come their personal Savior."

According to the Gallup survey, the typical adult evangelical is a middle-aged white Southern woman from a lower- to middle-class background. She is married and less likely to be college-educated than other Americans. Sixty percent of evangelicals are women (who comprise 53 percent of the total U.S. population). The South, with 28 percent of the American people, has fully 43 percent of the evangelicals; Democrats outnumber Republicans by a 3 to 2 margin. Blacks are more apt than whites to be evangelical. They make up roughly 10 percent of the population but 15 percent of the evangelicals.

While liberal Protestant denominations such as the United Presbyterian and United Methodist churches have been losing 75,000 to 100,000 members annually during the '70s, conservative evangelical churches like the Pentecostal and the Assembly of God are growing rapidly. Gallup suggests that with their large numbers of youthful adherents (13 million under age 18) and increasingly outspoken ministers, evangelicals will be a strong political and social force in the decade ahead.

Narrow-Minded Philosophers

"Never Speculate, Never Explain: The State of Contemporary Philosophy" by Kenneth R. Seeskin, in *The American Scholar* (Winter 1979/80), 1811 Q St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

Many modern philosophers tend to regard the great issues—death, God, happiness—as passé. They focus solely on the technicalities of logic and language in a spirit that Seeskin, a philosopher at Northwestern University, calls one of "caution, qualification, and retreat."

English-speaking philosophers today have been overwhelmed by the breakthroughs in logic and semantics of Bertrand Russell and Alfred North Whitehead in the first half of the century. They forget that these giants explored the nature of man, mind, and religion, as well as the relation between logic, grammar, and mathematics. Now, philosophers tinker with the meanings of ordinary words and endlessly refine technical proofs of even the simplest concepts. Many believe that the great problems and dilemmas of the past can be boiled down to logical or linguistic confusions.

Seeskin argues that today's philosophers have made the fundamental mistake of viewing their discipline as a *science.* Frustrated because philosophy is no closer to a satisfactory description of the world now than it was in Aristotle's time, they attack specific questions, arrive at final answers, and hope to reach quick agreement on some basic "truths"—such as the undeniable existence of the external world. But philosophy's true value lies in its denial of final answers to any question; Seeskin agrees with Socrates that philosophers should meet accepted beliefs with doubt. And philosophy does promote progress. By increasing the range of human perceptions, philosophers help prevent rigid, dogmatic, and possibly erroneous beliefs from taking root.

The study of mathematical logic should be removed from philosophy's purview—just as physics, chemistry, economics, and psychology were in the past. For their part, philosophers should step outside the ivory tower and grapple with current political, judicial, and cultural issues. The emergence of journals like *Philosophy and Public Affairs* and *Philosophy and Literature* and the critical success of John Rawls' controversial, egalitarian *A Theory of Justice* (1971) indicate that some philosophers are already moving to rejuvenate their field.

Hell-Bent on Tolerance

"A Sort of Republican Banquet" by Martin E. Marty, in *The Journal of Religion* (Oct. 1979), University of Chicago Press, 5801 Ellis Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60637.

If Americans take their religion seriously, how can they tolerate rival faiths? Tocqueville had a simple answer in the 19th century: American religious beliefs were either shallow or irrational.

Marty, a historian at the University of Chicago Divinity School, disagrees. In part, he says, tolerance stemmed from a tactical judgment made by early American religious leaders. By the 1700s, it was evident to many that the presence of a multitude of sects assured that no single one would emerge dominant. Each small denomination saw a stake in tolerance. But added to this perception was the strong desire for a common spiritual bond.

In 1749, Benjamin Franklin urged the fostering of religious attitudes to promote national unity—while disdaining the zealous faiths that divided neighbors. In the 19th century, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau advocated a public religion that transcended established churches and exuded nationalism. Philosopher John Dewey went even further—in *A Common Faith* (1934), he favored replacing church religion with a godless faith in democratic ideals.

In general, Americans have sought the benefits of religious unity—and of religious freedom—while avoiding the divisiveness of pluralism. Thomas Jefferson held that the basic morality of *all* religions would safeguard political liberty and justice. In 1978, President Carter raised this belief to the international level, attributing the Camp David Egyptian-Israeli accords in part to the piety of Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin. As a young priest informed Tocqueville, Americans do not demand religious conformity, but they do demand that everyone be religious.

Some intolerance has, of course, marked religious attitudes in America. Early U.S. Baptists and Methodists competed for souls "with larynxes and fists alike." Mormons and Catholics encountered persecution in the 19th century. But borrowing a phrase from 19th-century philosopher William James, Marty describes the American religious scene then and now as "a sort of Republican Banquet." Each denomination respects the others' "personal sacredness." Each hears "one nation under God" and pictures its own.