hold. Over half said they felt they had nothing in common with evangelicals religiously and over a third said they shared no common ground with evangelicals on social issues. Regarding those social issues for which they are at odds with evangelicals, a strong majority of respondents said they felt evangelicals were wrong to oppose homosexual rights and gay marriage; over half thought evangelicals stand against abortion was wrong.

By comparing the survey responses to the results of the frame analysis it became clear that the journalists’ attitudes toward evangelicals affected their coverage of members of

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that faith. In particular, two factors were determined to be predictors of journalists' negative framing of evangelicals: 1) the evangelical being covered had to espouse a belief, or demonstrate an action, that ran contrary to the journalist's personal beliefs or ideals; 2) the evangelical's belief or action had to somehow, according to the journalist's perception, threaten the public good. If the second criterion was not present, it was less likely (though not out of the question) that the evangelical would be framed negatively.

The actions of the journalists suggest that they see themselves as protectors of the public good; by subjecting evangelicals to negative coverage they are able to delegitimize the evangelicals' message and thus, limit that faith group's ability to challenge and change the status quo.

ABSTRACT

This study employed two primary research techniques: a frame analysis and a survey. The frame analysis examined the portrayals of evangelicals and evangelicalism in national, nightly news reports airing between 1994 and 2004. For the survey, national television news personnel were questioned about their attitudes towards religion in general and evangelicals in particular. A comparison of the findings from the frame analysis and the survey was conducted to determine if linkages exist between how national television journalists feel about evangelicals and how they report on evangelicals.

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Informed by years of studying evangelical culture in Canada, Stackhouse (1995: 28) states that when non-evangelical Canadians picture evangelicals they think of: “Fast-talking, money-hustling television preachers. Pushy, simplistic proselytizers. Dogmatic, narrow-minded know-it-alls. Straight-laced, thin-lipped killjoys”. Most recently, he says, the attributes of “ignorant, right-wing, and—perhaps worst of all—American” have been added to the character sketch (Stackhouse, 2005: 29).

The rift that exists between evangelicals and non-evangelicals in Canada has been attributed to the divergent value systems of the two groups (Stiller, 2006; 1997). Because evangelicals use the lessons and edicts of the Bible to gauge what is good and right for their own life and for society, their personal morals and social values tend to be more conservative and absolute than those of most Canadians and, therefore, on several issues Canada’s evangelicals find themselves at odds with majority opinion. Whereas evangelicals tend to be opposed to homosexual lifestyle and gay marriage, abortion, sexual promiscuity, pornography, gambling, and the use of illegal drugs (Reimer, 2003), most non-evangelical Canadians are untroubled by, or actively support, these issues (Adams 2003; 1997; Bethune, 2006).

If Canadians in general find it hard to relate to evangelicals in their country, Canada’s elite media professionals find it doubly so. Research by Miljan and Cooper (2003a) has determined that far more so than the public-at-large, journalists working for Canada’s national media outlets are holders of ultra-liberal, secular pluralistic values; as such, they are positioned at the opposite end of the spectrum from evangelical Canadians. Miljan and Cooper (2003a) also determined that the values Canadian journalists hold influence how they write about events and issues. Though news coverage of religious issues was not content analyzed as part of their study, Miljan (as cited in Woodard, 2001) suggests, given the worldview of Canada’s national journalists, it is probable that coverage of devout Christians is slanted toward the negative (cf. Kerr & Moy, 2002; Silk, 1995; Underwood, 2002).

It is certainly the belief of Canadian evangelicals that the news media treat them unfairly. A recent survey (Ipsos-Reid, 2003) found 74% of Canadian evangelicals felt the media were biased against them. It is true that in charging the news media with bias, evangelicals are not unique; many other religious groups and ethnic minorities have made

the same accusation (Fleras, 2003; Silk 1995). Silk (1995: xi) notes ironically that “anyone who knows something about anything is likely to be unhappy with the way it is covered in the news media. By the standards of those who know, the media get it wrong, or slant it... most of the time”. Other research has shown that people who are strongly committed to a belief are more apt to feel that the media are antagonistic in their coverage of that belief (Vallone, Ross, & Lepper, 1985).

However, what gives credibility to Canadian evangelicals’ accusation of prejudice is that 48% of non-evangelical Canadians agree there is a general bias against those with evangelical viewpoints (Ipsos-Reid, 2003). For evangelicals to secure such a high rate of agreement from those outside their community of interest is significant. By way of comparison, just 28% of the general population agree that the media have a negative bias toward ethnic minorities (Jedwab, 2003).

In the last decade, if one media event alone were to be credited with persuading many in the Canadian public, non-evangelical and evangelical alike, that evangelicals are treated unfairly by news personnel, it would have to be the 2000 federal election featuring politician Stockwell Day.

At the beginning of July 2000, Day became the new leader of the Canadian Alliance Party—at the time, Canada’s official opposition to the governing Liberal Party. In September, a win in a by-election gave Day a seat in the House of Commons where he assumed the position of Leader of the Opposition. One month later, Prime Minister Jean Chretien announced a federal election to be held at the end of November.

The federal election campaign of 2000 became more about religion than politics. Day’s conviction not to perform public duties on a Sunday, his assertion that “Jesus is Lord of the whole universe,” and especially his belief in creationism garnered an overwhelming amount of media attention (e.g., Creationism and Stockwell Day, 2000; Kumar, 2000; Moscovitz, 2000; Munson, 2000a; Oziewicz, 2000; Wente, 2000).

Just after winning the leadership of his party, Canada’s most established news magazine, *Macleans*, featured Day on its cover; under his picture was the caption: “How Scary?” The associated article focused on the effect Day’s religious beliefs might have on his political policies (Geddes, 2000). Columns and editorials in Canada’s national newspaper, *The Globe and Mail*, seized on the same angle and accused Day of being “un-

Canadian” because he admitted his faith influenced all the decisions he made in his life, including his political decisions (e.g., Laird, 2000; McCarthy, 2000). The headline for one *Globe* article about Day declared: “God has no place on the ballot: Canada lacks the U.S. taste for—and protections from—the influence of religion in politics” (Sheps, 2000). In the middle of the election campaign, the country’s national public broadcaster, CBC television, aired a documentary on the evening news titled: *The Fundamental Day* (Hunter, 2000). Many felt the documentary purposely attacked Day’s evangelical Christian beliefs in the hopes of proving him unfit to hold office (Woodard, 2001). After his party’s defeat, Day accused the media of an anti-evangelical bias, pointing out that other politicians were not subjected to “the third degree” with regard to their religious beliefs (Hoover, 2000).

Stackhouse (2005; 1995), suggests unflattering stereotypes of evangelicals promoted by the media contribute to the negative perception non-evangelical Canadians have towards that faith group. Lumping journalists together with [liberal] politicians and academics he says that they are “otherwise intelligent people” except when it comes to their characterizations of Canadian evangelicals (2005: 29).

Stackhouse’s assertion that the news media influences public perception of evangelicals rests on an extensive theoretical foundation of which the twin concepts of the social constructionist perspective and news framing are intricate parts.

1.1 The News as Social Construction

To understand the idea of news as a social construction, a good place to start is with how news was traditionally viewed. Up to the mid 1800s in North America, it was expected that journalists would incorporate a definite editorial slant into their coverage; however, by the 1890s the notion that reporting of the news should be objective had taken hold. An objective story was considered one that ran a middle path between two opposing rhetorical positions; objectivity was said to be breached if the story appeared to favour one position over the other. Certain practises were also deemed to make a reporter’s writing more objective; writing was to include corroboration of facts with multiple sources, eyewitness accounts of events and “balance”. Newspapers (and later radio and then television news shows) made much of their “objective” reporting,

marketing it to the public as a measure of merit. It was advantageous to do so because in the minds of the public objectivity was associated with factuality and truth—and citizens sought out the most trusted news. Ultimately, the reputation, and by extension, the profitability of a newspaper, radio, or TV newscast was directly tied to its perceived objectivity/truthfulness (Barnhurst & Nerone, 2001; Mindich, 1998; Schudson, 1995; 1978). Over the decades the idea has been perpetuated that news stories are a presentation of the objective facts; as such, for most North Americans it is now conventional wisdom that the news they see, hear or read is True (Mindich, 1998; Schudson, 1995; cf. 1978).

The social constructionist perspective (and, for that matter, its theoretical partner, framing) challenges this conventional wisdom. It challenges the belief that Truth is out there, ready made, and waiting to be found and the journalist's task is to find that Truth and deliver it to the public (Mortimer, 1981). Despite what journalists say, news is not an objective presentation of the facts, it is a socially constructed product influenced by the subjective views and opinions of its creators (Bennett, 2001; Fleras, 2003; Lorimer & Gasher, 2001). What do we mean that news is socially constructed? To call news socially constructed is to highlight its true nature and origins: it is made by humans and is therefore subject to limitations, manipulations and biases. To use that term is to remind ourselves that news reports do not spring forth fully formed from the ground where a news event occurs; what gets transported to our television screen or newspaper page is not the original entity but a very modified and condensed version of the original. The social constructionist position, therefore, argues that:

Much of what is defined and taken for granted as normal or necessary (i.e., common sense) is social and constructed rather than anything real, inherent, or inevitable. Objects do not exist per se; reality consists of processes in which attributes are applied to "things" and labelled accordingly (Fleras, 2003: 112).

Lorimer and Gasher (2001: 234) further elucidate the constructed nature of news stating:

News reports, while based on actual events and real people, never simply 'mirror' reality, as some journalists would contend. A mirror, after all, shows us only what is placed before it, nothing more and nothing less... The mirror metaphor and the associated notion of 'reflection' do not adequately describe the role of journalists as content producers. If news media were mirrors, new reports of an event would be virtually identical to one and other [which they are not].

As described by Berger and Luckmann (1966), the construction of social reality assumes that: (1) reality in and of itself is ultimately unknowable; and (2) what we call “reality” is not *a priori* “fact,” but the constantly shifting product of *cultural consensus*. Hence, “reality,” to the extent that it can be said to exist, is multi-layered, mutable, and sensitive to specific cultural contexts and orientations.

According to the social constructionist view all human perceptions of reality are mediated in some way; however, social constructionists do not go so far as to say that media actually *produce* reality. Instead, they insist that that media messages are instrumental in creating the “sense of the real” from which social relationships, beliefs, interpretations, and actions come into being (Fiske, 1994). From the constructionist point of view it is impossible for journalists to reproduce events and issues for the public without first filtering them through a host of sociocultural influences. As Bennett (1982: 303) puts it, the observations a journalist makes when creating a news item are influenced and tempered by “the cultural air we breathe, the whole ideological atmosphere of society, which tells us that some things can be said and others had best not be said”.

Understanding that news is socially constructed allows us to inoculate ourselves against the media’s influence; we can remind ourselves that an event depicted in the news as immutable, or a position portrayed as “common sense”, may represent the wishful thinking of the reporter and not the reality of the situation. News coverage does not, and cannot, present reality; at best, it can present just one version—the media’s version—of reality (Fleras, 2003; Lorimer & Gasher, 2001). Journalists’ choices about which voices and views to draw upon in constructing the news are fraught with political significance. Indeed, the process of constructing the news is part of larger political competitions to define the issues that should, and should not, concern the public. In other words, the news is “a site on which various social groups, institutions, and ideologies struggle over the definition and construction of social reality” (Gurevitch & Levy, 1985: 19). As such, some peoples’ realities become authoritative and widely-shared by serving as the basis for representations of reality, while others’ realities remain isolated and marginalized.

Given that the social constructionist position asserts that true objectivity is impossible, would it be more tenable and genuine to insist that journalists abandon all pretext of objective reporting? In light of how journalism is *currently* understood by the public and

practised by reporters¹, the answer to that question is no. It is obvious that such a free-for-all approach—were it to be employed without the implementation of a new systemic and structural framework—would not alleviate the problem of biased news coverage but would, instead, make it significantly worse. British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, is reported to have said, “Democracy is the worst form of government except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time”. A similar assertion could be made about journalistic objectivity: at present it is the most effective model Western-based journalism has on offer—despite its flaws. Until a new paradigm arises to replace the old, the best the news consuming public can hope for is that the journalists who bring them their information will act in accordance with the *ideal* of objectivity and thereby endeavour to keep their personal biases in check when covering news events. While human nature makes objective reporting a sisyphusian pursuit, “good” journalism, as it is popularly defined and understood today, consciously pursues it nonetheless.

1.2 News Media Framing

Informed by this constructionist perspective, a growing body of research has explored how journalists construct the pictures of reality presented in the news. Much of this inquiry has focused on a specific journalistic activity: news framing.

When they create a news story, journalists use interpretive judgment. Through the inclusion and exclusion of information, choice of sources and even choice of words they are able to highlight some aspects of an issue—making them seem more important—while diminishing or disregarding others. This process is called *framing* (Entman, 1993; Gamson, 1992; Severin & Tankard, 2001).

In essence, to ask how a news report is framed is to ask what shortcuts have been used to tell the story. For instance: Have complex points been simplified? Have certain assumptions been made? Have stereotypes been employed? Are comparisons or metaphors used to aid in the understanding of foreign concepts? Has the story been distilled into a conflict between good vs. evil or protagonist vs. antagonist? (Entman, 1993; Kerr & Moy, 2002; Gamson, 1995; 1989; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Gitlin

1. This idea of objectivity in journalism is revisited at the Conclusion of this thesis (see pp. 149-153); there, a new model of journalistic practise is discussed.

1980; Nelson, Clawson & Oxley, 1997).

The process of framing ends in the creation of a construct known as a frame. A news report's frame reflects a specific perspective, angle, or spin on the information that is presented. The choices that a journalist makes when he/she constructs a frame are influenced by his/her own beliefs and values, which are in turn influenced by the wider culture at large. For the most part, mainstream journalists see the liberal Western ideals that prevail in North America as inherently good; as such they tend to promote those ideals in the news coverage they produce. Conversely, when an individual or group comes along and challenges established convention or mainstream norms, journalists tend to subject them to more negative coverage as a means to minimize their influence on society (Gitlan, 1980; Gamson, 1995; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Gans, 1979; cf. Miljan & Cooper, 2003a; Silk, 1995).

Over time, specific frames can become inextricably linked to certain issue and situations and they appear again and again in stories related to that issue or situation. This familiarity is useful to journalists and audiences alike. Journalists can use a well-established frame to process large amounts of information quickly—the frames provide ready-made templates into which information can be plugged. Audiences, too, appreciate the “stock characters and plot lines” of frames—the familiarity of the frame allows them to quickly grasp the “gist” of a piece without much effort; they can rely on held knowledge and past experiences to fill in the gaps (Fleras 2003: 119; Gitlan, 1980; Gamson, 1992; 1989; Gamson & Modigliani, 1987; Kerr & Moy, 2002; Nelson et al, 1997).

As a key organizing tool that supplies a context for collection, presentation, and interpretation of the news, frames are very useful; however:

Problems arise with the kind of frames normally employed... Journalistic tradition, organizational and financial imperatives, audience preferences, and political and economic constraints have combined to frame news issues in ways that advance some interests, not other. Instead of constructing frames that offer diverse insights into complex and subtle issues, newscasting media tend to rely on highly formulaic frameworks that reconstitute the world in a familiar way (Fleras 2003: 120-1).

For a frame to become “the accepted version of reality” its sponsor must possess great economic, political and cultural resources, have an understanding of and access to media

organizations, and have a message that is in keeping with broader values or tendencies in the society (Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, & Sasson, 1992; cf. Foss, 1996). Given the criteria necessary to achieve success, the marginalized in society seldom triumph in contests of framing. Fleras (2003: 112) describes the contested nature of frames as an “interplay of divergent factors with varying amounts of resources” that manifests as a struggle between members of the dominant culture (those with the social, political and economic power) and members of the cultural fringe. The former, possessing greater resources, are able to ensure that their discourse is privileged over the discourse of the latter. Ultimately, through their tenacity (irrespective of their veracity) the privileged messages and their associated ideologies come to be accepted by the society in general as “the normal way” or “natural way” of thinking and behaving. That is to say, “common-sense views are historically conditioned by power struggles, reflective of the dominant discourses they serve, and deeply rooted in the dominant ideologies of particular societies” (Fleras, 2003: 112; cf. Gitlin, 1980; Hall, 1997; 1989; 1982).

By way of example, evangelicals in Canada see their on-going public relations campaign against changes to the traditional definition of marriage as a classic example of a battle between a non-dominant societal group (themselves) and elite hegemonic forces. They argue that many Canadians have come to accept the idea that marriage can be the union of two men or two women because over the last decade gay and lesbian rights groups, with the financial and legislative backing of consecutive Liberal governments, have been able to dominant the media’s agenda. Conversely, they argue, their message has been diminished, disregarded or ridiculed by media (Gunter, 2006; 2005).

Again, in relation to evangelicals, Silk (1995) remarks that one need only look to the media’s treatment of members of that faith group to see that news coverage is a highly subjective process where certain values are portrayed as *natural* but others are not. He explains that news professionals tend to praise the causes and ideals of religious groups when they agree with their own liberal, pluralistic values. On the other hand, evangelicals and other conservative faith groups are subjected to negative coverage—depicting them and their ideas as irrational, abnormal, scary, unintelligent, etc.—as a means of limiting their influence on society. Silk (1995: 142) explains that the news media, “[l]ike all establishments... tend to be interested in good order, and therefore are

made uneasy by strong beliefs that threaten to disrupt society”. They are able to rationalize their negative treatment of conservative Christians by claiming that their views are shared by the “normal people” in society—that is, those who share their values (Silk 1995).

Silk’s (1995) observations about the negative coverage of conservative Christians reflects themes other researchers have noted when studying various “outsider” communities. In his study of media framing of the Vietnam anti-war movement of the 1960s, Gitlan (1980: 792) found that the black and student peace movements were framed primarily as “civil disturbances”—a depiction Gitlan contends led to public support for the government rather than the protestors. Similarly, Gamson (1995) found that news frames emphasize class distinctions in adversarial and ideological ways. In his study of news frames of anti-nuclear activists’ occupation of a nuclear reactor site he found that the mainstream media trivialized the goals of the protestors by framing student activists as “indulgent children of the affluent who have everything they need” (Gamson, 1995: 102). Gans (1979) observed that elite, well-resourced groups tend to receive more coverage, overall, than marginalized groups.

Frame analysis seeks to identify and discuss the frames contained in news stories while simultaneously determining the role dominant ideology may have had on the construction of the frames (Entman, 1993; Gitlan, 1980; Gamson, 1995; Koenig, 2004; Nelson, et al, 1997).

1.2.1 News Media Framing of Religion

Stout and Buddenbaum (2003: 1) observe, frame analysis “has not been adequately applied to the study of media and religion”. A literature search I conducted in the fall of 2005 gives support to Stout and Buddenbaum’s observation. Going back to 1990 and searching an inventory of over 750 journals (contained in the Communication and Mass Media Complete database, the Humanities Full Text and Social Science Full Text database, and the ATLA Religion Database respectively) just eight studies were found that used frame analysis, in any of its forms to analyze news coverage of religion.

In the United States, when religion coverage has been the subject of academic exploration, the research method of choice has tended to be traditional content analysis the goal of which has been to count which religious groups got coverage and how often (cf. Buddenbaum, 1990; Garrett-Medill, 2000; Graham, 2004; Graham & Kaminski, 1993; Lichter, Lichter, & Amundson, 2000). The handful of studies that have examined religion coverage in Canada have used content analysis exclusively (cf. Cornies, 1984; Murray, 1996; Fraser Institute, 1996; Smith, 1999). Severin and Tankard (2001: 278) say that compared to frame analysis, traditional content analysis is too “narrow and simplistic” and cannot provide the “sophisticated analysis of news coverage” that a frame analysis can provide.

Of the eight US studies in the last 15 years to employ frame analysis as a methodology, six focused on the frames reporters have employed when covering an event with religious overtones or implications (e.g., Paxton, 2004; McCune, 2003). However, two of the eight studies—one by Kerr and Moy (2002) and the other by Kerr (2003)—took a broader approach and examined the frames reporters have used to depict a specific faith group in relation to numerous issues and situations over an extended period of time. Specifically, Kerr and Moy (2002) examined newspaper coverage of fundamentalist Christians (a subgroup of evangelicals defined by their extreme biblical literalism, militancy and separatistic tendencies) between 1980 and 2000. Independent of Moy, Kerr (2003) conducted a nearly identical study to determine how fundamentalist Christians were framed in the news reports of America’s national television networks between 1980 and 2000. These two American studies were influential in the shaping the methodology of this current study and will be discussed further in the Methodology section of this thesis.

1.3 The Missing *Link*—The Affect of Journalists’ Attitudes on Coverage

In relation to news coverage of social, economic and political issues, hundreds of studies have shown that frames influence audience perceptions (e.g., Fujioka, 1999; Iyengar, 1990, Kahneman & Tversky, 1990; Kahneman, Slovic, & Tversky, 1982; McCombs & Ghanem, 2001; Nelson et al, 1987); however, there have been very few studies conducted to demonstrated that the pre-existing attitudes of journalists influence

the frames they construct. As such, we have a good idea *how* journalists frame certain stories but have a poor idea *why*. The dearth of studies on this topic is actually quite surprising given how important the link between reporter worldview and reporter coverage is to the credibility of frame theory. In Canada, up to now, only one study has ever empirically established the link between reporter ideology and coverage.

To verify conclusively that the values journalists hold influence the news items they create, Miljan and Cooper (2003a) surveyed Canadian national journalists on their attitudes toward politics, social issues and the economy and then they compared the journalists' survey responses to stories they had written about those subjects. The news coverage content analyzed came from the *Globe and Mail*, *Calgary Herald* and *Le Devoir* newspapers and from CBC's *The National*, *CTV Evening News*, and *Le Telejournal* telecasts (Miljan & Cooper, 2003a). Based on their content analysis the researchers concluded that the causes and ideals Canadian journalists support are championed in the stories they report. For example, in court cases where rights of homosexuals were the focus, the media's coverage greatly favoured gays and lesbians; conversely, the position and opinions of opposing groups were subjected to criticism or excluded completely (Miljan & Cooper, 2003a).

Although some of Miljan and Cooper's (2003a) survey questions touched on religious belief, they did not gauge the journalists' attitudes toward evangelicals, nor did they content analyze any news coverage related to religious issues. This study, therefore, has the distinction of being the second to explore "linkages between ideology and reporting" in the Canadian news media, and the first to explore whether Canadian journalists' attitudes toward religion and evangelicals affect their coverage of that particular faith group.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

Canadian evangelical Christians have a long history of social activism. The establishment of public education, female suffrage, universal health care and a host of charity and volunteer organizations in Canada can all be traced to evangelicals and their involvement in the public square (Clarke, 1996; Murphy, 1996; Noll, 1992; Stackhouse,

2005). The most recent example of this faith group's dogma-inspired doggedness has been their political and legal battle against changes to Canada's definition of marriage.

Now, as in the past, evangelicals' proclivity for social activism has ensured they garner media attention. And while the media, keen for stories of conflict and controversy, are likely to consider their relationship with evangelicals "a match made in heaven," most evangelicals have come to characterize it as somewhat "hellish". It is not just the situations for which they receive coverage—which tend to highlight dissension—that make evangelicals question the media's agenda. It is also the framing of the coverage—which evangelicals believe purposely casts them in a negative light—that leads members of this faith group to charge the media with bias. Several researchers (Kerr & Moy, 2002; Miljan, cited in Woodard, 2001; Silk, 1995; Underwood, 2002) suggest that the extreme contrast between the belief and value systems of these two communities may lead journalists to take a negative slant when writing about evangelicals.

The broad research questions thus posed in this thesis are: **To what extent, if at all, are selected Canadian television news programs biased towards evangelical Christians, and how does the value systems of selected Canadian journalists influence their reporting on evangelical Christians.**

1.5 Purpose of the Study

Despite being the subject of much discussion in the popular press and among evangelicals themselves, up to now, the Canadian news media's relationship with evangelical Christians has never been examined using the tools of academic scholarship. In particular, Canadian evangelicals' claim of media bias has never been tested empirically through an examination of news coverage and never have the attitudes of Canadian journalists toward evangelical Christians been methodically gauged. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to explore these two areas of uncharted research and provide answers to the above stated research questions, as explained further in 1.7. To accomplish that task, this research employed two research techniques: a frame analysis and a survey.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study examined the portrayals of evangelicals and evangelicalism in the national, nightly news reports of Canada's largest television networks—CTV, Global and CBC—for the period of January 1, 1994 to December 31, 2004. To determine whether evangelicals were portrayed positively, neutrally, or negatively, over this 11-year span, an attempt was made to identify the frequency and quality of the frames used in the reports of these networks.

In addition, from June 16, 2006 to July 28, 2006, national television news personnel were surveyed for this study regarding their opinions on religion in general and evangelicals in particular. Full-time employees of CTV, Global, and CBC national news programs responsible for creating, revising, or overseeing *the written text* of news reports (e.g., reporters, producers, writers) were eligible to participate. The survey, a questionnaire composed of open-ended questions, was administered by phone or e-mail.

A comparison of the findings from the frame analysis and the survey allowed the researcher to determine if there are linkages between how national television journalists feel about evangelicals and how they portray them in the stories they produce.

1.7 Overall Objective

This study argues that by identifying and analyzing the frames used in Canadian television news coverage of evangelical Christians the researcher can determine the extent to which journalists succeed or fail in attempts at objectivity, balance and fairness when portraying this faith group. Furthermore, this study posits that by surveying the Canadian journalists responsible for producing the news coverage of evangelical Christians the researcher can determine whether the attitudes these journalists hold about religion and evangelicals influences their coverage of this faith group.

1.7.1 Specific Objectives

Specific Objective 1: Through frame analysis, identify and analyze the frequency, characteristics and meanings of the frames employed in the TV news reports about evangelical Christians to evaluate whether this faith group is portrayed in a predominantly negative, positive or neutral fashion.

Specific Objective 2: Discover whether the frames changed over time and if so, how?

Specific Objective 3: Determine whether the three networks framed evangelical Christians differently over the 11-year (132 month) period.

Specific Objective 4: Through survey, identify and analyze the prevalence and characteristics of the attitudes held by Canadian national television journalists toward religion and evangelicals to evaluate whether their attitudes are predominantly negative, positive or neutral.

Specific Objective 5: Determine whether journalists employed at each of the three networks hold similar or different attitudes towards religion and evangelicals.

Specific Objective 6: Compare the findings from the frame analysis to the findings from the survey to determine whether linkages exists between the way journalists' report about evangelicals and the way they feel about evangelicals.

At the conclusion of the Literature Review, which comprises the next chapter of this dissertation, the Overall Objective, above, and the subsequent Specific Objectives are restated and their corresponding hypotheses, formed in accord with the extant scholarship, are tendered.

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is organized to provide an overview of the literature that has guided this study. Because it is important that Canadian evangelicals be understood in the context of their larger society, the first section begins with an overview of the religious landscape of Canada, and then moves to a description of evangelicals that outlines their beliefs, practices and social values. The second section encapsulates past research related to evangelicals and the news media. The third section provides a thorough discussion of frame theory and other theories that have informed its development including agenda-setting. The third section concludes with the tendering of hypotheses concerning media coverage of evangelicals.

2.1 Part One—Evangelicals in Canada

2.1.1 *Religion in Canada—An Overview*

For more than 100 years in Canada, Protestants outnumbered Roman Catholics. But by 1971, due in large part to an increase in Catholic immigrants, the balance changed. About 12.8 million Canadians, or 43% of the population, are Roman Catholic and 8.7 million, or 29% of the population, are Protestant. In the last decade there has been a steady downward trend in the number of Canadians who belong to these two overarching faith communities. Roman Catholics, as a percentage of the total population, have dropped by 2% since 1991 and Protestants have dropped by 6% (Statistics Canada, 2003).

The significant decline of Protestantism in Canada is tied to losses in its largest mainline denominations—the Anglican, United, Lutheran and Presbyterian churches—where older members are dying and few young people are taking their place. Buddenbaum (1996: 52) defines mainline churches as more liberal in their doctrine than evangelical churches saying they “accept and embrace biblical interpretation and higher criticism”; that is, much of scripture is taken as metaphorical and allegorical. For members of mainline churches “properly understanding words in the Bible requires an examination of their context within the Bible itself and a sensitivity to the meaning they had for their original audience” (Buddenbaum, 1996: 52). Since 1991, the United Church,

Anglican Church, Presbyterian Church, and Lutheran Churches have declined by 8, 7, 36, and 5 percent, respectively. By the latest figures of Statistics Canada (2003), the United Church in Canada is recorded as having about 2.8 million members, the Anglican Church 2 million, Presbyterian 410 thousand and Lutheran 607 thousand; although, other demographic studies (Macdonald, 2006) suggest that these figures are highly inflated.

While mainline Protestant denominations are in decline, conservative Protestant denominations—that is, those specifically associated with evangelicals and evangelical doctrine—have grown by about 1% a year since the 1950s; today 8% of Canadians, or 2.5 million, claim affiliation in conservative Protestant denominations (Bibby, 2002). (As will be discussed later in this chapter, the number of evangelicals in Canada is greater than 8% because some do not belong to conservative Protestant denominations.)

Also growing is the number of Canadians reporting “no religion”. Nineteen percent of the population espouse no religious faith, up from 15% in 1995 (Statistics Canada, 2006). Thanks mostly to immigration, the number of Canadians reporting Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism as their faith has increased significantly; although, in overall terms, adherents of these religions make up a small portion of the country’s population. Muslims make up 2% of all Canadians and each of the other faiths mentioned make up just 1% or less. Similarly, Jews in Canada make up just over 1% of the overall population (Statistics Canada, 2003).

Despite a strong showing over the last decade by Canada’s conservative Protestant denominations, pollster and president of Environics Research Group, Michael Adams (2003), is convinced that religion is not on the “come-back trail”. He bases his opinion on recent polls and extensive surveys his company has conducted across Canada. He says if one wants a quick snapshot of the state of religion in Canada one need only look at the figures for church attendance. In the last 50 years weekly church attendance has dropped more than a third—down to a record low of 20% in 2000 (Adams, 2003).

Canada’s foremost sociologist of religion, Reginald Bibby (2006; 2004a; 2004b; 2002), staunchly disagrees with Adam’s (2003) assertion that religion is in decline in Canada and, in ironic fashion, cites religious attendance polls himself to prove his point. Bibby (2006: A15) states that his most recent Project Canada survey, completed in late 2005, found:

...that weekly attendance now stands at 25 per cent—a modest increase but nonetheless an increase over what was expected by most to be a decline from 22 per cent five years earlier. This is the first time since we began tracking national trends that the numbers have gone up (cf. 2004a; 2004b; 2002).

In addition to his own research, Bibby (2006) notes three other recent studies including a 2004 Gallup Poll found weekly religious attendance to be between 27 and 37%—levels not seen since the early 1980s (cf. 2004a; 2004b; 2002). These numbers, along with other survey data that show most Canadians still profess belief in traditional Christian doctrine (e.g., Jesus is the Son of God), lead Bibby (2004; 2002) to conclude that Canada is on the cusp of a religious renaissance.

While Adams and Bibby disagree in their predictions about the future of religion in Canada, they share a similar opinion about the state of religion in the present. Both acknowledge that for a majority of Canadians religion and religious belief is unimportant in their lives on a day-to-day basis (Adams, 2003; 1997; Bibby, 2004; 2002; cf. Beyer, 2000). This fact underscores why Canadian evangelicals may feel like strangers in their own land: unlike most of their compatriots, the religious beliefs of Canadian evangelicals inform who they are and how they interact with society-at-large.

2.1.2 Religious Beliefs and Practices of Canadian Evangelicals

Evangelical Christians are not a coherent or unified religious group. While there are certain conservative Protestant denominations that are known for their large evangelical population—Adventist, Baptist, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Christian Reformed, Church of Christ, Church of God, Free Methodists, Mennonite, Nazarenes, Pentecostal, Salvation Army, Quaker, Vineyard, as well as an array of independent community churches—almost all of Canada's Protestant denominations have evangelical members (Bibby, 1987; Bibby, 2004; Mackey, 1995; Reimer, 2003; Redekop, 2003; Robinson 2003a). Evangelicals can also be found outside formal religious institutions for, indeed, it is what one believes, and not where one worships, that makes one an evangelical Christian (Rawlyk, 1996; Reimer, 2003; Schultze, 1996). However, when deciding who is, and who is not, an evangelical a singular differentiation must be applied. When Catholics hold the core tenets of conservative Christian faith most media scholars do not classify them as evangelicals. Instead, they prefer to label them “conservative Catholics”

or “charismatic Catholics” (Buddenbaum, 1996; Hoover, 1998; Lichter, Lichter & Amundson 2000; Maus, 1990; Shultz, 1990; Silk, 1995). This distinction will also be made throughout this study.

The five defining beliefs of modern evangelicals in North America are: Biblicism, conversionism, crucicentrism, activism and a belief in the “End Times” or Christ’s imminent second coming (Rawlyk, 1996; Reimer, 2003).

Biblicism, the literal or predominantly literal interpretation of scripture, is the core evangelical belief from which others generate. Evangelicals hold that the authors of the Bible were inspired or directed by the Holy Spirit as they wrote. As such, the instructive edicts of the Bible are viewed as authoritative in determining what is good and right for one’s own life and for society (Rawlyk, 1996; Reimer, 2003; Schultze, 1996).

How much or which parts of scripture are to be taken literally depends on the level of conservatism within a specific evangelical faith community. Typically, scripture from the New Testament that reads as rules, edicts or direct instructions to believers is interpreted and followed literally—especially the words of Jesus and the letters of the Apostle Paul. Those scriptures that follow a simple narrative structure, particularly Old Testament passages like the stories of Adam and Eve, Jonah and the whale and David and Goliath are often interpreted more symbolically.

When surveyed, about 60% of Canadian evangelicals agree with the statement: “I feel the Bible is God’s word and is to be taken literally word for word” (Rawlyk, 1996: 95); that percentage increases to 100% when the statement is rephrased to read: “I believe the Bible to be the Word of God and is reliable and trustworthy” (Ipsos-Reid, 2003: 16)¹. Only 23% of non-evangelical Canadians agree the Bible is the Word of God and is reliable and trustworthy (Ipsos-Reid, 2003).

Conversionism refers to the belief that a person must make a conscious decision to be a Christian. Evangelicals insist that it is necessary to make a conscious decision to surrender one’s life to Christ and follow him; the person who accepts that he/she has sinned and asks for the atonement of Christ is forgiven of his/her transgressions and

1. All percentage comparisons in this chapter are between Canadian evangelicals and Canadian non-evangelicals unless otherwise stated; for clarity, responses from Canadian Catholics who held evangelical tenets of faith have been excluded from the 2003 Ipsos-Reid figures.

brought into a close relationship with God (Rawlyk, 1996; Reimer, 2003). For some, the experience of conversion (from one's sinful past to a new Christ-centred life) is dramatic and emotional, but for 65% of evangelicals their "day of decision" was a "natural consequence of religious socialization" (Reimer, 2003: 61). That is to say, they were brought up in the church and saw their public declaration of faith as a religious right of passage. About 20% of evangelicals can't identify a specific conversion experience at all; instead, they say their decision to follow Christ was "a gradual change over time" (Reimer, 2003: 61).

When the conversion experience *is* tied to conscious decision made on a specific day, it is typically expected that the "converted" person will begin to exhibit more Christ-like behaviour; for example, they will demonstrate more concern for others than themselves (Reimer, 2003). A converted person is said to be "born-again"—the term refers to the fact that one is no longer the same person but a new creature in Christ (Rawlyk, 1996; Reimer, 2003). As noted previously, if any term or statement could be "regarded as a litmus test for determining who is, or who is not, an evangelical" being born-again is such a test, for only evangelicals are truly comfortable with that label (Rawlyk, 1996: 84).

Ninety-nine percent of Canada's evangelicals agree that they have committed their lives to Christ—just 32% of the rest of the population agree (Ipsos-Reid, 2003).

Activism describes evangelicals' desire to promote their Christian faith through their words and deeds (Reimer, 2003; Rawlyk, 1996). Evangelicals dedicate a significant amount of time and money to programs within their own churches, but even with their church-related activities excluded, evangelicals devote more time to volunteer organizations and more money to charities than other Canadians (VanGinkel, 2003). Evangelicals also feel compelled to tell others about Jesus. As most evangelicals are convinced that those who do not accept Christ as their Saviour will be doomed to hell, one understands why they place such importance on sharing the Gospel with others whenever possible (Reimer, 2003; Rawlyk, 1996; Schultz, 1996). Eighty-six percent of Canadian evangelicals think it is important to act on their belief and encourage non-Christians to become Christians; just 20% of other Canadians agree (Ipsos-Reid, 2003).

Crucicentrism describes evangelicals' belief that Christ died on the cross and rose physically from the dead three days later. While belief in Christ's resurrection is common

to most Christian denominations, evangelicals take the events of Christ's death and return to life very literally. How Jesus died is important to evangelicals because they hold that the blood Christ shed while on the cross supernaturally expunges believers' sin and having one's sin expunged is a necessary precondition for acceptance into heaven. That Jesus rose again is of the utmost importance to evangelicals as well, because it is seen as proof positive that Jesus was God and therefore has the power to reward his believers with eternal life. Jesus' death and resurrection are the primary focus of most religious talk inside and outside evangelical churches. It is spoken of with a sense of awe—evangelicals are confounded by the miraculous nature of the event, the enormity of the love required for such a sacrifice and the promise of eternal life (Blanchard, 1999; Rawlyk, 1996; Reimer, 2003).

Ninety-eight percent of Canadian evangelicals believe that Jesus was crucified and raised from the dead versus 37% of non-evangelicals Canadians (Ipsos-Reid, 2003). When asked to respond to the statement "I believe that through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, God provided a way for the forgiveness of my sins" 100% of evangelical respondents agreed compared to 59% of the rest of the population (Ipsos-Reid, 2003: 13).

Finally, evangelicals—more so than any other Christian faith group—believe that Christ will return to the earth and his arrival will be sooner (many believe the next 100 years) as opposed to later (Rawlyk, 1996; Reimer, 2003). Furthermore, most evangelicals in North America believe Christ's second coming will be preceded by two events: the rapture and the tribulation (LaHaye & Jenkins, 2006; Lindsay, 1970; Rawlyk, 1996; Reimer, 2003). The rapture is defined as God's instantaneous removal of all true Christians from the earth. The true followers of Christ are taken up into heaven; those left behind are forced to go through a final world war fought between the new followers of Christ (those who became Christians after the rapture) and the armies of Satan (comprised of those who still refuse to believe in Jesus). This time of war between God and Satan's forces is commonly referred to as the tribulation. The tribulation ends with a final battle known as Armageddon when Jesus physically returns "coming in the clouds;" using supernatural power, he defeats the forces of Satan (LaHaye & Jenkins, 2006;

Lindsay, 1970; Rawlyk, 1996). Seventy-seven percent of evangelicals in Canada believe there will be a literal rapture (Reimer, 2003).

Other scripture-derived tenets of faith that evangelicals hold include the belief that God exists as a Trinity, consisting of the Father, Son (Jesus) and Holy Spirit—three persons within a single entity. They believe that God is a personal force more akin to a supernatural Father than an impersonal cosmic energy, and that Satan is a real entity dedicated to enacting evil in the world. Most believe in miracles, angels, visions or messages from God, demons, demon possession and exorcism. Most believe that heaven exists as a place of beauty and perpetual happiness where committed Christians go when they die; and that hell exists as a place of torment where the unsaved go after death (Bibby, 1987; Reimer, 2003; Shepherd, 2006). To varying degrees evangelicals reject the theory of evolution choosing instead to believe that God played the leading role in the design of the universe. However, most do not insist that the creation story found in the Book of Genesis be interpreted as a point for point account of the world's beginning (Reimer, 2003).

In addition to the beliefs listed above, the religious practices of evangelicals also distinguish them from the rest of the population. Evangelicals tend to be more fervent in their church attendance, reading of the Bible and dedication to prayer (Bibby 1987; 2002; Mackey, 1995; Redekop, 2003; Reimer, 2003). For example, 68% percent of Canadian evangelicals attended church once a week or more compared to 8% attendance for other Canadians (Ipsos-Reid, 2003). Evangelicals are also more likely than other Christians or the population-at-large to attend religiously oriented meetings like Bible studies, prayer groups, and spiritual retreats and seminars (Mackey, 1995; Reimer, 2003). Other religious practices like watching religious TV weekly and listening to contemporary Christian music once a week or more, are activities that are virtually exclusive to evangelicals (Reimer, 2003).

Often evangelicals are linked to boisterous forms of worship—hand clapping and raising of hands in church, shouts of “Amen” and “Hallelujah”—and ecstatic religious behaviours such as speaking in tongues, prophesizing, faith healing and other miracles. While some evangelical groups and denominations enjoy these elements of religious practice, many do not. In Canada, ecstatic or charismatic religious expression is most

often found in Pentecostal, Vineyard, Apostolic and other non-denomination or “Full Gospel” churches (Robbins, 1995; Mackey, 1995; Robinson, 1998; cf. Reimer, 2003).

2.1.3 Demographics of Canadian Evangelicals

Evangelicals are found in significant numbers across Canada with the exception of the province of Quebec where they are estimated to make up less than 1% of the population. Quebec’s large Roman Catholic population (83%) and small Protestant population (4.7%) in addition to its people’s significant embrace of secularism—may account for the province’s lack of evangelicals (Statistics Canada, 2003; Reimer, 2003).

Fifty-six percent of Canada’s evangelical population are women; 44% are men. They are more apt to be married than non-evangelical Canadians (64% married compared to 46%) and less likely to be divorced (16% divorced compared to 20%). In terms of the household size and the highest level of education achieved little difference exists between evangelicals and non-evangelical (VanGinkel, 2003).

A disproportionately high number of Canadian evangelicals are seniors. Thirty-four percent are age 55 or over compared to 27% of the population-at-large. In terms of annual household income evangelicals and non-evangelicals share near identical figures: one quarter make less than \$30,000, 40% are in the \$30,000 to \$60,000 category and close to 35% make above \$60,000 (Redekop, 2003).

Finally, slightly more evangelicals live in rural areas than in urban centres (Rawlyk, 1996).

2.1.4 Social Values of Canadian Evangelicals

Because evangelicals use the lessons and edicts of the Bible to gauge what is good and right for their own life and for society, their personal morals and social values tend to be more conservative and absolute than those of most Canadians. For evangelicals, fidelity in relationships, honesty, and charity are categorical imperatives and not situational options. While these personal attributes are generally esteemed by the rest of society, on several social issues Canada’s evangelicals find themselves at odds with majority opinion. Unlike most non-evangelical Canadians who show at least soft support for gay marriage and homosexuality, abortion, pre-marital sexual activity, pornography,

gambling and the use of recreational drugs (Adams, 2003; 1997; Bethune, 2006; George, 2006; PMG Consulting, 2006); evangelicals in Canada tend to oppose those practices (Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, 2004; Reimer, 2003). In addition, some evangelical communities are opposed to women taking on the highest leadership roles in the church; others go farther and say that women should be the submissive partner in a married relationship (Byfield, 1995; Reimer, 2003). Very few non-evangelical Canadians support the notion that the man should be the head of the household (Adams, 2003).

For each of the social issues above, evangelicals back their position by referencing specific passages of scripture. For example, to support their position against homosexual lifestyles they cite Leviticus 18:22 which reads, “Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable” and 1st Corinthians 6:9-11 which reads, “Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God”. To support their position against abortion they cite Psalm 139:13-14: “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made” and the commandment “You shall not kill” found in the Book of Exodus 20:13.

Evangelicals are not content to keep their values to themselves; as touched on already, they feel compelled to play out their values and beliefs in the public square. They see their values as medicine for a society suffering from various social ills and to deny society the benefits of that medicine would be negligent. Again, it is adherence to specific scripture that results in this attitude and its associated behaviours. For example, in the Gospel of Matthew 28:19, Jesus commissions his followers to go into “all the world” and preach His ideas; he also warns them in Matthew 5:15 not to “put their light [i.e. their Christian faith] under a basket” but to let it radiate out into society.

Over the last decade evangelicals have focused their social activism on two broad targets: sexual morality and church-state matters (though these battlefields sometimes overlap). In their war on sexual morality, battles have been fought against abortion, extramarital sex and homosexuality. In their war against the state, battles have been waged for government funding of faith-based schools, inclusion of prayer, religious education and religious activities in public schools and greater use of Christian symbols,

references and practices in the buildings and processes of government. Battles have been fought against school curriculum that runs contrary to scripture (e.g., that which promote premarital sex or homosexual lifestyles) and government interference in the operation of faith-based schools (Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, 2004).

In their bid to shape Canadian culture into an image closer to their own, evangelicals have employed demonstrations, petitions, political lobbying and the courts. Much to their chagrin, very few of their efforts have succeeded. In fact, in the last two decades most vestiges of Canada's Christian heritage and traditions have been expunged from the public square.

2.1.5 The Secularization of Canada

Janet Epp-Buckingham, Director of Religious Liberty for the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, thinks the secularization of Canada was a gradual process that began with the introduction of Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982. The Charter's guarantee that all faiths are equal under the law opened the door for minority groups to legally challenge any government institution, legislation or practice that afforded Christianity privileged status (Epp-Buckingham, 2001; cf. Stiller, 1997).

The very first cases were relatively innocuous and seemed to be more a rejection of Christian tradition than outright hostility toward the faith—the cases were not even brought forth by religious groups. Storeowners, hoping to operate on Sundays, “claimed that laws enforcing the Christian Sabbath offended the religious freedom of those who were not Christian. The Supreme Court agreed with that assessment and in 1985 Sunday shopping became a reality in Canada” (Epp-Buckingham, 2001: 29).

The next cases *were* brought by religious groups. In 1988, Muslims and Jews challenged the use of the Lord's Prayer in public schools as part of opening exercises. The Ontario court of appeal ruled in their favour and struck down the prayer's use. In 1990, non-Christians in Ontario's Elgin County challenged the way religious education was taught in public schools, arguing that it was too Christian focused. The courts agreed and set out new guidelines for religious education, insisting that all the world's major faiths be covered equally—regardless of the religious demographic of the student

population. At the time, 96% of the students in Elgin County, where this case originated, were Christian (Epp-Buckingham, 2001).

Epp-Buckingham (2001) believes these cases and others like them had a terrific influence on Canadian society. She says members of the government, the media and the population-at-large were taught that it is right for Christianity to be banned from the public sphere. It was a lesson, she says, that they learned only too well. Now, even when Christian symbols, traditions or practices are not forbidden by law—the collective response is to have them removed anyway (Epp-Buckingham, 2001).

Numerous instances support Epp-Buckingham's observation that Christianity has become a faith "non grata" in terms of public discourse and practice. For example, in September 1998, a memorial service was held at Peggy's Cove, Nova Scotia, for 229 people who died in the Swissair Flight 111 crash. Before the start of the service, a federal official—reportedly from the Prime Minister's Office—told the Protestant minister and the Catholic priest that they would not be allowed to utter the name of Jesus Christ, nor refer to the Bible. A rabbi was allowed to read from the Torah, a Muslim from the Koran, and a native Canadian was allowed to speak of the Great Spirit; only the Christian clergy were censored (Woodard, 2001).

Similarly, in 2001, following the September 11 attacks on New York and the Pentagon in Washington D.C., Canada's federal government held a public memorial service on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. Though it is typical on such occasions to cite Biblical texts or to speak of God, no religious references were made throughout the ceremony (Epp-Buckingham, 2001). At the 2003 swearing-in ceremony of Canada's twenty-first Prime Minister, Paul Martin, the religious dimension was provided by a native elder conducting a cleansing ceremony for Martin, fanning sage smoke over the incoming prime minister with an eagle feather (Newman & Vienneau, 2003). Martin professes to be a devout Catholic and does not practice native spirituality (McCarthy, 2003); however, no other religious officials, Catholic or otherwise, took part in the inauguration (Newman & Vienneau, 2003).

There are examples of government agencies, municipal governments and even in businesses excluding Christianity and its symbols from the public square. When handing out licenses to TV and radio stations, it has been observed that Canada's broadcast

regulator—the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC)—has historically denied stations dedicated to Christian-only programming the right to operate while willingly expediting the approval of stations with overtly sexual content. In the early 1980s the CRTC received applications from the Playboy Channel (a station dedicated to adult issues and “soft” pornography) and several Christian-faith stations. The Playboy channel was approved but none of the Christian stations. Twenty years, and multiple applications later, some of the Christian stations have received approval to broadcast, though not as part of the regular cable line-up. Instead they are relegated to the status of specialty channels (i.e., channels that cable customers must order specifically and pay for separately) (Wicken, 2004).

Of a less serious nature, in December of 2002, over the Christmas holiday season, municipal officials of Canada’s biggest city, Toronto, issued press releases indicating the 50-foot evergreen tree set up outside city hall was to be referred to as a “holiday tree” and not as a Christmas tree. That same December the Royal Canadian Mint ran commercials that changed the old holiday standard the *Twelve Days of Christmas* to the *Twelve Days of Giving* while Gap Clothing stores insisted their staff wish customers “happy holidays” instead of “Merry Christmas” (White, 2002).

Professor of Law at Carleton University, Margaret Ogilvie (1995), argues when it comes to Christianity, Canada’s courts and human rights tribunals are also guilty of the duplicitous behaviour. She explains that where challenges for accommodation in the workplace have been made by members of non-Christian faiths, the courts and tribunals “have always acceded to their requests,” but when devout Christians have asked for accommodation on religious grounds the judicial decisions have almost always gone against them (Ogilvie, 1995).

Specific cases illustrate Ogilvie’s point. Since the early 1990s all employers have been made to accommodate the holy days of Jewish and Muslim employees. Similarly, construction companies have been told that Sikh employees must be permitted to wear turbans even if safety helmets might be more advisable. Hospitals and schools, too, have been instructed that kirpans (the ornamental knives worn by Sikh men) must be allowed in their weapon-free environments (Ogilvie, 1995). Evangelicals, on the other hand have been told that their beliefs must be kept out of the workplace.

Printer Scott Brockie was fined \$5,000 in 2000 by the Ontario Human Rights Commission because he refused to print letterhead and envelopes for the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives. Brockie insisted that he was happy to do work for individual homosexuals; in fact, he had printed materials for individual homosexual clients in the past. However, he refused to print materials for the Archives because he believed the institution actively promoted greater homosexual activity in society, which he said was contrary to his beliefs as a born-again Christian. The adjudicator in the case decided that Brockie's "rights as a Christian were subordinate to the rights of homosexuals not to be discriminated against," and that "he must restrict the practice of Christianity to his home and church, and not take it with him into the public marketplace" (Grace, 2002: 22). Brockie was ordered to provide printing services "to lesbians and gays and to organizations in existence for their benefit" (Grace, 2002: 22).

A human rights tribunal in Prince Edward Island ordered bed and breakfast owners Dagmar and Arnost Cepica to accept homosexual clients. Rather than "be forced to condone homosexual acts under their own roof" the devout Christian couple shut down their business in 2001 (Hunter, 2003: A13). In 2004, the British Columbia College of teachers suspended evangelical Chris Kempling, a high school guidance counselor, from his job because "he wrote letters to his local paper outlining his views on the nature of homosexuality" (Gunter, 2005: A16). He was suspended despite the fact that he had never disparaged homosexual rights or homosexual lifestyles while performing his duties at his school (Gunter, 2005; Hunter, 2003).

Paradoxically, as Canada has become more secular over the last 25 years evangelicals in Canada have become increasingly more conservative in their morals and values (Reimer, 2003). So much so that in many ways Canadian evangelicals now have more in common with evangelicals in the U.S. than they do with most of their fellow Canadians.

2.1.6 Comparing Canadian and American Evangelicals

A significant percentage of the news reports about evangelicals that the average Canadian sees, hears or reads actually focus on evangelicals from the United States (cf. Murray, 1996; Smith, 1999). Therefore, it would seem appropriate, given the nature of

this study, to briefly highlight the differences between Canadian and American evangelicals.

Using international survey data and face-to-face in-depth interviews with Americans and Canadians belonging to conservative Protestant denominations, Reimer (2000a: 232) determined that “in the main, [American and Canadian evangelicals have] only minor regional and national differences in their central religious beliefs, religious experience, orthodoxy, or orthopraxy” (cf. Reimer, 2003; 2000b). However, he found Canadian evangelicals are more moderate than their American counterparts in regard to Biblicism, activism, religious expression, tolerance of others, and political involvement (Reimer, 2003; cf. Stackhouse, 2005).

In general, evangelicals in Canada take the Bible less literally than those in America. When asked what single belief or practice should be the most important to Christians, American evangelicals said that following the Bible and doing what it says ranks above all else. Canadians evangelicals, on the other hand, are less focused on Biblicism; instead, they believe that “what is most important for Christians is to be close to God, to spend time praying, worshiping and experiencing [His] great love” (Reimer, 2003: 82).

This greater latitude in interpreting scripture is part of a larger evangelical tradition in Canada where minor concerns over points of theology are ignored in order to accomplish a greater good. The best example of this tradition in action is the formation of the United Church of Canada (Murphy, 1996; Reimer, 2003). In 1925 the Methodist and Congregational churches along with a third of Presbyterian churches joined to form a single religious body with an evangelical ethos. They saw themselves as “heirs to a common revivalist tradition, which fostered a pragmatic approach to religion, emphasizing the importance of Christian life and service over doctrinal niceties” (Murphy, 1996: 342). A modern example of this inclination toward cooperation is the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada; formed in 1964 this pan-denominational organization is dedicated to providing a voice to the political and social concerns of all the nation’s evangelicals (Stackhouse, 1993).

Historically, American evangelicals have been less willing to compromise when it comes to scriptural interpretation and matters of doctrine. By way of comparison, in the 1920s—when Canada’s evangelicals were coming together to form the United Church—

evangelicals in the U.S. were embroiled in the modernist-fundamentalist conflict that saw many evangelicals “split from their denominations to form independent bodies” (Reimer, 2003: 27).

Canadian evangelicals are also less predisposed to activism than American. As previously mentioned, 86% feel it is important to encourage non-Christians to become Christians (Ipsos-Reid, 2003). This figure is nearly 10% lower than in the U.S. (Reimer, 2003). Reimer (2003: 85) attributes Canadians’ hesitation to aggressively proselytize to a “religious climate where church groups are not to compete but are to service their own” (cf. Bibby, 2002: 67).

Some suggest that Canadian churches’ hesitancy to solicit new members is linked to the governmental support they received during the 1800s and early 1900s. Because most of Canada’s denominations, even those with evangelical leanings, could count on governmental funds to aid in their operations they had little motivation to expand their base of participation (Adams, 1997; Hadden, 1995; cf. Murphy, 1996). Conversely, in American, from the beginning, church and state have been radically separated and in that pluralist environment the different religious traditions have been forced to compete with each other for members (Hadden, 1995).

Reimer (2003) suggests that the hesitation Canadian evangelicals show toward actively sharing their faith is just part of a larger national culture of tolerance and politeness. Tolerance of others’ beliefs and ideals is a highly prized trait among Canadians because it, more than anything else, distinguishes them from Americans (Adams, 1997; Reimer, 2003). The desire to be seen as other than American is strong in Canada. Because Canadians look, dress, eat and, for the most part, talk like Americans, they have come to define their national identity not so much by what they are, but by what they are not; the “we-are-different-from-American sentiment is a mainstay of Canadian national identity” (Hoover, 2000: 2; cf. Lipset, 1990; Shepherd, 2000). Reimer (2000a: 235) states that “regardless of whether one looks at racial, political, religious, or moral tolerance, Canadian evangelicals are more tolerant” (cf. Hoover, Martinez, Reimer, & Wald, 2002; Reimer, 2003; 2000b). In his research, tolerance (also termed irenicism) was defined as “attitudes toward other individuals or groups that are not sectarian, partisan, prejudiced, or patriarchal” (Reimer, 2000b: 159). By way of example,

Reimer (2003) states that 82.5% of evangelicals in Canada agreed they would be pleased to have a person of another race live next door to them while only 75% of American evangelicals agreed; similarly, when asked if they would vote for a Muslim political leader 65% of Canadian evangelicals agreed but just 45% of American.

Adams (1997) says in Canada tolerance of diversity has been institutionalized through state-sponsored programs that promote multiculturalism and through a national Charter of Rights and Freedoms that outlaws discrimination on the grounds of religion, sex, race, ethnicity or sexual orientation. Government support for multiculturalism since the 1960s and the enactment of the Charter in 1982 has, in turn, precipitated other modern Canadian trends such as acceptance of women's and gay's rights.

Other commentators are more general in their assessment and suggest an entire history punctuated by compromise and respect for diversity has given rise to the culture of accommodation in Canada that now permeates almost all social groups, including evangelicals (Stackhouse, 1993). Conversely, the intolerance that manifests itself with American evangelicalism is thought to find its roots in the American historical tendency toward individualism, revolution and dissent (Adams, 2003; Reimer, 2003).

In addition to the ubiquitous spirit of accommodation that now permeates all Canada, the demure nature of Canadian evangelicalism is also due in large part to an increased British influence following the war of 1812 (Murphy, 1996; Rawlyk, 1996; Reimer, 2003).

Before the War of 1812 (1812-1814), over half of Canada's English-speaking population was of American origin (Murphy, 1996). These transplanted Americans were Protestant, and many were "radical" evangelicals—men and woman who had experienced a dramatic conversion experience and practiced an exuberant, participatory style of worship (Murphy, 1996; Rawlyk, 1996).

However, when the war ended, immigration from United States dried up and so too did the "ready-made" supply of radical evangelical clergy and parishioners. However, a wave of immigrants from the British Isles rushed to fill the void. They swelled the population and turned a country, once predominantly American in origin, into a country that was overwhelmingly British. For the most part, the new immigrants joined the established denominations of Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist. They

rejected American-style radical evangelicalism and encouraged a new moderate, "British-style" evangelicalism (Murphy, 1996; Reimer, 2003). This new evangelicalism was marked by "more conventional piety, restraint of emotional excesses, better educated clergy, political conservatism, and stricter church discipline" (Murphy, 1996: 142).

The desire to be un-American that has made Canadian evangelicals more moderate and tolerant has also influenced how this faith group engages political activity. It is because they fear being ridiculed as "too American" that, up to now, many Canadian evangelicals have abstained from mixing religion directly with politics. Lobbying politicians has been fair game but, traditionally, evangelicals have forgone targeted involvement in political parties (Clemenger, 2004; Reimer, 2003; Stiller, 1997; Stackhouse, 2005).

In the United States politics and religion are inextricably linked. Evangelical politicians, from the lowest public official to the leader of the nation, openly profess their faith and make references to God and scripture in their speeches (Adams, 1997; McCarthy, 2003). Once, during a presidential candidates' debate, self-declared evangelical George W. Bush told a journalist that Jesus Christ was the philosopher who had most greatly influenced his life (Dowd, 1999). In Canada, such public confessions of faith are not acceptable; for Canadian public officials the only acceptable religious conviction is an unobtrusive one (Adams, 1997). Certainly, many of Canada's top elected officials hold this to be true—including former Prime Ministers Jean Chretien and Paul Martin. Both have stated that it is incumbent upon elected officials to divorce their private beliefs from public policy (McCarthy, 2003). Canada's former Minister of Culture and Deputy Prime Minister, Sheila Copps, added that politicians should also "refrain from invoking the Judeo-Christian God to avoid offending others in Canada's multi-ethnic society" (McCarthy, 2003: F3).

Politicians with strong religious convictions who do not abandon their beliefs at the door of the legislature risk being labeled "too American" or "un-Canadian" (Hoover, 2000). They also risk their political career as was discovered by Stockwell Day, the erstwhile leader of Canada's official opposition. As noted in the Introduction of this study, columns and editorials referred to Day's political stand as an "import from the American Christian Right," and "decidedly un-Canadian in its ugliness" (Hoover, 2000:

2-3). Jeffrey Simpson of Canada's national newspaper the *Globe and Mail* summarized majority opinion saying, "That Mr. Day has strong religious beliefs is fine; that he brings them into the public domain is not. At least not in this secular country..." (Simpson, 2000: A17).

In addition to a fear of public ridicule, two other factors also have kept Canadian evangelicals from mobilizing and putting their agenda forward politically. One of the factors is a lack of financial and media resources (Reimer, 2003). Canadian evangelicals have neither the money nor the means to get their message out. Unlike in the U.S., evangelicalism Canada has "produced few wealthy businesspersons and no large foundations to underwrite major projects" (Stackhouse, 1993: 201).

Finally, the political inactivity of Canadian evangelicals is due in some measure to the fact that no political party has seemed to align with their specific interests. In the U.S. most evangelicals actively support the Republican Party because of its conservative stand on social and economic issues (Hunter, 1991; Smith, 2000). In Canada, however, up to the late 1980s evangelicals tended to divide their support among all parties because no single party identified itself with hardcore social conservatism (Hoover, 2000; Reimer, 2003; Stackhouse, 2000).

That changed somewhat in 1987 when Preston Manning, a devout evangelical and son of a former provincial premier, formed the federal Reform Party. As the party has grown and expanded, its leader has changed, as has its name: from Reform, to the Canadian Alliance, to simply the Conservative Party. But throughout its many incarnations it has held fast to its commitment to fiscal and social conservatism (Hoover, 2000; Laycock, 2001; Reimer, 2003; Stackhouse, 2000). However, its attachment to fiscal conservatism may be its Achilles' heel when it comes to appealing to Canadian evangelicals.

While it is undeniable that conservative Protestant support for Canada's Conservative Party grows with each federal election, evangelicals in America still show more uniform support of their "party on the right"—the Republicans—than do Canadian evangelicals (Hoover, 2000; cf. Clemenger, 2004; Stackhouse, 2005). The difference lies in the fact that many of Canada's evangelicals do not meld their social conservatism with economic conservatism as is done in the U.S.; instead, many evangelicals north of the 49th parallel have a leftist bent. They want more government spending on social programs like

healthcare and low-income housing for the poor, not less. Canadian evangelicals' proclivity for socialism is attributed, in large part, to Canadian evangelicals' historical associations with left-leaning political organizations like the Social Credit Party lead by evangelical radio preacher "Bible Bill" Aberhart, and the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation Party lead by Baptist clergyman Tommy Douglas (Hoover et al, 2002; Reimer, 2003; 2000a; cf. Stackhouse, 2000).

That Canadian evangelicals have in the last decade begun connecting religion and politics is seen as part of a larger trend toward the Americanization of their faith. Today most of the evangelical books, magazines, radio and TV shows that Canadians access are produced in America and have a decidedly American outlook. Many of Canada's evangelical clergy have received some or all of their training in the U.S. and about 20% are Americans who moved north (Reimer, 2003).

Finally, in terms of religious practice as well, Canadian evangelicals have more in common with American evangelicals than with the other Canadians. Canadian evangelicals are just slightly more fervent about weekly church attendance and daily Bible reading, while evangelicals in America are more dedicated to weekly Bible studies and slightly more diligent about praying daily. However, in most cases the difference in the rates of religious practice between the two groups is less than five percentage points (Reimer, 2003).

2.2 Part 2: Evangelicals and the News Media

In Canada, a handful of studies (Barrier, 1995; Cornies, 1984; Fraser Institute, 1996; Murray, 1996; Smith, 1999) have examined religion coverage as a monolith. Although these studies occasionally make some observations related to the quality of coverage afforded to specific faith groups, they tend to be little more than numerical assessments of which religion received coverage and how much. Most of the in-depth research pertaining to the news media's coverage of religion has been conducted in the United States. Several multi-year studies (Buddenbaum, 1990; Garrett-Medill, 2000; Graham, 2004; Graham & Kaminski, 1993; Himebaugh & Arnold 1982; Lichter, Lichter, & Amundson, 2000; Orwig, 1999; Silk, 1995) have explored the history, content and tone of religion coverage in the American news media, some looked specifically at the coverage of evangelicals as

part of their examination. Additionally, three recent studies in the U.S. were dedicated to examining the news media's portrayal of fundamentalists Christians—a subgroup of evangelical Christians characterized by their strict Biblical literalism, militancy and tendency to be separatistic. Given the increasing similarities between the American and Canadian cultures, and the affinity that exists between evangelicals in the two countries, it is reasonable to assume that the broad trends reflected in the findings of the U.S. research are, at least in part, applicable to Canada.

2.2.1 American Studies

Himebaugh and Arnold (1982) showed that up until the early 1970s religion coverage in the U.S. was on the decline. But, midway through the decade it began to enjoy a renaissance—increasing 30% by the mid-1980s. However, the nature of the coverage was markedly different from that in ages past. Mainstream religious institutions no longer dominated coverage (traditionally half of religion coverage was dedicated directly or indirectly to mainline Protestant denominations); instead, religion stories began to explore counterculture religious ideas and movements. Cults and the born-again movement of evangelical Protestantism also came into the spotlight (Himebaugh & Arnold, 1982; Silk, 1995).

Specifically, the evangelical beliefs of American president Jimmy Carter and the rise of Christian fundamentalist, and leader of the Moral Majority, Jerry Falwell, dominated U.S. headlines in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Religion stories remained prominent in the late 1980s and early 1990s with the televangelist scandals of Jim and Tammy Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart, the pedophile scandals of the Catholic Church, and the presidential campaigns of Reverend Jesse Jackson and Christian talk show host Pat Robinson (Silk, 1995). Battles over homosexual rights, gay marriage, cloning, stem cell research, along with more sexual abuse scandals within the Catholic Church, ensured the Christian faith received extensive coverage through the 1990s and into the twenty-first century (Lichter, et al, 2000; cf. Graham, 2004). No study has explored whether coverage of religious issues is growing in Canada. However, it seems probable that coverage has increased given the ample attention Canada's media have paid to evangelicals engaged in the

political process over the last two decades, and their more recent fixation on radical Islam.

The news media's shift away from covering the spiritual and theological dimension of stories was tracked over a 105-year period (1893 to 1998) in Orwig's (1999) study of four American newspapers (*The New York Times*, the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Chicago Tribune*). The study catalogued four distinct periods of religion coverage. It showed that between 1893 and the 1920s references to theology and doctrine were the mainstay of religion stories. Also, daily devotionals and sermon reviews were considered important parts of the newspaper. In the mid-1920s critical "judgments about faith entered into the discourse" (Orwig, 1999: 200). Much of the criticism was directed at fundamentalist Christians who were engaged in a national public debate over the teaching of evolution in public schools. Orwig (1999) hypothesizes that the fierceness of the debate may have contributed to a nationwide wariness toward the discussion of beliefs. She found by 1955 religion coverage "had nothing to do with beliefs" and instead the external outcomes of belief—predominantly the "good works" of religious people—became the focus (Orwig, 1999: 200). By 1998 the emphasis on external outcomes of religion was so complete that "religion in contemporary newspapers tends to be understood and valued for its relevance to social, political and economic interests" and not for its "connection to an other worldly perspective" (Orwig, 1999: 200).

The most thorough study of religion coverage in America to date was conducted by Lichter, Lichter, and Amundson (2000). They examined a 10% random sample of 2,365 religion stories that appeared from 1969 through 1998 in *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Time*, *Newsweek* and *US News & World Report* and on the evening newscasts of ABC, CBS and NBC. Only news items dealing with religion in the U.S., and only those that included religion as a major component—comprising one third of the story or more—were included in the study.

Their study found that religion coverage in newspapers, news magazines and on TV had grown steadily through the 1970s and 1980s and then doubled between 1990 and 1998. From 1969 to 1998, Protestants and Catholics received about two-thirds of the coverage followed by Judaism (12%) and Islam (3%). While still dominant in the 1990s,

the proportion of news items devoted to Catholics and mainline Protestants declined significantly while coverage of Judaism remained stable and coverage of Islam increased. Also on the rise was coverage of new religious movements and Eastern religions. By the 1990s, one quarter of all religion stories were about these non-mainstream faiths (Lichter et al, 2000).

The researchers also noted a striking incongruity. Despite the fact that all of the stories featured religious men and women engaged in religiously inspired pursuits, most stories contained little information about theology or spirituality. In fact, only 7% referenced any religious beliefs or doctrines. Furthermore, when theological references *were made* they were most often in relation to non-Christian religions (Lichter et al, 2000).

While the stories seldom addressed the spiritual dimension of a religious issue, whenever possible they did exploit an issue's political dimension. In fact, by the 1990s more religion stories were about Church-State conflicts than any other topic. For example, evangelicals fighting for prayer and scripture study in public schools generated heavy coverage (Lichter et al, 2000).

After stories on Church-State conflicts, stories featuring churches or clergy involved in crimes or scandal (generally of a sexual or financial nature) increased the most. Combined, stories about Church-State conflicts and church/clergy scandals made up 20% of all religion stories in the 1990s (Lichter et al, 2000). Lichter et al (2000) suggest the dramatic turn toward conflict and controversy and away from issues such as church governance represents the single most important trend in the coverage of religion.

Regarding whose opinions are privileged and whose are muted, the researchers determined that the American news media, in their coverage of controversial issues such as abortion, homosexuality and having religion play a role in public life tend to give more prominence to opinions featuring traditional religious values than to opinions featuring liberal or secular values. Conversely, liberal opinions advocating more inclusive church policies for women outnumber more traditional opinions that would restrict women's roles in the church (Lichter et al, 2000).

The last portion of Lichter et al's (2000) study focused solely on the American news media's coverage of evangelicals. The goal was to determine whether the coverage of evangelicals received was markedly different from the coverage of other faiths. It was

found that between 1970 and 1998 just 6% of all religion stories focused on evangelical Christians. This percentage was proportionately low considering evangelicals at the time comprised between a quarter and a third of America's population (Eck, 2001; Kosmin, Mayer, & Keysar, 2001). In comparison, Muslims, at less than 1% of the population and Jews at 1.3% (Eck, 2001; Kosmin, Mayer, & Keysar, 2001), received 3% and 12% of all religion coverage, respectively (Lichter et al, 2000).

While evangelicals received proportionally less coverage, they were significantly overrepresented in stories of a negative nature. Specifically, 16% of all stories related to sexual scandal, 24% of all stories debating extramarital sex and 15% of all stories criticizing homosexuals featured evangelicals (Lichter et al, 2000). The researchers noted only one faith group—Catholics—surpassed evangelicals in coverage defined by conflict and controversy. Specifically, Catholics accounted for over 70% of coverage on controversies surrounding reproductive issues and 60% of coverage dedicated to debates over sexual morality while accounting for just 28% of overall religion coverage (Lichter et al, 2000).

Other research (Beverly, 2002; Rawlyk, 1996; Shea, 2004; Van Ginkle, 2003) has shown that conservative Catholics and conservative Protestants are theologically very compatible—in fact, in terms of traditional religious beliefs and practices evangelicals often have more in common with devout Catholics than with other Protestants from mainline denominations. It is not surprising then that Catholics and evangelical Protestants share a similar media profile.

Like Lichter et al's study (2000), Graham's (2004), content analysis of national television news coverage broadcast between March 1, 2003 and February 29, 2004 on the ABC, CBS and NBC networks found that religion coverage since the 1990s has doubled. Graham (2004) drew that conclusion by comparing results from an earlier study he had conducted (Graham & Kaminski, 1993), mentioned below, to his 2003-2004 findings. He also determined that religion stories that feature conflict or controversy received the most airtime. For example, he noted if the topic of the story was a message from the Pope it was delivered as a 20 or 30-second anchor brief, but if the topic was sexual abuse by a Catholic priest, or the installation of a gay Episcopalian bishop, the story was delivered as a two or three-minute reporter-based news package (2004). Graham (2004) noted the

Catholic Church received the most airtime among faiths due to widespread and unrelenting reports related to Catholic clergy sexual abuse.

Similar to Lichter et al (2000), Graham (2004: 7) determined that very few religion stories explored a spiritual or theological dimension; instead, “stories were approached from a secular and political perspective”. However, unlike Lichter et al (2000), Graham (2004) found that news reports about religion most often did not highlight the opinions of conservative religious believers. Conversely, he found when choosing experts to interview for stories “[t]he networks heavily favored “religious” scholars and journalists who strongly question orthodox religion and accuracy of the Gospels” (Graham, 2004: 12). Furthermore, he noted when someone holding conservative Christian beliefs was given voice, he/she was subjected to prejudicial treatment. Specifically, those interviewees who expressed a high view of scripture were labeled “conservative,” “ultraconservative,” or “fundamentalist” (either in the audio of the report or in a video graphic on screen) 11% of the time; while interviewees who expressed secular views or opposed Christian orthodoxy were almost never referred to as “liberals or secularists” (Graham, 2004: 12). Finally, Graham (2004: 7) noted conservative Christians beliefs tended to be portrayed as “self-interested assertion[s] that should be viewed as factually questionable” while liberal or secular ideologies were depicted as modern, sensible and destined to prevail.

A similar study of national television news on CNN, PBS, CBS, NBC and ABC conducted a decade earlier by Graham and Kaminski (1993) also found religion coverage to be biased against people of traditional religious beliefs. Like the 2004 study, it noted that the “secular” side of an issue was always given voice while religious concerns and religiously-informed opinion were given less time or were ignored completely. It also found that, while respectful of all others, reporters often described people of conservative religious faith using pejorative terms (Graham & Kaminski, 1993).

The Garrett-Medill study (2000) sampled the religion news content of *The New York Times* and *USA Today*; *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U.S. News & World Report*; CBS, NBC, ABC network news and their Chicago affiliates; plus two Chicago daily newspapers during a six-month period in 1998-1999. Researchers found between 11% and 20% of all stories from daily newspapers, weekly newsmagazines, or TV newscasts referenced

religion, spirituality or values. However, very few of those stories had religion, spirituality or values as their primary focus. In stories where religion did figure predominantly, the reporting often lacked theological or historical context—a complaint echoed by Lichter et al (2000) and Graham (2004). In terms of providing context, the study judged that daily newspapers did a better job than television news. In contrast to Graham's (2004) and Graham and Kaminski's (1993) findings, only a slight bias against religious practitioners was detected by the researchers. However, it must be noted that the Garrett-Medill study (2000) examined the media's treatment of religious practitioners of all degrees (nominal to devout) and of all faiths. It has been determined that the media's coverage of adherents of mainline Protestant, Eastern, and new religious movements tends to be positive and favourable (Huckins, 1999; Lichter et al, 2000; Silk, 1995; cf. Fraser Institute, 1996); as such, a study examining the treatment of all faith groups collectively would be skewed toward the positive.

Buddenbaum's (1990) examination of sample newscasts from ABC, CBS, and NBC from the years 1976, 1981 and 1986 determined that 6% to 11 % of all news reports contained some kind of religious content. While these figures seem low when compared to the 11% to 20 % figures of the Garrett-Medill study, they are in keeping with the trends identified by Lichter et al (2000a) and Graham (2004); it must be remembered, it was not until the 1990s that religion coverage doubled. Her analysis also determined that the overall treatment of religion in the news was fair. However, all religions were analyzed as a monolith; the media's treatment of individual faith groups was not examined.

Three of the most recent studies of religion coverage in the U.S. focused solely on the news media's portrayal of fundamentalist Christians. Because fundamentalists are a prominent sub-group of evangelical Christians, the findings of these studies are particularly important to this current research. The studies also differ from the research discussed above in that they employed frame analysis, as opposed to straight content analysis, as their methodology. The studies of Kerr and Moy (2002), and Kerr (2003), were particularly influential in the shaping the methodology of this current study and are discussed again in the Methodology section.

Kerr and Moy (2002) examined newspaper coverage of fundamentalist Christians between 1980 and 2000. A population of 2,689 articles from newspapers across America was generated using the Lexis-Nexis database and the search words “fundamentalist” or “fundamentalism” in combination with the term “Christians”. The study found that over the two decades the number of newspaper stories mentioning fundamentalists Christians rose steadily and on average they portrayed fundamentalists in a slightly negative fashion. In particular, the fundamentalists were framed as somewhat intolerant, somewhat criminal-minded, a little unintelligent and irresponsible, a little pushy and unpatriotic, a little violent and a little prone to dangerous behaviours (Kerr & Moy, 2002). Stories that framed fundamentalists as politically involved tended to portray them in a neutral or balanced fashion.

Independent of Moy, Kerr (2003) conducted a nearly identical study to determine how fundamentalist Christians were framed on national television network news between 1980 to 2000. The evening news reports of ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox and CNN were analyzed and it was determined that over the 20-year period television news portrayed fundamentalist Christians in a slightly negative manner but not so negatively as newspapers. While still framing fundamentalists as somewhat intolerant, somewhat criminal-minded and a little irresponsible, in relation to intelligence and tendency toward aggression, television news portrayed members of this faith group neutrally. When the focus of a TV news report was political involvement or patriotism, fundamentalists tended to be framed positively. Regarding specific topics of coverage, political issues brought fundamentalists into the spotlight most often; education was the second most frequent topic (Kerr, 2003).

Huckins (1999) for his Ph.D. thesis (unpublished) examined how *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times* and *Washington Post* differed in their framing of two religious figures: Christian fundamentalist and social activist, Reverend Jerry Falwell; and liberal theologian and social activist, Reverend William Sloane Coffin. The time period for the study was 1980 to 1989. He found the coverage of all three newspapers was slightly negative in tone toward Falwell while, on average, it remained balanced or positive toward mainline Christian Coffin leading him to conclude “the media will marginalize

(either through negativity or lack of attention) social movements perceived as outside mainstream politics" (Huckins, 1999: 177).

2.2.2 *Canadian Studies*

Cornies (1986) study of religion content in the province of Ontario's daily newspapers was the first of its kind in Canada. He examined coverage in three of Ontario's daily newspapers—the national paper the *Globe and Mail*, the mid-sized circulation *London Free Press*, and the smaller circulation paper the *Sault Star*—between the years 1981 and 1986. Only stories in which religion, religious individuals or religious institutions played a key role were analyzed.

He determined that about 55% of religion coverage examined Canadian faith issues. With regard to which faith groups get coverage and how much, he found that Roman Catholics, who comprised 35.6% of the population of Ontario in 1981, garnered 38% of the religion coverage. Protestants at 51.8% of the population in the province got 20% of the coverage with the Anglican Church receiving 8% and all other protestant groups sharing the remaining 12%. Jews at 1.7% of the population got 14% of the coverage and Muslims at 0.6% of the population got 7% (Cornies, 1986). What Cornies (1986) thought was most notable about the statistics was the paucity of coverage afforded mainline Protestant groups in Ontario. The largest Protestant denomination in the country, the United Church, was featured less often than the smaller evangelical denomination, the Pentecostal Church (Cornies did not provide specific figures).

In relation to topic, Cornies (1986) found 59% of all religion coverage in the daily press related to the political and social action of religious bodies. Stories in this category focused primarily on church groups fighting for or against issues of public and social policy. This corresponds to Lichter et al's (2000) findings in the U.S.: during the 1980s stories related to church-state conflict had become most common. However, Cornies' (1986) findings differed significantly from several of the U.S. studies (Lichter et al, 2000; Garrett-Medill, 2000; Graham, 2004; Graham & Kaminski, 1993) in that he found a significant portion of Canadian stories, 24%, contained information about theology or spirituality. His second largest category, these stories focused on debate over theological issues such as the contest between evolution and creationism. Seven percent of stories

dealt with church celebrations and worship; 2% dealt with charitable work of religious organization (Cornies 1986).

It is notable that Cornies (1986) did not feel a category for crimes and scandal was warranted. Of course the reason for this is most likely the time period in which his study was conducted. It was not until the late 1980s and early 1990s that the televangelist scandals of Jim and Tammy Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart and the pedophile scandals of the Catholic Church became big news in North America.

The next study of religion in Canadian news was conducted nine years later; by this time scandal was a dominant part of the reportage. The study (Barrier, 1995) was a qualitative analysis of news coverage of court proceedings involving members of a Catholic religious order, the Brothers of the Christians Schools. The Brothers were found to have sexually abused boys under their care at a reform school in Alfred, Ontario and Uxbridge, Ontario in the 1970s. In 1990, arrests were made and charges laid when former students of the school went to police with their stories (Barrier, 1995).

The study examined *Canadian Press* newswire coverage of the scandal from 1990 when the story broke to 1993, when many of the Brothers were sentenced. The major finding was that secular media outlets, when they cover religious issues or groups, purposely avoid the spiritual dimension of the story. Church scandals are treated as typical crime or court stories relegating “religious questions and implications... to a lesser status” (Barrier, 1995: 75-76). The study concluded: while it may be easier for a reporter to ignore “questions of theology, faith and morality” and cover stories about believers “from a civic rather than religious dimension” journalism of that nature does a disservice to the majority of Canadians for whom religion is important (Barrier, 1995: 122).

A year after Barrier, Murray (1996) conducted a content analysis of religion reporting that appeared in the *Globe and Mail* over a four-month period in 1995. Only stories that focused on long-standing religious denominations were examined—letters to the editor were also excluded. A sample of 78 stories was generated. Just over half the stories were specifically related to religion in Canada, about 10% were specific to the U.S., the rest were generic in nature or focused on religious events and communities in countries around the world.

The largest number of stories, 22, featured Roman Catholics; 18 stories featured Muslims. Very few stories were written specifically about Protestants as a collective, instead Protestants were covered according to their specific denomination; of 26 stories featuring Protestants, 6 were about evangelicals and 10 about fundamentalists Christians (Murray, 1996).

Of the 78 stories, 52% were deemed to contain negative content, while 19% had positive content and 29% had neutral. Negative content was defined as featuring unwelcome change, violent or abuse behaviours and practices, or illegal or immoral activities. Conversely, content was considered positive if it reflected a welcome change, a pleasant, hopeful or encouraging experience. The tone of the articles was analyzed for positive, negative and neutral attributes as well. While most of the articles, 43%, were neutral in their tone toward religion and religious individuals, 37% were deemed to be negative, and just 20% positive. Tone was determined by examining how reporters and sources described the actions of people, the practices of religious groups, or the events in each article (Murray, 1996). The study did not discuss the content and tone as it related to specific faith groups.

A study by Canada's Fraser Institute (1996) analyzed the religion content of TV news stories from the CBC's and CTV's prime time news shows airing over the course of 1994. Ninety-five reports, 52 from CBC and 43 from CTV, featured people of faith or focused on religious issues. Stories about non-Christian faith groups comprised 65% of the CBC's stories and 48% of CTV's reports. In contrast, just 17% of the CBC's stories were about Roman Catholics and only 18% featured Protestant denominations. At 32% CTV afforded more coverage to Roman Catholics, but at 20% was almost equal to the CBC in its coverage of Protestants. At the time of the study Catholics made up 45% of Canada's population, Protestants accounted for 35%. Researchers noted that if percentage of Canada's population was a guide to the amount of coverage a faith group received, Christian faith groups, particularly Protestants, were greatly under-represented while others were over-represented. Researchers also noted that stories featuring Christian faith groups tended to be shorter than those reports featuring non-Christian religious groups—except when the Christian groups were involved in conflict (Fraser Institute, 1996). This

observation echoes the findings of Graham (2004) and Graham and Kaminski (1993) in the U.S.

Smith's (1999) study of religion coverage in Canada examined 20 newspapers—small, mid, and large circulation dailies—from across the country over a three-month period in 1998. She determined that the newspapers with the largest circulation also tended to have the most religion coverage. Canada's three national newspapers were among the top publishers of reports on religion. The *Toronto Star* had an average of 7.46 stories per issue fully about religion, followed by the *Globe* at 6.67, and the *National Post* at 6.56 stories per issue. Most religion stories, 43%, were situated in the front, or hard news, section of the paper, 16% in the designated religion or faith section, 14% in the arts and entertainment section, and 9% in the lifestyles section. Opinion articles and letters to the editor made up just under 10% of religion content (Smith 1999).

Smith (1999) also found that out of all stories with religious content, 14.5% referenced Protestantism or a specific Protestant denomination while 13.5% featured Catholics or Catholicism. Judaism was referenced in 9.5% of stories, Islam in 6.5% followed by Buddhism and Hinduism at 1.5% each. When Protestantism was broken down denominationally it was found that the United Church was featured in 4% of all religion stories, followed by the Anglican Church in 3.5% of stories and Presbyterians in 1%. Evangelical denominations, when taken collectively, were featured in about 6% of all religion stories (Smith, 1999)—a figure that mirrors the percentage of coverage evangelicals received in the American press (Lichter et al, 2000).

2.2.3 Why the News Media Cover Evangelicals the Way They Do

When reviewing the empirical research it becomes clear that certain qualities characterize the news media's coverage of evangelicals. As relayed above, coverage of this faith group has been found to avoid the spiritual or theological side of issues; instead, the political, social or economic dimension of stories is highlighted. Coverage tends to be sparse, it also tends to be negative in content (i.e., stories focus primarily on negative situations rife with conflict) and negative in tone (i.e., stories are pejorative their description/depiction of evangelicals).

Having identified these characteristics it is important to consider why they manifest in the first place. What follows are some current theories as to why members of the news media cover evangelicals the way they do.

Why No Theology?

There are several opinions as to why theological or doctrinal content is absent from stories about evangelicals, and for that matter, stories about religion in general. Lack of education and formal training has been cited as a cause. Fumea (2002; cf. Buddenbaum, 1998) found that few journalists in the U.S. are trained to cover the complicated topic of religion. In Canada, no textbook on reporting contains references, let alone a chapter, on reporting religion or the religion beat. Furthermore, no school of journalism at a Canadian community college or university offers a course in reporting religion.

Without academic training to produce qualified religion reporters, their numbers are few; however, it would seem demand for such professionals is limited. Maus (1990: 225) notes that "the media seldom hire journalists who specialize in religion reporting". Hoover (1998) adds that at most newspapers in America the ratio of people working on the sports beat to those on the religion beat is 10 to one or worse. Gormly (1999) states that in most cases religion stories are covered by general assignment reporters with little experience or expertise in the field of religion. In Canada, there are no designated religion reporters working for national television news programs. Daily newspapers in Canada employ about a half-dozen full-time religion reporters though some of these journalists are asked to "double-up" and cover other beats as well.

Others have suggested that it is journalists' staunch dedication to "the facts" that hampers their ability to cover the spiritual side of an issue; that is, because "journalism is empirical in nature" news people are not practiced in the language of the "subjective, intuitive, and unverifiable" (Dart & Allan, 1993: 15). Hoover (1998) agrees that it is journalists' aversion to the subjective that makes them pursue the political, economic, social, or criminal dimension of religion stories. He concludes it is in the realm of the tangible and material that the news media feel most comfortable; conversely, "[r]eligion makes claims that often are not verifiable in the conventional sense, and this makes journalists, and particularly editors, nervous" (Hoover, 1998: 36-37).

Why Sparse, Negative Content?

We should not be surprised that television news stories about evangelicals tend to focus on negative situations rife with conflict given that most news stories, regardless of who is featured in them, focus on these elements as well. Journalistic convention holds that certain types of events and issues are simply more worthy of coverage than others. Four decades ago, Galtung and Ruge (1965) determined that the presence of certain elements, or specific criteria in a news event, cause journalists to deem one situation more worthy of coverage than another. They determined that, among other factors, events that are negative, easy to grasp, unexpected, involve elite personalities, and that can be depicted as a battle between individuals are far more likely to receive coverage.

Paraphrasing the findings of Galtung and Ruge's (1965) and setting them in a decidedly Christian context, Maus (1990: 245) explains:

Millions worship each week... proclaim the Gospel and serve humanity by feeding the hungry... These are not the kinds of events journalists define as news. It is news, though when a popular minister gets caught in greed or lust. The secular media report the unusual; they seldom deal with the usual, and the more usual something is, the less attention it gets.

By taking Maus' reasoning one step further, one is able to provide a possible explanation as to why evangelicals experience a paucity of coverage. If evangelicals are covered infrequently, it could very well be because they behave *too well*. That is to say, most of the activities and events evangelicals are involved in are positive and in keeping with Christian ideals of charity and goodwill and therefore garner little media attention. Whether evangelicals' good behaviour diminishes the amount of news coverage they receive requires empirical study to be confirmed; however, a recent television news report gives some anecdotal support to that assertion. In 2005 a group of Canadian evangelical Christians demonstrated in Ottawa on Parliament Hill, their goal was to voice their concerns over impending same sex marriage legislation. The reporter described the demonstration saying: "They didn't shout slogans, they didn't carry signs or banners. Instead, this group of Evangelical Christians gathered on Parliament Hill for an Easter Sunrise service and proclaimed their message with prayers and hymns" (Bourbeau, 2005). The reporter also noted: "...we [Global News] were the only media organization that came out to listen" (Bourbeau, 2005).

Driving what the news media consider worthy of coverage is a financial imperative. The news media exist to make money and money is made by selling advertising. Because advertising rates are tied to market penetration, the more people watching or reading a company's news product, the more that company can charge for advertising. To ensure the greatest audience, news content is adjusted accordingly. Media professionals know that easy to understand, sensational, negative news has greater mass appeal than complicated or positive news and thus it is more profitable (Fleras, 2003; Messner, Duncan & Wachs, 1996). For example, experience suggests to them that a story about evangelicals protesting pro-gay kindergarten textbooks will sell more newspapers or engage more viewers than a story about Evangelicals raising funds to buy books for needy children.

Postman and Powers (1992) observe that of all the news media, television news gives most attention to stories featuring conflict and controversy. Ericson (1995) suggests television preoccupation with this one story type is due to the constraints of its format. He notes that:

[a] newspaper can build its readership by appealing to an aggregate of minorities, each of whom will select and read only particular sections and items from the total volume available in the newspaper. Television must do the selecting of items for its audience and hold its attention throughout the newscast. Therefore television includes material that is attractive to the widest range of people, which means an appeal to the lowest-common-denominator mass audience (Ericson, 1995: 20).

Barrier (1995: 109) says more simply "[t]he complexity of religion just does not translate well to television newscasts. Television, even more than newspapers, loves the bizarre, the weird and the scandalous because television newscasts are not structured to deal with difficult concepts".

Barrier (1995) concedes that news editors and reporters have to select stories of interest to their readers and viewers if they hope to achieve higher circulation and better ratings to stay profitable. And he realizes that scandals are legitimate news and the media cannot be faulted for reporting controversies related to religious leaders or religious organizations. However, he says the media can be faulted because "in the media's rush to find the next aberrant story, the deep reading, more abstract and ethereal stories of people and their search for faith are often neglected" (Barrier, 1995: 117).

In addition to supplanting deeper stories of peoples' search for faith, Silk (1995) argues that coverage of evangelicals that focuses primarily on negative situations is problematic for yet another reason. He states the aura of negativity surrounding such situations is transferred onto the antagonists of the story; ultimately, all evangelicals are viewed as discordant individuals because of the issues with which they are associated.

Why Negative Tone?

It has been shown that the values and beliefs journalists hold influence the news stories they construct. As mentioned in the Introduction of this study (see page 12), Miljan and Cooper (2003a) determined—at least in relation to economic, social and political issues—that the causes and ideals that Canadian national journalists personally support tend to be promoted in the news stories they create, whereas those that they oppose are subjected to denigrating treatment or are ignored (Miljan & Cooper, 2003a; cf. Silk, 1995). That being the case, if news reports are pejorative in their presentation of evangelicals and evangelicalism, it is likely because journalists personally disagree with many of the beliefs and values espoused by this faith group.

A study done by Underwood (2002) determined that members of the American news media tend to follow a liberal Christian value system themselves and that, in turn, makes them more critical of conservative and fundamentalist Christians. Up to now, no study has specifically explored Canadian journalists' attitudes toward evangelicals and evangelicals' beliefs; however, other studies have more broadly determined where Canadian journalists stand on a variety of religious and "values" issues. From those studies it becomes clear: many of the values and causes that Canadian journalists hold and support run counter to those held by evangelicals.

As part of the survey portion of their study, Miljan and Cooper (2003a) asked journalists about their religious beliefs and determined that Canadian journalists working for the largest and most influential newspapers and broadcasters tend to be significantly cooler toward religion than the public-at-large (and, by extension, we might conclude far cooler than evangelicals).

Using a standard set of questions, the researchers compared journalists' responses with those of the Canadian public. A sample of more than 600 English and French-speaking

Canadians from the general population were interviewed by phone along with 123 English-speaking journalists from major English-language news outlets and 55 French-speaking journalists from major news outlets in the province of Quebec. The journalists were a mix of management staff and “front-line” reporters (Miljan & Cooper, 2003a).

The small sample size of the French-language journalists proved problematic for the researchers when it came time to draw conclusions from their data. However, the data regarding Canada’s English-speaking journalists had strong reliability and validity and thus the study was not significantly weakened (Miljan & Cooper, 2003a). While the French-language media are influential within the province of Quebec they hold little sway in the rest of the country. The inverse cannot be said of Canada’s English-language media—it is influential across the nation and in Quebec and, as such, is seen as the superlative target of study by communication scientists (Henry & Tator, 2000).

Miljan and Cooper (2003a) found that 32% of English-speaking Canadian journalists said they definitely believe in God compared with 66% of the general population; 14% of them said they definitely did not believe in God compared with 5% of the general population. Fifteen percent of the journalists said they attended a religious worship service regularly compared with 23% of the general public.

Equally interesting is what the researchers did not find. Of those journalists surveyed, none reported belonging to a conservative Protestant denomination. By way of comparison, 56% of journalists surveyed gave Roman Catholic as their religious affiliation, 23% reported belonging to mainline Protestant denominations and 6% reported Judaism to be their religion (Miljan & Cooper, 2003b).

It would seem evangelical journalists are either very shy about disclosing their faith or they are severely underrepresented in the news media. It is probably both. In the early 1990s, Pippert (1990) estimated fewer than 50 journalists working at mainstream media outlets in the United States were evangelical Christians. Furthermore, Schmalzbaur’s (1999) study of conservative Christian journalists working for elite media in the U.S. showed that evangelical reporters *are* afraid to disclose their faith. He found that 10% of evangelicals contacted refused to take part in his study because they felt it would harm their professional credibility if their colleagues knew they were devout Christians. Schmalzbaur (1999) hypothesizes that progressive views dominate the culture within

newsrooms and, therefore, someone expressing more conservative, religious views would be stigmatized.

The most recent study to explore the religious beliefs of Canadian media professionals was Barber and Rauhala's (2005) exploration of the demographic and political leanings of television news directors. The researchers found Canadian news directors, whom they describe as the people "with the most direct responsibility for programming the news on any given day," to be more secular than the rest of the population (Barber & Rauhala, 2005: 285). Nearly a quarter indicated they had no religious affiliation compared to just 16.2% of the public. They were about half as likely as other Canadians to attend religious services weekly; "almost half (47.8%) of news directors attend a place of worship either once a year or not at all" (Barber & Rauhala, 2005: 287).

Studies out of the U.S. have also showed that America's elite journalists are less religious than the public. Lichter and Rothman (1981) interviewed news professionals working for the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *US News & World Report*, ABC, CBS, NBC and PBS news divisions and discovered that the predominant characteristic of this media elite was its "secular outlook" (1981: 42). While just over 10% of Americans in the early 1980s said they had no religion, 50% of the elite media claimed no religious affiliation. When it came to attending religious services fewer than 15% of the media elite said they attended services regularly, this compared to 40% of the population-at-large (Lichter & Rothman 1981; Lichter, Rothman & Lichter, 1986).

Fifteen years after his pioneering work with Lichter, Rothman (as cited in Lichter et al, 2000) conducted a similar survey as a follow-up to the earlier study of elites. Two hundred and forty-two news personnel from *USA Today*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Associated Press*, and CNN were queried. This time 30% of the journalists said they attended religious service at least monthly (just 10% lower than average Americans) and only 22% reported no religious affiliation (compared to 10% nationally).

Rothman (as cited in Lichter et al, 2000) suggests that his findings show that journalists at elite media organizations have become more religious since 1980 though still less so than the general public. However, there is reason to be critical of Rothman's study. First, his sample is drawn from significantly fewer media outlets overall, and

second, almost all of the New York City-based media outlets (e.g., *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *US News & World Report*, ABC, CBS, NBC) were eliminated from the newer study. It is the opinion of many academics and industry personnel alike, that New York journalists, and the media outlets for which they work, are the most secular in all America (Goldman, as cited in Barrier, 1996; Olasky, 1988; Proctor, 2000; cf. Goldberg). By excluding the most secular of journalists from his study, Rothman may have skewed his findings toward the religious side of the scale.

In addition to their dissimilarity of religious belief, Canadian journalists and evangelicals find little common ground in terms of the social values they hold and the social causes they support. In their study Miljan and Cooper (2003a) found that more so than the public-at-large, Canada's English-speaking journalists express strong support for gays and lesbians and for a woman's right to an abortion; conversely, they register distain for those groups that lobby against gay rights or abortion access.

When asked whether "the rights of homosexuals receive too much, somewhat much, or too little attention," only 4% of English-speaking journalists thought too much attention was given compared with 52% of the general public (Miljan & Cooper 2003a: 81). Twenty-nine percent of journalists thought that the rights of gays and lesbians received too little attention compared with 16% of the public (2003a).

When asked whether a woman has both a moral and legal right to terminate her pregnancy, 53% of journalists "highly agreed" while 36% of the general population "highly agreed". At the other end of the scale, 14% of the public strongly disagreed with the statement compared to just 3% of journalists (Miljan & Cooper 2003a).

Using a sliding scale anchored on the left by the statement "The group does not deserve more respect than it receives today" and on the right by "The group deserves a lot more respect than it receives today" Canadian journalists were asked about the level of respect Real Women—a group comprised primarily of conservative Christian women who oppose abortion and endorse stay-at-home-mothers—should be afforded (Miljan & Cooper, 2003b; cf. Miljan & Cooper, 2003a: 79). Sixty-three percent positioned their response on the "no more respect than today" side of the scale, 16% were neutral and 18% positioned on the "a lot more respect than today" side (Miljan & Cooper, 2003b). When pro-life organizations were the focus of respect, 76% of journalists' ratings fell on

the “no more respect than today” side of the scale, 11% were neutral, and 13% fell closer to the “a lot more respect than today” anchor (Miljan & Cooper, 2003b; cf. Miljan & Cooper, 2003a: 79-80).

In terms of attitudinal differences between news organizations, Miljan and Cooper (2003a) observed that journalists working for the public broadcaster, the CBC, were the most socially and economically liberal of all Canadian news personnel holding views further left of those employed by private sector news organizations. In their study of Canadian news directors, Barber and Rauhala (2005) had similar findings. They found personnel working for the CBC were far more likely to vote for the New Democratic Party (NDP), Canada’s party of the left, than private sector employees with rates of 13% and 4.5%, respectively. Conversely, 11.4% of private sector news directors intended to vote for Canada’s party of the right, at the time the Canadian Alliance (now called the Conservative Party) while no CBC news directors had that intention. In terms of religiosity, “CBC news directors are more secular. A third (34.8%) said they never go to a place of worship. This is twice the number (15.9%) of those in the private sector who made the same claim” (Barber & Rauhala, 2005: 289).

As the information relayed above shows, evangelicals and elite, national journalists in Canada have little in common when it comes to their core ideology. In fact, it would be difficult to find two communities that are so similar in look, language, dress—and a host of other outward cultural markers—yet think so differently. Results of previous studies suggest that those outside the journalists’ ideological circle do not fare well in terms of news coverage.

2.2.4 Canada’s Major Television Networks

To achieve a more rounded understanding of Canada’s national television journalists, a brief overview of the size, structure and history of the television networks they work for is warranted.

CTV Television is a division of CTVglobemedia and is Canada’s largest privately owned television network. At its launch in 1961, CTV was known as CTN—the Canadian Television Network—and it consisted of eight stations operating in all the

major cities across Canada. A year later the network changed its name to the CTV Television Network (Gittins, 1999; Nolan, 2001; Wedge, & McCreath, 2006).

By the mid-1970s three other stations had joined the CTV network but it was in the mid-1980s, when Baton Broadcasting moved in and slowly began taking over CTV stations, that the network grew dramatically. By 1996 Baton was the full owner of the CTV network and the number of stations had doubled. In 2000, Bell Communications acquired CTV and combined it with NetStar Communications and *The Globe and Mail* newspaper to form a media division known as Bell Globemedia (Gittins, 1999; Nolan, 2001; Wedge & McCreath, 2006).

In 2006, Bell Globemedia acquired radio and television conglomerate CHUM Limited. In early 2007 Bell Globemedia changed its name to CTVglobemedia. With the acquisition of CHUM's assets, CTVglobemedia now owns and operates over 30 Canadian television stations (Wedge & McCreath, 2006).

Each CTV station is responsible for production of its own local newscast; however, all stations broadcast *CTV National News* with anchor Lloyd Robertson as their primetime, nightly news program. For decades, *CTV National News* was consistently the top news program in Canada then in the mid-2000s it began to cede its lead to Global's national news program (CanWest Global, 2007; Nolan, 2001; Wedge & McCreath, 2006).

Global Television is the second-largest private television network in Canada and operates as a division of CanWest Global Communications which also owns a chain of radio stations and newspapers. Broadcasting since the mid-1970s, Global Television did not become a full-fledged Canadian network until the mid-1990s when it acquired stations in Quebec and on both the east and west coasts of Canada. In 2000, Global added the assets and stations of Western International Communications to its holdings giving it an even stronger Canadian presence. Global Television also maintains a second system of five independent stations, branded "CH" stations. These stations, two in British Columbia, and one each in Alberta, Ontario and Quebec, tend to air programming that is distinct from that shown on the Global network of stations (CanWest Global, 2007; Dulmage, 2006).

Though it had stations in all regions of Canada by the mid-1990s, Global Television did not air a pan-Canada national newscast until fairly recently. Between 1993 and 2001

Global's national news, slugged *First National*, was not carried outside of eastern and central Canada. In 2001, *First National* was replaced by a new program, *Global National*, which aired on all Global stations across the country. Since its debut, *Global National* has gained market share over *CTV National News*, and in 2006 it became Canada's most watched national television news program (CanWest Global, 2007; Dulmage, 2006).

CBC TV is the English-language television arm of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), Canada's publicly-funded radio and television broadcaster. As a Crown corporation, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation is funded by, but operates autonomously from, the federal government (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 2007). For fiscal 2006, the CBC received a total of \$1.53 billion from all revenue sources, including government funding, subscription fees, advertising revenue, and other revenue. CBC TV received \$616 million of that funding (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 2006).

The critics of CBC TV suggest that the network is a waste of taxpayers' money because it duplicates what private broadcasters are already doing. Other critics, namely the private broadcasters themselves, say CBC TV is an unfair competitor because, in addition to the government funding it receives, it also accesses advertising revenues (Hoskins & McFadyen, 1995). The network's defenders justify CBC TV's "double-dipping" by pointing out that its legislated mandate requires it to produce significantly more original Canadian content than private broadcasters—an expensive undertaking. Private television broadcasters, on the other hand, are allowed to purchase and air significantly more pre-produced American-made programming at a fraction of the cost (Thompson, 2006).

2.3 Part 3: Theoretical Perspective

2.3.1 The Role of the News Media

The news media have been given a nearly impossible mandate.

In a democratic society, the news media are expected to provide a forum for public discussion and debate so that citizens may know all their options (be they politically, socially, economically, or even religiously-oriented) and thus make, what they would

consider, the best choices. In addition to their role as conduit to a market place of ideas, the news media in a democracy are also to act as an auditor or watchdog over the society, sounding an alarm when an institution, group, or individual veers from accepted practices or behaviours (Coronel, 2003; Lorimer & Gasher, 2001).

Again, society expects the news media to produce and transmit cultural knowledge. It also expects the news media to wield influence. How ironic it is that for the very tasks we expect them to perform, the news media are vilified. It would seem the problem is one of degrees. Most times we will accept the media functioning, as Gitlin (1980) says, like “mobile spotlights” drawing our attention to this issue, and then to the next. In fact, we are usually pleased to have the media focus our attention on particular issues; after all, they have superior access to the “halls of power” and the “gutters of the underworld” and thus, are in a better position to know the important things that are transpiring there. However, once the media has brought the issue to our attention we want them to leave us alone: we do not want them influencing our opinion; we do not want them telling us how to think.

Gauging when the news media has crossed over the line from social responsibility to undue influence is a difficult task; however, communication scholars have advanced several theories to assist in that task. Agenda-setting theory has explored the affect the news media agenda has on the public agenda. Frame theory, the theoretical foundation for this present study, has explored the effect news content has on the perceptions of individuals. Both of these theories are discussed in detail below.

2.3.2 Agenda Setting

By the mid-1960s media scholars determined the reason some events and issues receive news coverage, when others did not, was a matter of inherent criteria contained in news events (Galtung & Ruge, 1965). Defined as “news values” by early researchers, these criteria are elements contained in a story that make it more interesting or exciting for an audience. It was journalists themselves, through long years of experience, who determined that these elements are what audiences crave. While theorists are not unified in their appraisals of what each of the elements is, most agree a story that contains conflict, is unique or unexpected, involves well known people, or involves a happening of

significant magnitude will probably make the news. Chances of an event or issue receiving coverage are also increased the more “local” it is. Put most simply, news values are akin to a scoring system used by journalists. A story with the most, or the purist, news values is put on the front page or at the top of the newscast (Bennet, 2001; Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Gans, 1979; McQuail, 2001).

The categorization of news values, though interesting, did little to answer theoretical questions that stretched beyond the *selection* of media content. The impact of the selected content on audiences was of interest to scholars; agenda-setting theory grew out of that interest.

When most of us pick up a newspaper or turn on a TV news program we come with the question, “What’s the news today?” It is seldom, if ever the case, that we come asking, “Do *I* think *this* [whatever you are reading or watching] is *news* today?” Agenda-setting theory, on the other hand, would have us ask just that; it requires us to acknowledge, and then examine, the news media’s ability to raise the importance of an issue in the public’s mind through repeated coverage.

Rogers and Dearing (1988: 556) defined agenda-setting as “a process through which the mass media communicate the relative importance of various issues and events to the public”. This idea, that the media can influence the public’s agenda, or what people deem to be *important issues*, is neatly expressed in a famous quote by Cohen (1963). He wrote that the press “may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about” (1963: 13).

Although Cohen (1963) was writing about the concept of agenda-setting and the media in the early 1960s—and others, like Lippmann (1922), had done so 40 years earlier—it was not until the early 1970s that McCombs and Shaw (1972) provided the first empirical proof of the mass media’s agenda-setting function. Studying the American presidential election of 1968, McCombs and Shaw (1972) hypothesized that the news media influenced which issues Americans thought were the most the important in the campaign. The researchers selected and interviewed a group of 100 undecided voters and simultaneously conducted a content analysis of the news media to which those voters had access. Respondents were asked to list the major problems in the country and when their answers were compared to the findings of the content analysis, a correlation was found

between the respondents' and the media's lists of most important issues (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). The researchers attributed the near perfect correlation they found between the media's and the respondents' lists to the media's agenda-setting function. However, they admitted that correlation did not prove causation; they noted it could have been the case that the media had simply "tapped into" and reflected concerns that the public already possessed; that is, the media may have been simply mirroring the agenda already set by the public.

Research by Funkhouser (1973), Shoemaker, Wanta, and Leggett (1989) and, to lesser degree, Shaw and McCombs (1977) and Tipon, Haney, and Baseheart (1975) established empirically that the public agenda trails the media agenda; that is, the public's priorities about particular issues form *after* the media have commenced reporting on those issues. However, it was Iyengar, Peters, and Kinder (1982) who established unequivocally the causal influence the media has on the public agenda. The researchers divided a pool of university age participants into three groups. Each group watched different, specially edited TV newscasts. Group one's newscasts always had lead stories of an environmental nature, two's lead stories focused on national defense, and three's focused on economic inflation. When surveyed about their personal concerns regarding the world—members of each group elevated the lead issue from their newscasts to the top of their individual list of concerns (Iyengar et al, 1982).

In their respective studies, Shaw and McCombs (1977) and Tipon, Haney, and Baseheart (1975) showed a weak causal relationship between certain media agendas and public priorities; specifically, the researchers found evidence of lag-time between the media's agenda and the public agenda in relation to newspapers but not for television. Examining the weak causal relationship of these earlier studies, Zucker (1978) hypothesized that the agenda-setting effect does not take place for every issue but only for those issues that are obtrusive. He defined those issues that the public had experienced, or could experience, first-hand and directly—like unemployment—as obtrusive; issues experienced less directly—like pollution—were defined as unobtrusive. Contrary to his hypothesis, Zucker (1978) found that agenda-setting effects take place most on unobtrusive issues; that is, for unobtrusive issues extensive media coverage preceded the rise of importance of an issue in the mind of the public while extensive

coverage did not precede importance to the public for the obtrusive issues. In a similarly conceived study, Yagade and Dozier (1990) examined whether agenda-setting effects more greatly impact concrete (easily visualized) issues like drug abuse than abstract (difficult to visualize) issues like the federal budget deficit. The researchers found a significant relationship between the media and the public agendas for concrete issues but not for abstract issues.

Outside of the most famous studies mentioned above, hundreds of other agenda-setting studies have been conducted since McCombs and Shaw's (1972) seminal work; this vast body of research divides into two genres (Dearing & Rogers, 1996). The first group includes issue-hierarchy studies, patterned after McCombs and Shaw's examination of correlation between the media's and the public's rankings of importance of issues. These studies are cross-sectional in that they analyze the relative rankings of issues at distinct points in time, often within the context of political or election campaign news coverage. They also seek to determine whether the media influences the importance the public attaches to issues, or whether public opinion drives the agenda of the media.

The other genre of agenda-setting study examines a single issue longitudinally. These types of studies catalogue how the same issue rises and falls—appears and disappears—on the media, public, and policy agendas over a lengthy period of time. Such studies have examined drug use (Bare, 1990); inflation, unemployment, and energy (Behr & Iyengar, 1985); child abuse (Nelson, 1984); the Vietnam War (Neuman, 1990); AIDS (Rogers, Dearing, & Chang, 1991); and global warming (Trumbo, 1995). Single-issue studies, like those just mentioned, often uncover pivotal events that have triggered increased media attention to their respective issues. For example, Bare (1990) found that after U.S. federal government's declaration of "war on drugs," newspaper coverage of the drug war increased dramatically.

Bare's (1990) finding that the U.S. federal government, through deliberate action, was able to secure a high position on the media's agenda serves as an ideal segue into a very important aspect of the agenda-setting process; that is: who sets the agenda for the agenda setters? Opinion is not unified. In keeping with Bare's (1990) observation, several studies conducted in the U.S. have shown that the President (Gonzenbach, 1996; Hart, 1987; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Wanta, 1997; Wanta, Stephenson, Turk, & McCombs,

1989) or other government officials (Atwater & Fico, 1986) set the agenda for most important issues nationally. However, other studies of the Presidential State of the Union Addresses (Gilberg, Eyal, McCombs, & Nicholas, 1980; Wanta & Miller, 1995) found the ability of a President to impact the media's agenda was dependent on several variables including presidential leadership style and the quantity and quality of the issues presented in his addresses. Wanta (1997) established that neither the media nor the President enjoyed the upper-hand when it came to the elevation of issues in the public's mind; instead, he found the relationship was mutualistic with the President needing "the news media to further highlight and explain the issues that he deemed important" (Wanta, 1997: 84). Extrapolating these findings beyond the realm of the United States, it could be concluded that the leaders of democracies and their government colleagues are to a certain extent able to influence the media's agenda.

Other research (Andsager, 2000; Andsager & Smiley, 1998; Westley, 1976) has determined that special interest and advocacy groups are able to influence the news media's agenda through the sending of media releases or the staging of events. Using similar methods, public relations professionals employed by government, corporations, institutions and organizations have been shown highly effective at "persuading" the media to pick-up an issue. Key to the success of public relation campaigns is the tool known as the information subsidy. Information subsidies can be as simple as a press release or a meeting notice, but they may also be as refined and complex as a full magazine or a ready-to-air video—essentially, they can be "anything sent to the media in order to gain time or space" (Burns, 1994: 5; c.f. Berkowitz, 1987).

Alluding to the traditional definition of a subsidy being a form of financial support, Gandy (1982: 8) defines information subsidies as "efforts to reduce the prices faced by others [journalists] for certain information, in order to increase its consumption". Hence, when public relations professionals provide these "subsidies" to journalists, the journalist "saves the cost" of researching that information him/herself. Several studies have sought to measure the degree to which information subsidies supplied by public relations professionals have influenced the media's agenda. Sigal (1973) found more than half of front-page stories for the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* traced their origins back to press releases and special issue advocates. Turk (1986) found that half of the

information subsidies supplied by government agencies in Louisiana were used by the media; similarly, in his study of local and network television newscast reliance on official sources and routine channels, Berkowitz (1987) found that television broadcasts rely on press conferences, press releases, and official proceedings for more than 70% of stories. More recent studies (McCombs, 1994; Wilcox & Nolte, 1997) have found that over half of the content in elite national newspapers in the U.S. comes from media releases and press conferences.

In addition to government, interest groups, and public relations professionals, research has shown an agenda-setting effect occurring *within* the media industry. That is, some media outlets set the agenda for what issues other outlets will consider important enough to cover. For example, Reese and Danielian (1989) and Trumbo (1995) showed that the *New York Times* set the agenda for other national, regional, and local media. Stempel (1985) showed more broadly that elite national news outlets in the U.S. set the news agenda for smaller news outlets in the rest of the country. Others note that some news events get coverage simply because they possess a convergence of specific criteria or “news values” that are so “compelling that editors have no choice but to feature them” (Griffin, 2003: 395). Manheim and Albritton (1984) and Manheim (1987) have argued for a theory of agenda-setting that moves beyond the idea of the media as the primary causal agent. They prefer a systematic definition that promotes agenda-setting as a process in which the media, public and political agendas interact with one another and with their mutual external environment. Rogers and Dearing (1988) concur, positing, that each agenda has its own internal dynamics and is linked to the others by informational, behavioural, and institutional links.

While it is clear from the research that the news media can and do influence “what we think about,” the degree to which the priorities of individual new consumers are affected by the media’s agenda varies greatly. Wanta and Miller (1995) determined that news consumers are more likely to accept the media’s agenda as their own when they think that the media outlet is credible. Furthermore, the researchers found that respondents’ preconceived notions and previously held opinions also affected their acceptance of the media’s agenda; that is, when a news story dealt with an issue that was already of interest to the respondent, he/she was more apt to elevate that issue’s importance personally

(Wanta & Miller, 1995; cf. McCombs, 1994). McCombs (1997) adds that individuals who are “blank slates” in terms of which issues they believe are important are far more willing to accept the media’s agenda as their own.

The piece that is missing from many of the above-mentioned studies is an examination of the factors that affect the media’s treatment of an issue (Dearing & Rogers, 1996; Gandy, 2001; Rogers & Dearing, 1988). Most often agenda-setting studies focus solely on quantitative examinations of the pattern of news story frequencies about issues in relation to the public’s perceptions of the importance of those issues. They quantify the level of media attention given an issue, but do not, for the most part, address qualitative questions about whether the media are influential in terms of how the public thinks about issues of importance (Gandy, 2001). To better understand this process, one must turn to the concept of framing.

2.3.3 Framing

Framing, or more precisely, frame theory (of which the concept of framing plays a major part) is crucial to this current study because it provides the foundational scholarly principles and tools for analysis used in this research.

Up to 25 years ago, scholars studying agenda-setting had been content with the notion that the news media can tell us *what* issues to think about but cannot tell us *how* to think about them. That mindset changed when, early in the 1980s, researchers determined that news stories not only provide their audiences with important topics to think about but they also provide “contextual cues or frames in which to evaluate those subjects” (Johnston, 1990). Media personnel were seen as promoting specific interpretations for the events and issues they covered—a perception that went beyond agenda-setting to the influencing of public opinion (Kuypers, 2005).

The idea was not entirely new; it had evolved and solidified. As early as the 1920s people working in the news media observed that the product they created had the power to convey meaning and emphasis through inclusion, exclusion and other storytelling conventions (Lippmann, 1922). In the 1970s, Goffman (1974: 21), a sociologist, began the discussion of framing as a concept, writing frames are a means of “actively classify[ing] and organis[ing] our life experience to make sense of them”. Late in that

same decade, Tuchman (1978: 1) applied the concept of framing to the news media writing “news is a window on the world. Through its frame... the news aims to tell us what we want to know, need to know, and should know”. In this sense, we can see that news is not a depiction of what “is” but instead is a transmission of selected ideas that have been constructed with specific goals in mind. Following Tuchman’s lead, Gitlin (1980: 7) described framing in relation to the news, observing that “[m]edia frames, largely unspoken and unacknowledged, organize the world both for journalists who report it and, in some important degree, for us who rely on their reports”. He stated media frames are useful to journalists because they: “enable journalists to process large amounts of information quickly and routinely: to recognize it as information, to assign it to cognitive categories, and to package it for efficient relay to their audiences” (Gitlin, 1980: 7).

Though the definition of frames and framing in relation to news has grown considerably clearer, there is still some difference of interpretation among scholars. Some see it as a second-level of agenda-setting. McCombs and Estrada (1997; cf. McCombs & Ghanem, 2001), for instance, state framing is a second level of agenda setting that elevates the importance of certain features or aspects of a particular event or issue. They write:

When we consider the key term of this theoretical metaphor—the agenda—in totally abstract terms, the potential for expanding beyond an agenda of issues becomes clear. In the majority of the studies to date the unit of analysis on each agenda is an object, a public issue. Beyond the agenda of objects, there is also another dimension to consider. Each of these objects has numerous attributes—those characteristics and properties that fill in and animate the picture of each object. Just as objects vary in salience, so do the attributes of each object. (McCombs & Estrada, 1997: 239)

However, others disagree, arguing that framing should be viewed as a concept separate from agenda-setting (Entman, 1993; Iyengar & Simon, 1993; Kuypers, 2005; Kosicki, 1993; Maher, 2001). Those opposed to conflating the two concepts point out that frame theory emphasizes greater agency and responsibility on the part of news media professionals. Robert Entman (1993: 52), in his widely-cited and well respected definition of framing stated that frames take a perceived reality and “promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described”. In his definition the conscious, participatory

role played by the journalist—acting as the agent who *promotes* a particular problem definition and *makes* a moral evaluation—is easily discerned. Kuypers (2005: 198), articulating the “purist’s view” of framing, explains that framing “moves beyond second-level agenda-setting in that it posits that the media not only focus attention on particular attributes of an issue, making some portions more salient than others, it does so in such a manner that *a particular political agenda is advanced*” (emphasis mine). Similarly, Kosicki (1993: 113) draws attention to the agency of media personnel writing, “Media gatekeepers do not merely keep watch over information, shuffling it here and there. Instead, they engage in active construction of the messages, emphasizing certain aspects of an issue and not others”.

When a reporter covers an event that lasts hours or even days it is impossible for him/her to convey everything that happened in a two-minute television news story or a 500-word print article. Similarly, when a reporter covers an issue that pits several individuals or groups against each other it is impossible for him/her to give voice to every point each stakeholder raised. When they create a news story, journalists must use interpretive judgment; that is, they must select and emphasize some facts and leave others out.

Entman (1993: 52) writes that in order to define what the issue is, frames “select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text”. To say an aspect of perceived reality is more *salient* in a communicating text means it has been made more prominent, meaningful, significant or memorable within the context of the news report. Obviously, if information is included in a news report, it becomes more salient, for that which is left out remains unknown to the audience. However, the language of a news report also increases the saliency of certain facts in so far as it is used to emphasize and elaborate certain aspects of an issue (Entman, 1993; Severin & Tankard, 2001). When constructing a frame the reporter will use metaphors, exemplars, stereotypes, catchphrases and other audio and visual symbols. The connotations of these keywords and symbols—which can be positive, negative or neutral—influence how the audience feels about the issue or event (Gamson, 1989; Entman, 1993).

Reflecting on the role words play in the construction of a frame, Wallack, Dorfman, Jernigan, and Themba (1993: 45) write:

There is power in the act of naming things... At first, naming things may not seem important and to some may even seem silly or trivial. However, consider the importance of the term person with a disability versus disabled person or handicapped person. The former term emphasizes the person, whereas the latter terms emphasize the disability.

The quotes from sources (interviewees) that are chosen by the reporter and inserted into a news piece contribute to the news frame as well. Clayman (1995) identified three reasons behind the selection of key quotes and sound bites: narrative relevance, conspicuousness, and extractability. Narrative relevance relates to a quote's ability to meld with the story-telling function of a news report; the quote must contribute to the unity of the story. Conspicuousness refers to a quote's sensational nature; the more sensational or dramatic a quote is the more likely it will be chosen. Extractability refers to simplicity with which a quote can be taken from a longer interview and "dropped in" to a news report; quotes requiring a significant amount of contextualization are seldom chosen.

Others have considered the role of framing the news report as a whole. In his study of television news, Iyengar (1991:14) found that television reports are framed in either an episodic or a thematic fashion with episodic coverage taking the form "of a case study or event oriented report and depicts public issues in terms of concrete instances". He adds that episodic television stories are often "on-the-scene coverage of 'hard news' and are often visually very compelling". Conversely, thematic coverage "places public issues in some more general or abstract context" (Iyengar, 1991:14). One reason, he argues, that episodic reports dominate in television is that thematic reports "related background material would require in-depth, interpretive analysis, which would take longer to prepare and would be more susceptible to charges of journalistic bias" (Iyengar, 1991: 14). Iyengar (1991: 14, 52) believes that the overwhelming number of episodic stories told on television news—because they are void of situational context—has led to the popular notion that individuals, and not problems with the system, are to be blamed for troublesome social issues like crime, poverty, and the like.

Arguing in a similar fashion to Iyengar (1991), Haller (1996) calls journalism an event-driven profession. And in his opinion, this emphasis on events over issues serves to marginalize social groups or movements because they become known for their actions and not for the reason behind their actions (cf. Bowie, 1999; Entman & Rojecki, 1993).

Others have expanded on Entman's idea of inclusion and omission applying it to journalists' selection of sources. For example, the news media's dominant reliance on "elite" media sources, such as institutional experts, business owners, and government officials versus "people on the street" or unofficial stakeholders has been found to present a one-sided view of society that diminishes or silences the views of the less powerful (Soloski 1989). Nelson, Clawson and Oxley (1997) note that sometimes journalists construct frames unintentionally when they seek opinions from experts. The researchers observe that expert sources may have a certain perspective that they wish to promote and often relish the opportunity to do so when the news media allows it. Goldberg (2001) posits that it is often the case that journalists promote their own interpretation of an issue by simply finding an "expert" who says what *they* would like to say.

Despite its shortcomings, the process of framing is necessary to the production and consumption of news. As news consumers we want journalists to go to events, as our proxy, and tell us "just the important information" from that experience. We do not have the desire or the time to hear every detail—we want the "irrelevant information" left out. However, reporters run into trouble with regard to framing when they allow their personal biases to skew what should be their neutral relaying of an event or issue.

We expect our journalists to be as objective as possible when relaying information so that we might come to our own opinions and decisions about events taking place around us. In cases where a hard-news reporter (as opposed to a designated opinion writer or columnist) interprets an issue through his/her own personal worldview, he/she takes away the audience's right to decide how they feel about the information (Kuypers, 2005). On the other hand, according to Kuypers (2005), a neutral or objective frame relays to the audience the ideas that the subjects (that is, the people the story is about) are putting forward, as *they intend* those ideas to be understood. The ideas of the subjects are not interpreted or filtered by the reporter according to his/her personal worldview. An objective news frame will also place events in perspective by providing relevant background and will allow those who are criticized in the body of the report to respond fully to the accusations of their critics. Finally, in cases where opinion, and not fact, is relayed, an objective frame clearly distinguished it as opinion.

Kuyper's (2005) explanation of an objective news frame is in close alignment with what Bennet (2001) defines as fair and balanced reporting. He writes news coverage can be considered balanced and fair when it meets the following criteria:

1. The professional journalist assumes the role of a politically neutral adversary, critically examining both sides of the issue and thereby assuring the impartial coverage.
2. The journalist resists the temptation to discuss the seamy sensationalistic side of the news by observing prevailing social standards of decency and good taste.
3. The truthfulness and factuality of the news is guaranteed by the use of documentary reporting practices that permit reporters to transmit to the public "just the facts," or only what they can observe or support with credible sources and physical evidence.
4. News objectivity is reinforced further by the use of a common or standardized format for reporting the news: the story, and the use of the inverted pyramid with the story (Bennet, 2001: 186).

Entman (1991: 7) states that the influence of a particular frame increases through "repetition, placement, and reinforcing [cultural] associations" (cf. Entman, 1993). Gamson (1992: 135) notes that it is at this point that certain frames have "a natural advantage [over others] because their ideas and language resonate with a broader...culture. Resonances increase the appeal of a frame, making it appear natural and familiar". Similarly, Condit (1990: 46-47) found that certain frames resonate or align with public values because they are:

Derived from widely based political and moral authorities who represent the experiences and interests of all members of the community. In contrast, illegitimate frames—those likely to be subject to effective argumentative challenge—feature the 'teachings' of only one partisan group in the community (thereby getting us to act in their interests by passing off 'their heritage' as 'ours').

By Condit's (1990) criteria, the "teachings" and "heritage" of evangelicals—a minority with unconventional mores—would qualify as "illegitimate frames"; thus, the chance of evangelicals' "version of reality" taking hold or even gaining significant ground culturally in Canada would seem to be slim indeed. Hiltgarner and Bosk (1988)

identified other elements of resonant frames such as: generalizability, an appearance of common sense, and the application of concrete facts coupled with emotional rhetoric or endorsement by official sources.

The influence of a frame is also increased when it goes unopposed by another frame with a competing message; that is, when it enjoys “exclusion of interpretation” (Entman, 1993: 53). Thus, in so far as a news frame presents one version of events, the more often it is used exclusively in relation to a specific situation the more natural or normal its version of reality becomes: used again and again to the exclusion of all others it teaches the audience the “one way” to think about an issue.

Building on Entman’s (1993) idea of the naturalization of certain frames, Scheufele (1999) divides the framing process into four increasingly influential stages. “Frame Building” occurs as journalists construct stories; next, “frame setting” takes place when those frames are “set” upon the public by mass dissemination. These frames become part of our thinking in a stage called “individual-level effects framing,” which results in a final stage where frames are engrained on society and become “societal frames”. Once engrained on society, the journalists themselves are influenced by the dominant frames and begin to incorporate them into new stories at the original “frame building stage” (Scheufele, 1999).

The final stage of Scheufele’s (1999) model is interesting because it reminds us that journalists are also consumers of their own product and subject to its effects. It also suggests why certain news events get covered so similarly by different media outlets: one journalist sees a colleague’s story expressing a complicated concept in a catchy, easy-to-understand way and then, for expediency, frames his/her own story similarly. Audiences, too, appreciate the familiarity of an established frame because it allows them to quickly “jump” into the story. Stories not following the established template are less familiar and thus less comprehensible for audiences.

The “societal frames” found in the last stage of Scheufele’s (1999) process corresponds to what cultural critics call a discursive formation (Hall, 2001[1997]). A brief explanation of the latter provides a deeper understanding of the former. The discursive formation, like the societal frame, forms as a result of a process of reflexivity. The discourse (or in Scheufele’s model, the frame) travels through the media to the public

and back again—time and again—purifying and solidifying itself, accepting fewer and fewer interpretations until it becomes the “normal” or “natural” way of thinking (Hall 2001[1997]; cf. Gee, 1999: 70).

The notion of societal frames once again brings to the fore the idea that news frames reinforce dominant ideologies to the exclusion of other ways of thinking. To elaborate on this pertinent disposition of frame theory, it is useful to review the two main strands of the literature on the ideology of news frames.

The first of these theoretical threads—rooted in Marxist theories that stress economic determinism—focuses on the news media’s role in advancing overtly hegemonic frames. By hegemonic frames we mean those frames that serve the interests of social elites who benefit from existing social, political, economic, and cultural arrangements. Working from a media hegemonic perspective, researchers have found close parallels between dominant news frames and official government positions. In the U.S. parallels have been noticed for such issues as: air strikes on enemy aircraft, dissident social movements, labour disputes, and the Persian Gulf War (Carragee, 1991; Entman, 1991; Gitlan, 1980; Hall, 1977; 1978; Hallin, 1986; Hufker & Cavender, 1990; Solomon, 1992). Journalists have been found to support the views of official sources even when non-official sources are available to provide alternative frames (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987). Furthermore, when journalists do include non-official frames, they tend to privilege official frames by making them “the starting point for discussing an issue” (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987: 166).

However, there are those who argue that the media hegemony thesis oversimplifies the relationship between news and ideology. Carragee (1993; 1991), for example, found hegemonic frames were more prevalent when an issue was tied to the wellbeing of the nation; conversely, those issues deemed peripheral to national interests were given more ideological latitude. Altheide (1984) cites several examples, including the Watergate scandal, to show that journalists are not predisposed to support the status quo. Severin and Tankard (2001: 282) remain agnostic on the matter:

The idea of media hegemony is a difficult one to test with research. Although suggesting a powerful influence, it is somewhat vague in its actual implications. If it is true, it is describing such a pervasive phenomenon that it becomes difficult to study because is nearly impossible to set up a control group that is not subject to the effect being researched.

As an alternative to the Marxist-influenced theories, some studies on the ideology of news frames have focused on how news distributes and reinforces cultural values. These studies posit that news marginalizes unpopular societal groups in its representations and thereby limits their access to economic and cultural resources (e.g., Binder, 1993; Fowler 1979; Hall, 1977; Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke, & Roberts, 1978; Hodge & Cress, 1979). On the framing power of journalists, Nelkin (1991: 295) remarks, they can “trivialize an event or render it important; marginalize some groups, empower others; define an issue as an urgent problem or reduce it to a routine”.

Volosinov (1986) argued the extent to which a journalist agrees with/supports the ideology of a group can be discerned by examining the quotes that he/she puts into his/her news report. Those groups with whom the reporter shares similar ideologies will most often have their words reproduced verbatim; that is, the reporter will quote those sources directly and extensively. In letting the source “speak” in his/her own words, the journalist imbues those words with a factual authority; hence, they are taken more seriously by the news audience. Conversely, those sources with whom the reporter does not share sympathies, will have their message filtered through the paraphrased narration of the report; that is, they will tend not to be quoted directly. Paraphrased ideas are taken less seriously by the audience.

Volosinov’s theory has been supported in part by an experimental study by Gibson and Zillman (1993). It was found that readers and radio listeners were more apt to believe claims enclosed in direct quotations/news clips than those presented as paraphrases. The researchers posit that “paraphrasing may be perceived as diminishing the level of veracity, if only because it is recognized that the original account was recast and may have been tampered with—inadvertently or deliberately” (Gibson & Zillman, 1993: 795).

In relation to journalists “adjusting” the content of their news report to best reflect their own worldviews, Schudson (1995: 13) found that reporters feel justified in vacating their journalistic obligations to fairness and accuracy when covering groups or individuals that they positioned in the “zone of deviance”. Groups located outside the mainstream “can be ridiculed, marginalized, or trivialized without giving a hearing to

‘both sides’ because reporters instinctively realize that [these groups] are beyond the pale” (Schudson, 1995: 13; cf. 1989; 1978).

A well-known study that examines ideology from the cultural perspective is Hall and colleagues (1978) study of press coverage of a juvenile crime wave in postwar Britain. By approaching the notion of “deviance” as a cultural construct, the study illustrates how news media representations of deviance promote larger hegemonic interests—in particular, the maintenance of social order and mobilization of support for oppressive political actions. Hall et al (1978) emphasize the process by which news discourse circulates and reflects cultural values and ideologies and also defines, specifies, and legitimates them (cf. Hall, 1982).

Binder’s (1993) comparative study of news media framing of heavy metal versus rap music offers a specific example of the way in which news frames promote cultural values that lead to unequal treatment of selected social groups. She states the mainstream press, “invoked different frames to address the ‘white’ genre of heavy metal music than they used to discuss the ‘black’ genre of rap music” (Binder, 1993: 764). Furthermore, she continues, the news media’s use of “racially charged frames” to communicate the meaning and implications of rap music to mainstream Americans, reinforced established cultural “myths” and stereotypes about white versus black youths (Binder, 1993: 764).

Ball-Rokeach and Rokeach (1987, 1984) and Ball-Rokeach and colleagues (1990) have added significantly to the literature surrounding framing and cultural values. Their empirical work has demonstrated that the media emphasize and reinforce certain cultural values (e.g., honesty or equality) and then uses those values to shape public understandings of social problems and their solutions.

The assertion that the news media marginalize and trivialize those groups that are at odds with popular ideologies/the values of the news professionals themselves is supported by an impressive body of research (Carragee, 1991; Gamson, 1995; Halloran, Elliott & Murdock, 1970; Miljan & Cooper, 2003a; Morris, 1974; Tuchman, 1974). However, some media scholars suggest that social “out-groups” occasionally have opportunities to frame their own positions in the national media. For example, Barker-Plummer (1995: 309), after analyzing the strategies employed by the women’s movement over the course of its history, determined that groups outside the mainstream culture can

“potentially at least, learn about news organizations’ routines, practices and discursive logics, and take part in framing themselves” (cf. Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, & Sasson, 1992; Foss, 1996).

While in some cases the news media’s privileging of one group’s message over another’s may be done intentionally, in others the muting is systemic in origin. That is, in some cases the normal functions of the news media—its processes, rules, and outputs—actually constitute barriers to full and equal participation in society’s discourse. For example, television news reports typically have a very short turn-around time. That is, from the time a TV reporter is assigned his/her story, to the time that story makes it to air, is very short; often no more than eight hours. A reporter working on a story about youth violence in the inner-city may want to interview gang members from the area to get “their side of the story” but is unable to track them down during his/her shift because most live a nocturnal existence and sleep during the day. So, instead, the reporter schedules interviews with those he/she can reach: typically, the police, social workers and other “officials” who work regular hours. Even the “packaging” of news reports effects which groups will be heard and how. A 90-second story on television or a 500-word piece in a newspaper leaves little room for a rich mix of opinions; the presentation of one pro and a one con position on any particular issue is usually what conventional time or space allows. Similarly, Lormier and Gasher (2001) add that everyday news organizations are presented with an overwhelming number of story options and choices must be made; simply, no newscast is long enough and no newspaper has enough pages to accommodate all the potential stories that *could* be covered; therefore, some must be ignored.

The Power of Frames—Some Illustrative Examples

By presenting some illustrative examples, the clearest understanding of framing and social constructionism can be gained. Numerous studies have shown that frames in news reports establish the criteria by which audiences evaluate and interpret an issue. Kahneman and Taversky (1984) showed the dramatic impact that the most subtle framing selections and emphases have on human perceptions. In their experiment the researchers asked subjects to choose between two options for dealing with a rare Asian disease. When an option was framed in terms of *lives saved*, nearly three-quarters of all

respondents selected this course of action. Yet, when the same option—this time framed in terms of *lives lost*—was offered to a second group, only 22% of subjects chose it. Another experiment by Kahneman, Slovic, and Tversky (1982) found that framing cues, such as simply labeling an expenditure a “tax” rather than a “charge,” biased respondents’ choices and evaluations.

Experiments conducted by other researchers have yielded similar findings: medical patients and physicians were significantly less attracted to cancer surgery as a means to a cure when risk was framed in terms of mortality instead of survival rates (McNeil, Parker, Sox, & Tversky, 1982). In an experiment involving television news Iyengar (1990) found that viewers ascribed blame for various social problems to society as whole when the problems were framed as group predicaments generating from systemic shortcomings. Conversely, viewers saw individuals experiencing poverty or unemployment as responsible for their own situation when the reports were framed as personal problems.

One study is of particular interest because of its affinity to this current research; conducted by Nelson et al (1987), it focused on a group who—like evangelicals in Canada—hold views and values that are at odds with majority opinion. Specifically, the researchers conducted an experiment to examine the effect of news frames on tolerance for the white supremacy organization the Ku Klux Klan. Participants in the experiment were put into groups and then asked to watch a videotape of actual news footage. Both tapes began with the same generic news stories but ended with a different report about a KKK march. One of the reports framed the rally as a free speech issue, and the other framed it as a disruption of public order. The researchers found that “participants who viewed the free speech story expressed more tolerance for the Klan than those participants who watched the public order story” (Nelson et al, 1997: 567). As a second stage of investigation, Nelson et al (1997) conducted another similar experiment. To exert greater control over the information, researchers created two print news stories and placed them on a bogus internet news site. These “faked” stories focused on a request from the KKK to hold a speech and rally on a university campus. Similar to the TV news reports used in experiment one, the first story was constructed around a free speech frame and the second around a public order frame. Those participants who read the free-speech-

framed-story expressed more tolerance for the Klan than those who read the public-order-framed story (Nelson et al, 1997).

2.3.4 Central Theoretical Statements

The literature review above can be condensed into several key theoretical statements which, in turn, link directly to the hypotheses outlined in the section below. It was noted that in Canada, research into the relationship between religion and media is scarce; Canadian studies that *were* conducted in the past examined disparate faiths as a monolith. Accordingly, most of what is known about news coverage of evangelicals comes from studies performed in the U.S. Those American studies have shown that news reports about evangelicals tend to lack a spiritual dimension, are few in number, focus on negative situations and depict adherents negatively. Lack of training in the field of religion and an aversion to subjective subject matter were presented as reasons why journalists fail to delve into the spiritual side of an issue. Overrepresentation of evangelicals in negative situations was attributed, in large part, to journalists' desire to cover issues and events that reflect conventional news criteria. The tension that exists between journalists and evangelicals, as evidenced in biased reportage, was linked to the divergent value systems of these two communities: elite journalists were found to be far more secular and socially liberal than the public and, by extension, evangelicals. Furthermore, it was determined that the attitudes journalists hold influence the stories they produce. It was noted that in terms of attitudes, journalists employed at Canada's public broadcaster, the CBC, are more left-leaning than those working for private sector networks.

Regarding the scholarly underpinnings upon which this current study relies, agenda-setting and frame theory were described. In particular, the notion that frames use inclusion and exclusion of information, key words and symbols, source selection and quote selection to promote dominant culture and, conversely, to marginalize fringe groups, was highlighted. Furthermore, Entman's (1993; 1991) notion that the influence of a frame increases when it is used frequently and exclusively was also cited, as was Scheufele's (1999) idea that frames become fixed or "set" over time thereby allowing for little variation of interpretation. Finally, for the purpose of clarity and comparison the

concept of neutral framing was defined. It was said to occur when a news story presents the message of its subjects (i.e., those serving as the focus of the news coverage) as they themselves intended it to be understood.

2.4 Restating the Overall Objective, Specific Objectives, and Positing Hypotheses

Having presented the extant, relevant scholarship related to this research, this study's overall objective and specific objectives are re-stated below and its hypotheses are posited.

2.4.1 Overall Objective

This study argues that by identifying and analyzing the frames used in Canadian television news coverage of evangelical Christians the researcher can determine the extent to which journalists succeed or fail in attempts at objectivity, balance and fairness when portraying this faith group. Furthermore, this study posits that by surveying the Canadian journalists responsible for producing the news coverage of evangelical Christians the researcher can determine whether the attitudes these journalists hold about religion and evangelicals influences their coverage of this faith group.

2.4.2 Specific Objectives

Specific Objective 1: Through frame analysis, identify and analyze the frequency, characteristics and meanings of the frames employed in the TV news reports about evangelical Christians to evaluate whether this faith group is portrayed in a predominantly negative, positive or neutral fashion.

Specific Objective 2: Discover whether the frames changed over time and if so, how?

Specific Objective 3: Determine whether the three networks framed evangelical Christians differently over the 11-year (132 month) period.

Specific Objective 4: Through survey, identify and analyze the prevalence and characteristics of the attitudes held by Canadian national television journalists toward

religion and evangelicals to evaluate whether their attitudes are predominantly negative, positive or neutral.

Specific Objective 5: Determine whether journalists employed at each of the three networks hold similar or different attitudes towards religion and evangelicals.

Specific Objective 6: Compare the findings from the frame analysis to the findings from the survey to determine whether linkages exist between the way journalists' report about evangelicals and the way they feel about evangelicals.

2.4.3 Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: National, nightly television news reports will most often employ frames that depict evangelical Christians negatively.

Hypothesis 2: The frames employed in TV news reports about evangelical Christians will not change dramatically from year to year but will remain relatively constant.

Hypothesis 3: The three networks will frame evangelical Christians differently over the 11-year time period with Canada's public broadcaster, CBC TV, framing evangelicals more negatively than the private networks CTV and Global.

Hypothesis 4: National television journalists will have little interest in religion themselves and will view evangelicals and their tenets of belief negatively.

Hypothesis 5: Journalists at the three networks will hold different attitudes toward religion and evangelicals with employees of CBC feeling least interested in religion and most negative toward evangelicals.

Hypothesis 6: A comparison of the findings from the frame analysis to the findings from the survey will show that a link exists between how journalists report about evangelicals and how they feel about evangelicals.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

This study involved two major research components: a frame analysis of television news reports about evangelical Christians and survey of national television journalists regarding their attitudes toward religion and evangelicals. A comparison of the findings from the frame analysis and the survey allowed the researcher to determine if there are linkages between how national television journalists feel about evangelicals and how they portray them in the stories they produce.

The frame analysis for this study employed a quantitative method of data collection and analysis and the survey used a qualitative methodology. Combining quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis, as this study does, provides the researcher with multiple perspectives and therefore controls for systematic errors inherent in any single technique (Hedley, 1984).

3.1 Frame Analysis

This component of the study investigated how evangelical Christians were framed in the nightly, national television news coverage of Canada's three largest networks, CBC TV, CTV and Global TV between January 1, 1994 and December 31, 2004. Babbie (1995) and Hedley (1984) note that multi-year explorations are preferred over static cross-sectional designs because measurements over time reduce the influence of anomalous historical and social events.

For the purposes of this study nightly, national news is that which has typically been aired at 6:30 on Global, 10:00 p.m. on CBC TV and 11:00 p.m. on CTV. Briefly, during the mid-1990s CBC TV changed the time of its national news program from 10:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Former Global News producer Carmen Harvey (personal communication, October 17, 2005) states that prior to 2001, Global's national newscast was not available in the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia.

National nightly news from these three networks was chosen because it is the most influential. Combined, privately held CTV and Global and publicly funded CBC TV have over 60% of the market share (Statistics Canada, 2005; Viessing, 2001). Over three

quarters (77%) of Canadians regularly watch nightly national news programs on CBC, CTV or Global to keep abreast of current events compared to 70% who read a daily newspaper, 58% who listen to radio news, and 27% who regularly look to the internet for news (Mazzuca, 2001). Of the news shows available to Canadians, those that air nationally on CBC TV, CTV, and Global TV reach the largest audiences with ratings averaging between 700,000 and 1 million viewers per night (Bureau of Broadcast Measurement; Nielsen Media Research, 2006). Conversely, news programs on other smaller Canadian networks such as CityTV, A-Channel, and the CH affiliation of stations—which tend to focus on local and regional issues—glean significantly smaller audiences (Bureau of Broadcast Measurement, 2006; Nielsen Media Research, 2006).

It is not sheer audience size alone that makes the national news casts of CBC, CTV and Global influential. Research by Stempel (1985) determined that elite national news outlets set the news agenda (both what will be covered and how it will be covered) for smaller news outlets in the rest of the country.

Miljan and Cooper (2003a) agree with Stempel (1985) but go further arguing that national television news, specifically, sets the agenda that other *national media* will follow. Citing examples from business and politics, they explain individuals or organizations that secure TV coverage for their cause “are more likely to obtain the outcome they desire because television attention is usually followed by newspaper, radio and magazine play” (Miljan & Cooper, 2003a: 31).

3.1.1 Data Pool

Full-text print transcripts of the television news reports were the artifacts examined for this study. The transcripts from CTV’s news reports were obtained through the Proquest CBCA Current Events Database. Full-text transcripts from Global and CBC TV were obtained from the news archivists-librarians at those networks.

For several reasons, a researcher conducting a longitudinal study of Canadian television news stories must use transcripts of the stories and not video dubs. Unlike in the United States where dubs of news reports are available from the Vanderbilt Video Archive, Canada has no independent body or group that records and stores television newscasts. While the networks themselves archive many of their news reports in video

form, some stories—deemed to be of “lesser” interest—are not saved indefinitely on video. Even when a story is saved on video it is difficult to access as the TV networks do not make their archives open to the public—not even for academic research purposes. Dubs of specific stories can be obtained (if they survive) for a fee of about \$50; however, a request for dubs of numerous stories that have aired over a 10-year period would not be approved. Such a request would not be granted because it would prove “too daunting a task for tape library personnel who are already busy with other duties” (Noseworthy, Kelly [Archivist, Global TV]. Personal Communication, April 11, 2005).

Miljan and Cooper (2003a) argue that visuals need not be included in an analysis of TV news stories because the focus, themes and intent of a TV news report will come out clearly in the anchor’s lead, reporter’s voice over and interview clips—all of which are transcribed in the text of the script. They note that the influence of images is minimal given that “the number of visual accompanying a TV report are relatively small in comparison to the number of pictures of people simply talking”(Miljan & Cooper, 2003a: 33). This opinion finds support in the research of Pride and Wamsley (1972) and Kerr (2003); their respective studies found visuals did not significantly effect whether a news story was perceived to be positive or negative in its portrayal of an issue or group.

To be selected for inclusion in this study, the script of a news report had to contain one of the following key words (or its close variant): evangelical, fundamentalist Christian, conservative Christian, Christian right, Baptist, Pentecostal, or born-again. Christian fundamentalist and its variants were searched because, as noted previously, fundamentalists Christians are a subgroup of evangelicals. The Baptist and Pentecostal denominations house the country’s largest number of evangelical members (Bibby, 1987; Reimer, 2003; cf. Statistics Canada, 2003). Conservative Christian, Christian right and born-again were searched because all are commonly used to describe evangelical Christians (Rawlyk, 1996; Reimer, 2003). However, if a report described an individual or group as Conservative Christian, Christian right, or born-again and also as Catholic that script was not included in the sample.

3.1.2 Validity and Reliability of the Frame Analysis

It has been argued that the validity of research is an essential aspect in accepting the outcome of the research. In this regard, Krippendorff (1980: 155) states that “validity designates that quality of research results with leads one to accept indisputable facts”. Moreover, Riffe, Lacy and Fico (1988: 135) note the importance of validity in social science by affirming the following: “The social science notion of validity relates more rigorously to procedures for obtaining information so that appropriate inferences and interpretations may be made”. In order to ensure the validity of the frame analysis portion of this study, the entire population of scripts was analyzed by two coders: the researcher and a trained undergraduate student. The coders trained over two days for about six hours in total; the training method proposed by Lombard, Snyder-Duc & Bracken (2002) was followed. Specifically, the morning of the first day involved familiarizing the student coder with the concept and theory of media framing, explaining who Canadian evangelicals are and what they believe, and outlining key concepts and ideas related to television news and TV news scripts.

Reliable research supposes to produce similar results over and over again. Kaplan and Goldsen (1965: 83) point out the importance of reliability by stating that “reliable data, by definition, are data that remain constant throughout variations in measuring process”. To establish reliability for the frame analysis portion of the study, the afternoon of the first day was dedicated to studying, discussing and adapting the coding instrument. The reliability of the coding instrument itself was informally assessed using a sample of 20 “trial” TV news scripts. The scripts were not part of the 1994 to 2004 sample to be analyzed for the study; instead, they were randomly selected news reports that aired before January 1994 or after December 2004. To refine the coding instrument, the researcher and coder would first code one of the “trial” scripts and then compare their findings. Where inconsistencies occurred the researcher and coder discussed the disconnect and, if needed, added to or changed the coding instrument.

On the second day the reliability of the coding instrument was formally assessed using a pilot test with the coders working independently. A high level of agreement between coders was achieved. When performing the actual analysis, the coders again worked independently without consultation. Inter-coder reliability was 88% using Holsti’s formula

(Lombard et al, 2002). Inconsistencies between coders were resolved through discussion, yielding one set of data.

3.1.3 Coding Categories—Nominal Variables

The examination of the reports used two levels of analysis: the overall news report and the individual news frames. All the news reports were coded for several nominal variables at the first stage of analysis (for a full description of these categories see the Coder's Guidebook, Appendix 1). This manifest content included: the date the report aired, the network that aired it, the number of words in the news report, the format of the news report and the overall topic or main focus of the news report as it related to evangelicals.

Regarding the format of the news reports, the stories were placed into one of four categories. They were:

- 1) Anchor Read—shorter stories that are read live by the anchor during the newscast to the viewing audience (only the anchor lines are seen and heard).
- 2) Anchor Read to a Clip—similar to the Anchor read in that the story is read live by the anchor. However, at one point in the story (it can be right at the beginning, in the middle or at the end) the anchor's lines are interrupted/replaced by a pre-recorded interview clip from someone else. The clip is generally a 10 to 15-second quote from someone who was interviewed in the field/on the scene.
- 3) Reporter's Pre-recorded Package—these are reporter-based stories introduced by the anchor (when he/she reads the lead to the story) but "told" by the reporter. They are generally the longest type of news story. They feature narration by the reporter and clips (quotes) from several different sources. A reporter's pre-recorded report is easily identified because the anchor always names the reporter who is "bringing us the story".

- 4) Live Interview/Live Commentary—the live interview is easily identifiable because it appears in question and answer format. Generally, it involves the anchor asking questions of an in-studio guest or of someone linked to the news station electronically. The live commentary involves a single speaker, most often the anchor or someone else from the network, delivering a prepared speech on an issue.

Regarding topic of news reports, Lichter, Lichter and Amundson (2000) and Kerr (2003) note the religion coverage in general, and of evangelicals specifically, tends to focus on a handful of subject areas. By adapting and combining the ideas of these researchers a list of possible topics was created. They were:

- 1) Evangelicals involved in religious observance/theological discussion
- 2) Evangelicals involved in internal church business/church governance (not involving doctrine or theology)
- 3) Evangelicals involved in charity work/volunteer work/mission work
- 4) Evangelicals involved in proselytizing/ “witnessing”
- 5) Evangelicals involved in social actions/protest (but not in the courts, not related to education and not with an overtly political focus)
- 6) Evangelicals involved in political action/issues (but not related to education and not enacted through the courts)
- 7) Evangelicals involved in legal actions/issues (but not related to criminal activity and not related to education)
- 8) Evangelicals involved in educational actions/issues

9) Evangelicals involved in criminal or immoral actions/issues

10) The life or exploits of a famous evangelical (i.e., TV evangelist, entertainer or big business owner)

If a coder felt that none of the topics on the list applied to his/her story, a final category, “other,” could have been chosen.

3.1.4 Coding Categories—Frames

The second stage of analysis focused on news frames, using frames as the unit of analysis. It has been observed that the weakness of many framing studies is that they do not explain “which mechanisms were used to arrive at particular frames and, how [the frames] have been measured empirically” (Koenig, 2004: para. 2). To combat the charge of imprecise or capricious identification of frames it has been suggested that coders be presented with a list of identifiable frame attributes which serve as “manifest indicators for the identification of frames” (Koenig, 2004: para. 7; cf. de Vreese, Claes, Jochen, & Semetko, 2001; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Tankard, 2001).

To combat the charge of ill-defined measurement, it has been suggested that researchers employ a rating scale to evaluate the negative, neutral or positive qualities of those frames that are identified (Koenig, 2004; cf. Kerr, 2003; Kerr & Moy, 2002). Kerr (2003) and Kerr and Moy (2002) in their respective studies of fundamentalist Christians in the news, employed both an inventory of potential frames and a rating scale. High intercoder reliabilities in their studies (81% and 82 % respectively) suggested that this method is reliable. With a mind to achieving similar success, the frame analysis portion of this study was modeled on the coding instruments used by these two American researchers. Specifically, coders for this study were given a pre-made list that categorized the numerous ways evangelicals *could be* framed in a news report. The coders’ guidebook outlined in detail keywords, situations and various other devices that could indicate the presence of specific frames. Tankard (2001) states that a list of frames with their attributes may be derived ahead of time based on theoretical or research literature about a topic; the frames on this study’s list were arrived at based on historical

analysis (Clarke, 1996; Murphy 1996; Noll, 1997; 1992; Stackhouse, 2000; 1993), similar academic exploration done in the U.S. (Buddenbaum, 1990; Garrett-Medill, 2000; Graham, 2004; Graham & Kaminski, 1993; Kerr, 2003; Kerr & Moy, 2002; Lichter et al, 2000), sociological research done in Canada (Adams, 2003; 1997; Beyer, 2000; Bibby, 1993; 1987; Grenville, 2000; Hoover, 2000; Katerberg, 2000; Rawlyk, 1996; Reimer, 2003; 2000a; 2000b), interviews with prominent Canadian evangelicals (Emmanuel, Tristan. Personal Communication, May 12, 2004; Epp-Buckingham, Janet. Personal Communication, March 13, 2003; Mainse, Ron. Personal Communication, October 12, 2004; VanGinkel, Aileen. Personal Communication, March 12, 2004) and a pilot study done on Canadian news reports.

Twenty-four frames were presented in 12 pairs as opposites. Specifically, coders were to determine if a news report framed evangelicals as:

- 1) Intolerant or Tolerant. To identify frames from this category, coders looked for evangelicals being portrayed as able to sympathize (or not) with beliefs or values contrary to their own.
- 2) Insincere or Sincere. For this category, coders analyzed portrayals of evangelicals involved in preaching, decorous or controlled worship, proselytizing, charity work or community outreach paying particular attention to the implicit and explicit references made regarding the motivation behind the evangelicals' words and deeds.
- 3) Unintelligent or Intelligent. Here, coders looked for evangelicals being portrayed in terms of their intellectual ability or education level.
- 4) Neglectful or Responsible. Here, coders looked for evangelicals being portrayed in terms of their obligations or duties to themselves, their jobs, their families and society.
- 5) Pushy with social views or Respectful advocating social views. Here, coders looked for evangelicals being portrayed as activists (e.g. involved in marches, petitions, protests) with the goal of advancing their own social views and values.

6) Threatening politically or Reassuring politically. Here, coders analyzed portrayals of evangelicals involved in politics or politicians who were evangelicals.

7) Criminally-minded or Law abiding. Here, coders analyzed portrayals of evangelicals involved in ethical dilemmas, courts, criminal activities or situations where the law or legal matters were the focus.

8) Superstitious or Spiritual. Here, coders analyzed portrayals of evangelicals involved in, or talking about, the supernatural (e.g. ecstatic or boisterous worship, emotional prayer, spontaneous healings, speaking in tongues, prophecy or being “slain in the spirit”).

9) Vengeful or Forgiving. Here, coders looked for situations where evangelicals were wronged or perceived that they had been wronged and analyzed how the evangelicals were portrayed as responding to the offending party.

10) Un-Canadian or Canadian. Here, coders looked for evangelicals being portrayed as “fitting in” or “not fitting in” with the rest of Canadian society. In particular, they looked for Canadian evangelicals being portrayed as more culturally “American” than Canadian.

11) Deserving of Media and Societal Bias or Undeserving of Media and Societal Bias. Here, coders analyzed situations where evangelicals were portrayed as being subjected to societal or media bias (specific references to societal or media bias would be made).

12) Holding Outdated Values and Beliefs or Holding Contemporary Values and Beliefs. For this category, coders looked for evangelicals being portrayed in terms of the current relevance of their values and beliefs.

(For a full description of these categories see the Coder’s Guidebook, Appendix 1.)

A brief example illustrates how theoretical material could translate into a frame on a list. Several researchers (Clarke, 1996; Murphy, 1996; Hoover, 2000; Noll, 1992; 1997; Reimer, 2003; Stackhouse, 1993) observed that Canadian evangelicals—in the past and the present—have been characterized by the media, mainline churches, or by the population at large as being “too American”. Specifically, it is Canadian evangelicals open (and sometimes boisterous) proclamation of their faith, and their willingness to let their faith inform their social and political activism, that is viewed as distinctly un-Canadian behaviour. It is popular convention in Canada that faith is best when quiet, decorous and left out of the public square (Clarke, 1996; Hoover, 2000; McCarthy, 2000; Reimer, 2003). The observations of these researchers lead to the inclusion of the “Un-Canadian/Canadian” frames on the coders’ list of possible frames.

To facilitate measurement, each pair of frames was placed on an ordinal scale. The frame from the pair that expressed the negative quality (e.g., intolerant) was stationed on the left of the scale where it was subdivided into its very negative and somewhat negative manifestations (e.g., very intolerant; somewhat intolerant). Similarly, the frame that expressed the positive quality was stationed on the right side of the scale and subdivided into its somewhat positive and very positive manifestations (e.g. somewhat tolerant; very tolerant). A rating of balanced was positioned at mid-scale. Each position on the scale was given a value starting at 1 on the far left and moving through to 5 on the right. For example, the opposites Intolerant and Tolerant appeared on the code sheet as:

Very Intolerant	Somewhat Intolerant	Balanced	Somewhat Tolerant	Very Tolerant	DID NOT MENTION
1	2	3	4	5	

To increase the validity of their ratings choice, coders were required to justify their decisions by providing textual evidence and, when necessary, explanatory notes.

3.2 Survey

This part of the study employed a questionnaire administered by e-mail or telephone to national newsroom personnel at CBC, CTV and Global television networks; the survey’s

goal was to investigate the journalists' attitudes toward religion in general and evangelicals specifically.

3.2.1 Validity and Reliability of the Survey

In order to develop a valid survey instrument, a first draft of the questionnaire was prepared and distributed to a panel of experts for review and modification. The panel included the thesis advisors for this study (Prof J.D. Froneman and Dr L.M. Fourie), executives from the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, an experienced professor of social science research methods, and select news media personnel. This panel of experts helped to refine the questionnaire in regard to clarity, design, length and appropriateness for the purpose of this study.

Montgomery and Crittenden (1977) state when using a survey consisting of open-ended questions, reliability is a measure of the consistency of the question's results. They define consistency as the ability of the respondents to understand the true meaning of the questions as they are stated. They note that random error is the most common cause for diminished questionnaire reliability; it occurs when questions are poorly worded, or when they are presented in a confusing fashion (i.e., an earlier question unintentionally negates a later one). The researchers suggest conducting a "pilot test" with the proposed questionnaire on a sample group to determine reliability. The consistency of the measurement is tested by having the sample group take the survey twice (test, retest). If the results are consistent, then the instrument may be considered reliable. Montgomery and Crittenden's (1977) procedure was used to establish the reliability of this study's survey. A small test group of local journalists were tested and retested. Results showed the instrument was reliable.

Regarding the format of this survey, Gray and Guppy (2003: 151) note that surveys administered by e-mail or phone "may have lower rates of measurement error" because the distance between researcher and respondent "eliminates many of the non-verbal cues associated with personal interviews (where interviewer appearance and gesture have influences)".

3.2.2 *Participants*

While national television reporters for CBC, CTV and Global networks were the prime targets for this survey, producers, writers, and managers (that is, anyone with a role in the creation or revising of the *written* content of the national news reports) were also asked to participate. Ninety-seven potential candidates were identified and each was sent an information letter on June 16, 2006, via e-mail. The letter outlined the study and asked for their participation (see Appendix 2). E-mail addresses for many of the national news personnel were available from their networks' web sites. As a former television reporter, the researcher was also able to use his contacts in the industry to procure those journalists' e-mail addresses not posted on the network web sites.

Journalists interested in participating in the study were asked to reply, via e-mail, to the information letter; they were to specify whether they wanted to be e-mailed the survey questionnaire (to be completed on their computer and returned via e-mail) or whether they wanted to be contacted by phone to complete the questionnaire verbally. The e-mail and telephone survey instruments contained identical open-ended questions (see Appendix 3 and 4). Pruitt, Koerner, and Goldstein (1995) state that when attempting to gauge the attitudes of a sample population, it can be advantageous for a researcher to use a relatively unstructured method of exploration to stimulate free responses and bring latent information to the surface. Open-ended questions, like those used on this survey, perform this function. Gray and Guppy (2003) note that because open-ended questions allow respondents to answer in their own words, using as few or as many words as they like, they allow respondents to stress what they feel is important and prevent the researcher's assumptions from inhibiting the answers. Regarding the quality of data gathered from open-ended responses, a number of researchers have reported that respondents write lengthier and more self-disclosing comments on e-mail open-ended questionnaires than they do on mail survey questionnaires (Bachmann & Elfrink, 1996; Kiesler & Sproull, 1986; Locke & Gilbert, 1995; Schaefer & Dillman, 1998; Sproull, 1986). Bachmann and Elfrink (1996) suggest that this might be due to the speed of typing over handwriting but no study has carefully investigated this question.

The researcher alone was responsible for conducting the survey. The last completed survey was returned via e-mail on July 28, 2006. In total, 21 journalists participated in the

survey; 20 through e-mail and 1 by telephone. This survey's response rate of 21.6% is within the normal range for e-mail surveys taking place since 2000. In her study of e-mail survey response rates Sheehan (2001) noted that over the last 15 years the average response rate has been decreasing; by 2000 it had dropped to 24%. Recently, Johnson and Kelly (2003) used e-mail to survey American journalists about their attitudes regarding what makes a story news worthy and the response rate they achieved was 20.5%.

Gray and Guppy (2003) point out that the quality of a survey's results are not necessarily compromised by lower response rates. It is only when those who did not participate in the survey are characteristically different from those who did participate that quality is compromised; that is, "only if nonrespondents are distinctive in comparison to respondents does their exclusion from the survey actually lead to bias or distortion in survey results" (Gray & Guppy, 2003: 168). As this survey's respondents and nonrespondents, alike, were Canadian, national, television journalists they shared high uniformity.

Gray and Guppy (2003) also state that higher response rates are only needed when the assessment's purpose is to measure effects or make generalizations to a larger population. When the assessment's purpose is to gain insight into a particular phenomenon high response rates are less important. The findings of this current survey are being used for the latter purpose; they are meant to elucidate why Canadian journalists cover evangelicals the way that they do.

All information gathered by phone or e-mail was confidential. When completed questionnaires arrived by e-mail the information was transferred to a secure database (to which only the researcher has access) and the original e-mail was deleted. Original spelling and grammar were retained. Questionnaires completed over the phone were recorded, the information was transcribed to the secure database and the original recording was erased. All identifying material such as names or e-mail addresses was removed from the data stored in the secure database.

3.2.3 Survey Questions

In order to develop a valid survey instrument, a draft of the questionnaire was prepared and distributed to a panel of experts for review and modification. The panel included the thesis advisor for this study, staff from the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, an experienced professor of social science research methods and select news media personnel.

Following review and modification, nine questions were included on the questionnaire. They were:

1. What position do you hold/what job do you perform for your national news program?
2. Do you consider yourself a practicing member of any religion? If yes, please briefly explain what religion you practice and if possible identify the specific denomination, branch, division, sect or subgroup to which you adhere.
3. Does your religious belief lead you to perform rituals or routines such as prayer, meditation, study of sacred texts or attending religious services? If yes, please briefly explain what they are and how often you participate in them.
4. Briefly state what you see as the main beliefs, characteristics and attitudes of evangelical Christians (For clarification, evangelical Christians are also known as conservative Protestants).
5. In terms of religious beliefs, how are you most similar to evangelical Christians?
6. In term of religious beliefs, how are you most at odds with evangelical Christians?
7. On what social issues do you find yourself in agreement or mostly in agreement with evangelical Christians?
8. On what social issues do you find yourself most at odds with evangelical Christians?

9. What sources have provided you with most of your information about evangelical Christians?

3.2.4 Rationale for Questions

Each of the questions on the survey was included for specific reasons. Question 1 allowed the researcher to verify that the respondent was in some way responsible for the creation or revision of the written content of television news reports. Whereas the opinion of reporters, writers, line-up editors and other such journalistic staff was being sought, the opinion of camera operators, floor directors and other more technical staff was not.

A journalist's attitudes toward evangelicals may be influenced by his/her larger perception of religion in general; therefore, Questions 2 and 3 asked about the role religion played in the life of each news person. These questions allowed the researcher to explore whether certain religious beliefs and practices (or lack of them) portended the amount of affinity a journalist felt for evangelicals. Question 2 was particularly important because it allowed the researcher to determine if any of the national television journalists were evangelicals themselves.

Question 4 explored what journalists perceived to be evangelicals' dominant traits; in particular, it sought to determine whether evangelicals are primarily associated with certain religious beliefs or specific social issues.

Questions 5 and 6 sought to determine which evangelical religious beliefs journalists are most comfortable with and which they are least comfortable with. Similarly, Questions 7 and 8 sought to determine which evangelical-associated social issues journalists support and which they do not. Question 5, 6, 7, and 8 allow the researcher to more deeply probe the sentiments the journalists relayed in Question 4 by forcing them to stratify their answers into clearly delineated pro and con opinions.

By asking where journalists get their information about evangelicals, as Question 9 does, the researcher was able to postulate whether journalists are adequately and accurately informed about the evangelical faith and its members. The question also

allowed the researcher to explore connections between where journalists get their information about evangelicals and what opinions they hold about evangelicals.

3.2.5 Data Analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaires was analyzed using a grounded theory approach. Grounded theory is an inductive process whereby hypotheses are “discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data” (Berg, 1995: 23). Leady and Ormrod (2001: 154) state that the purpose of a grounded theory approach is to “begin with the data and use them to develop a theory”.

Specifically, analysis followed the three stage process of open, axial and selective coding advocated by Strauss and Corbin (1998). Journalists’ responses were scrutinized for commonalities and reduced into small sets of themes then, as relationships between disparate categories emerged, these were reassembled into related categories and subcategories. These categories, in turn, were combined into overarching categories that best described “what happens” at the level of specific questions’ responses and at the aggregate level of the survey responses as a whole. Finally, conclusions were drawn for use in theory building.

Although the answers to the questionnaire were intended to provide qualitative insights into journalists’ perceptions, there were elements in the responses given that proved amenable to a degree of reliable, statistical summation. Where appropriate, these quantitative findings are presented in the Results section of this paper to allow the reader to judge more precisely the extent to which certain themes and issues were evident across the survey sample.

3.3 Merging the Data from the Frame Analysis and the Survey

To address the question whether linkages exist between the stories national television journalists produce about evangelicals and the attitudes they hold about them, the data from the frame analysis and the survey were considered collectively. Specifically, evidence of correlations between frames and attitudes was determined by identifying and then comparing the most prevalent frames to the most prevalent attitudes. When a

prevalent frame was accompanied by a corresponding prevalent attitude, a relationship between these two variables was deemed to exist.

The limitations of this particular merging process must be acknowledged. Some of the journalists who responded to this study's attitudinal survey in June and July of 2006 were not the same individuals who generated stories about evangelicals for CBC, CTV and Global's national newscasts between January, 1994 and December, 2004. Therefore, in light of this potential disconnect, the conclusions that this study draws regarding the linkages between the stories journalists produce about evangelicals and the attitudes they hold about them must be tempered somewhat. That said, there was some affinity between those who completed the survey and those who created the news reports under examination. While confidentiality prevents the disclosure of the names and positions of those journalists who responded to the survey, I can verify that about a quarter of those who responded to the survey also had one or more reports included in the pool of scripts analyzed.

Chapter IV

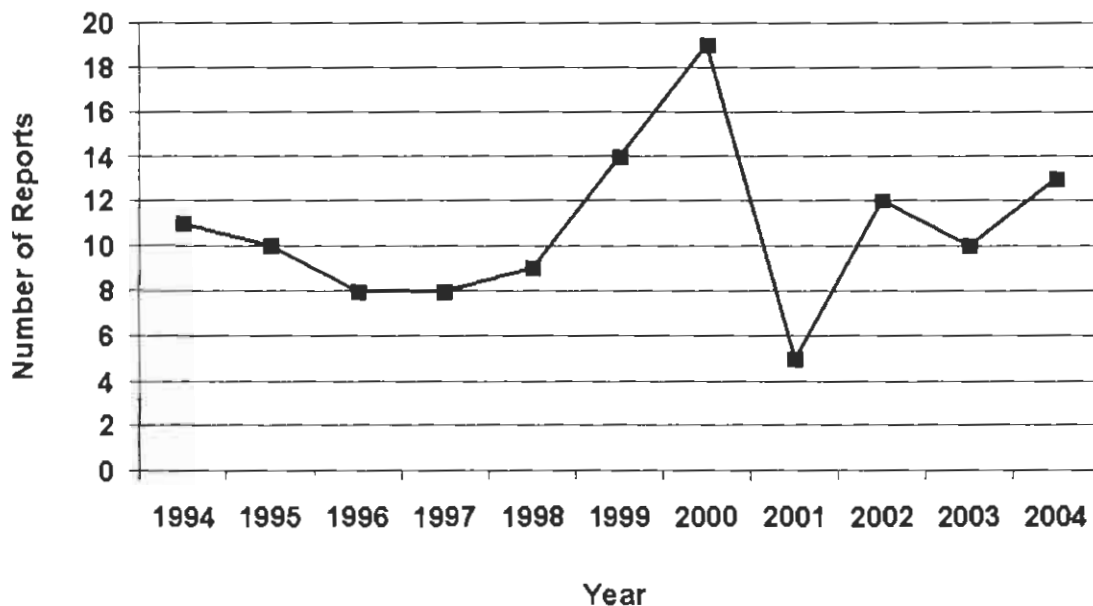
RESULTS

4.1 Frame Analysis Findings

4.1.1 Number of Reports by Year

From January 1994 to December 2004 evangelicals were featured in a total of 119 national television news reports. For the most part, the reports were fairly evenly distributed over the 11-year period; ten reports per year was the median and 11 was the mean. However, in the year 2000 the number of reports took a sharp rise, increasing to 19. In 2000 evangelical politician Stockwell Day took over the leadership of the Canadian Alliance Party and campaigned to become Prime Minister; 17 of the 19 “evangelical” stories that year focused on Day and his performance in the federal election campaign. At five reports, 2001 saw the fewest number of news stories featuring evangelicals (see Figure 1).

Figure 1
Number of News Reports Per Year



4.1.2 Reports by Network and Number of Words

Divided according to their respective network, CTV covered evangelicals most often, featuring them in 58 stories; Global had 33 stories in which evangelicals were featured and CBC had 28. However, for CBC, running fewer stories did not equate to less airtime devoted to evangelicals. In fact, because CBC's news stories tended to be longer than those of CTV or Global, the number of words (and therefore the total amount of airtime) that network dedicated to coverage of evangelicals was greatest of all. Combined, CBC's 28 stories contained 38,133 words while CTV's 58 stories had a total word count of 24,741. At about 12,622 words Global devoted the fewest words to the coverage of evangelicals.

4.1.3 Reports by Format

Most, or 83.1% (N = 99), of the reports featuring evangelicals were in the longer format of Reporter's Pre-recorded Package. Broken down by network, 89.2 % (N = 25) of CBC's news reports about evangelicals were packages, 82.7% (N = 48) of CTV's, and 78.7% (N = 26) of Global's reports were in the package format.

Just 5.8% (N = 7) of all reports were in the Live Interview or Commentary format. Divided by network, 10.7% (N = 3) of CBC's, 9% (N = 3) of Global's, and 1.7% (N = 1) of CTV's reports were in this format. Similarly, 5.8% (N = 7) of reports were Anchor Reads. Global had 9% (N = 3) in this format, and CTV had 6.8% (N = 4); CBC had no reports in this format. Only 5% (N = 6) of reports were in the Anchor Read to Clip format. By network, 8.6% (N = 5) of CTV's reports were in this form and 3% (N = 1) of Global's; CBC had no reports in this format.

4.1.4 Reports By Main Focus/Topic

As detailed in Table 1, reports featuring evangelicals involved in political actions or issues dominated coverage; 29.4% focused on this topic. These stories showed evangelical politicians or evangelical citizens involved in politics mostly at the federal level. A story was not coded as evangelicals involved in politics if the political issue related to education or was connected to a court action; there were more specific categories for stories of that nature.

Table 1
Topic of News Reports

<i>Topic</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>
Politics	29.4	35
Crime/Immorality	16.8	20
Social Activism	14.2	17
Rel. Observ/Theology	14.2	17
Legal Actions	8.4	10
Education	6.7	8
Proselytizing	4.2	5
Church Business	2.5	3
Charity Work	2.5	3
Celebrity Evangelical	.8	1
Total	100	119

After politics, evangelicals were most often featured in stories involving criminal or immoral activity: 16.8% fell into this category. These stories focused primarily on evangelicals perpetrating sexual or physical abuse or engaged in sexual or financial impropriety. However, 4 of the 20 crime related stories showed evangelicals as victims of crime.

Next, 14.2% of reports showed evangelicals involved in social action or protest. These stories were about demonstrations, marches, petitions, sit-ins or other actions. If the social actions were exercised through the courts, were related to education or had an overtly political focus the report was not placed in this category but in another more attuned to the specific content.

At 14.2%, reports featuring evangelicals involved in religious observance or theological discussion tied those about social protest. Many of these stories were about special church services, though stories about conferences or seminars by evangelical leaders for an evangelical audience also appeared. Reports focusing on evangelicals involved in legal actions or issues comprised 8.4% of the population of scripts. Evangelicals were shown using the courts to stop or challenge decisions made by government, regulatory bodies, businesses or community organizations. If the court

action was related to educational matters, the story was placed in the education category. If the court action was related to an evangelical having committed a crime, the story was placed in the crime category.

Evangelicals involved in educational issues made up 6.7% of reports. Stories focused on all levels of education including university and showed evangelicals trying to implement or change school curriculum or practices, or implement or change selection processes involving students or staff. Evangelicals involved in proselytizing comprised 4.2% of reports. Reports in this category showed evangelicals actively trying to influence the religious lives/religious beliefs of people locally and abroad. Stories were about missionaries working aboard or about large local concerts held with the specific goal of teaching non-Christians/non-evangelicals about Jesus and Christianity.

Evangelicals involved in church business or governance made up 2.5% of reports. The non-theological discussions and decisions of a church or denomination were the focus of coverage. Stories were about new building construction, hiring or firing of a minister, or two churches or denominations amalgamating. Similarly, just 2.5% of reports focused on evangelicals involved in charity or volunteer work. Stories in this category showed evangelicals helping others locally or abroad to live a better *material life*. One report (.8%) focused on a celebrity evangelical. To qualify for this category a report had to highlight biographical information about a famous evangelical over any overt Christian message they were relaying. If an evangelical was famous due to political activity the report was placed in the political story category.

4.1.5 Frames Employed, 1994-2004

In the total population of news reports, evangelicals were framed as being somewhat intolerant ($M = 2.17$, $SD = 1.19$), somewhat politically threatening ($M = 2.29$, $SD = 1.16$), somewhat criminally-minded ($M = 1.75$, $SD = 1.01$), somewhat un-Canadian ($M = 2.08$, $SD = 1.08$), and slightly unintelligent ($M = 2.44$, $SD = 1.23$). They were framed in a balanced or neutral fashion between superstitious and spiritual ($M = 2.69$, $SD = 1.18$), as balanced between vengeful and forgiving ($M = 2.81$, $SD = 1.25$), balanced between pushy and respectful when presenting social views ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 1.50$), balanced between having outdated values and beliefs and contemporary ones ($M = 3.22$, SD

=1.71), balanced between insincere and sincere ($M = 3.24$, $SD = 1.59$), and balanced between neglectful and responsible ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 1.31$). The one specifically positive frame depicted evangelicals as being somewhat undeserving of media and societal bias ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 1.05$).

An average of the scores for all frames produced a mean of 2.83 ($SD = 1.30$) or an overall rating of balanced. In terms of actual number of frames used in the 119 reports, 241 frames were identified of which 128 were negative (65 somewhat; 63 very), 30 were balanced, and 83 were positive (45 somewhat; 38 very).

On a network by network basis, the news reports that aired on CBC TV employed the most negative frames; collectively, they generated a mean of 2.42 ($SD = 1.27$) or an overall rating of slightly negative. An average of the scores for all frames used in the reports of CTV produced a mean of 2.93 ($SD = 1.28$) or an overall rating of balanced, and the frames used in the reports of Global TV produced a mean of 3.14 ($SD = 1.25$) or an overall rating of balanced¹. A more detailed examination of the frames used by the individual networks is included at the end of this chapter.

As was explained previously, when a frame's frequency (i.e., how often it is used) and exclusivity (i.e., not being opposed by a contradicting or competing frame) are high, it becomes more salient and, therefore, more influential in terms of *how* an audience thinks about an issue (Entman 1993; 1991). By those criteria, it can be said that the "intolerant," "criminally-minded," "undeserving of media and societal bias," and the "un-Canadian" frames were more likely to influence audience opinion than others that appeared in the news reports about evangelicals (see Figure 2).

The "evangelicals as intolerant" frame appeared in one quarter, or 24.3%, of all reports (10.1% somewhat intolerant; 14.2% very intolerant) while 7.5% of news reports framed evangelicals in a balanced fashion in relation to tolerance and 5.8% framed them as tolerant (4.2% somewhat tolerant; 1.6% very tolerant). An example of a news report that coders determined framed evangelicals as "very intolerant" was a profile piece about

1. A t-test determined the difference between the means for the CBC and Global was statistically significant ($t = 2.22$, $d.f. = 59$, $p = 0.02$). A second t-test determined the difference between the means for CBC and CTV approached significance but fell slightly short of conventional criteria ($t = 1.73$, $d.f. = 84$, $p = 0.08$). A third t-test determined the difference between the means for CTV and Global was not statistically significant ($t = 0.75$, $d.f. = 89$, $p = 0.45$).

evangelical politician, Stockwell Day (Hunter, 2000). At the time, Day was leader of Canada's official opposition and the report, which ran during the federal election campaign of 2000, referred to Day as racist, sexist and homophobic. One source in the piece accused Day of having a hidden agenda of intolerance, stating:

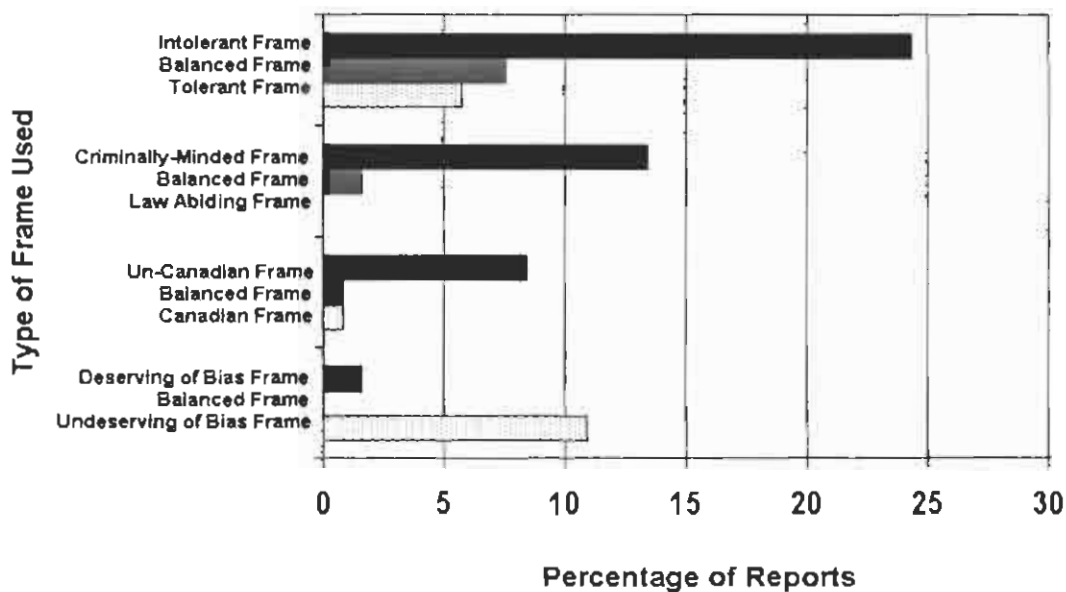
I don't think that the Stockwell Day that Canadians are seeing on the hustings is the true Stockwell Day, as to what his reaction will be, if he is ever Prime Minister of this country and [has] to make decisions about matters relating to women, about matters relating to ethnic groups, particularly religious minority groups, about how he would react in matters clearly related to homosexuality (Hunter, 2000).

Another source attacked Day for opposing a government grant earmarked to fund research into the history of gays and lesbians in Day's home province of Alberta. She said his decision was "inconsistent with an agenda of tolerance" (Hunter, 2000). Coders noted that Day was not interviewed for the report and was therefore not given the opportunity to respond to his accusers and give his version of events.

Elsewhere, during the voiceover narration of the report, the reporter pointed out that before entering politics Day had worked at a Christian school that was situated just 30 kilometres down the road from a known Holocaust denier (Hunter, 2000). Coders saw the reporter's segue from the Holocaust denier to Day as further evidence of negative framing—a type of guilt by association. They noted that the report gave no examples of anti-Semitism on the part of Day, his only connection to the Holocaust denier was that they shared the same geographic location.

A final observation was made by the coders regarding news reports employing the intolerant frame. It was found that in reports where evangelicals were featured together with gays and lesbians or gay rights activists, the intolerant frame was far more likely to be employed than in any other type of story. In total, 20 stories were identified as juxtaposing evangelicals against homosexuals or their supporters; in 60% of those stories (N = 12), evangelicals were framed as intolerant to a greater or lesser degree. Four reports featuring evangelicals and homosexuals together were from CBC, 11 were from CTV and five were from Global. In relation to main focus or topic, these reports spanned the categories from politics, to social protest, to court, to education stories. In most of the stories featuring evangelicals and homosexuals, the intolerant frame was also

Figure 2
Frames with Greatest Frequency and Exclusivity, All Networks



accompanied by one or all of these other frames: the “pushy with social views frame,” the “outdated values and beliefs frame,” or the “unintelligent frame”.

Moving on, the frame of “criminally-minded” was used in 13.4% of reports (5.8% somewhat criminally-minded; 7.5% very criminally-minded). Regarding neutral and opposing frames, just 1.6% of reports employed a balanced frame and .8% framed evangelicals as somewhat law-abiding. No report framed evangelicals as very law-abiding.

One news report that coders determined employed the frame of “very Criminally-minded” featured evangelicals visiting the Holy Land at the turn of the millennium. Specifically, the piece focused on members of the faith who wanted to see the Jewish temple rebuilt on Mt. Moriah where a major Muslim mosque stands. The building of this new temple would, they believed, hasten the second coming of Christ (MacDonald, 1999). The evangelicals in the report were portrayed as willing to use illegal means to bring about the destruction of the mosque so as to make way for the temple. Although the reporter, at one point in his voiceover narration stated that: “It must be said that the

vast majority of evangelicals, including Hal Lindsey [an evangelical featured in the report], say they believe that any human efforts to clear the Mount right now would be futile, destructive and wrong” (MacDonald, 1999), he went on to contradict his own ameliorating comment. For example, he warned that evangelicals were prepared to do “[s]tupid violent things that will lead to the chaos that will, in turn, [in their minds] lead to paradise” (MacDonald, 1999). He also noted that the evangelicals’ clandestine machinations were making “Israeli police and intelligence services terribly nervous. They have in fact begun using the blunt tool of expulsion rather than risk the presence of a Christian who wants to nudge the Apocalypse along” (MacDonald, 1999). The reporter did not, however, provide any examples of evangelicals found plotting or committing illegal acts against the mosque.

Evangelicals were framed positively as undeserving of media and societal bias in 10.9% of reports (1.6% somewhat undeserving of media and societal bias; 9.2% very undeserving of media and societal bias). Just 1.6% of reports framed evangelicals as deserving of media and societal bias (1.6% somewhat deserving; 0 very deserving). No report employed the “balanced” frame. A report deemed to employ the “undeserving of media and societal bias” aired during the election of 2000 and like the previous example of a story from the federal campaign trail, it too focused on evangelical politician Stockwell Day. However, this second report defended Day’s religious beliefs (Oliver & Robertson, 2000). The reporter in the piece stated:

Our last five Prime Ministers were all Catholics, Trudeau in particular very devout, trained by Jesuits, Tommy Douglas was a devout minister. No one asked them for a moral accounting. So why are we doing the same in a case of an Evangelical Christian[?] Why are his beliefs so suspect and the beliefs of others not (Oliver & Robertson, 2000).

Apart from the frames listed above, no other single frame possessed high exclusivity while also appearing in 10% or more of reports. The “sincere” frame and the “politically threatening” frame both appeared in 17.6% of reports. However, these frames did not possess exclusivity. Regarding sincerity, the competing “insincere” frame was used in 13.4% of all reports; regarding political activity, 6.7% of reports framed evangelicals in a balanced fashion in relation to their political activity and 5% framed them as politically reassuring. Despite their significant frequency, the influence of the two aforementioned frames was therefore muted by competition from their respective oppositional frames.

Of those frames appearing in fewer than 10% of reports, only the “un-Canadian” frame stood out for its high exclusivity. Specifically, evangelicals were framed as un-Canadian in 8.4% of reports (5.8% somewhat un-Canadian; 2.5% very un-Canadian) while they were framed neutrally in just .8% of reports and as very Canadian in .8%. No frames appeared for “somewhat Canadian”.

By way of example, a CBC report about Canada’s first evangelical television station was coded as employing the “un-Canadian” frame. Rather than focusing on the station’s predominantly Canadian content (which was highlighted in a CTV report on the same subject), the piece portrayed the station and its operators as purveyors of American culture. Just before cutting to a clip of the scandal-prone American televangelist Jimmy Swaggart loudly opining about money, the reporter stated: “The channel joins a host of American stations already beaming up over the border. The station will air many U.S. programs, providing the stars of the right-wing religious world with a Canadian platform” (Gray, 1995).

4.1.6 Changes to Frames Over Time

As demonstrated in Table 2, most of the frames used in the coverage of evangelical changed very little over time. It was never the case that a “switch” occurred where evangelicals were predominantly framed one way for a series of years and then suddenly framed the opposite way for another span of time. Furthermore, it was rarely the case that an inactive frame—that is, one seldom used in coverage—became a highly active frame. Only the “Threatening Politically,” “Undeserving of Societal and Media Bias” and the “Un-Canadian” frames experienced uncharacteristic spikes (see Figures 3, 4, and 5). These short-lived spikes occurred in 2000 and directly corresponded with the federal election campaign of evangelical politician Stockwell Day.

Table 2
Frequency of Frames by Year

Frames	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Intolerant	5	2	2	1	2	3	5	1	1	5	1
Balanced					1	1			3	1	3
Tolerant			2		2	2			1		
Insincere	4	1	2	1		2	2		2	2	
Balanced	1	1	1								
Sincere		3		1	4	4	2	1	1	1	4
Unintelligent					1	2	2		1	1	
Balanced											
Intelligent		1								1	
Neglectful						1		1	2		1
Balanced	1				1	1					
Responsible		4			1				1	1	
Pushy w Social Views		1		1		2	1			2	
Balanced				2			1				
Respectful w Social Views	1	1	3	1			1	1	2	1	
Threatening Politically	2		1		2	1	9		2	2	2
Balanced		1					5				2
Reassuring Politically							3				3
Criminally-Minded	2	2		2		3	1	3	1	1	
Balanced		1	1								
Law Abiding						1				1	
Superstitious	1			1	1	1			2	1	
Balanced			1								
Spiritual	1	2			1			1			
Vengeful	1	1				2				3	
Balanced											
Forgiving							2				1
Un-Canadian		2			1	1	4			1	1
Balanced							1				
Canadian											1
Deserving of Bias							1			1	
Balanced											
Undeserving of Bias	2	1	1				5			1	2
Outdated Values & Beliefs				1		1	1				
Balanced											
Contemporary Vs & Bs	2	1							2		1

Please Note: On this table the “very” and “somewhat” manifestations of each frame have been combined into a single positive or negative category. For example, frames coded as “very intolerant” and “somewhat intolerant” have been tabulated together under the frame category “Intolerant”.

Figure 3
Change in the “Threatening Politically” Frame, 1994-2004

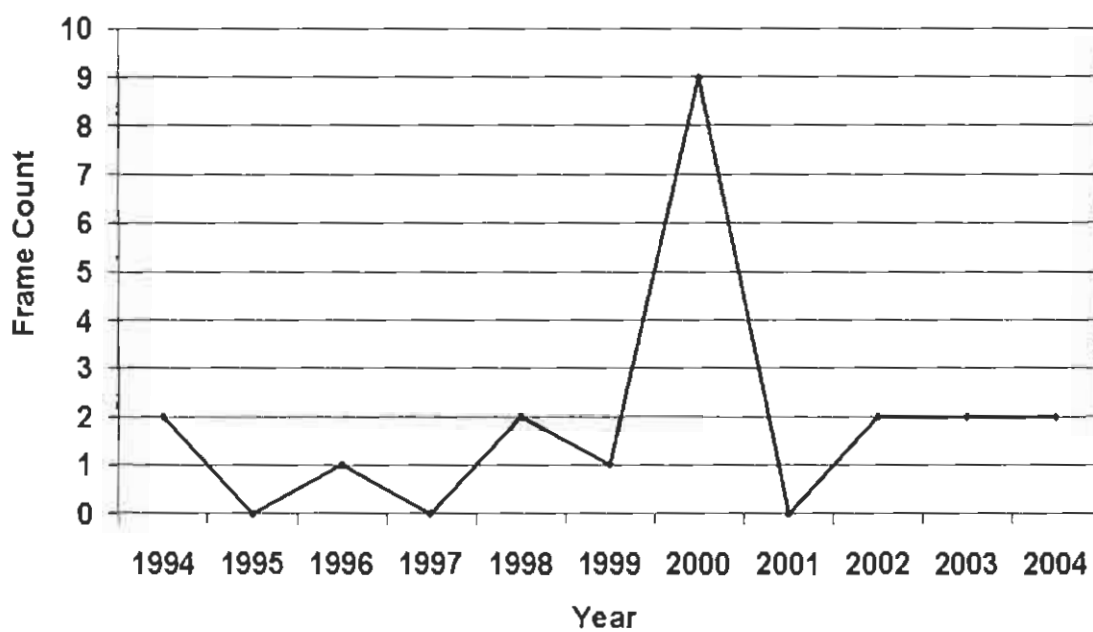


Figure 4
Change in the “Undeserving of Media and Societal Bias” Frame, 1994-2004

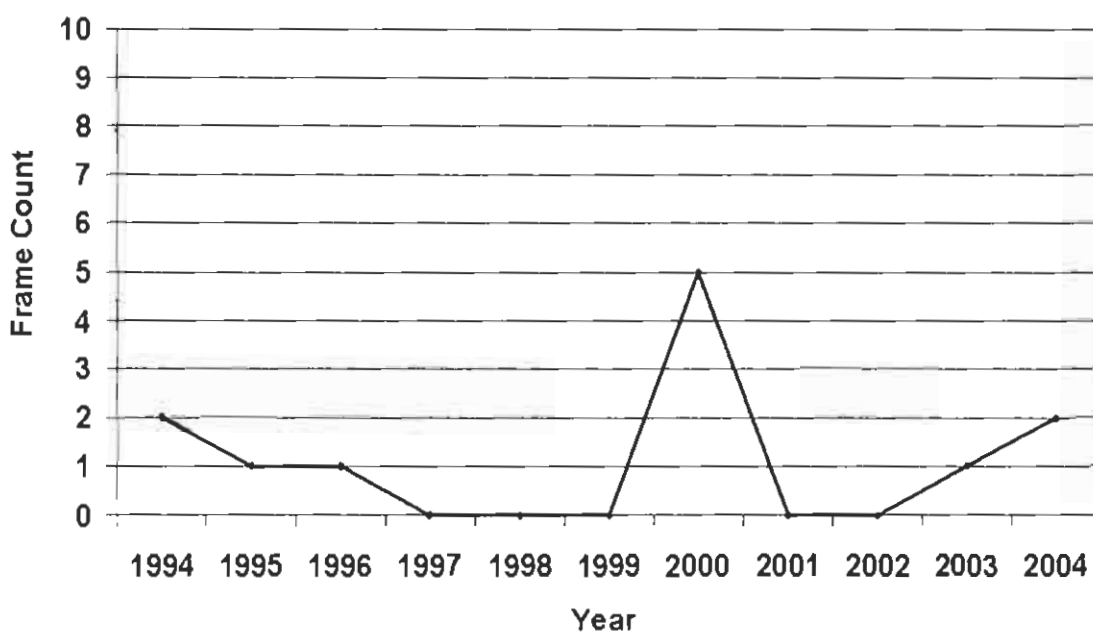
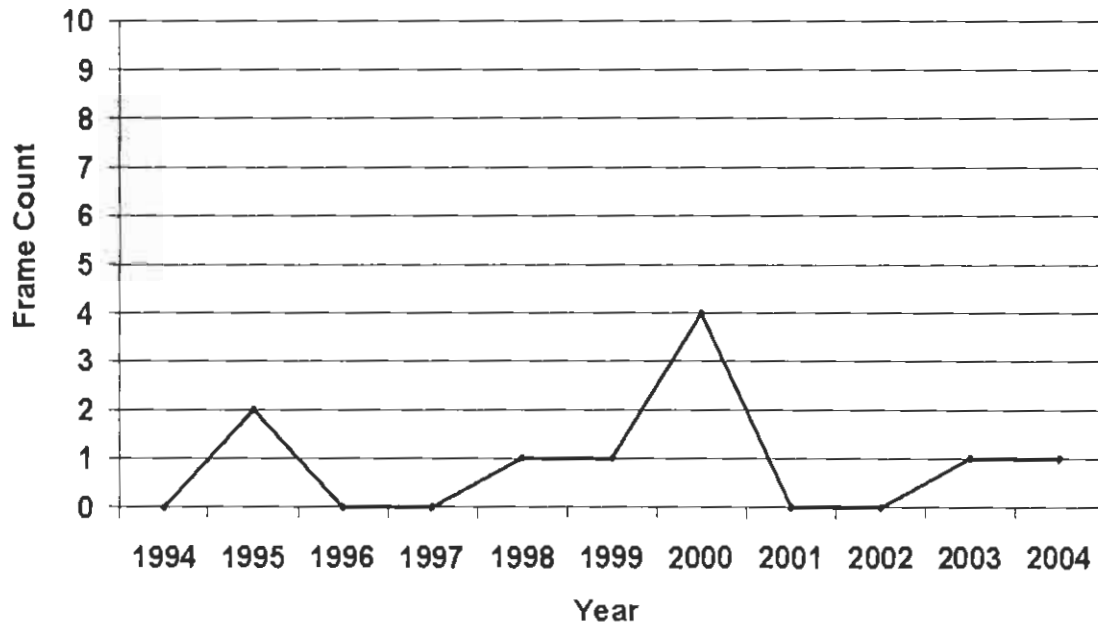


Figure 5
Change in the “UnCanadian” Frame, 1994-2004



4.1.7 Frames by Network—CBC

In the news reports of CBC TV evangelicals were framed as: very criminally-minded ($M = 1.16$, $SD = .40$); somewhat un-Canadian ($M = 1.60$, $SD = .89$); somewhat superstitious ($M = 1.66$, $SD = .57$); somewhat intolerant ($M = 1.71$, $SD = 1.13$); somewhat politically threatening ($M = 1.91$, $SD = .99$); somewhat unintelligent ($M = 2.25$, $SD = 1.25$); somewhat insincere ($M = 2.33$, $SD = 1.80$); holding somewhat outdated values and beliefs ($M = 2.50$, $SD = 1.73$); balanced between vengeful and forgiving ($M = 2.60$, $SD = .89$); balanced between pushy and respectful when presenting their social views ($M = 3.11$, $SD = 1.53$); somewhat responsible ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 1.73$); somewhat undeserving of media and societal bias ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 1.03$).

As mentioned on page 98, an average of the scores for all frames used in the reports of CBC produced a mean of 2.42 ($SD = 1.27$) or an overall rating of slightly negative. In terms of actual number of frames used in the 28 CBC reports, 77 frames were identified

of which 51 were negative (18 somewhat; 33 very), 5 were balanced, and 21 were positive (10 somewhat; 11 very).

Evangelicals were most frequently and most exclusively framed as intolerant, politically threatening, undeserving of media and societal bias, criminally-minded, insincere and un-Canadian in the reports of CBC news (see Figure 6).

Evangelicals were framed as intolerant in 35.7% of CBC's reports (3.5% somewhat intolerant; 32.1% very intolerant); conversely, use of neutral and oppositional frames was far less frequent. Just 3.5% of their reports framed evangelicals in a balanced fashion and 7.1% framed them as somewhat tolerant. No reports employed the "very tolerant" frame.

Evangelicals were framed as politically threatening in 32.1% of CBC's reports (14.2% somewhat politically threatening; 17.8% very politically threatening) while the "balanced" frame was used in 7.1% of reports and the "somewhat politically reassuring" frame in 3.5%. The frame of "very politically reassuring" was not used.

On the CBC evangelicals were framed positively as undeserving of media and societal bias in 25% of reports (3.5% somewhat undeserving of media and societal bias; 21.4% very undeserving of media and societal bias). Just 3.5% of reports framed evangelicals as somewhat deserving of media and societal bias. No report employed the "balanced" frame or the "very deserving of media and societal bias" frame.

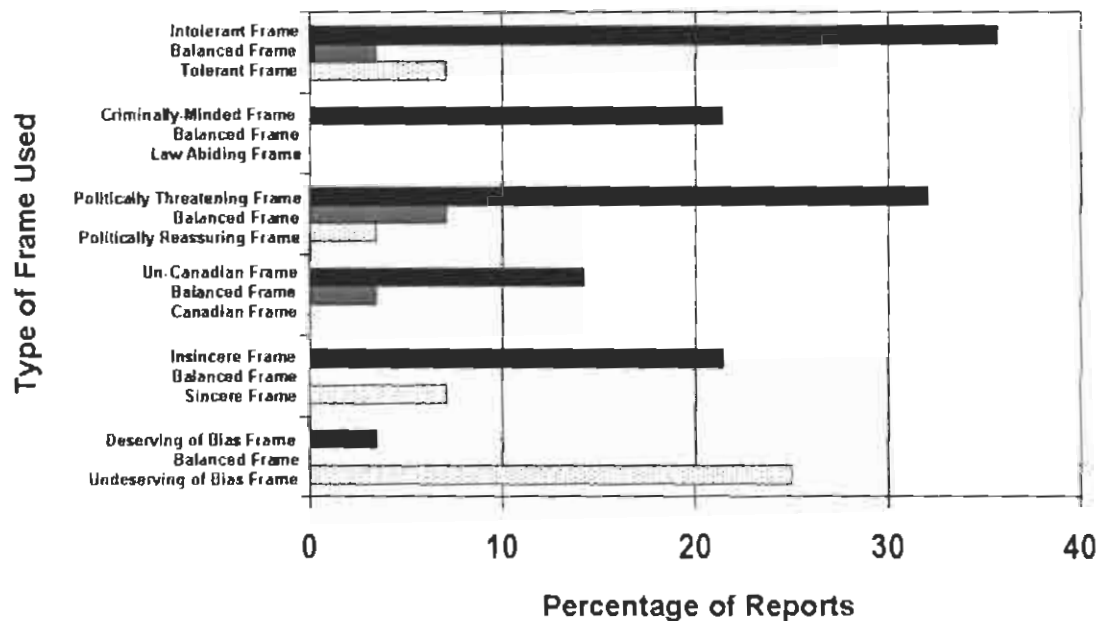
The "criminally-minded" frame was used in 21.4% of CBC's reports about evangelicals (3.5% somewhat criminally-minded; 17.8% very criminally-minded). No neutral or positive oppositional frames were employed.

Evangelicals were framed as insincere 21.4% of CBC's reports (3.5% somewhat insincere; 17.8% very insincere). The opposing "sincere" frame was used in just 7.1% of reports (3.5% somewhat sincere; 3.5% very sincere). The "balanced" frame was not used.

Only two other frames, appeared in 10% or more of CBC's reports. Evangelicals were framed as un-Canadian in 14.2% of reports (3.5% somewhat un-Canadian; 10.7% very un-Canadian). While the "balanced" frame was used in 3.5% of reports, no positive oppositional frames were used.

Evangelicals were also framed as respectful when presenting their social views in 14.2% of reports (7.1% somewhat respectful; 7.1% very respectful). However, unlike the frames above which suffered little enervation from competition, the influence of the

Figure 6
Frames with Greatest Frequency and Exclusivity, CBC



“respectful when presenting their social views” frame was muted by a strong showing by its oppositional frame: 10.7% of CBC reports framed evangelicals as pushy when presenting their social views (3.5% somewhat pushy; 7.1% very pushy). The “balanced” frame was used in 3.5% of reports.

4.1.8 Frames by Network—CTV

In the news reports of CTV, evangelicals were framed as: somewhat criminally-minded ($M = 1.88$, $SD = .78$); somewhat politically threatening ($M = 1.91$, $SD = .99$); somewhat un-Canadian ($M = 2.00$, $SD = .00$); somewhat intolerant ($M = 2.18$, $SD = 1.13$); balanced between unintelligent and intelligent ($M = 2.60$, $SD = 1.34$); balanced between superstitious and spiritual ($M = 3.00$, $SD = .1.19$); balanced between vengeful and forgiving ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 1.73$); balanced between pushy and respectful when presenting their social views ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 1.61$); balanced between neglectful and responsible ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 1.22$); balanced between insincere and sincere ($M = 3.34$,

SD = 1.49); somewhat undeserving of media and societal bias (M = 4.33, SD = .57); and as holding very contemporary values and beliefs (M = 4.66, SD = .57).

An average of the scores for all frames used in the reports of CTV produced a mean of 2.93 (SD = 1.28) or an overall rating of balanced. In terms of actual number of frames used in the 58 CTV reports, 113 frames were identified of which 57 were negative (33 somewhat; 24 very), 15 were balanced, and 41 were positive (25 somewhat; 16 very).

Evangelicals were most frequently and most exclusively framed as intolerant, politically threatening and criminally-minded in the reports of CTV news (see Figure 7).

Evangelicals were framed as intolerant in 25.8% of CTV's reports (13.7% somewhat intolerant; 12% very intolerant). Just 6.8% of reports framed them as balanced between intolerant and tolerant and 5.1% framed them as intolerant (3.4% somewhat tolerant; 1.7% very tolerant).

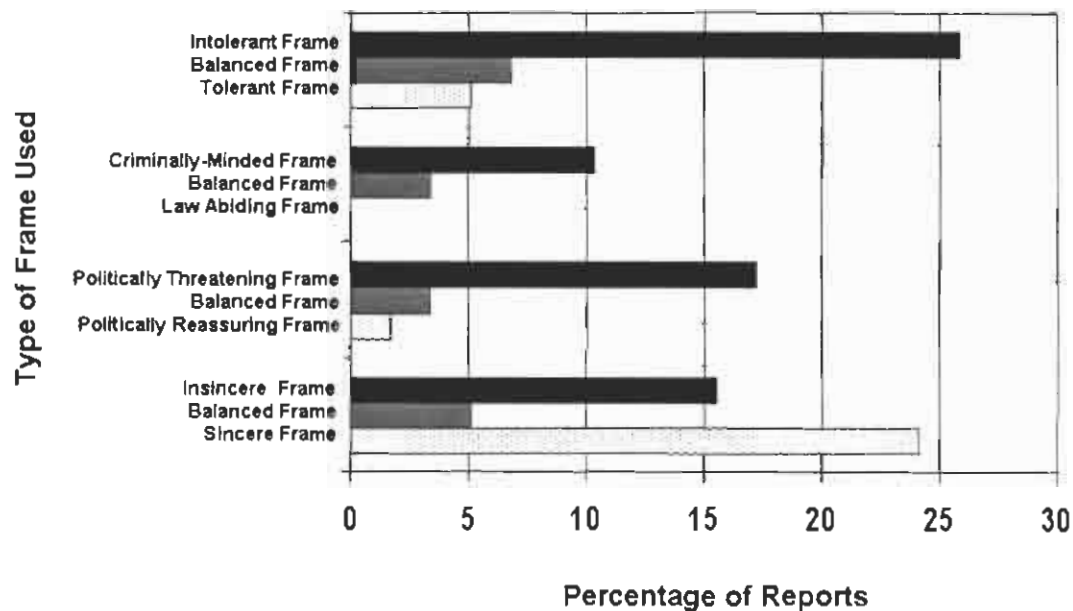
Evangelicals were framed as politically threatening in 17.2% of CTV's reports (6.8% somewhat politically threatening; 10.3% very politically threatening) while the "balanced" frame was used in 3.4% of reports and the "somewhat politically reassuring" frame in 1.7%. The frame of "very politically reassuring" was not used.

The "criminally-minded" frame was used in 10.3% of CTV's reports about evangelicals (6.8% somewhat criminally-minded; 3.4% very criminally-minded). Evangelicals were framed as balanced between being criminally-minded and law abiding in 3.4% of reports but no positive oppositional frames were employed.

Evangelicals were framed as sincere in 24.1% of CTV's reports (10.3% somewhat sincere; 13.7% very sincere) and as balanced between insincere and sincere in 5.1% of reports. However, the influence of the sincere frame was muted slightly by the opposing "insincere" frame which was used in 15.5% of reports (8.6% somewhat insincere; 6.8% very insincere).

Apart from those frames listed above, no other single frame was used in 10% or more of CTV's reports.

Figure 7
Frames with Greatest Frequency and Exclusivity, CTV



4.1.9 Frames by Network—Global

In the news reports of Global, evangelicals were framed as: somewhat criminally-minded ($M = 2.20$); holding somewhat outdated values and beliefs ($M = 2.50$); balanced between pushy and respectful when presenting their social views ($M = 2.66$); balanced between un-Canadian and Canadian ($M = 2.75$); balanced between intolerant and tolerant ($M = 2.88$); balanced between superstitious and spiritual ($M = 3.00$); balanced between vengeful and forgiving ($M = 3.00$); balanced between politically threatening and politically reassuring ($M = 3.20$); balanced between neglectful and responsible ($M = 3.33$); somewhat undeserving of media and societal bias ($M = 4.00$); somewhat sincere ($M = 4.16$). Evangelicals were not framed in relation to their intelligence in any of the Global reports.

An average of the scores for all frames used in the reports of Global produced a mean of 3.14 ($SD = 1.25$) or an overall rating of balanced. In terms of actual number of frames

used in the 33 Global reports, 51 frames were identified of which 20 were negative (14 somewhat; 6 very), 10 were balanced, and 21 were positive (10 somewhat; 11 very).

Unlike the news reports of CBC or CTV in which a single frame, like that of “intolerance,” could appear in 25% of reports or more in highly exclusive fashion; Global’s reports used a more equally distributed, diverse repertoire of frames. As such, even the frames found to appear most frequently were used in just 15% of reports or fewer. Only the “criminally-minded” and the “sincere” frames enjoyed higher levels of exclusivity, all others suffered enervation from competing frames (see Figure 8).

Evangelicals were framed as sincere in 15.1% of Global’s reports (6% somewhat sincere; 9% very sincere). The oppositional frame, “insincere,” gave little competition appearing in just 3% of reports (3% somewhat insincere; 0 very insincere). The “balanced” frame was not used.

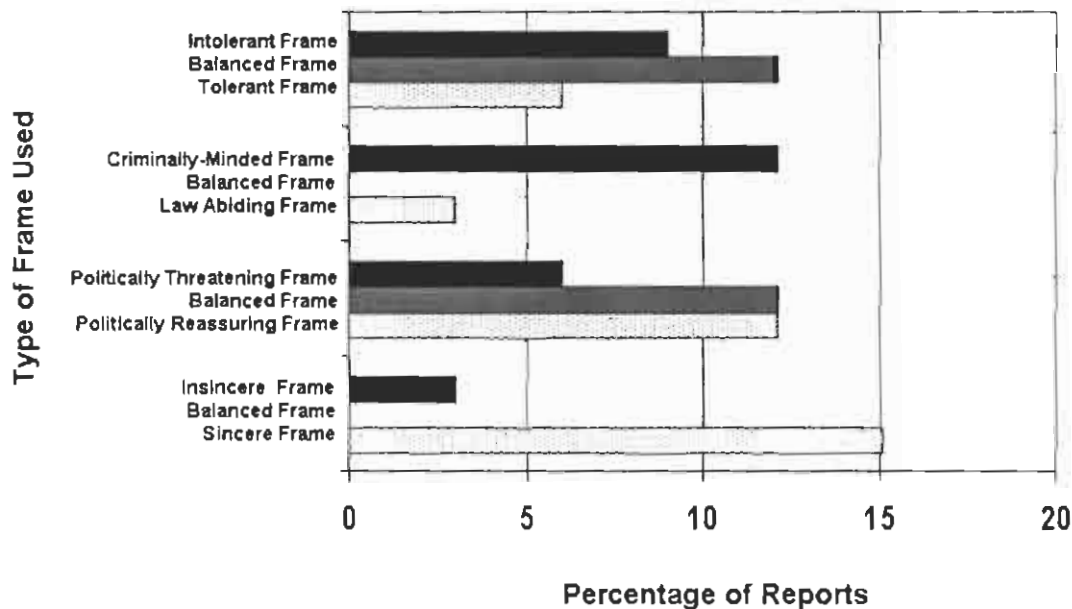
The frame of “criminally-minded” was used in 12.1% of Global’s reports (6% somewhat criminally-minded; 6% very criminally-minded) and was opposed by the “law-abiding” frame in just 3% of reports (3% somewhat law abiding; 0 very law abiding). The “balanced” frame was not used.

Less influential was the “politically reassuring frame”. Evangelicals were framed as politically reassuring in 12.1% of Global’s reports (9% somewhat reassuring; 3% very reassuring) and as balanced between politically reassuring and politically threatening in 12.1% of reports, the oppositional frame “politically threatening” was used in 6% of reports (3% somewhat threatening; 3% very threatening)—enough of a showing to mute the “politically reassuring” frame slightly.

Evangelicals were framed as balanced between intolerant and tolerant in 12.1% of Global reports, as intolerant in 9% (6% somewhat intolerant; 3% very intolerant) and as tolerant in 6% (3% somewhat tolerant; 3% very tolerant). The relative equality (or lack of exclusivity) among these competing frames muted the influence of all.

Apart from those frames listed above, no other single frame was used in 10% or more of Global’s reports.

Figure 8
Frames with Greatest Frequency and Exclusivity, Global



4.2 Evaluation of Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3

In terms of actual number of frames used in the 119 reports, 241 frames were identified of which 128 were negative (65 somewhat; 63 very), 30 were balanced, and 83 were positive (45 somewhat; 38 very). Hypothesis 1 stated that national, nightly television news reports will most often employ frames that depict evangelical Christians negatively. That hypothesis was supported. However, the finding that more negative frames were employed in the reports about evangelicals than positive or balanced frames is tempered by the fact that an average of the scores for all frames produced a mean of 2.83, or an overall rating of balanced. The complex implications of these seemingly conflicting findings are discussed at length in the next chapter of this study; the high frequency and exclusivity of certain negative frames is also considered.

As demonstrated in Table 2, most of the frames used in the coverage of evangelical changed very little over time. It was never the case that a “switch” occurred where evangelicals were predominantly framed one way for a series of years and then suddenly framed the opposite way for another span of time. Furthermore, it was rarely the case that

an inactive frame—that is, one seldom used in coverage—became a highly active frame. Hypothesis 2 stated that the frames employed in TV news reports about evangelical Christians will not change dramatically from year to year but will remain relatively constant. That hypothesis was supported.

On a network by network basis, the news reports that aired on CBC TV employed the most negative frames; collectively, they generated a mean of 2.42 or an overall rating of slightly negative. Conversely, an average of the scores for all frames used in the reports of CTV produced a mean of 2.93 or an overall rating of balanced, and the frames used in the reports of Global TV produced a mean of 3.14 or an overall rating of balanced. Hypothesis 3 stated that the three networks will frame evangelical Christians differently over the 11-year time period with Canada's public broadcaster, CBC TV, framing evangelicals more negatively than the private networks CTV and Global. That hypothesis was supported.

4.3 Survey Findings

As indicated in the Methodology chapter of this paper, 97 national, newsroom personnel at CBC, CTV and Global were identified as potential participants for this study; all were sent information letters inviting them to take part. Of the 97 journalists contacted, 21 agreed to participate². Of those 21, 20 completed the survey electronically as an e-mail and one completed the survey verbally over the phone. Eleven of the respondents were men and 10 were women. By network, 10 surveys were completed by CBC personnel, seven by CTV employees, and four by journalists at Global.

Question 1 on the survey asked what job the journalist performed for his/her national news program. A majority of respondents, about 70% (N = 15) were reporters while about 30% (N = 6) performed other functions related to the written content of the news reports (e.g., news directors, anchors, producers, writers). As the responses were analyzed, it became evident that some of the participants who were not reporters

2. One more participant, for a potential total of 22, had agreed to participate. However, while the respondent was completing the survey over the phone, he/she determined that his/her knowledge of evangelicals was insufficient and thus declared his/her answers void.

performed jobs that were relatively unique; thus, their job title/job description could serve to identify them. Therefore, to avoid breaching confidentiality, as researcher I have chosen not to list these participants by their more specific function in the workplace. By extension, comparisons between the specific job held by a news person and his/her attitudes toward religion and evangelicals will not be made.

What follows is a synthesis of relevant themes and categories emerging from participants' answers to the survey questions.

4.3.1 Religious Beliefs and Practices of Journalists

Paraphrased, Question 2 asked if the journalist considered him/herself a practicing member of any religion and Question 3 asked if his/her religious beliefs led him/her to perform rituals or routines such as prayer or attending religious services. Exactly two-thirds of respondents (N = 14) stated they were not practicing members of any religion. Respondents working for the CBC were far and away the most secular; 90% (N = 9 of 10) said they were atheist, agnostic or non-practicing compared to 57% (N = 4 of 7) of the respondents from CTV and 25% Global (N = 1 of 4). As might be expected, most of these respondents also indicated that they performed no religious routines or rituals. However, two of the non-religious respondents (both from CBC) indicated that they occasionally prayed or meditated but said that the activity was not directed toward a god.

One third of respondents (N = 7) considered themselves practicing members of a religion (although, as will be demonstrated, levels of practice differed considerably). All claimed Christianity as their faith: two were members of the United Church of Canada (1 from CBC; 1 from CTV), two were Roman Catholic (1 from CTV; 1 from Global), one was Anglican (from CTV), and two were evangelical Christians (both from Global). The first evangelical was a member of the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church the second did not indicate his/her specific denomination.

Of the seven journalists who considered themselves practicing members of a religion, just four—the two evangelicals from Global, the Anglican from CTV, and the Roman Catholic journalist from CTV—gave evidence of their faith in action. All reported regular weekly church attendance, and sometimes twice a week. The evangelicals and the Catholic read the Bible or religiously-focused material weekly and prayed daily as part of

a set routine, whereas the Anglican journalist stated that prayer and the study of sacred texts “occur on an ad hoc basis”.

Conversely, the United Church members employed at CBC and CTV, respectively, and the Roman Catholic from Global did very little to exercise their faith. All said they did not go to church often, none mentioned reading the Bible, and prayer was described as irregular, typically taking place when the journalist or a loved one was in need.

Based on the information provided by the journalists above, it may be a more correct assessment to say that just 19% of respondents (N = 4) were religious believers who actively practiced their faith while 66 % (N = 14) had no religious faith at all, and 14% (N = 3) did not actively practice the faith they said they held.

4.3.2 Evangelicals’ Defining Traits—Journalists’ Opinion

Question 4 asked the journalists to state what they saw as the main beliefs, characteristics and attitudes of evangelical Christians. The hope was to capture what was “top-of-mind” for the journalists in relation to evangelicals; in a sense, the question was asking “When you picture an evangelical, what are the first things that you think of?” The responses to this question total greater than 21 (the number of participating journalists) because most journalists listed two or more traits as the main beliefs, characteristics or attitudes of evangelicals. Given the wide diversity of the responses, only those traits that appeared in the answers of five or more journalists are listed.

Thirty-eight percent of the respondents (N = 8) saw arrogant self-righteousness as one of the dominant traits of evangelical Christians; this trait was usually mentioned in conjunction with what was perceived to be the evangelicals’ desire to impose their values and beliefs on others. Half of the respondents from CBC (4 non-religious; 1 inactive United) cited this trait, as did two respondents from CTV (both non-religious) and one respondent from Global (non-religious). The response from a CBC journalist was typical of others; he/she said evangelicals are people “who believe it is their right and duty to promote their beliefs on others. They feel (or at least give the impression of feeling) superior to others in their faith and practice of faith”.

Evangelicals’ opposition to homosexuality was mentioned as a dominant trait by 38% of respondents (N = 8) as well; three were from CBC (all non-religious), four from CTV

(1 non-religious; 1 inactive United; 1 active Catholic; 1 active Anglican) and one from Global (evangelical). Unlike the non-religious and religiously inactive respondents who tended to describe evangelicals as being “against” homosexuals, the evangelical and religiously active respondents tended to describe the evangelicals’ opposition as being directed toward gay-marriage making such remarks as: evangelicals are “[a]gainst the idea of same-sex marriage,” and “Evangelicals support the traditional definition of marriage,” and they recognize “traditional marriage only”.

Evangelicals’ high view of scripture was cited as a dominant trait in 28.5% of responses (N = 6); three CBC respondents (all non-religious) made reference to evangelicals “literal belief in the Bible” as did one respondents from CTV (non-religious). The two evangelical respondents from Global described specific creedal statements they held to be as true.

Also mentioned as a dominant trait in 28.5% of responses (N = 6) was evangelicals’ penchant for spreading the message of the Gospel. Two CBC respondents (both non-religious), two CTV respondents (1 inactive United; 1 active Anglican) and two Global respondents (both evangelical) referenced this characteristic. The two evangelical respondents from Global and the religiously active Anglican from CTV elevated this trait above others. One evangelical respondent noted that “[a]n evangelical shares God’s love and spreads the gospel. Evangelical itself is Greek for messenger”. The active Anglican also saw spreading the Gospel as the core trait of an evangelical. To that point, he argued that one need not attend a “conservative” church or hold a prescribed set of conservative beliefs and values to be evangelical:

I would take issue with your characterization of evangelical Christians as conservative Protestants. The Anglican Church in Canada, you might be interested to know, has been charging its flocks to become more evangelical. There is a feeling among Church leaders we don’t do enough proselytizing so the call has gone out to us to “talk up” joining the Anglican Church, a church which... would certainly not be characterized as ‘conservative’.

Evangelicals’ stand against abortion was described as one of their main traits by close to 24% of respondents (N = 5); these included two journalists from CBC (both non-religious), two from CTV (1 active Anglican; 1 inactive United) and one from Global (inactive Catholic). Evangelicals devotion to God/Christ or relationship with God/Christ was also deemed a main trait by about 24% of respondents (N = 5); these included three

from CBC (2 non-religious; 1 inactive United), one from CTV (active Catholic) and one from Global (inactive Catholic).

4.3.3 Evangelical Religious Beliefs Supported by Journalists

Question 5 asked the journalists how they were most similar to evangelical Christians in terms of their religious beliefs. Fifty-seven percent of respondents (N = 12) said they were in no way similar. All but one of the journalists from the CBC said they were in no way similar to evangelicals; two journalists for CTV answered in this fashion as did one from Global. Not surprising, all these respondents were journalists who said that they practiced no religion. One respondent from the CBC noted, “I am agnostic... I cannot imagine God, and therefore cannot believe he has a son”.

Twenty-eight point five percent of the respondents (N = 6) claimed only minor or incidental similarities. The religiously inactive United Church members from CTV and CBC, and the inactive Catholic from Global, somewhat tongue-in-cheek remarked that they “use the same Bible” as evangelicals; the United member at CBC also noted that neither he/she nor evangelicals pay homage to the Pope. In a sincere attempt to find common ground, two of the non-religious respondents from CTV suggested that they were similar to evangelicals in regards to strong “support for family”. The religiously active Anglican at CTV noted that he/she and evangelicals “probably” share a belief in the Nicene Creed.

Conversely, about 14% of the respondents (N = 3) claimed greater affinity with evangelicals. The religiously active Catholic at CTV recognized a bond between him/herself and evangelicals saying that they were similar “[i]n welcoming the grace of God and in following the footsteps of Jesus Christ as best we can”. As stands to reason, the two evangelical journalists from Global showed the strongest identification with evangelical religious belief; one summed up the situation saying:

As an evangelical myself, my beliefs are a reflection of evangelicals at large. The biggies for me, like most evangelicals, are faith in Christ, telling others about God’s love, belief in the resurrection, eternal life through Christ, loving my neighbour, believing that the Bible is God’s word for my life, I believe all the stuff in the creeds... you get the picture.

4.3.4 Evangelical Religious Beliefs Opposed by Journalists

Question 6 asked the journalists how they were most at odds with evangelical Christians in terms of their religious beliefs. One third of respondents (N = 7) saw their disbelief in God as the main difference between them and evangelicals; five were from CBC (all non-religious), one from CTV (non-religious) and one from Global (non-religious).

Another third (N = 7) suggested that they were most at odds with the evangelicals' belief that theirs was the only "true" faith and that Jesus was the only way to salvation; three journalists from CBC (all non-religious), three from CTV (all non-religious) and one from Global (inactive Catholic) were of that opinion. A respondent from CTV put it this way: "The belief that all other religions... billions of people around the world... have it wrong. That theirs is the only true path to paradise. I can't even begin to understand how that is possible". Respondents sometimes suggested the belief they preferred over the evangelical's belief. A journalist from the CBC stated: "I value ideology from ALL religions..."

Just over 14% of respondents (N = 3)—the religiously inactive United Church members at CBC and CTV and the religiously active Catholic at CTV—said they were least similar to evangelicals when it came to believing the Bible was literally true.

Evangelicals' belief that homosexuality is a sin was cited as a point of dissimilarity by just over 14% of respondents (N = 3) as well; two were non-religious journalists from CBC (one of whom also saw her disbelief in God, mentioned above, as a dissimilarity), the other, somewhat surprisingly, was one of the evangelical respondents from Global. He/she explained his/her position saying:

I would not say that I'm at odds with evangelicals because I am one myself. You should know that there is a diversity of beliefs among evangelicals. What I believe, other evangelicals might not. For example, many of my friends and I (all evangelicals) are strong supporters of gay rights and we don't think a loving monogamous life-partnership between gay men or lesbians is a sin.

The religiously active Anglican from CTV felt he/she was most at odds with evangelicals' belief that women should be excluded from church ministry. The second evangelical respondent from Global found no dissimilarities between his/her beliefs and those of evangelicals at large.

There were 22 responses to this question instead of 21 because, as noted above, one respondent from CBC suggested two ways that he/she was most at odds with evangelical Christians.

4.3.5 Evangelical Social Issues Supported by Journalists

Question 7 asked the journalists, “On what social issues do you find yourself in agreement or mostly in agreement with evangelical Christians?” The most popular response to this question was “none,” “no comment,” or variations on that theme. Thirty-eight percent of respondents (N = 8) answered in that fashion; most were non-religious respondents from the CBC though one respondent was from CTV (active Anglican) and one was from Global (non-religious).

Twenty-eight point five percent of respondents (N = 6) said they shared evangelicals’ concern for the vulnerable in society; one was from CBC (non-religious), three were from CTV (1 non-religious; 1 inactive United; 1 active Catholic) and two were from Global (both evangelicals). Most of these respondents mentioned specific initiatives such as “relief programs for the homeless” or “emergency aid” for victims of disaster. The active Catholic, speaking more broadly, said he/she and evangelicals were participating in “[t]he quest for a just society”.

Almost 24% of respondents (N = 5) including the religiously inactive Catholic from Global, three non-religious respondents from CTV and one from CBC, saw commitment to strong families and healthy communities as the social issue they shared with evangelicals. The inactive Catholic wrote, “Like evangelicals, I put a high priority on spending time with my family and teaching my children what I consider to be good and true;” the CBC respondent stated that he/she was “profoundly in agreement” with evangelical who made their communities better environmentally and with those who “incorporate Christ’s teachings to make their community a kinder and more compassionate one”.

One non-religious respondent from the CBC said “honesty and truth in thoughts and actions” was the social issue he/she and evangelicals agreed on most. The religiously inactive United Church member from CBC said he/she and evangelicals were aligned in their support for the death penalty “for certain types of crimes” and for religion being

taught in schools (though he/she explained that he/she preferred that all religions be part of the curriculum).

4.3.6 Evangelicals Social Issues Opposed by Journalists

Question 8 asked the journalists, “On what social issues do you find yourself most at odds with evangelical Christians?” The responses to this question total greater than 21 because most respondents expressed two or more social issues for which they were at odds with evangelicals.

A strong majority of respondents, about 71% (N = 15), said they felt evangelicals were wrong to oppose homosexual rights and gay marriage; six respondents from CBC (all non-religious), six from CTV (4 non-religious; 1 inactive United; 1 active Anglican) and three from Global (1 non-religious; 1 inactive Catholic; 1 evangelical) held this opinion. The evangelical to voice criticism of his fellow believers was the same evangelical from Global who had expressed support for gays in his answer to Question 6. While the other journalists were brief and to the point with their answers to this question; the evangelical respondent gave a detailed explanation of his/her position:

I know I am at odds with many of my Christian brothers and sisters on this one but I think that people who are gay have no choice in the matter. I wouldn't (and couldn't) ask someone to change their skin colour and likewise, it's unfair to ask a gay man or woman to change their sexual orientation.

Most journalists also felt that evangelicals' were wrong to oppose abortion; 57% of respondents (N = 12)—six from CBC (5 non-religious; 1 inactive United), five from CTV (3 non-religious; 1 inactive United; 1 active Anglican), and one from Global (non-religious) were of this opinion. Interestingly, half of the journalists (N = 11) linked homosexual rights and access to abortion together in their response. For example, a response like this one from a CTV journalist was typical: “I'm at odds with evangelicals' stand against a woman's access to abortion and with their stand against homosexuals' rights, e.g. right to marry”.

Three journalists, two from CBC (both non-religious) and one from CTV (active Catholic) gave no response. Two respondents, one from CBC (non-religious) and one from CTV (active Anglican), said they were at odds with evangelicals when it came to rights of women. Another two from CBC (both non-religious) viewed the proselytizing

evangelicals engage in as a social ill that needed to be stopped. One CBC respondent (inactive United) said he/she did not agree with evangelicals mixing religion and education while another CBC journalist (non-religious) said he/she disagreed with the way evangelicals sometimes mix God and politics. Finally, the other evangelical respondent from Global stated that there were no social issues for which he/she was at odds with evangelicals.

4.3.7 Where Journalists Get Their Information about Evangelicals

In response to Question 9 which asked, “Which sources have provided you with most of your information about evangelical Christians?” most journalists, over 71% (N = 15), cited the mainstream news media as one of their main sources; this was the case for eight respondents from CBC (7 non religious; 1 inactive United), five from CTV (4 non-religious; 1 inactive United) and two from Global (1 non-religious; 1 inactive Catholic). The non-religious journalist from Global remarked, “Like everyone else, I read about evangelicals in the newspaper and see them on the TV news”.

Many journalists also said that conservative Christians they had contacted through work—that is, those they had interviewed for news stories—were a main source of information about evangelicals and evangelicalism. Fifty-seven percent of journalists in total (N = 12)—six from CBC (5 non-religious; 1 inactive United), four from CTV (3 non-religious; 1 inactive United), two from Global (1 non-religious; 1 inactive Catholic)—made this claim.

Almost 24% of journalists (N = 5) had personally explored elements of evangelical culture. A respondent from the CBC (non-religious) and one from CTV (active Anglican) said they had attended evangelical church services. Two other respondents, again from the CBC (non-religious) and CTV (non-religious) said they read evangelical publications or explored evangelical news and current affairs sites on the internet. The religiously active Catholic from CTV said he occasionally watched televangelists on Sundays, but admitted it was “not exactly a bona fide guarantee of accurate impressions”.

Interestingly, very few journalists mentioned intimate contact—that is, friendship with an evangelical—as one of their key ways of knowing about this faith and its adherents. The religiously inactive United Church member from CBC said, “I know some

evangelicals,” but did not go so far as to call them friends. Another journalist from CBC remarked that he/she had a “very close high school friend who was born-again”. However, the way the journalist described his/her friend suggested the companion was not highly esteemed: “No books other than the Bible allowed in the house. Constant, tedious attempts to convert me”. Only three journalists, one respondent from CBC and the two evangelicals from Global stated unequivocally that intimate relationships with evangelicals (i.e., friends, fellow church members or family) were a source of information about this faith and its members.

4.4 Evaluation of Hypothesis 4 and 5

It was found 81% of journalists who responded to the survey had no religious faith or did not actively practice the faith they said they held. When asked how they were most similar to evangelical Christians in terms of their religious beliefs 57% of respondents said they were in no way similar. When asked what they saw as the main characteristics, beliefs or attitudes of evangelical Christians, “arrogant self-righteousness” was the most popular response, given by 38% of respondents. When journalists were asked “On what social issues do you find yourself in agreement or mostly in agreement with evangelical Christians?” the most popular answer, given by 38% of respondents, was “none,” “no comment” or variations on that theme. A strong majority of respondents, about 71%, said they felt evangelicals were wrong to oppose homosexual rights and gay marriage; over half thought evangelicals’ stand against abortion was wrong. Hypothesis 4 stated that national television journalists will have little interest in religion themselves and will view evangelicals and their tenets of belief negatively. That hypothesis was supported.

Survey data confirmed that respondents working for the CBC were more secular than respondents from the two other networks; 90% of CBC respondents said they were atheist, agnostic or non-practicing compared to 57% of the respondents from CTV and 25% from Global. The one reporter of the 10 from CBC who did espouse a religious faith said he/she did not partake of regular religious activities like praying, reading the Bible or attending church. When asked how they were most similar to evangelical Christians in terms of their religious beliefs, 90% percent of CBC journalists said they were in no way similar compared to 28.5% of CTV journalists and 25% of Global journalists. Half of the

respondents from CBC saw arrogant self-righteousness as one of the dominant traits of evangelical Christians compared to 28.5% of CTV respondents and 25% of Global respondents. When journalists from CBC were asked “On what social issues do you find yourself in agreement or mostly in agreement with evangelical Christians?” 60% said “none” or gave no comment compared to about 14% of CTV respondents and 25% of Global respondents. Hypothesis 5 stated that journalists at the three networks will hold different attitudes toward religion and evangelicals with employees of CBC feeling least interested in religion and most negative toward evangelicals. That hypothesis was supported.

4.5 Findings from the Merged Data

The survey of national television journalists conducted for this study determined that a majority of news personnel have little in common with evangelicals in terms of religious or social values. It also determined that on most religious and social issues, the position held by evangelicals is viewed as untenable at best, and offensive at worst, by most news personnel.

The frame analysis of this study determined that Canadian national television journalists more often framed evangelicals negatively in the stories they created than positively or neutrally. While it is true that the difference between the number of negative frames and the combined neutral or positive frames was small enough (i.e., 128 negative frames versus 113 neutral or positive) so as not to skew the overall rating of coverage from balanced to negative, the fact remains that negative frames were more often employed. Furthermore, the frame analysis determined that the journalists used certain negative frames—the evangelicals as “intolerant,” evangelicals as “criminally-minded,” and evangelicals as “un-Canadian” frames—most frequently and most exclusively of all.

The findings of the survey and the frame analysis when considered together suggest that the perceptions journalists have of evangelicals manifest as negative coverage of evangelicals. In particular, evangelicals are depicted most negatively in those situations where their beliefs and values are in greatest opposition to the personal beliefs and values of the journalists.

To prove this assertion more conclusively a small corroborative test, or side-analysis, was performed. The analysis was initiated on the assumption that those evangelical beliefs and values that journalists describe as most disagreeable personally, will be subjected to a greater than average amount of negative coverage.

According to the survey findings, the evangelical position that journalists disagreed with most was their opposition to homosexuality in general, and gay marriage in particular; 71% of journalists said they felt evangelicals were wrong to hold the views on homosexuality that they do. Therefore, if attitudes affect coverage, it should be the case that coverage that juxtaposes evangelicals against homosexuals (or their supporters) should be far more negative than coverage of evangelicals on the whole.

Earlier, during the analysis of all the reports, 20 reports that featured evangelicals and homosexuals together had been identified and isolated from the rest of the sample (as was explained on page 99, these 20 reports were examined for the frame of intolerance). For this side-analysis, the scores of all frames appearing in those 20 reports were averaged and then that mean was compared to the mean score for the coverage as a whole.

As noted previously on page 98, the mean score for all frames in all reports was 2.83 (SD = 1.30); that is to say, coverage on the whole had a rating of balanced. However, an average of the scores for the frames found in just those reports featuring evangelicals and homosexuals together produced a mean of 2.20 (SD = 1.07), or an overall rating of somewhat negative. Therefore, it is indeed the case that coverage that juxtaposes evangelicals against homosexuals (or their supporters) is far more negative than coverage on the whole.

On a network by network basis the results were similar. The overall rating for CBC's coverage was 2.42 (SD = 1.27), or slightly negative; for coverage of evangelicals and homosexuals the rating fell to 2.14 (SD = 1.29), or somewhat negative. CTV's overall rating for coverage was 2.93 (SD = 1.28), or balanced; but, its rating for reports featuring evangelicals debating homosexuals fell to 2.16 (SD = .95), or somewhat negative. Global's overall rating was 3.14 (SD = 1.25) but was 2.43 (SD = .97), or slightly negative, for the "evangelicals versus gays" type of stories.

4.6 Evaluation of Hypothesis 6

Hypothesis 6 stated that a comparison of the findings from the frame analysis to the findings from the survey will show that a link exists between how journalists report about evangelicals and how they feel about evangelicals. As demonstrated above, that hypothesis was supported. Again, however, this finding must be viewed as more suggestive (i.e., what might be) than conclusive (i.e., what is) given that there was not one-to-one affinity between those journalists who created the news reports that were analyzed for this study and those who responded to the attitudinal survey.

Chapter V

DISCUSSION

Evangelicals in Canada have claimed that the news media are biased against them and, as stated at the outset, the goal of this study's frame analysis was to empirically test the validity of that charge. It would have been more dramatic if the results of this study provided singular and unequivocal evidence to support or refute the evangelicals' claim, but they do not. In fact, the results tell two divergent tales.

Evangelicals were, in terms of overall mean rating for frames, portrayed in a neutral fashion in nightly, national television news reports between 1994 and 2004. This finding suggests that Canada's national television journalists, in the main, strive to provide coverage that is balanced. However, the frequent use of the intolerant, criminally-minded, and un-Canadian frames—usually without significant competition from opposing frames—and the high number of negative frames used overall, suggests that there is still room for improvement in their coverage of evangelicals. That is to say, national television journalists were not exemplary in their pursuit of journalistic objectivity because: 1) they did not consistently relay to their audience the ideas that the subjects of the reports were putting forward as *the subjects intended* those ideas to be understood; 2) they did not consistently place events in perspective by providing relevant background; 3) they sometimes failed to allow those who were criticized in the body of a report to respond fully to the accusations of their critics; 4) and they sometimes failed to indicate when opinion, and not fact, was being relayed (Kuypers, 2005; cf. Bennet, 2001: 186).

And while it is true that the results of the frame analysis tell two tales, the tales may not be of equal significance. That is to say, in terms of audience perceptions it could be suggested that the concentrated negative frames (because of their increased saliency) wield more influence over viewers' attitudes than the numerically plentiful, yet thematically disparate, collection of positive and balanced frames. Research has shown that a correlation exists between repetitive viewing of specific, similar content on television and the holding of specific perceptions or beliefs about the world. Rubin, Perse and Taylor (1988) determined that regular viewers of daytime soap operas (which often feature villains with hidden agendas and ulterior motives) tend to score lower in

perception of altruism and trust in others. Similarly, McLeod, Daily, Eveland, Guo, Culver, Kurpius, Moy, Horowitz, and Zhong (1995, as cited in Severin & Tankard, 2001), found that regular exposure to crime-saturated local television news was likely to promote the perception that the crime rate was rising even when it was actually going down (cf. McCombs & Ghanem, 2001). By extension, concentrated depictions of evangelicals as intolerant, criminally-minded and un-Canadian might lead to viewers' acceptance of those messages as valid.

It is true that the effect of these negative frames on viewers' perceptions of evangelicals may be somewhat muted given that reports featuring this faith group air much less frequently than soap operas or crime stories on daily local TV news. On the other hand, the negativity of the frames themselves makes them more readily accepted by a wider audience. Negative information has been shown to more greatly affect observers' formation of impressions than positive information (Fiske, 1980; Hamilton & Zanna, 1972; Reeder & Covert, 1986; Wanta, Golan, & Lee, 2004).

The goal of the survey portion of this study was to determine the attitudes national television journalists hold toward religion and evangelicals in order to gauge whether those attitudes influence their coverage. The survey responses showed that most of Canada's television journalists embrace secularism and are strong supporters of such liberal concepts as abortion access and homosexual rights. These findings corroborate the Miljan and Cooper's (2003a) work and, in relation to secularism, the work of Barber and Rauhala (2005). In terms of secularism, the journalists are not only quite divergent from evangelicals but also from the public-at-large. Just 19% of all Canadians say that they practice no religion (Statistics Canada, 2006) compared to 66% of the respondents to this study's survey.

A comparison of the survey responses to the results of the frame analysis suggested that journalists' attitudes toward evangelicals affected their coverage of that faith group¹. In particular, journalists found it most difficult to report in a dispassionate, neutral

1. As discussed on pages 93 and 124 of this thesis, the disconnect between those journalists who created the news reports that were analyzed for this study and those who responded to the attitudinal survey negates the possibility of a more assertive conclusion regarding this perceived link.

manner when evangelicals' beliefs and values directly contradicted their own heart-felt convictions about what constitutes right and wrong or what constitutes a just society. For example, the journalists' strong support for homosexual rights was reflected in the frame analysis which showed that evangelicals were framed significantly more negatively in reports where they opposed gay rights activists or pro-homosexual legislation. This finding—the most significant of the study—must be explored in relation to the body of theoretical work that has preceded it if its implications are to be understood fully.

As mentioned in the Introduction of this dissertation, up to now, only Miljan and Cooper (2003a) had empirically examined whether the personal values of Canadian journalists influence the coverage they produce. After surveying the attitudes of Canadian journalists regarding social, political, and economic issues, these researchers content analyzed national news reports related to those issues and concluded that the causes and ideals news personnel support are championed in their stories. Although some of Miljan and Cooper's (2003a) survey questions touched on religion, they did not gauge journalists' attitudes toward evangelicals, nor did they content analyze any news content related to religious issues. The findings of this study, therefore, build on Miljan and Cooper's (2003a) work by measuring journalists' attitudes about religion in general, and evangelicals in particular, and by determining conclusively that the attitudes journalists hold about religion and evangelicals also affect the stories they produce. In showing that journalists are willing to forsake the principal of objectivity when covering groups they deem to be deviant, this study's findings also support the work of Schudson's (1995; 1989; 1978).

And while the findings of this study tell us a great deal about individual journalists in Canada, it tells us even more about the role Canada's media plays in the preservation of dominant ideologies and distribution of power. To be sure, the data show when evangelicals challenge Canada's cultural conventions or societal norms the media firmly assert themselves as the protectors of the status quo. That is to say, the data support the cultural-critical position that news—in this case, Canadian television news—is framed so as to circulate and reflect cultural values and ideologies while simultaneously defining and legitimating those values and ideologies (Binder, 1993; Fowler, 1979; Hall, 1977;

Hall et al 1978; Hodge & Cress, 1979). In Canada the most revered cultural value is tolerance and the dominant ideology is pluralism (Adams, 2003; 1997; Lipset, 1990). The news media were able to reinforce tolerance and the pluralism by framing evangelicals negatively in those situations where members of that faith were deemed to have compromised that value and that ideology. Specifically, in reports where they attempted to limit the rights of others—by opposing homosexuality or abortion, for example—evangelicals were subjected to the most negative framing. By depicting the evangelicals negatively, the validity of their position was undermined and their ability to influence society was mitigated. The actions of the Canadian media in these situations, corroborates Silk's (1995: 142) assertion that news professionals want to make conservative Christians "look bad" when their strong beliefs "threaten to disrupt society". Similarly, Gitlan's (1980) and Gamson's (1995) more general assertion, that groups protesting the status-quo will be marginalized by the media, is also validated.

Silk's (1995) casual observation that it is *when* evangelicals "threaten to disrupt society" that they are subjected to denigrating coverage, deserves further elaboration in relation to this study. This research found when a story possessed two distinct criteria there was a far greater likelihood that journalists would subject the featured evangelical(s) to negative framing. First, the featured evangelical had to espouse a belief, or demonstrate an action, that ran contrary to the journalist's worldview. Second, the evangelical's belief or action had to somehow, according to the journalist's perception, threaten the public good. If the second criterion was not present, it was far less likely (though not out of the question) that the evangelical would be framed negatively. For example, evangelicals engaged in ecstatic behaviours, like speaking in tongues or being "slain in the spirit," were framed neutrally, for the most part, despite the fact that Canadian national journalists (as suggested by the findings of this study's survey) would have found that kind of activity unusual at best and disturbing at worst. The idea that an evangelical must be a threat to society and not just simply "odd" before the media will subject him/her to negative coverage is reminiscent of Caragee's (1993) observation about hegemonic frames. He states when an issue is deemed "harmless" to the national interests it is given ideological latitude by the media, but when an issue is tied to the well-being of the nation the media promote the official government position.

Regarding governmental hegemonic influence as it applies to this study, parallels can be found between the official policies of the Canadian government and the dominant frames used in the coverage of evangelicals. Pluralism (most often in the form of multiculturalism) has been federally promoted and financed since the 1960s, and tolerance (including tolerance toward sexual orientation) has been enshrined in Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms since the 1980s—though tolerance itself has been a major component of the Canadian identity since the country's inception (Adams, 2003; 1997; cf. Lipset, 1990). Therefore, insofar as they promote tolerance and pluralism, the Canadian media are advancing the government's agenda. Expressed in relation to this study's findings, it could be argued that by subjecting evangelicals to highly negative framing, when they are thought to have contravened accepted standards of tolerance and pluralism, the Canadian news media are exercising the government's will.

However, despite this evidence, it is more probable that media professionals frame evangelicals as they do, not to advance government policy, but to promote their own heartfelt convictions regarding pluralism and tolerance (certainly, the results of the survey would suggest this interpretation is the more correct of the two)². In this regard, my perspective is in step with Ball-Rokeach et al's (1990; 1987; 1984) theoretical approach which rejects the rigid determinism of the Marxist hegemonic perspective (cf. Gitlan, 1980) and, instead, would have us view the media's activities in terms of reinforcement of cultural values.

When we speak of "heartfelt convictions regarding pluralism and tolerance" it is important that a point of clarification be made: how most Canadian journalists define tolerance and pluralism differs from the way Canadian evangelicals define these concepts. We have established that Canadian journalists resort to framing evangelicals negatively when they *perceive* that evangelicals have contravened these sacrosanct laws of the land. In most cases, evangelicals would perceive a different reality, believing that no breach had occurred. Evangelicals in Canada *do* subscribe to the principals of tolerance and pluralism, the research of Reimer (2003) has shown this to be so. However,

2. To a certain extent, the issue is reflexive in nature (that is to say, it takes on a "chicken or the egg" argument structure); it is likely that the convictions journalists hold toward tolerance and pluralism have been elevated in importance because of the influence and pervasiveness of related government policies.

in the minds of evangelicals, tolerance and pluralism are equated to respecting the humanity of persons with differing beliefs and values; the concepts are not equated with accepting opposing beliefs and values as valid. Put most simply, for Canadian evangelicals pluralism and tolerance are embodied in the notion that one must be “willing to agree to disagree”. This does not seem to be the understanding of Canadian national television journalists (as is evidenced by the situational conditions that result in the use of their greatest number of negative frames, and also by their responses to the attitudinal survey). It would appear the journalists feel to be truly tolerant and truly accepting of pluralism one needs to view the beliefs and values of others as equally valid to one’s own. To claim another’s beliefs and values are wrong is a serious transgression. Put most simply, for Canadian journalists, pluralism and tolerance are embodied in the notion “we all have a different understanding of what truth is, and while my idea of truth is different from yours, both our ideas of truth are equally valid”. Despite its arbitrary, socially constructed nature, when one crosses the definitional boundary line journalists have established, real world consequences follow. This clash of worldviews that Canadian evangelicals and journalists experience is explored further later in this chapter.

We have established that in reports where evangelicals attempted to limit the rights of others, journalists subjected them to the most negative framing so as to minimize their influence on society. Research has shown that the news media employ specific framing strategies to mute dissonant voices; let us now turn our attention to those strategies as they apply to the findings of this study.

According to Volosinov’s (1986) theory of direct versus paraphrased quotation, to devalue the position of a particular speaker a journalist will present his/her statements as paraphrases. Paraphrased statements according to Volosinov (1986) (and as corroborated by the findings of Gibson and Zillman (1993)) are seen by an audience as less authoritative and less factual. Given that paraphrases contribute to the muting of an oppositional group’s message, one would expect that Canadian television journalists in their coverage of evangelicals—especially in the coverage related to evangelicals threatening dominant ideology—would have featured few direct quotes from members of this faith group. However, that was not the case. A simple count of the interview clips in the reports shows that evangelicals were quoted directly more often than non-evangelical

sources. (This, incidentally, runs contrary to what Graham (2004) and Graham and Kaminski (1993) found in their studies of television coverage of conservative Christians in the U.S.) Even in those reports where evangelical ideology clashed most with the status quo, members of that faith group were quoted (that is, featured in interview clips) more often than other sources.

While this phenomenon, at first glance, might appear to contradict the position that Canadian journalists marginalize evangelicals deemed threatening, a more detailed examination shows otherwise. We must look beyond Volosinov's (1986) theory to Clayman's (1995) principal of quote selection for an explanation. Clayman (1995) states quotes or sound bites are chosen for inclusion in a news piece based on their narrative relevance, conspicuousness and extractability. In the reports examined for this study, the direct quotes from evangelicals most often met the second criterion; this is to say, the interview clips from evangelicals inserted in the reports tended to be of a conspicuous or sensationalistic nature. Given the nature of the clips, the argument could be made that they promoted an unflattering, (mis)representation of evangelicals. Undeniably, a direct quote/sound bite—especially one that posits an idea foreign to, or at odds with, popular convention—can just as easily frame a speaker negatively as grant him/her greater esteem and authority in the public's eyes. This is something Volosinov (1986) does not consider.

What we must also consider is the role of the journalist in source selection, for that too has a bearing on the frame of the news piece; as many researchers have shown, what a source says is often dictated by who the source is (cf. Goldberg, 2001; Nelson et al, 1997; Soloski, 1989). The reporter is able to choose which evangelical source will provide the voice for his/her entire religious community. Knowing journalistic convention holds that negative, extreme, and unusual (weird) views are more newsworthy (cf. Galtung & Ruge, 1965) it would go against a reporter's training and inclination to choose a source who presented a moderate, well-reasoned evangelical view when a more extreme source, willing to spout outrageous quotes on camera, was available. As anyone with experience in the news industry, like myself, will confirm, certain rules apply when constructing a story. If a group has a duly appointed spokesperson, then that person's view gets priority; however, in a situation where no clear group leader exists, radical and dramatic individuals become the prime choice for an interview.

Goldberg (2001) has demonstrated that journalists promote one side of an issue over another, not through blatantly stating their opinion in their news report, but by choosing only those sources who agree with their personal opinion. We see a related process taking place in the coverage of evangelicals. To promote the idea that evangelicals are deviant a reporter can choose to interview only those believers who corroborate his/her personal thesis. Because every community has its share of “blacksheep” the reporter looking for a deviant source will seldom be disappointed.

Others researchers (e.g., Entman, 1993; Gamson, 1989; Kahneman & Taversky, 1990; Wallack et al, 1993) suggest it is important to focus on individual words used in a news report because some terms are ideologically “loaded” and their mere usage can powerfully shape a story’s frame. In this examination of the coverage of evangelicals one turn-of-phrase in particular was viewed as contributing to a marginalizing effect. In 20% of the reports (N = 25) the conservative Protestants featured were not called evangelicals nor were they referred to according to their denominational allegiance (e.g., Pentecostal); instead, they were referred to as “fundamentalists”—a term that calls forth images of militancy and backwardness. As we shall see, it is highly unlikely that Canadian journalists reporting during the 1990s and beyond would not know “fundamentalist Christian” was a term of derision; there is good reason to believe the term was knowingly used to stigmatize and marginalize those to whom it was applied.

During the fall of 1993, Brian Stiller, at the time head of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, launched a public relations campaign directed specifically at the media; he requested that they stop using the term fundamentalist Christian as a synonym for evangelical. Stiller’s open letter, sent to all major news organizations, was blunt and to the point:

For you to label an evangelical a ‘fundamentalist’ is like calling an Afro-Canadian a ‘nigger’ or a Canadian aboriginal with mixed ancestry a ‘half-breed.’ ‘Fundamentalism’ is a code word, signifying [to] people that the media elite have judged you to be less than legitimate, and view you as having no place in the public mainstream of our culture. (Stiller, as cited in McAteer, 1993: K17).

Fundamentalist, he conceded, was once used as a religious term to denote conservative Protestants but it now stood for “bigoted, narrow, dogmatic and war-like people and is used to convey contempt and ridicule” (Stiller, as cited in McAteer, 1993: K17). Stiller

concluded his letter by insisting the media “call us ‘evangelicals’ and not resort to unfair names and innuendoes which the term ‘fundamentalist’ triggers” (Stiller, 2002: para. 10).

Stiller’s letter got media attention and also generated a significant amount of discussion within Canada’s newsrooms. As a direct response to the letter, two major news outlets, CBC Radio (the radio division of Canada’s public broadcaster) and Canadian Press (Canada’s largest news wire service) instituted policies whereby their journalists were not to use the word “fundamentalist” to describe Christians unless the Christians themselves used that term self-referentially (Stiller, 2002).

Given the amount of publicity Stiller’s campaign for correct nomenclature was afforded and given the results that it achieved nationally, it seems unlikely that journalists working in Canada after the fall of 1993—including those that created the reports analyzed for this study—could apply the term fundamentalist to an evangelical Christian without knowing the marginalizing effect of that word.

The data suggest that evangelical’s were further marginalized due to the episodic nature of the coverage they received. Iyengar (1991) and Haller (1996) state when a news report is framed to emphasize events over issues—as most of these news reports were—the individual or group featured in the coverage become known for their actions but not for the reasons behind their actions. Seldom between 1994 and 2004 did the stories about evangelicals meet Iyengar’s (1991:14) definition of thematic coverage; that is, coverage marked by “in-depth interpreted analysis” and “related background material”. In fact, over the time period of the study, the only coverage to meet Iyengar’s (1991) thematic criteria was that which focused on the federal leadership campaign of Stockwell Day.

In light of the evidence showing journalists’ penchant for marginalizing the evangelical message, how does one account for the fact that 10.9% of their reports framed evangelicals positively as undeserving of media and societal bias? The explanation for that phenomenon may be tied to Nelson et al’s (1997) observation that frames can originate outside the news organization. They suggest that there are times when a source’s interpretation of an event or issue is so persuasive that the reporter adopts it as the “right” interpretation (cf. Barker-Plummer, 1995). It may be that in 10.9% of reports evangelicals stayed on message and argued vociferously that the treatment they were receiving in the media and from others in society was prejudicial. In the end they

were so convincing that their “version of reality” was adopted, or favoured, in the news reports.

It could also be that journalists employed this positive frame in a concentrated fashion as a means of placating evangelicals and others disgruntled by previously negative coverage. Interestingly, over half of the reports in which the “undeserving of societal and media bias” frame aired near the end, or shortly after, the Canadian federal election of 2000—an election that many defined in terms of its hostility toward evangelicals (Hoover, 2000). After his party’s defeat, Stockwell Day himself publicly accused the media of an anti-evangelical bias (Hoover, 2000). Regarding journalists’ occasional “change of heart,” Herman and Chomsky (1988) argue it is not uncommon for media personnel to sporadically criticize the very ideas and ideals that they themselves have propagated; doing so creates the illusion of diversity and debate and enables the news media to discount claims of imbalance and bias while allowing them to proceed unencumbered in their promotion of values and ideologies they esteem.

Variations among the networks with regard to how each framed evangelicals deserves some attention. Of the three networks, the CBC was the only one to register an overall rating below the balanced territory in the “slightly negative” range. Not surprisingly, CBC journalists had the highest uniformity of negative attitudes toward evangelicals of all survey respondents. The seven journalists from CTV and even the four journalists from Global possessed a greater diversity of opinion regarding evangelicals (some pro and some con) than all 10 journalists from the CBC who were, for the most part, unsympathetic to evangelicals and their beliefs. What makes this finding even more remarkable is the fact that all respondents were self-selecting; that is, journalists of a particular attitudinal profile were not solicited or recruited. Such high uniformity of random respondents from CBC suggests that there may not be many journalists at that network who *are* sympathetic to evangelicals. This suggestion finds support in the studies by Miljan and Cooper (2003a) and Barber and Rauhala (2005) which found CBC journalists to be the most secular in all Canada. The attitudinal uniformity among CBC employees is thought to arise from owners and managers with strong ideologies hiring and promoting front-line journalists who demonstrate similar ideologies (Miljan & Cooper, 2003a; cf. Barber & Rauhala, 2005). Anecdotal evidence, as well, suggests this

is so. Long-time CBC employee, turned newspaper columnist, Robert Fulford had this to say about his colleagues at the nation's public broadcaster:

For generations, they have been constructing a body of impregnable, self-regenerating opinion. As employees they are pre-selected and their views are pre-recorded, like most of their programs. A single rule governs all personnel selection: Like hires like. That principal, followed for seven decades, produces seamless intellectual agreement in all corners of the staff (Fulford, 2006: A20).

Trying to determine why journalists at Global News were the most likely to frame evangelicals positively or in a balanced fashion involves more conjecture; however, it too might have a great deal to do with the hiring and firing practices of owners and managers. It may not be sheer coincidence that two of Global's survey respondents were evangelicals themselves, perhaps management at Global are inclined to hire news staff with evangelical traits. This idea becomes more credible in light of two important facts: one, evangelicals tend to be strong supporters of the state of Israel and; two, the owners of the Global Network expect their employees to support the state of Israel in their coverage.

Evangelicals' support for Israel stems from their belief that the establishment and continuation of the state of Israel is a necessary prerequisite for the second coming of Christ. It is estimated that evangelicals from the United States and Canada contribute more than \$20 million a year in aid to Israel. About 400,000 evangelicals travel to the Holy Land each year contributing millions of dollars to Israel's economy; in fact, Israeli Tourism Minister Benny Elon credited evangelicals with saving his country's tourist industry from bankruptcy (Broadway, 2004).

American evangelicals also use their considerable political influence to lobby the U.S. government to adopt pro-Israel policies (Broadway 2004). Similarly, evangelicals in Canada were given some of the credit when this country's newly elected Conservative government came out strongly in favour of Israel during the recent conflict in Lebanon.

Regarding Global's stand on Israel, it is well documented that the Asper family, the owners of CanWest Global, Global Television's parent company, are strong supporters of the state of Israel, both politically and financially (Boswell, 2003; Israel Asper, 2003). It is equally well known that journalists working for the Aspers, especially those employed at their newspapers (CanWest owns 14 major dailies and 136 smaller papers), are

expected to privilege their owner's position on Israel in their editorial and opinion content (Brown, 2002; Moore, 2002; Siddiqui, 2002). *Montreal Gazette* reporter Bill Marsden summarized the Asper's editorial policy saying "[t]hey do not want any criticism of Israel. We do not run in our newspaper op-ed pieces that express criticism of Israel and what it is doing" (Siddiqui, 2002: OP01). Upper managers at CanWest newspapers who have not toed the Asper's party line editorially, and reporters who have written pieces criticizing the policies of the state of Israel have been punished. For example, the publisher of the *Montreal Gazette*, Michael Goldbloom, was fired "after deviating from CanWest Global's pro-Israel stance" (Fraser, 2002: A8). Doug Cuthand, a columnist for the *Regina Leader Post* was not fired but he had an essay "sympathetic to the plight of Palestinians in Israel" pulled from the paper (Schiller, 2002: A27). It was the first time in 10 years of freelancing for the paper that Cuthand had had his column terminated; while management gave him no explanation, he said he believed it was because "what [he] wrote went against the corporate policy of CanWest" (Schiller, 2002: A27).

Again, the proposition that Global news executives are more amenable to hiring evangelicals because of their ideological leanings is highly conjectural and would require further research to be proven conclusively.

A few more observations regarding the survey findings are warranted. The survey revealed that when journalists think of evangelicals, one of the dominant images that comes to their minds is that of a self-righteous person trying to impose his/her beliefs and values on others. If one considers the worldview of evangelicals versus the worldview of journalists one can understand how journalists might come to this perception. Evangelicals hold that there is such a thing as "absolute truth"; they take Jesus at his word when he says in the Gospel of John 14:6 that he alone is "the way, the truth, and the life" and not just *a* way or *one of many* truths. Evangelicals reason that if their beliefs are "true," then other faiths and values systems that oppose Christ's teachings cannot be. However, a claim to absolute truth would be considered heresy by journalists who embrace the post-modern notion that truth is relative and situational. To the post-modern journalists there are many "truths" and all are equally valid; one would have to be either stupid, or arrogantly self-righteous, or both, to say that they knew "the truth". As the

journalist from CTV put it: “That theirs is the only true path to paradise. I can’t even begin to understand how that is possible”.

Regarding impressions of evangelicals, the survey results also revealed that those respondents who were actively religious yet not evangelicals themselves—the Catholic and Anglican from CTV—were more temperate in their assessment of evangelicals’ main characteristics. These two respondents’ more temperate approach to evangelicals is understandable. In his theory of rhetoric, Burke (1950) outlined the concept of identification which insists the more overlap there is between a speaker’s substance (that is, his/her physical characteristics, background, personality, beliefs, values and method of rhetorical delivery) and an audience’s substance, the greater the chance the speaker will be viewed favourably by the audience (as demonstrated by the acceptance of the speaker’s message). More recent research in the field of homophily (Jussim & Osgood, 1989; Laumann, 1973; Lincoln & Miller, 1979; Louch 2000, McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001) has likewise shown that connection and acceptance between similar people occurs at a higher rate than among dissimilar people.

While a few of the respondents could recognize similarities between themselves and evangelicals, most could not. When asked how they were most similar to evangelicals in terms of religious belief, over half of respondents said “in no way”; similarly, over one third said they could not think of any social issues that they and evangelicals both supported. When commonalities were cited, it was often the case that the responses were insincere or made in jest. Overall, the lack of effort to find common ground combined with the tone of the answers suggested that many of the journalists were “content” to be estranged from evangelicals. This “contented estrangement” is unfortunate: a relationship of respect can never be built when similarities are ignored and only differences are emphasized.

Of course, if many of the television journalists were unable to think of commonalities between themselves and evangelicals it is probably due, in large part, to the fact that they tend not to know many evangelicals personally; those evangelicals they do know are acquaintances that they have interviewed for stories. Only one respondent, apart from the evangelical journalists from Global, indicated close friendships with evangelicals.

The fact that most of the journalists do not know any evangelicals personally becomes increasingly problematic when one considers where a majority of respondents said they got their information about evangelicals; over 71% said one of their key sources of information about this faith group was the mainstream news media. The mainstream media, as this study and others in the United States have shown, tends to depict evangelicals negatively. That being the case, if Canada's national television journalists are relying on mainstream media to learn about evangelicals, chances are good that the perception they will come away with will not be favourable (we are reminded of Scheufele's (1999) argument that journalists are influenced by their own creations). Furthermore, and most importantly, because the journalists do not know any evangelicals personally, they are even more prone to accept the media messages as valid; studies by Fujioka (1999) and McCombs (1997) have shown that a frame's influence over how an individual or group will be perceived is increased when the viewer or reader has no first-hand knowledge of the individual or group represented. Ultimately, a vicious circle of negative coverage develops: journalists accept evangelical stereotypes promoted in past stories; propagate them in current stories; and thereby ensure their presence in future stories.

Finally, a remark about the format of the news reports, a few comments about the chronological consistency of the frames in this study, and a few observations about the main focus or topic of the reports in relation to conventional news criteria and agenda-setting theory.

In their studies of national television news coverage of religion in the United States, Graham (2004) and Graham and Kaminski (1993) found reports that showed religious individuals in situations of conflict or controversy tended to be longer running reporter-based stories while those that showed them in positive situations tended to be brief anchor-reads. Similarly, the Fraser Institute's study (1996) of religion stories on Canadian national television news found that reports featuring Christian faith groups tended to be shorter than those reports featuring non-Christian religious groups—except when the Christian groups were involved in conflict. In contrast to the two aforementioned studies, in this study stories depicting evangelicals positively were not relegated to shorter-running formats. As was noted in the results, just 13 of the 119 reports about evangelicals

were anchor reads or anchor reads to clips. A cursory examination of those shorter reports by the researcher determined that 10 of the 13 were negative in their portrayal of evangelicals (it was clearly evident that the frames identified in those 10 reports were predominantly negative). If the shortest stories in this study were primarily negative, by process of elimination it can be concluded that the more positive reports about evangelicals tended to be broadcast as the longer running reporter packages and live interviews.

Regarding the consistency of the frames, the results showed that apart from the uncharacteristic spike in frequency that the “Threatening Politically,” “Undeserving of Societal and Media Bias” and the “Un-Canadian” frames experienced in 2000 (on account of strife over the federal election), the frames identified in this study did not change dramatically over time. This finding lends support to Scheufele’s (1999) and Gamson et al’s (1992) idea that once a frame becomes set, or engrained on society, it is unlikely to be replaced by an opposing version of reality. However, the spikes—specifically those of a negative nature—deserve further examination. As discussed previously in this chapter, this research found when a story featured an evangelical espousing a belief that ran contrary to the journalist’s worldview *and* when the evangelical’s belief was deemed to threaten the public good, then the evangelical was far more likely to be framed negatively. In these spikes we see further support for this study’s claim of predictive criteria for negative framing. In 2000, national television journalists deemed evangelical politician Stockwell Day a serious threat to the public good: if he was successful in his bid to become Prime Minister, his strong opposition to abortion and same sex marriage and other such religiously-informed positions would gain exposure and increased credibility nationally. Seeing his views as antithetical to their own and realizing the influence he would wield if he won, the media did everything in their power to ensure that he did not—the evidence of their concerted effort is visibly perceptible in the sudden and prolific use of the “Politically Threatening” and “Un-Canadian” frames in the lead-up to the election. In so far as the media’s course of action greatly contributed to the governing Liberal Party’s campaign agenda (i.e., to paint Stockwell Day and his Canadian Alliance party as “scary” and thus, illegitimate political players), an argument for the governmental hegemonic thesis could be made (cf. Gamson

& Modigliani, 1987; Gitlan, 1980); however, as is discussed below, there is more evidence to suggest that a single elite media outlet, and not the governing Liberals, decided what the TV watching public would “think about” during the 2000 election.

Stempel (1985), Reese and Danielian (1989), and Trumbo (1995) each determined certain prestigious media outlets are able to set the agenda for what issues other outlets will consider important enough to cover. In the case of the 2000 election, the CBC TV national news team decided Stockwell Day’s evangelical faith was an issue worthy of the country’s attention and, on November 14, they aired a documentary that explored that faith, focusing especially on his belief in creationism. While the print media had made Day’s faith a major agenda item as early as March, up to the broadcast of CBC’s documentary, national television news in Canada had been virtually silent on his religious outlook; previously the only comments were innocuous references to him being Pentecostal and a former lay preacher. However, after the CBC aired its documentary, Day’s religious beliefs—particularly his belief in creationism—became the focus of coverage on both CTV national news and Global national news. All three networks kept Day’s faith high on their agendas for several days. Subsequent stories tended to be reaction pieces featuring politicians, sociologists, theologians commenting on and discussing—not Day’s faith per se—but what CBC’s documentary *had said* about Day’s faith. In this case, CBC national news not only set the agenda, it became part of the story.

Turning our attention to which evangelical-related issues and events made the national media’s agenda over the longer period of 1994 to 2004, we see that evangelicals were more apt to be covered when involved in non-religious situations rife with conflict (e.g., politics, crime, and social protests), than when involved in distinctly “positive” situations where harmony was exemplified (e.g., charity and volunteer work). Distinct from how they were framed in these situations, the situations themselves were primarily negative. The media’s preference for covering evangelicals in non-religious, controversial situations may be linked to biased attitudes toward this faith group; however, the media’s preference for covering stories of this nature is probably more a case of established precedent than overt prejudice. As determined by Galtung and Ruge (1965), journalistic convention holds that certain types of events and issues possess multiple news criteria or a greater range of “news values” and, therefore, are more worthy of coverage than others

(cf. Maus, 1990; Griffin, 2003). We should not be surprised, then, that most of the television news stories about evangelicals focus on negative situations and lack complexity given that most news stories, regardless of the subject, are like that as well. However, we must consider whether the media's defence that "this is just the way we *always* do our job" is sufficient justification for the choices they have made in relation to coverage of evangelicals. On closer inspection the media's argument reveals its weakness.

While the media cannot be faulted for placing stories that contain "tried-and-true" news criteria (e.g., negativity, conflict) on their agenda, in the case of evangelicals they can be faulted for focusing on certain conventional criteria to the exclusion of others. It would appear that the media believe that "negativity" is the only (or at least most important) news criterion by which an evangelical-related event or issue should be deemed worthy of coverage; indeed, they tend to overlook those evangelical stories in which the news criteria of "uniqueness" and "significance" (i.e., those stories involving large numbers or impacting many) are present. In Canada, evangelicals devote more time to volunteer organizations and more money to charities than other any other single community of citizens, and this measure of volunteer work and charity giving does not include the time and money they contribute to programs within their own churches (VanGinkel, 2003). These two activities of evangelicals are both "unique" and "significant" in the Canadian context; however, news stories related to their volunteer and charity work comprised just 2.5% of all coverage in the last decade, the lowest amount of coverage for any single topic category.

In relation to their agenda-setting function, the media, for the most part, are highly successful in making us think about evangelicals in terms of conflict and controversy and, whether intentional or not, this adds to the impression that they evangelicals are deviant. Even when the reporting is fair and balanced, the content of most of the news stories with its 'us-versus-them structure' necessarily leaves news consumers with "a feeling of negativity". It cannot be helped that the negativity surrounding an issue is transferred onto the antagonists of the story through the process of "guilt by association". In short, evangelicals are seen as contentious because of the issues with which they are associated.

Whatever the reasons for their aversion to substantively covering evangelicals involved in unique and significant positive acts, it remains incumbent upon Canada's TV journalists to work towards rectifying this imbalance. If non-evangelical Canadians are to ever truly understand who evangelical Christians *really are*—that is, if they are ever to see them in terms of more than one of two incidental traits—the news media must begin to define them in a manner more reflective of how they define themselves.

One thing that this study's findings about story topics makes clear is that evangelicals have very little power over the media's agenda; in terms of controlling what events and issues the media will cover, this faith group appears to wield almost no influence. While research (Andsager, 2000; Andsager & Smiley, 1998; Westley, 1976) has determined that some special interest and advocacy groups are able to influence the media's agenda through the sending of media releases, evangelicals—at least from what the data suggest—are not among "the chosen few". As well, certain anecdotal evidence provides further proof that Canadian news outlets pay little heed to information subsidies originating with evangelicals. In August of 2005 popular U.S. televangelist Pat Robertson made headlines for suggesting on national television that Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez should be assassinated (Alberts, 2005). Following the incident, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC), on behalf of the more than 140 evangelical organizations and denominations it represents, sent out a media release to all major news outlets in Canada condemning Robertson's comments. The intent of the EFC was to relay to non-evangelicals in Canada that Canadian evangelicals were not "cut from the same cloth" as their more radical American cousins. However, the statement was not picked up by radio, TV, or the papers, nor did the EFC receive any calls from reporters seeking to clarify where Canadian evangelicals stood on the issue. According to EFC executives, the media's behaviour in this case was consistent with other instances (Reid, Gail. [EFC Communications Director]. Personal Communication, May 10, 2006).

Chapter VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusions

The broad research questions this thesis sought to answer were: **To what extent, if at all, are selected Canadian television news programs biased towards evangelical Christians, and how does the value systems of selected Canadian journalists influence their reporting on evangelical Christians.**

The findings of this research reveal that in terms of portrayal of evangelicals, a disparity does exist between national television news programs. Relatively speaking, CBC's national news is most biased against this faith group followed by CTV's national program. Global's national newscast stands alone for its exceptionally balanced coverage of evangelicals.

Furthermore, this study has shown that the Canadian journalists are highly irreligious but, when it comes to liberal Western ideologies and values, especially the ideology of pluralism and the cultural value of tolerance, they are devout believers. These firmly held beliefs of journalists are promoted in the news coverage that they produce. By extension, this study has also determined that journalists, in order to ensure their own ideological system prevails in society, tend to negatively frame those groups that challenge their beliefs and values. The media realize that by depicting those groups that they find personally offensive as deviant and undesirable, they are able to coax the population-at-large into rejecting their message. This study is careful to clarify that groups holding beliefs and values at odds with those held by the media are not automatically a target for negative framing. It is when a group's beliefs or values imperil or threaten to compromise what journalists see as the public good or as a "just society" that an offensive of negative frames is most likely to be launched.

This study makes the observation that it is the media's definition of tolerance and pluralism that is the root of their conflict with groups holding more conservative values than themselves. Specifically, the media take a broader, more encompassing view of what these concepts entail (i.e., one must accept others' views as equally valid as one's own), while conservative-values groups tend to define tolerance and pluralism more

narrowly (i.e., it is valid to believe your view is the right one; in cases where someone holds a conflicting view to your own, you must “agree to disagree”).

Of course, there is a certain irony in the media’s negative framing of groups they deem to have breached the boundaries of pluralism and tolerance; that is, they seem to be contravening their own rule that “one must accept all views as equally valid”. One would guess that they are able to rationalize their behaviour using the logic that it is alright to be intolerant to the “intolerant”.

It has been more than three hundred years since Scottish politician Andrew Fletcher made his famous quip, “If a man were permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of a nation” (as cited in Griffin, 2003: 393). Fletcher recognized that stories have as much power to shape the culture and ideology of a society as political policies: when someone or some group has the power to transmit their stories into the living rooms of almost every Canadian, the effects are beyond imagination. As the group with that very power, the news media play a truly crucial role in deciding which groups in society will be valued and which will be devalued. By deciding whether to cover an issue or event, in choosing sources and then portions from their interviews, through words use, and through exclusion of information, the media shape a group’s message and even their identity for an audience. With that in mind, we recall in the Introduction of this study (see page 1) that it was noted 31% of Canadians surveyed said they would be uneasy meeting an evangelical (Bethune, 2006). It was further noted that commentators suggest unflattering stereotypes of evangelicals promoted by the media contribute to the negative perception non-evangelical Canadians have towards that faith group (Stackhouse 2005; 1995; cf. Stiller, 2003; 2006; 1997). While we cannot claim causation based on the findings of this study, the results do fuel the fires of speculation. Should we be surprised that nearly one third of Canadians feel uncomfortable with evangelicals when over the last 11 years the news media has stressed that they are intolerant, criminally-mixed, politically-threatening and un-Canadian? At the very least we must admit, in light of this study’s findings a statement like “I don’t know an evangelical personally but I’ve seen them on the news” now takes on ominous overtones.

6.2 Recommendations

Very few published studies have examined how a single faith group has been framed by the media over an extended period of time. In fact, Kerr and Moy's (2002) study of the framing of fundamentalist Christians between 1990 and 2000 in U.S. newspapers, and Kerr's (2003) study of the framing of fundamentalist Christians in American national television news between 1990 and 2000 were, up to now, the only two studies to have examined the framing of a single Christian faith group longitudinally. And while these researchers' respective studies were helpful in developing the methodological model for this current study (as stated in Chapter III, page 83, of this thesis, the coding instrument of this study with its "list of frames" was based on Kerr and Moy's (2002) design) there were flaws in their respective methodological models that this study tried to correct.

Kerr and Moy's (2002) and Kerr's (2003) studies used the "list of frames technique" promoted by Tankard (2001) and Koenig (2004) to determine which frames were present in news reports, but, unlike in this study, they paid little heed to the frequency and exclusivity of the frames that were found. As such, in their studies, a frame that was found in 4 news reports was purported to be as powerful (i.e., as able to influence audience opinion) as a frame that was found in 44 news reports. The findings from Kerr and Moy's (2002) study of newspaper frames are a perfect example of this oversight. For simplicity of illustration, below is an edited excerpt from their findings that deals with just two frames:

During the two decades studied, newspapers have portrayed fundamentalist Christians as somewhat intolerant ($M = 1.96$, $S.D. = .71$)... However, these stories depicted fundamentalist Christians in a nearly neutral manner in terms of patriotism ($M = 2.62$, $S.D. = .95$) (Kerr & Moy, 2002: 59)

Note that in their findings Kerr and Moy (2002) make no distinction between the influential power of the intolerant and patriotic frames. We are led to assume that the audience will see the fundamentalists as intolerant but they are *equally as likely* to think of them as balanced in terms of their patriotism. The numbers suggest otherwise. In one of their study's data tables, Kerr and Moy (2002: 62) list the different frames according to their mean rating but also according to the number of times they appeared in reports. That table shows that frames related to tolerance appeared in 1,091 reports; however, those related to patriotism appeared in just 192 reports. Given the repeated use

of frames related to tolerance it would certainly be the case that an audience would be more prone to think of fundamentalist in relation to that characteristic than in relation to patriotism. Despite this fact, nowhere in their findings, nor later in their discussion, do Kerr and Moy (2002) raise the issue that the frames that appear more often actually have greater resonance, and thus greater saliency, than other frames that appear less frequently. This same oversight is found in Kerr's (2003) study of fundamentalist Christians in TV news reports.

Because there are so few studies of a similar nature, it is inevitable that future research into religion and news will look to Kerr and Moy's (2002) and Kerr's (2003) work for inspiration. Therefore, it is important that the limitations of their respective studies be revealed and corrected so that forthcoming work of a related ilk posits accurately interpreted results and conclusions. As was determined by this study, the mere presence of a frame does not guarantee that it is able to persuasively promote a particular reality.

With an eye to the future, this research should be viewed as a first step in a long progression to illuminate the relationship between evangelicals and the media in Canada. To convincingly determine if this faith groups' concerns over media bias are justified, further research is warranted. For example, the depiction of evangelicals in Canadian newspapers, magazines and even entertainment media should be subjected to analysis and the attitudes of journalists toward specific religious traditions should be probed more thoroughly.

Other, more specific, areas of potential research also deserve mentioning. While conducting this study it became evident that American evangelicals are strongly represented in Canadian television news coverage; a count by the researcher determined that one-third of the reports collected for this study ($N = 39$) featured evangelicals from the U.S. During the analysis of the news reports it also became evident that the American evangelicals featured in the news reports were characteristically different from the Canadian evangelicals. In particular, it was noted that the words and actions of the American evangelicals tended to be far less temperate and decorous than the Canadian evangelicals—a finding in keeping with Reimer's (2003, 2000a, 2000b) research mentioned in Chapter II of this study. While a comparison of the portrayals of American and Canadian and evangelicals in Canadian television news reports was beyond the

purview of this study, such research would certainly be worthwhile: a study of that nature could help determine the extent to which Canadian evangelicals are “tarred” with the same (negative?) brush as their American counterparts.

Furthermore, it would be beneficial if future studies were to examine the relationship between the Canadian media and other faith groups using a methodology comparable to that used in this research. Similarly focused studies on “stand-alone” faith communities would allow for comparison of data between religious groups and, as Kerr (2003) suggests, in the end provide a clearer and more complete understanding of the news media’s overall treatment of religion. In particular, similar research examining the media’s treatment of conservative Catholics and conservative Muslims would be very useful for evaluative purposes. An examination of media coverage of conservative Catholics—who, over the last few decades, have become increasingly similar doctrinally and ideologically to evangelicals (Beverly, 2002; Shea, 2004)—would allow researchers to determine whether conservative Christian faith groups, in general, share a common media profile. Conversely, a similarly conducted study of coverage of orthodox Muslims would allow researchers to determine if journalists—known for their support of the underdog—are more sympathetic in their treatment of non-dominant (i.e., non-Christian) conservative faith communities.

It must be said that the results of this study would be put to poor use if they served only to heighten the tension that already exists between evangelicals and the news media. It is the opinion of the author that the findings would be better employed as a catalyst to positive action.

The results show that Canadian television journalists, in certain cases, fail to cover evangelical Christians in a balanced and objective fashion. Failure to rectify this problem could be detrimental to evangelicals but also to the profession of journalism.

Because the news media do influence the opinion of the public at large, when they cover groups like evangelicals negatively the effects are far reaching. Researchers studying other religious minorities and marginalized groups have determined that such coverage can lead to ridicule and diminished status publicly, and privately it can cause a sense of inferiority among members of the ostracized group (Henry & Tator, 2002; Fleras, 2003; Mahtani, 2001; Stroman, 1986; Subervi-Velez & Necochea, 1990).

For journalists, abandoning the notion of objectivity could lead to an erosion of press freedom. The reason that media outlets in most democratic countries are allowed to produce and disseminate their messages with little government involvement is it is assumed that they will police themselves and be fair and objective; when they forgo neutrality in favour of advocating a specific cause or ideology they risk losing their privileged status (McQuail, 2001). Furthermore, news media organizations that become known for abandoning their objectivity risk alienating sources and their audiences. Sources might cease to make themselves available to “biased” outlets for fear that their comments would not be accurately or fairly relayed to the public. Likewise, audiences might cease to view, read or listen to the news from those outlets that they perceive are trying to influence their opinion. Because advertising revenues are tied to market share, stations that lose their audiences inevitably lose money as well (McQuail, 2001).

Miljan and Cooper (2003a) note abandoning attempts at objectivity in order to advocate a particular agenda is dangerous for one other reason. They explain that when journalists write “[t]o promote social change, which means always to promote specific social change... [they] justify their advocacy on the grounds that they believe they are right, and that what they advocate will improve society” (Miljan & Cooper, 2003a: 60). However, they conclude, unless journalists possess psychic ability that allows them to see into the future, they cannot know for certain when they are right. In fact, history suggests that many of the causes and ideals promoted by journalists in the past turned out to be detrimental to society in the future (Miljan & Cooper, 2003a). The glowing—and deeply flawed—coverage of Stalin’s Soviet Union that *New York Times* correspondent Walter Duranty’s produced in the early 1930s comes to mind.

Three simple strategies could help television networks in Canada be more balanced and fair in their coverage of evangelical Christians. First, they could hire a faith specialist—an individual with extensive knowledge in the field of religion. In stories involving evangelicals, such a person would be more able to explain the theological motivation behind their beliefs and actions moving beyond the “what” of a story to the “why”.

Second, the networks could begin hiring reporters who are evangelicals, or at least religious. The results of this study’s survey suggest that religious individuals from all

faiths are significantly underrepresented in Canada's national television newsrooms. The survey findings also showed that reporters who are religious, though not necessarily evangelicals themselves, tend to be more open-minded toward those believers who are evangelicals. More religious reporters would bring greater knowledge and balance to stories about evangelicals and religion in general.

Third, when secular news personnel cover evangelicals they should try to explore the religious angle of the story—that is, its theological or doctrinal foundation—by asking questions related to beliefs and faith. In the past, this approach has seldom been used when covering “good news” stories about evangelicals. For example, when evangelicals receive coverage for volunteer or charity work they are rarely asked what motivates their actions.

However, are we simply being naïve to think that news professional will change the way that they cover evangelicals simply because we ask them? Are the recommendations above a waste of ink? Frame theory itself and, its ideological cousin, the social constructionist position insists that journalists—indeed, all of us—must necessarily interpret (or filter) events and issues through the lens of our own values, beliefs and opinions (though, as has been discussed, “good” journalism, as it is understood today, requires that a reporter tries to keep his/her personal biases in check). And, it is only if/when our values, beliefs and opinions change that our interpretations of reality can or will change. By that logic, it is fair to say that unless the majority of Canadian news professionals experience personal conversions to evangelical Christianity, it is highly unlikely that their values, beliefs, and opinions toward members of that faith group will significantly change. We might suggest ways for journalists to change the way they write about evangelicals, but getting them to change the way they think about evangelicals is quite another matter. It is only the latter action that will lead to conclusive and lasting results in terms of coverage of evangelicals. That is to say, if journalists' worldviews do not change, then their coverage—at its deepest level, the level of the frame—cannot. Perceptions are reality and the perceptions of journalists become the reality of their audience. It is this conundrum that causes me to consider, at least briefly, what might be described as more radical strategies. I begin with an approach advocated by Dr. Marvin Olasky, professor of journalism at the University of Texas at Austin.

Olasky (1996), an evangelical himself, does not believe that a devout Christian is able to get “accurate” or “objective” information from a secular news source. His solution, therefore, is for Christians to get their news from Christian news outlets that specifically subscribe to the principal of “Biblical-objectivity”. Olasky (1996: para. 23, 26) defines the principal of Biblical-objectivity as:

faithful reflection of the biblical view, as best we can discern it through God’s Word... Biblical-objectivity does not fall into relativism or situational ethics, however, because its sole ethic is to reflect biblical positions. In that way its philosophical base is diametrically opposed to the prevailing liberal theory of objectivity, which assumes that there is no true truth on any issue.

Olasky (1996) states that to non-evangelicals and secularists his principle may appear biased and subjective because it categorically promotes the Biblical position; however, his feeling is that the Bible is True (in that it contains the thoughts of *all-knowing* God), and therefore, the rules, values and actions it promotes qualify as an objective measure by which events and issues in this world can be measured. Furthermore, he states that secular journalists who criticize *his* model of objectivity should be aware of their own hypocrisy when it comes to fairness and balance. He remarks, “Many reporters privately acknowledge that they put their hands on the scales, but try to do so in subtle ways unnoticed by readers” (Olasky, 1996: para. 28). For Olasky (1996: para. 29) the choice is unequivocal:

Christian journalists, in situations where the Bible shows us the right path (and it does so most of the time), should reject both the theory and the farce [of objectivity as mainstream media see it]. Biblically, there is no neutrality: We are either God centered or man centered.

Olasky’s (1996) assertion that Christians should get their news from Christian news sources that are dedicated to, and informed by, an evangelical worldview seems to find support in the social constructionist position. In a manner reflective of my own argument above (in which I question whether the hope for improved coverage of evangelicals might be naïve), Olasky (1996), through his Biblical-objectivity principle, takes the social constructionist position to its logical conclusion. While he does not expound the theoretical foundation for his position explicitly, he appears to posit: Because reality is a social construction influenced by one’s beliefs, values, and culture, what is reality for people within one community cannot be the same reality for those in another who possess

different beliefs, values and culture. That being the case, the best a journalist can ever hope for when he/she creates a news report is to reflect the reality of his/her community back upon itself. That is to say, it is only when the journalist creates news for those who share the same beliefs, values and culture as him/herself that it will ever be taken as fair, accurate, and balanced: in other words, True. It is inevitable that those who are outside the journalist's "worldview community" will see his/her coverage as misrepresenting most events or issues (especially those that pertain to them personally) because their criteria for Truth has been set by their own worldview. In short, for news coverage to ever be taken as an objective account of reality, both the journalist and the audience must be willing participants of the dialectic: the reporter must speak the truth, but, more importantly, the audience must hear the truth. Only those who share the journalist's worldview—or perception of reality—are predisposed to hearing the truth of the news report.

However, the solution Olasky (1996) proposes—that evangelicals only get their news from evangelical newspapers, radio programs and TV shows—is problematic for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that, if put into practice, it would contribute to the cultural retardation and isolation of evangelicals in North America. Another obvious concern has to do with how evangelicals interpret the Bible: Olasky (1996) assumes that there is a unified evangelical worldview and that is simply not the case. For example, many Mennonite denominations in Canada are comprised of evangelicals who are pacifists and abhor war; conversely, many Baptist denominations in Canada are comprised of evangelicals who feel war, under certain circumstances, can be just—both base their beliefs on a literal interpretation of scripture (these are no "liberal" Christians). How does one cover a war in a Biblically-objective fashion—that is, from God's perspective—when evangelicals themselves are diametrically opposed over what God's perspective truly is on that issue? Despite Olasky's (1996) claim that Biblical-objectivity transcends the capriciousness of "secular" journalistic objectivity, it is obvious that it too is influenced by the subjective opinions of individual journalists. The last flaw I will focus on is of a more practical nature. At present, there just are not that many evangelical news outlets in existence. If one wanted to rely on evangelical news agencies for the bulk of one's news, one would be terribly under-informed. Even in the U.S. where the

evangelical community possesses the greatest financial and human resources, there is not, at this time, a daily national evangelical newspaper, or an all-news evangelical radio network. The evangelical TV networks that exist, like CBN and Trinity, devote relatively little time in their schedule to the reporting of news. Evangelical publications and broadcast programs operating in local markets tend to be more focused on commentary and analysis than on coverage of day-to-day issues and events. In Canada, news from an evangelical perspective is virtually non-existent.

For the reasons stated above, I believe Olasky's solution is not viable. However, I would like to offer another option; not so radical as Olasky's plan but, admittedly, unconventional in its own right. Increasingly, it is becoming common practice that journalists working for newspapers, radio and television news outlets are, in addition to creating reports for their publication or news program, expected to publish a blog on their media company's web site. These blogs—a type of informal journal or diary—for the most part, provide behind-the-scenes insights into how particular stories were researched and ultimately published or broadcast. Blogs on a news outlet's web site are the equivalent of the movie director's commentary which now accompanies DVD copies of Hollywood blockbusters—they provide the story behind the story (Brown, 2006).

My suggestion is this: journalists should begin using their blogs for another purpose; they should begin disclosing where they personally stand on the issues that they are covering. "Disclosure journalism," as I call it, recognizes that news professionals are influenced by the values and beliefs that they hold and it further recognizes that it is impossible for them to separate themselves from that influence. Therefore, rather than force journalists to sublimate their worldview, it asks them simply to reveal it. By doing so, the audience is able to weigh a journalist's personal perceptions against his/her account of an issue and then judge for themselves how "true" that retelling of events might be. *The greatest problem with news is not that journalists are influenced by their perceptions; the greatest problem is that news audiences do not realize journalists are influenced by their perceptions.* Disclosure journalism awakens news audiences to this phenomenon and thus inoculates them, at least somewhat, to its affects.

In addition to reminding news audiences of the subjective nature of the news, disclosure journalism would combat news bias at its source. That is, it would lessen the

incident of bias in the creation of news because it would make journalists more self-reflective. A journalist who knew that he/she would have to disclose where he/she stood on a particular issue after his/her coverage of that issue was filed, would be more likely to exercise caution when framing his/her original news report. I must state, that as I envision it, disclosure journalism would not reject the journalistic principles of fairness, accuracy and balance. Under this new model those principles would still be applied to the best of the ability of each reporter. However, while it reveres fairness, accuracy and balance, disclosure journalism realistically accounts for the fact that some reporters are less able (or willing) to apply those principles than others.

Because the profitability of a newspaper or news broadcast is linked to its reputation as an honest purveyor of information, news providers might view disclosure journalism with a modicum of interest. At a time when the public is becoming increasingly cynical toward the media and what it sees as slanted coverage, it is not unreasonable to think that a news outlet that claimed “our reporters have no *hidden* agenda and we can prove it to you” might prove highly successful.

Just as this study illuminates how the media might go about conducting “their business” in some new ways; it also has some suggestions for evangelicals regarding their engagement in the public sphere. The fact that over 10% of the reports positively framed evangelicals as undeserving of media and societal bias suggests that under the right conditions evangelicals can overcome established news frames. However, if evangelicals hope to get “their version of reality” adopted more often by the media, then they must approach the task of communicating with journalists more purposefully. Specifically, they must be prepared to explain to the media what they are doing using terms, metaphors and references that secular reporters will understand and, more importantly, respect. For example, they might begin to talk about themselves as a religious minority (perhaps as a cultural minority as well), desiring and deserving equal protection under Canada’s Charter. They could also refer to their religious behaviour as a “lifestyle choice,” and justify their causes not by referencing the Bible but by citing empirical data, legal precedents, and cogent philosophical arguments. Ironically, evangelicals might be wise to model their communication strategies on the strategies used by Canada’s gay and lesbian community over the last two decades.

All this is not to say that evangelicals should deny the source from which their ideas and actions spring; their devotion to Christ and his teachings can be included in their messages to the media. However, they must be guided by the knowledge that 30 seconds in a television news piece, or a paragraph or two in a newspaper, is not long enough to convince someone of the truth of Christianity. On the other hand, it might be just long enough to convince someone that those who call themselves evangelical Christians are sincere, intelligent and of value to society.

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APPENDIX 1

CODERS' GUIDEBOOK

For each script that you analyze, you must complete a code sheet. Each code sheet has numerous sections or categories that must be filled in. This guidebook is to be used in conjunction with your code sheet; it explains each of the coding categories.

Story Number: Each news script is assigned a number in its top right hand corner. The numbers are sequential.

Coder Initials: the initials of the first and last name are to be printed.

Date Report Aired: the date is to be found near the lead of each story.

Network: the network affiliation is found near the top of the first page of the news script.

Format of News Report

For the purpose of this study, news reports will be coded according to one of four general formats. They are:

- 1) **Anchor Read**—these are shorter stories that are read live by the anchor during the newscast to the viewing audience (only the anchor lines are seen and heard).
- 2) **Anchor Read to a Clip**—similar to the Anchor read in that the story is read live by the anchor. However, at one point in the story (it can be right at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end) the anchor's lines are interrupted/replaced by pre-recorded interview clip from someone else. The 'clip' is generally a 10 to 15 second quote from someone who was interviewed in the field/on the scene.
- 3) **Reporter's Pre-recorded Package**—these are reporter-based stories introduced by the anchor (when he/she reads the lead to the story) but 'told' by the reporter. They are generally the longest type of news story. They feature narration by the

reporter and clips (quotes) from several different sources. A reporter's pre-recorded report is easily identified because the anchor always names the reporter who is "bringing us the story".

- 4) Live Interview/Live Commentary—the live interview is easily identifiable because it appears in question and answer format. Generally, it involves the anchor asking questions of an in-studio guest or of someone linked to the news station electronically. The live commentary involves a single speaker, most often the anchor or someone else from the network, delivering a prepared speech on an issue.

Total Word Count

At a TV station news reports that are broadcast are measured according to running time--that is, how long a single news report is on the air from start to finish. However, because this study is examine scripts of TV news reports the number of words in each news script will be measured. The total word count is generally tabulated by the network and is placed near the top of each script. Where the total word count is not recorded by the network on the script by the network the coder is to manually count the number of words in the script.

Main Focus/Topic of the News Report

Television news reports generally have a predominant focus. In simple terms, the main focus or topic of a news piece details who was involved and what they were doing. For this coding category a list of topics is provided for you. After reading the news story select the most applicable topic from the list. What follows are more detailed explanations of the kinds of stories that fit with each of the summaries on the list.

Evangelicals involved in religious observance/theological discussion: Use if the focus is purely upon religious practice, belief, or doctrine. Specifically, stories may about special Church services (including Christmas concerts and the like), sermons or seminars by Church leaders, lectures given by key note speakers at the church, polls and surveys of

religious belief and practices. These stories involve evangelicals talking amongst themselves.

Evangelicals involved in internal church business/church governance: Stories will focus on non-theological discussions and decisions made by a church or denomination. New building construction, new hymn books adopted, hiring of a new minister, or two churches or denominations amalgamating are all possible topics.

Evangelicals involved in charity work/volunteer work/mission work: Stories will focus on helping others locally or abroad to live a better **material life**.

Evangelicals involved in proselytizing/ “witnessing”: Stories will focus on evangelicals trying to influence the religious lives/religious beliefs of people locally and abroad. Stories may be about large concerts, crusades, programs or other events that are held with the specific goal of teaching non-Christians/non-evangelicals about Jesus and Christianity. Stories may also be about individual evangelicals talking to one or two people about Jesus and Christianity.

Evangelicals involved in social actions/protest (but not in the courts, not related to education and not with an overtly political focus): These stories may be about marches, petitions, sit-ins, letter writing campaigns or other actions meant to elicit change in society. These stories are about evangelicals out of the church and into the public sphere but the actions, as mentioned, do not involve the courts, education or specific political parties or politicians—other categories better suit stories of that nature.

Evangelicals involved in political action/issues (but not related to education and not enacted through the courts): These stories clearly show evangelicals involved in the political process or political discussion at the local, provincial or federal level. These stories will involve direct references to politics, political process, and politicians. Stories may be about evangelicals trying to influence political parties, politicians, political policy or governmental practices and procedures; or they may be about evangelical political

candidates. A story will not be coded as evangelicals involved in politics if it relates to education or court action—there are more specific categories for stories of that nature.

Evangelicals involved in legal actions/issues (but not related to criminal activity and not related to education): These stories focus on evangelicals using the courts to elicit change or to stop change. They may be using the courts to stop or challenge decisions made by government or regulatory bodies, businesses, or community organizations. If the court action is related to educational matters do not code the story as evangelicals involved in courts, go to the education category instead. If the court action is related to an evangelical having committed a crime, go to the crime story category.

Evangelicals involved in educational actions/issues: These stories focus on evangelicals and their specific interactions with public schools both elementary and secondary, private schools both elementary and secondary, and universities and colleges both public and private. Stories may be about evangelicals trying to implement or change curriculum, implement or change school practices, implement or change selection processes involving students or staff.

Evangelicals involved in criminal or immoral actions/issues: These stories focus on criminal or immoral actions that have been committed by evangelicals. Stories may be about evangelicals perpetrating sexual or physical abuse or engaged in sexual or financial impropriety.

The life/exploits/thoughts of a famous/important evangelicals (i.e., TV evangelist or entertainers/big business owners):

These stories focus on biographical information about famous evangelicals. That is to say, the personality, lifestyle and history of the person is highlighted over any overtly Christian message they may be relaying. If an evangelical is famous due to political activity, do not code in this category, go to politics category.

Other (please indicate): _____

If the story defies all other categories write what you believe the topic is in the space provided.

Frames used in the News Report

This section asks: “how were evangelicals depicted in this news report and what did the journalist in this news story choose to highlight or accentuate about evangelicals?” You have been provided with a list of twenty-four frames presented in 12 pairs as opposites. These frames suggest the most probable ways that the evangelicals in the story could have been depicted. Your task is to determine when any one of these listed frames is used in a news story. When found, you are to subjectively measure the negative, positive or neutral quality of the frame. To facilitate measurement, on your code sheet each pair of frames is placed on an ordinal scale. The frame from the pair that expressed the negative quality (e.g., intolerant) is stationed on the left of the scale where it was subdivided into its very negative and somewhat negative manifestations (e.g., very intolerant; somewhat intolerant). Similarly, the frame that expresses the positive quality is stationed on the right side of the scale and subdivided into its somewhat positive and very positive manifestations (e.g. somewhat tolerant; very tolerant). A rating of balanced is positioned at mid-scale.

Each news report may frame evangelicals in several different ways; therefore, you may have to code for many different frames. If no evidence of a frame is found then you should circle “did not mention”. If the presence of a frame is detected but it appears equally in its negative and positive manifestations then code that frame as neutral or balanced.

When a frame has been identified and its intensity has been measured and marked on the ordinal scale, you must next supply textual evidence from the news report to support the coding decision that you made. That is to say, you must prove that the frame is present in the text by transcribing the phrase(s) or sentence(s) that lead you to make your coding decision. These phrases or sentences are to be written in the space provided to the right of the ordinal scale on the code sheet.

Throughout this process of analysis, do not conclude that a news report is “guilty” of employing a negative frame simply because it showed an evangelical saying or doing something negative; remember, evangelicals, like all humans, can and do perform ignoble acts and to report an ignoble act *as it happened* does not constitute negative framing. It was only when the text of a report contains manifest signs that the ideas and actions of the evangelicals have been subjected to interpretation according to someone else’s biases and worldview that you are to rate a frame as other than balanced.

Below are definitions explaining what each frame entails, use these as a guide:

Intolerant/Tolerant: For evidence of this frame look for evangelicals being portrayed as able to sympathize (or not) with beliefs or values contrary to their own. The frame of “Very intolerant” will be identified if the evangelical is explicitly (with hostility) referred to or portrayed as very closed minded, condemning and/or disrespectful toward others’ views. “Somewhat intolerant” will be selected if the close-mindedness or disrespect toward others’ is suggested less dramatically perhaps in a matter-of-fact way. “Somewhat tolerant” will be selected if the evangelical is shown or described as resolutely holding one belief or value while neither slighting nor supporting the opposing view. Code “Very tolerant” when the evangelical is being portrayed as holding a differing view, but open-minded/non-condemning and/or respectful toward the opposing viewpoint/person/group. The tolerance scale is not meant to measure the level of *disagreement* with other viewpoints, but the ability or inability to accept such differences in a respectful/rational manner (it measures one’s ability to “agree to disagree”).

Unintelligent/Intelligent: For evidence of this frame look for evangelicals being portrayed in terms of their intellectual ability or education level. “Very unintelligent” may be explicitly stated or implied by citing low educational achievement or by referencing such terms as “backward”, “naïve”, “uninformed”, or by ridiculing religious beliefs or values as irrational. “Somewhat unintelligent” would be a milder form of the above, or it could be suggested when evangelical beliefs are contrasted against more

scientific or liberal beliefs and the former are made out to be less credible than the latter. “Somewhat intelligent” would portray evangelicals as rational, knowledgeable, or credible, whereas “Very intelligent” has the news report directly complimenting their intellectual achievements or capabilities by citing high educational achievement or by referencing terms such as “very bright” or “has a keen mind”.

Neglectful/Responsible: For evidence of this frame look for evangelicals being portrayed in terms of their obligations or duties to themselves, their jobs, their families, and society. “Very neglectful” may involve failure to admit a major mistake, failure to perform duties that, if not done, could endanger themselves or others. “Somewhat neglectful” may portray evangelicals shifting blame, being lazy in community affairs, or unwilling to perform tasks necessary for society. “Somewhat responsible” involves portrayal of evangelicals doing their duty, owning up to their positions and the consequences of them, implicitly showing them to be trustworthy. “Very responsible” is when the story explicitly portrays evangelicals as being trustworthy, conscientious, dependable, or mature and performing their required duties with gusto and excellence.

Pushy with social views/Respectful advocating social views: This frame does not involve proselytizing (religious conversion) but does involve trying to change society or social policy. For evidence of this frame look for evangelicals involved in activities (e.g. marches, petitions, protests) with the goal of advancing their own social views and values. (Note: If the evangelicals are *reacting* to the social movements/activities of other groups it may be more accurate to employ the intolerance/tolerance frame.) “Very pushy with social view” would depict or describe evangelicals as militant, ‘mobbish’ and coercive when trying to elicit social change; they would be portrayed as openly ridiculing the social values of others. “Somewhat pushy with social views” would portray evangelicals as impolite and too forceful when trying to elicit social change: rude but not dangerous. “Somewhat respectful advocating social views” would depict or describe evangelicals as a legitimate minority with the democratic right to have their opinions heard. “Very respectful advocating their social views” would portray evangelicals as a calm and thoughtful minority (good people) with the democratic right to have their

opinions heard. Furthermore, the causes/ideals would be depicted as worthwhile and beneficial to society.

Threatening Politically/Reassuring Politically: For evidence of this frame look for evangelicals involved in politics or politicians who are evangelicals. “Very politically threatening” would involve explicit references to evangelicals’ political activities as a “bad thing” or “scary”; they would be clearly portrayed as “outsiders” not intended for the political arena. “Somewhat politically threatening” would involve portrayals similar to those above though less explicit; the portrayal would subtly imply that evangelicals did not belong in politics. “Somewhat reassuring politically” would portray evangelicals as a legitimate force, or one among equals, on the Canadian political scene. “Very reassuring politically” would portray evangelicals as having solid political ideas and policies; furthermore, they would be depicted or described as a good choice for elected office.

Criminally-Minded/Law Abiding: For evidence of this frame look for evangelicals involved in courts, criminal activity or legal issues. “Very criminally minded” depicts or describes evangelicals as breaking laws without remorse or knowingly bending laws without remorse. This may be a refusal to go to court or to comply with court orders, or it may involve extreme examples of criminal activity. The evangelicals are not described or depicted as morally justified for their actions. “Somewhat criminally minded” will show evangelicals breaking or bending the law but with remorse. It might also portray evangelicals as rationalizing their behaviour using weak or inadequate reasons. “Somewhat law abiding” portrays evangelicals as following the laws and upholding legal or ethical standards of the land in a fashion no better or worse than the rest of the population. Or, it can depict evangelicals as breaking or bending the law but with good reason. “Very law abiding” shows clear examples of evangelicals adhering to a strict definition of the law and ethics, more so than the average person, and at times to their own detriment.

Superstitious/Spiritual: For evidence of this frame look for evangelicals involved in or talking about the supernatural. Specifically, look for ecstatic or boisterous worship,

prayer, or in acts of the miraculous (e.g., spontaneous healings, speaking in tongues, prophecy, or being “slain in the spirit”). “Very superstitious” portrays evangelicals explicitly as “unscientific” or “irrational” or as “being duped” for their beliefs or participation in the miraculous; references will be made that belittle evangelicals’ beliefs in supernatural phenomenon. “Somewhat superstitious” portrays evangelicals as having “unproven” beliefs; skepticism will be present in the news report but it will not be malicious; evangelicals are shown as slightly odd but not hurting anyone. “Somewhat spiritual” portrays evangelicals involved in supernatural phenomenon as “interesting” and “enlightened”. “Very spiritual” portrays evangelicals involved in the miraculous as possessing something that is unique and precious; they are held up as models that others should follow; they are shown as having some inner power that others might envy.

Insincere/Sincere: For evidence of this frame first look for evangelicals involved in preaching, decorous or controlled worship, proselytizing, charity work or community outreach and then look for implicit and explicit references as to the motivation behind their words and actions. “Very insincere” would portray evangelicals as blatantly hypocritical or deceptive in these activities. It would show them as having ulterior motives or a hidden agenda for the things they do. It would portray them as acting solely for the good of themselves. They might be depicted as “performers” only pretending to believe/live the values or ideals that they are advocating. “Somewhat insincere” would portray evangelicals as overly showy/ostentatious, lacking humility, and possibly a little hypocritical or deceptive. They may be shown as the major beneficiaries of their actions. “Somewhat sincere” portrays evangelicals being true to their word, their values and beliefs but perhaps being slightly self-righteous because of their strong moral stand or good works. Their actions would be shown as meant to benefit others. “Very sincere” portrays evangelicals as being true to their word, their values and beliefs in a humble fashion; they will also be shown as having a resolve to endure hardships rather than give up or compromise their values and beliefs. They are willing to make personal sacrifices in an attempt to benefit others.

Vengeful/Forgiving: Look for news stories in which evangelicals have been wronged or in which they perceive that they have been wronged. This is not a measure of how evangelicals treat groups that are opposed to their views—that is the tolerance measure above. “Very vengeful” will portray evangelicals as outraged and calling for swift and extreme penalties to be applied to the person/group that has wronged them; the evangelicals will refer to the offending group in disparaging terms. “Somewhat vengeful” portrays evangelicals as demanding the offending party be punished. “Somewhat forgiving” portrays evangelicals as compassionate to the offending party but still interested in seeing justice done. “Very forgiving” emphasizes evangelicals wanting to forgive the offending party with no call for retribution.

Un-Canadian/Canadian: Look for direct examples of evangelicals being compared to, or rated against, others in Canadian society. “Very Un-Canadian” would portray evangelicals as dangerously different from the rest of society; terms such as “too American” or “like Americans” or “Un-Canadian” may be explicitly cited. “Somewhat Un-Canadian” would portray evangelicals as different from the rest of society but not so much a danger as an oddity or annoyance. “Somewhat Canadian” would portray evangelicals as a unique group in Canadian society with differences that should be respected. “Very Canadian” would portray evangelicals as a legitimate and important group in Canada whose members make valuable contributions to society.

Deserving of Media and Societal Bias/Undeserving of Media and Societal Bias: Look for stories that specifically mention societal or media bias in favour of or against evangelicals. Stories rated “Very right to critical” will state unequivocally that the negative treatment evangelicals are subjected to in the media/society is brought on entirely through their own actions. Stories gauged as “Somewhat right to be critical” will suggest that the negative treatment evangelicals endure is, most of the time, due to their own behaviours. Stories rated “Somewhat unfair to be critical” will put forth the idea that evangelicals have odd beliefs and values but they should not be subjected to negative treatment because of those beliefs and values. Stories rated “Very unfair to be critical” will strongly put forth the idea that evangelicals’ beliefs and values are positive,

beneficial, and worthwhile and to treat them negatively for holding those beliefs and values is scandalous.

Outdated Values and Beliefs/Contemporary Values and Beliefs: Look for stories that refer to evangelicals' values and beliefs with regard to their current relevance. Stories that rate "Very outdated values and beliefs" will specifically refer to evangelicals' values and beliefs as old fashioned, irrelevant, no longer of use and should be discarded because they are holding society back. "Somewhat outdated" will suggest that evangelicals' beliefs and values are old fashioned and ridiculous but of little harm to society. "Somewhat contemporary" will imply or suggest that evangelical beliefs and values are valid and beneficial to today's society. "Very contemporary" will explicitly cite specific evangelical beliefs and values and explain why they are valid and beneficial to today's modern society.

Frame Analysis of Canadian National Television News Coverage of Evangelical Christians

Format of Report:	Anchor Read	Anchor Read to Clip	Reporter's Package	Live (circle one)

Main Focus/Topic of the News Report (check only one)

- | |
|---|
| Evangelicals involved in religious observance/ theological discussion |
| Evangelicals involved in internal church business/church governance (not involving doctrine or theology) |
| Evangelicals involved in charity work/volunteer work/mission work |
| Evangelicals involved in proselytizing/ "witnessing" |
| Evangelicals involved in social actions/protest (but not in the courts, not related to education and not with an overtly political focus) |
| Evangelicals involved in political action/issues (but not related to education and not enacted through the courts) |
| Evangelicals involved in legal actions/issues (but not related to criminal activity and not related to education) |
| Evangelicals involved in educational actions/issues |
| Evangelicals involved in criminal or immoral actions/issues |
| The life/exploits/thoughts of a famous evangelical (i.e., TV evangelist, entertainer or big business owner) |
| Other (please indicate) |

CODE SHEET (Page 2)

Frames used in the News Report (or EACH dimension listed below, circle the answer that best reflects how the news report framed evangelical Christians):

Sentence phrase that suggests the presence of this frame:

a. Very intolerant	Somewhat intolerant	Balanced	Somewhat tolerant	Very intolerant	DID NOT MENTION
b. Very unimpeachable	Somewhat unimpeachable	Balanced	Somewhat impeachable	Very impeachable	DID NOT MENTION
c. Very respectful	Somewhat respectful	Balanced	Somewhat disrespectful	Very disrespectful	DID NOT MENTION
d. Very positive with social views	Somewhat positive with social views	Balanced	Somewhat negative with social views	Very negative with social views	DID NOT MENTION
e. Very threatening politically	Somewhat threatening politically	Balanced	Somewhat reassuring politically	Very reassuring politically	DID NOT MENTION
f. Very criminal/murdered	Somewhat criminal/murdered	Balanced	Somewhat law-abiding	Very law-abiding	DID NOT MENTION
g. Very suspicious	Somewhat suspicious	Balanced	Somewhat spiritual	Very spiritual	DID NOT MENTION
h. Very insecure	Somewhat insecure	Balanced	Somewhat sincere	Very sincere	DID NOT MENTION
i. Very vigilant	Somewhat vigilant	Balanced	Somewhat forgiving	Very forgiving	DID NOT MENTION
j. Very Un-Canadian	Somewhat Un-Canadian	Balanced	Somewhat Canadian	Very Canadian	DID NOT MENTION
k. Very Right to Criticize Eng. for non-mainstream values & beliefs	Somewhat Right to Criticize Eng. for non-mainstream values & beliefs	Balanced	Somewhat Unfair to Criticize Eng. for non-mainstream values & beliefs	Very Unfair to Criticize	DID NOT MENTION
l. Very outlandish values & beliefs	Somewhat outlandish values & beliefs	Balanced	Somewhat Contemporary values & beliefs	Very Contemporary values & beliefs	DID NOT MENTION

APPENDIX 3

INFORMATION LETTER FOR SURVEY

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY INFORMATION LETTER

Project Title: Faith and Media: a survey of television journalists' opinions about religion and evangelicals.

Researcher: David Haskell, Assistant Professor of Journalism, Wilfrid Laurier University

Dear Television News Professional,

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to explore the viewpoint of national television journalists toward religion in general and evangelical Christianity in particular.

National television news personnel responsible for creating, revising, or overseeing *the written text* of news reports (e.g., reporters, producers, writers) and working for the CBC, CTV or Global television networks are eligible to take part. About 120 individuals will likely participate. Participants will be asked to complete a short questionnaire consisting of just nine (9) questions. The questionnaire, like this information letter, can be sent as an e-mail to be completed directly on your computer (it is a regular e-mail, not an attachment). Or, if you would prefer, the questionnaire can be administered over the phone by the researcher. The entire process will take 10 to 15 minutes.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information gathered by phone or email is strictly confidential. No one, apart from the researcher, will know who chose to participate in the study and who chose to decline. When completed questionnaires arrive by e-mail the information will be transferred to a secure database (to which only the researcher has access) and the original email will be deleted. Questionnaires completed over the phone will be recorded, the information will be immediately transcribed to the secure database, and then the recording will be erased. Wilfrid Laurier University goes to great lengths to insure the security of its e-mail system; however, faculty who conduct research using the internet are required to remind participants that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed while their data are in transmission on the internet.

The names of participants will not be used, nor will their specific job titles, in any write-ups or presentations; in presentations and write-ups each participant, regardless of employment position, will be referred to generically as "the journalist" or "the news staff member." Furthermore, names along with all other personal identifying information (e.g., email address and, if applicable, phone number) will be deleted from the database when the project is complete. While individual participants will not be identified, quotes from their answers may be used in write-ups or presentations produced by the researcher.

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you

withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be destroyed. You have the right to omit any question(s) you choose.

COMPENSATION

Those national television news professionals who complete the questionnaire (by e-mail or phone) before the **deadline of Sunday, July 16th, 2006** will have their name entered in a draw for a \$100 gift certificate for Future Shop electronics superstore. To ensure the anonymity of all participants, only the winner will be notified.

CONTACT

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, David Haskell, Assistant Professor of Journalism, at Wilfrid Laurier University—Brantford Campus, (519) 756-8228 ext. 5808 or dhaskell@wlu.ca. This project has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Board at Wilfrid Laurier University. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Bill Marr, Chair, University Research Ethics Board, Wilfrid Laurier University, (519) 884-0710, ext. 2468.

FEEDBACK AND PUBLICATION

It is the intention of the researcher to publish the results of this study in a peer-reviewed academic journal. The earliest the results will be ready for publication is spring of 2007. Participants may contact the researcher in the spring of 2007 to be updated on the progress of the article. Requests for electronic versions of the completed article will be accepted at that time; interested participants will be e-mailed the completed article immediately following its publication.

BENEFITS

In the last ten year only two academic studies have included questions related to Canadian journalists' belief in God and attendance at religious services; however, no Canadian study has ever specifically probed more deeply Canadian journalists' thoughts on religion and faith. This study, therefore, will provide the first detailed insights into a neglected area of Canadian mass communication research.

CONSENT

If you have read and understood the above information and you are willing to participate in this study, simply reply to this e-mail with a short message indicating your approval. ALSO, please state if you would like to receive the questionnaire as an e-mail, or if you would like the questionnaire administered by phone. If by phone, please include your phone number and the time when you are most likely to be available in your reply.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Cordially,
David Haskell
Assistant Professor, Journalism
Wilfrid Laurier University
Brantford Campus

APPENDIX 4
E-MAIL SURVEY INSTRUMENT

E-MAIL VERSION—OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE BY E-MAIL

Method #1:

CLICK “reply” to this email. Below the space where you would normally begin writing will be this e-mail with the questionnaire. Scroll down to the questionnaire. Write each of your answers underneath its corresponding question on the questionnaire (answers can be as long or short as you like). When completed, CLICK “send”.

Method #2:

Highlight and copy the text of the questionnaire. Paste it onto a word processing page and write each of your answers underneath its corresponding question (answers can be as long or short as you like). Highlight and copy the text of the completed questionnaire. Paste it onto a new email addressed to dhaskell@wlu.ca . CLICK “send”.

QUESTIONNAIRE
FAITH AND MEDIA: A SURVEY OF TELEVISION JOURNALISTS’ OPINIONS
ABOUT RELIGION & EVANGELICALS

Thank you for your important contribution to this research. Please be honest—even critical if necessary—in your explanations. If you find that a particular question does not apply to you, or that you do not wish to answer it, you may write N/A (for not applicable) or you may skip to the next question. As stated in the information letter that you received, all comments are confidential. For more details about the study itself, please refer to the information letter or contact David Haskell at (519) 756-8228 ext. 5808 or dhaskell@wlu.ca .

Please be reminded: those national television news professionals who complete and submit the questionnaire before the **deadline of Sunday, July 16th, 2006** will have their name entered in a draw for a \$100 gift certificate for Future Shop electronics superstore. To ensure the anonymity of all participants, only the winner will be notified.

Questions:

1. What position do you hold/what job do you perform for your national news program?
2. Do you consider yourself a practicing member of any religion? If yes, please briefly explain what religion you practice and if possible identify the specific denomination, branch, division, sect or subgroup to which you adhere.
3. Does your religious belief lead you to perform rituals or routines such as prayer, meditation, study of sacred texts, or attending religious services? If yes, please briefly explain what they are and how often you participate in them.

4. Briefly state what you see as the main beliefs, characteristics and attitudes of evangelical Christians (For clarification, evangelical Christians are also known as conservative Protestants).
 5. In terms of religious beliefs, how are you most similar to evangelical Christians?
 6. In term of religious beliefs, how are you most at odds with evangelical Christians?
 7. On what social issues do you find yourself in agreement or mostly in agreement with evangelical Christians?
 8. On what social issues do you find yourself most at odds with evangelical Christians?
 9. What sources have provided you with most of your information about evangelical Christians?
-

Thank you for your assistance in this research.

APPENDIX 5
TELEPHONE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

TELEPHONE SCRIPT—OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE

**FAITH AND MEDIA: A SURVEY OF TELEVISION JOURNALISTS' OPINIONS
ABOUT RELIGION & EVANGELICALS**

Hello _____ (*state participant's name*). This is David Haskell, I'm assistant professor of journalism at the Brantford Campus of Wilfrid Laurier University.

You received information from me about a study I'm conducting on journalists' opinions about religion and evangelicals. In your reply to my e-mail you kindly agreed to take part in the study and said that this would be a good time to call. Do you have about 10 minutes to go through the questionnaire with me?

(*If YES, continue. If NO, ask when a good time to call back would be*) _____

Before I begin I'd like to remind that your responses will be kept confidential and that only I will have access to your information which will be transcribed to a secure database. By the way, your name and all other identifying information will be deleted from the database when this project is completed.

I'll also remind you that participation in this study is voluntary and, as such, you have the right to refuse to answer any question. You may also end the conversation at any time.

For accuracy of transcription I'll be taping this conversation. The tape will be erased as soon as your information has been transcribed. Are you alright with me recording?

Finally, I'll mention that this survey has been approved by the University Research Ethics board and you are welcome to contact the Chair of the board if you have any questions about the ethics of this project. Contact information is on the information letter you were sent.

Now we're ready to begin. There are nine (9) questions in total. Please be honest—even critical if necessary—in your explanations.

1. What position do you hold/what job do you perform for your national news program?
2. Do you consider yourself a practicing member of any religion or spiritual movement? If yes, please briefly explain what religion or spiritual movement you belong to and, if possible, identify the specific denomination, branch, division, sect or subgroup to which you adhere. (*If NO, go to question #4*).

3. Does your religious/spiritual belief lead you to perform rituals or routines such as prayer, meditation, study of sacred texts, or attending religious services? If yes, please briefly explain what they are and how often you participate in them.
 4. Briefly state what you see as the main beliefs, characteristics and attitudes of evangelical Christians. For clarity, I'll point out that evangelical Christians are also known as conservative Protestants.
 5. In terms of religious beliefs, how are you most similar to evangelical Christians?
 6. In term of religious beliefs, how are you most at odds with evangelical Christians?
 7. On what social issues do you find yourself in agreement or mostly in agreement with evangelical Christians?
 8. On what social issues do you find yourself most at odds with evangelical Christians?
 9. What sources have provided you with most of your information about evangelical Christians?
-

That concludes the questionnaire. Thank you very much for your participation.

Your name, along with the names of other television news professionals who participate, will be entered into a draw for a \$100 gift certificate to Future Shop electronics super store. To ensure anonymity, only the winner will be notified.

Have a good evening. Goodbye.

