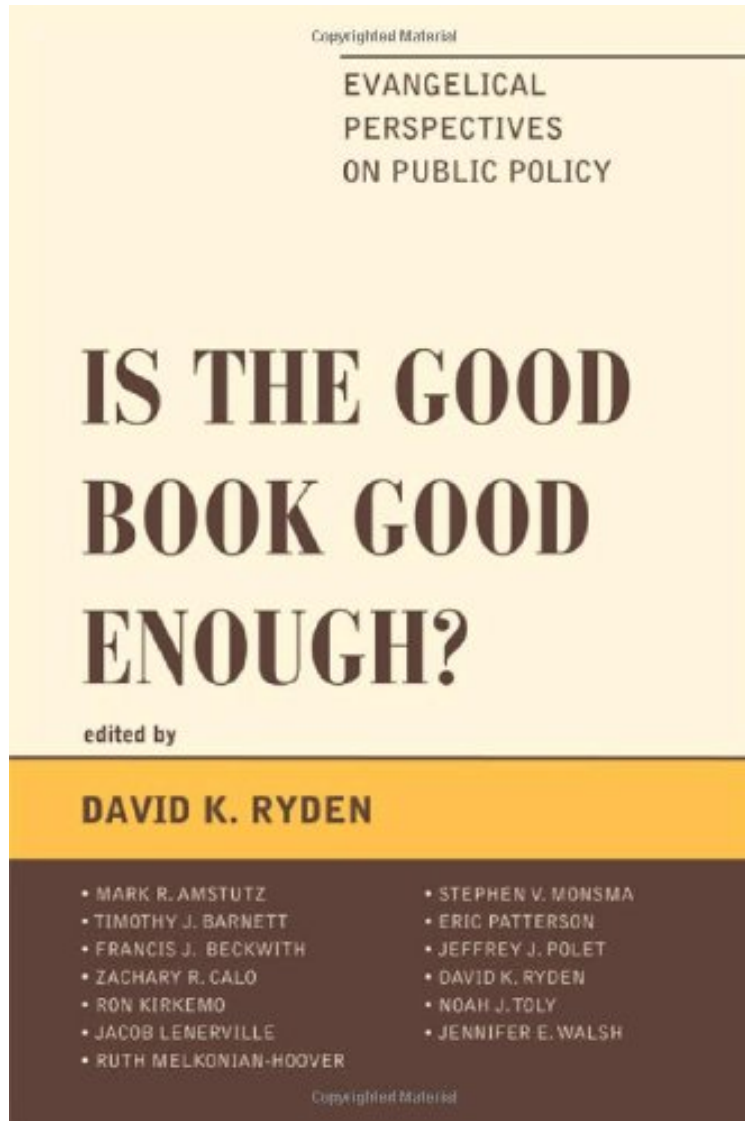


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Enough?: Evangelical Perspectives on Public Policy:

The political emergence of evangelical Christians has been a signal development in America in the past quarter century. And while their voting tendencies have been closely scrutinized, their participation in the policy debates of the day has not. They continue to be caricatured as anti-intellectual Bible thumpers whose views are devoid of reason, logic, or empirical evidence. They're seen as lemmings, following the cues of Dobson and Robertson and marching in lock step with the Republican party on the "culture wars" issues of abortion, gay rights, and guns. *Is The Good Book Good Enough?* remedies the neglect of this highly influential group, which makes up as much as a third of the American public. It offers a carefully nuanced and comprehensive portrait of evangelical attitudes on a wide range of policies and their theological underpinnings. Each essay applies an evangelical lens to a contemporary issue - environmentalism, immigration, family and same-sex marriage, race relations, global human rights, foreign policy and national security, social welfare and poverty, and economic policy. The result thoroughly enriches our understanding of evangelicalism as a prism through which many view a wide range of policy debates.

David Ryden's edited volume makes a very strong contribution at both a descriptive and normative level. Scholars and citizens concerned to discover a fair description of the current state of evangelical public policy engagement will find a state of the art depiction within these pages. Meanwhile, scholars, activists, and others who are looking for fresh thinking about how evangelical theological and ethical convictions should inform public policy views on a wide range of issues will also find considerable help in this book. Especially important are chapters on neglected issues such as financial reform, criminal justice reform, and the war in Afghanistan. I highly recommend this very important book. (David P. Gushee, Distinguished University Professor of Christian Ethics, Mercer University) It is often thought that Evangelical Christians are pre-occupied with 'single-issues' in contemporary political disputes. But this important and helpful volume assembles some of their best scholars on a wide range of vital issues. This will be an indispensable resource for policy makers and students alike. (Michael Cromartie, Ethics and Public Policy Center, Washington, D.C.) An excellent overview of the public policy perspectives held by evangelicals, providing the reader with a sympathetic, yet critical, assessment of the starting assumptions and approaches that undergird the policy perspectives that many evangelicals advance. (Corwin E. Smidt, Calvin College) The book serves simultaneously as a mirror held up to the evangelical movement, a critique, and an excellent primer for those seeking to understand the history and current state of evangelical contributions to public policy. Stephen Monsma contributes an excellent chapter on the history and current challenges of the American social welfare system. The authors conclude that it may be too early to tell whether the changing evangelical political movement reflects a maturing political mind. However, they make a convincing case that this moment presents remarkable opportunities to shape the movement's future direction. (Comment Magazine: Cardus) Do Evangelical Christians offer a distinctive contribution to public policy debates? Students of religion and politics will benefit immensely from the richly textured, two-tiered response to this question in this superbly edited volume by Ryden (Hope College). At the first level, the book's diverse set of young and well-established scholars chronicles the long-standing and extensive (biblically based) engagement of Evangelicals across a broad spectrum of policy issues: environmentalism, poverty, criminal justice, immigration, human rights, national security, racial injustice, and the seemingly irreconcilable struggles over abortion and same-sex marriage. The second level is a more nuanced, self-critical discussion on the lack of a coherent theological framework for Evangelical policy participation. Several authors attribute this failure to an emerging apprehension among Evangelicals that their policy prescriptions are insufficiently grounded in a Christian (biblical) worldview and are instead mediated by ideology, partisanship, culture wars, and unfettered commitments to methodological individualism and free-market economics. Moreover, Evangelicals profoundly disagree over whether to enter policy debates qua Evangelicals or to translate their biblically informed policy positions into secular arguments. Highly recommended. Lower-division undergraduate collections. (CHOICE) About the Author David K. Ryden is professor of political science at Hope College.