

**THE CHRISTIAN CONSERVATIVE AGENDA IN
THE UNITED STATES:
From 1980 to 2008**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse and assess the enduring nature of Christian conservatism within the United States, from 1980 to 2008. Under the direction of a core group of leaders, the movement has stepped out from its insular church base to project their ideals onto the American political and cultural landscape. This radical agenda has been largely motivated by a literal and highly prophetic interpretation of the Bible and this study aims to provide a detailed examination of the consequences of such a worldview. Through engaging with such issues as the presidential election cycle, abortion, the U.S. relationship with Israel and the a case study of a Christian conservative mega-church, this thesis demonstrates the maintained presence of Christian conservatives within U.S. politics and the problematic influence they seek to exert. The issues selected for this study are notable examples of foreign, domestic and cultural politics within the United States that reveal the breadth of scope incorporated within the Christian conservative political agenda.

Christian conservatism as a theology has existed within the United States for over a hundred years. However, this study is particularly concerned with its more recent politicisation and the subsequent mobilisation of its adherents into an influential constituency. The effects of this mobilisation and influence have continuously shifted over the scope of this study, and so a central theme of this thesis is the depiction of Christian conservatism as a continually evolving movement. Throughout this time, Christian conservatives have made some gains in seeing various elements of their agenda enacted, only to be disappointed by the ultimate limitations preventing the fulfilment of their goals. This thesis will critically evaluate these successes and failures, with a view to answering the important

questions of what motivates Christian conservatives, and why their influence endures, despite its fundamental flaws in significantly changing U.S. culture.

This study also offers a unique perspective of Christian conservatism by placing considerable emphasis on the theological convictions of its leaders, which overwhelmingly feed into their political agenda. The case study of Thomas Road Baptist Church is an integral component of this, in providing an understanding of Christian conservatism direct from many of the movement's key leaders, as delivered in sermons throughout 2006. However, all four of this study's chapters seek to articulate the essence of Christian conservatism as defined by its own leaders and spokespeople, working together in synthesis with other authors and commentators on the subject across nearly 30 years.

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS USED

ACTV – American Coalition for Traditional Values

ADL – Anti-Defamation League

AFC – American Freedom Coalition

AIPAC – American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

AWACS – Airborne Warning and Command Systems

CBN – Christian Broadcasting News

CIA – Central Intelligence Agency

CIPAC – Christians’ Israel Public Action Campaign

CPC – Crisis Pregnancy Centre

GOP – Grand Old Party; a common term for the Republican Party within the United States.

ICEJ – International Christian Embassy - Jerusalem

IDF – Israeli Defence Force

IFCJ – International Fellowship of Christians and Jews

LAPAC – Life Amendment Political Action Committee

NCC – National Council of Churches

NRB – National Religious Broadcasters Association

NRLC – National Right to Life Committee

PAC – Political Action Committee

PLO – Palestinian Liberation Organisation

RNC – Republican National Committee

WMD – Weapon(s) of Mass Destruction

INTRODUCTION

This thesis deals principally with the cultural phenomenon and political ramifications of Christian conservatism. Although this term has been intermittently used by academics and journalists alike since the 1980s, it remains distinctly under-utilised as a means of articulating the composition and methodology of one of the United States' most significant constituencies. Throughout this study, the ideology and instigators of Christian conservative values will be assessed through the lens of three key issues: the campaign cycle of presidential elections, abortion politics and the United States relationship with Israel. Christian conservatives have also shown a vested interest in many other issues, such as the public education system, same-sex marriage and more recently stem-cell research. However, over the scope of this study spanning the presidencies of Ronald Reagan through George W. Bush, the issues of electioneering, abortion and Israel have been consistently placed at the top of the Christian conservative agenda and thus demand specific attention.

As a starting point, the question of how Christian conservatism is defined is crucial. Over the years, adherents to this religious, cultural and political ideology have been labelled collectively as the “New Christian Right”, “Evangelicals”, or “Christian Fundamentalists.” However, all three of these terms are largely insufficient as appropriate descriptions. Firstly, the former can be largely regarded as steeped in the awkward and largely out-dated political polarities of “left” and “right.” In his 1996 book *Onward Christian Soldiers*, Clyde Wilcox defines the “Christian Right” as a primarily “social movement” which seeks to mobilise “evangelical Protestants and other orthodox Christians into conservative political

action.”¹ Here Wilcox makes the important point that the movement *incorporates* rather than *differentiates* various Christian groups, however he nonetheless reinforces terminology which, while continuing to remain in the political lexicon, nevertheless offers little insight or accuracy of definition for the movement’s current form.

Similarly, the title “Evangelical” inherently denotes a theological principle accepted by many Christians regardless of political persuasion: that being an obligation to evangelise to others regarding their beliefs, at least to some extent. The concept of ‘Evangelicalism’ was borne from the revivalist movements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, where stump preachers would “elicit dramatic conversion experiences” from people hearing their “evangel” – translated from the Greek as “good news.”² While this practice continues today in a more contemporary form, the movement itself has become far more complex and increasingly politicised.

It is also important to note that not all contemporary evangelicals subscribe to a right-wing brand of politics, as the term “evangelical” has increasingly come to alienate those with politically liberal but theologically conservative views.³ Political and social commentator Tom Sine has argued that the evangelical community has instead had its movement “hijacked” by the “Religious Right.” By thrusting their own agenda into the political mainstream, Sine argues that “[the Religious Right] have...determined what the politically correct issues are...and decided that the correct political identity of Christians should be conservative Republicanism.”⁴ The force behind this identification was clearly apparent at both the 2000 and 2004 U.S. Republican Party Conventions, where on the back of distributed programmes a

¹ Clyde Wilcox, *Onward Christian Soldiers?: The Religious Right in American Politics* (Boulder, Co: Westview Press, 1996) p. 5.

² George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1991). p. 2.

³ See Amy Johnson Frykholm, *Rapture Culture: Left Behind in Evangelical America* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2004) p 22.

⁴ Tom Sine, ‘A Hijacked Heritage’, *Sojourners Magazine* 24.1 (March-April 1995) p. 20.

slogan declared “What Can 80 Million Evangelicals do for America? Anything They Want!”⁵

The nature of “Christian fundamentalism” as a definition is similarly problematic. George M. Marsden defined a fundamentalist as “an evangelical who is militant in opposition to liberal theology in the churches or to changes in cultural values or mores.”⁶ Alternatively, Amy Johnson Frykholm has suggested that first-wave “fundamentalists” have in fact invoked “evangelicalism” as a means of increasing their contemporary visibility while simultaneously removing themselves of the negative connotations surrounding “fundamentalism.”⁷ Acknowledging the diverse nature of both evangelicalism and fundamentalism as movements containing at best *informal* organisations, Marsden has also invoked “fundamentalism” as an evolving movement. From its origins in the 1920s, as a label for those who sought a return to the literal “fundamentals” of the Bible, Marsden argues its modern meaning has grown into a “rather specific self-designation” of predominately separatist Baptists.⁸ Steve Bruce has also highlighted what he classifies as strains of “super-patriotism” within Christian fundamentalism, bluntly claiming that “fundamentalists are American jingoes.” As evidence of this he cites the thousands of U.S. citizens who attended Reverend Jerry Falwell’s “I Love America” rallies; assessing their core theology as being “pro-family, pro-life...pro-moral...pro-America.”⁹

According to Richard John Neuhaus, this fundamentalist theology has significant ramifications in U.S. domestic and foreign policy, as he suggests that:

In a curious way, fundamentalism today is most assertive about the public meaning of the gospel...Their interpretation of prophecy does not shy away

⁵ Cited in Barbara Victor, *The Last Crusade: Religion and the Politics of Misdirection* (London: Constable and Robinson Ltd., 2005) p. 167.

⁶ Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, p. 1.

⁷ Amy Johnson Frykholm, *Rapture Culture...* p. 22.

⁸ Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, pp. 1-4.

⁹ Steve Bruce, *Pray TV: Televangelism in America* (London: Routledge, 1990) p. 81.

from specifics. They are quite prepared to match Bible passages with historical peculiarities as specific as Israel's occupation of the West Bank, Soviet rearmament, and the incidence of drug addiction in America.¹⁰

Incorporating elements of all of the above, Christian conservatism remains the most appropriate description available for the purposes of this study. The reason for this is because, more than anything else, the movement is essentially concerned with *conserving* certain values and principles, existing within an (often imagined) history of the United States. The belief that the United States is a "Christian nation" is mired in a sense of patriotic mythology; however it remains one of Christian conservatism's central tenets and is often acted out in their desire to "take back America for God." Many of the values lauded by Christian conservatives are derived specifically from their interpretation of religious theology, such as their anti-abortion stance and pro-Israel position. However, certain other values, such as support for limited government and a hawkish foreign policy, can be equally couched in a purely secular framework.

While this is not a uniquely American phenomenon, the sheer density of Christian conservatives within the United States and their capacity to be mobilised as agents of change is significant. Facilitating this has been the foundation of organised church bases, which have been described as "fantastic contexts for mobilization because they combine culture, leadership, money, facilities, infrastructure, an audience, and a communications network."¹¹ Within this framework, Christian conservatives have been able to reach into the country's political, cultural and social arenas to engage with issues and, where they have deemed necessary, act upon them.

¹⁰ Richard John Neuhaus, *The Naked Public Square: Religion and Democracy in America* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1984) pp. 14-5.

¹¹ Kenneth D. Wald and Allison Calhoun-Brown, *Religion and Politics in the United States (Fifth Edition)* (Lanham MD.: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007) p. 131.

Thus the premise of this thesis is to objectively analyse and assess how Christian conservatives have engaged with, and sought to influence, key policy issues.

The scope of this study on Christian conservatism begins in 1980, which is significant as the year Ronald Reagan was elected President. Christian conservative leaders, who by that stage were building a values-based organisational coalition of their own, saw themselves as inextricably linked to Reagan's victory. In 1981 Jerry Falwell, with Ed Dobson and Ed Hindson, wrote *The Fundamentalist Phenomenon: the resurgence of conservative Christianity*.¹² This book, like many others written by Christian conservative leaders, sought to boldly signal the intent of the movement, through promoting and legitimising their new forays into the American political-cultural realm. Other writings of the early 1980s analysed this movement by profiling a variety of its facets: as a political movement, such as in Michael Lienesch's article "Right-Wing Religion"; as a lobby group, in Peter L. Benson and Dorothy L. Williams' *Religion on Capitol Hill*; and even as moral crusaders, in James Davison Hunter's *American Evangelicalism*.¹³ By the mid-to-late 1980s an even broader understanding developed, with the appearance of some of the decade's best works on Christian conservatism, by authors such as Gillian Peele, Kenneth Wald, and Clyde Wilcox.¹⁴

Steve Bruce's *The Rise and Fall of the New Christian Right* (1988) also provided an overview of mobilization techniques utilised by the Christian conservative's interlocking organisations. These groups were originally orchestrated

¹² Jerry Falwell [ed.] *The Fundamentalist Phenomenon: the resurgence of conservative Christianity* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1981).

¹³ Michael Lienesch, "Right-Wing Religion: Christian Conservatives as a Political Movement", *Political Science Quarterly*, 97.3 (1982) pp. 403-425. Peter L. Benson and Dorothy L. Williams, *Religion on Capitol Hill*, San Francisco, Cali.: Harper & Row, 1982). James Davison Hunter, *American Evangelicalism* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers, 1983).

¹⁴ Gillian Peele, *Revival and Reaction: The Right in Contemporary America* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984). Kenneth Wald, *Religion and Politics in the United States* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987). Clyde Wilcox, "The Christian Right in Twentieth Century America: Continuity and Change", *The Review of Politics* 50.4 (1988) pp. 659-681.

by Richard Viguerie, Howard Phillips and Paul Weyrich, who were labelled by Bruce as “The Holy Trinity.”¹⁵ At this time Bruce and other commentators concluded that the influence of the “New Christian Right” was waning on account of financial strains and their inability to impose an overarching moral agenda on what is essentially a pluralistic society.¹⁶ However, Christian conservatism would rise again into the new decade, with a renewed focus and recast vision for political success.

Into the 1990s, Michael Lienesch continued publishing incisive analyses of Christian conservative culture, with *Redeeming America: Piety and Politics in the New Christian Right* (1993), as well as a chapter entitled “Prophetic Neo-Populists” in Hans-Georg Betz and Stefan Immerfall’s *The New Politics of the Right*.¹⁷ As the decade continued, Christian conservatism was often placed within broader studies of the cultural/political “right” within the United States, as was the case in Sara Diamond’s *Roads to Dominion*. Diamond’s depiction of the U.S. political “Right” incorporated a broad scope, containing anti-communist and racially-motivated elements, as well as neo-conservatives alongside the “New Christian Right.” Diamond viewed the latter as the “largest and most influential grassroots movement on the political scene”, on account of its growing base of “evangelical” support and gave exclusive focus to this group, of which she is openly antagonistic, in two of her other books, *Spiritual Warfare* and *Not by Politics Alone*.¹⁸

¹⁵ Steve Bruce, *The Rise and Fall of the New Christian Right: Conservative Protestant Politics in America, 1978-1988* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988). p. 56.

¹⁶ Steve Bruce, *The Rise and Fall of the New Christian Right*, p. 134. And Jerome L. Himmelstein, “The Rise and Fall of the New Christian Right: Conservative Protestant Politics in America 1978-1988 – Book Review”, *Social Forces* 69.1 (September 1990) p. 316.

¹⁷ Michael Lienesch, *Redeeming America: Piety and Politics in the New Christian Right* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1993). Hans-Georg Betz and Stefan Immerfall, *The New Politics of the Right: Neo-Populist Parties and Movements in Established Democracies* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998).

¹⁸ Sara Diamond, *Roads to Dominion: right-wing movements and political power in the United States* (New York: Guilford Press, 1995) p. 311. Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare: the politics of the Christian Right* (Boston, M.A.: South End Press, 1989). Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone: the enduring influence of the Christian Right* (New York: Guilford Press, 1998).

The latter is particularly revealing, as it critiques Christian conservatism in terms of its political influence through the imposition of a cultural morality. Diamond argued that the New Christian Right, having had almost two decades of experience in the trenches of United States politics, had now solidified itself as a “potent force” on account of its “dual nature as [both] subculture and political faction.”¹⁹ The author’s discussion of Christian conservatives’ cultural accessibility is also highly engaging, with analysis of their “mindset that moves seamlessly from the details of daily life to the ominous task of changing politics.”²⁰ This somewhat editorial style of analysis continued into the new millennium, through such books as Barbara Victor’s *Last Crusade* and David S. New’s *Holy War*.²¹ However, Kenneth Wald’s fifth edition of *Religion and Politics in the United States*, co-written with Allison Calhoun-Brown and published in 2007, offers a more academic appraisal of Christian conservatives’ continued presence within U.S. politics. This study is particularly valuable, as the authors ignore the simplicity of debating a religiously-driven “culture war” and instead emphasise their own quantitative analysis, inclusive of what they describe as “the social movement known as the Christian Right.”²²

These foundational works have provided a historical basis for this thesis, as a synthesis of the movement from 1980 and the election of Ronald Reagan, to the second term of George W. Bush. This span of over a quarter century provides appropriate scope to understand the movement over a significant timeline. Within this temporal breadth, this study offers far more than simply a linear narrative, as it focuses on three key aspects of Christian conservatism.

¹⁹ Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, p. xi.

²⁰ Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, p. 34.

²¹ Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, David S. New, *Holy War: The Rise of Militant Christian, Jewish and Islamic Fundamentalism* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland and Company, Inc. Publishers, 2002).

²² Kenneth D. Wald and Allison Calhoun-Brown, *Religion and Politics in the United States (Fifth Edition)* p. 206.

This thesis contains four distinct chapters, each analysing a different aspect of Christian conservatism's political and cultural ideology. For the opening chapter assessing Christian conservative's role in presidential elections and subsequent administrations, I have consulted a broad array of academic and journalistic sources. Haynes Johnson's *Sleepwalking Through History* is a seminal work critiquing the Reagan administration, with topical analysis of the Christian conservative agenda during this time.²³ *The Bible and the Ballot Box: Religion and Politics in the 1988 Election*, edited by James L. Guth and John C. Green, is another outstanding study, which included a detailed analysis of Christian conservative leader Pat Robertson's bid for the Republican nomination.²⁴ Overarching both these periods is Bruce Nesmith's *The New Republican Coalition*, which successfully articulated the rise of the Christian conservative political agenda.²⁵ This chapter, and all subsequent others, has also been aided by numerous primary sources, including the online-archived *Sojourners Magazine*, edited by Jim Wallis. I have furthermore utilised many newspaper articles, from the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *Boston Globe*, *Dallas Morning News*, *Denver Post*, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*.

The second chapter analyses the history of abortion politics in the United States, which has also been well-documented especially the quarter-century beginning with Reagan's election in 1980. The avidly pro-choice Michele McKeegan published *Abortion Politics: Mutiny in the Ranks of the Right* in 1992, in which she detailed how the abortion issue has been problematically utilised by the Republican Party.²⁶ The old-firm leadership of Viguerie, Weyrich and Phillips were

²³ Haynes Johnson, *Sleepwalking Through History* (New York: Anchor Books, 1992).

²⁴ James L. Guth and John C. Green [eds.], *The Bible and the Ballot Box: Religion and Politics in the 1988 Election* (Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1991).

²⁵ Bruce Nesmith, *The New Republican Coalition* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1994).

²⁶ Michele McKeegan, *Abortion Politics: Mutiny in the Ranks of the Right* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

again at the forefront of this campaign, and McKeegan provided a high degree of background in profiling these, and other important personalities within the Christian conservative-GOP relationship. McKeegan also notably closed her analysis with the depiction of the “New Christian Right” as a movement in decline, citing the dismantling of the Moral Majority in 1989 on account of falling support, as well as the public and government backlash against the pro-life campaign known as Operation Rescue.²⁷

The following year Barbara Hinkson Craig and David M. O’Brien published *Abortion and American Politics*, a study providing important insights into how government and policy-makers had wrestled with the legislative processes surrounding abortion politics.²⁸ Cynthia Gorney’s, *Articles of Faith: A Frontline History of the Abortion Wars*, highlighted the author’s journalistic credentials, through offering a detailed analysis of the abortion issue, largely through the perspectives of individual organisers.²⁹ William Saletan sought to continue this narrative into the current decade with *Bearing Right: How Conservatives Won the Abortion War*.³⁰ Here Saletan revealed the increasingly conservative approach that has come to overwhelm both sides of the abortion politics issue, again by looking predominantly at individual case studies.

In terms of the current literature on the relationship between the United States and Israel, a number of key books have been helpful in my own understanding and analysis of the topic. Edward Tivnan’s *The Lobby: Jewish Political Power and American Foreign Policy* (1987), provides a comprehensive overview of the

²⁷ Michele McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, pp. 164-5.

²⁸ Barbara Hinkson Craig and David M. O’Brien, *Abortion and American Politics* (Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House Publishers, Inc., 1993).

²⁹ Cynthia Gorney, *Articles of Faith: A Frontline History of the Abortion Wars* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998).

³⁰ William Saletan, *Bearing Right: How Conservatives Won the Abortion War* (Berkeley, Cal.: University of California Press, 2003).

entwined relationship of the two nations' political history and its consequences.³¹ In researching the book, Tivnan interviewed Tom Dine (a former head of AIPAC), policy adviser Martin Indyk, a number of Israeli social-science professors, and dozens of confidential sources, among others. Many notable insights are achieved from this extensive primary research, including the role of pro-Israel lobbies in getting sympathetic candidates elected to office, achieving desired amounts of foreign aid dollars for Israel, as well as influencing specific government policies – especially in the areas of defence. A more contemporary work of note is Timothy P. Weber's *On the Road to Armageddon: How Evangelicals Became Israel's Best Friend* (2004). Weber offers an outstanding theoretical and cultural analysis of pre-millennial dispensationalism, and demonstrates how U.S. Christian conservatives work within this ideology in engaging directly with Israel.³² Other recent contributions include the working paper by John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt and subsequent response by Alan Dershowitz, on the question of “The Israel Lobby.”³³ Mearsheimer and Walt's paper, (later published into book form) proved highly controversial, with Dershowitz, a colleague of Walt at Harvard University, the main protagonist of attacks against the authors.³⁴ While not analysing the role of Christian conservatives specifically, both papers raise important questions about the

³¹Edward Tivnan, *The Lobby: Jewish Political Power and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987).

³²Timothy P. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon: How Evangelicals Became Israel's Best Friend* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004).

³³John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy – Working Paper* Number RWP06-011, March 2006. Alan Dershowitz, *Debunking the Newest – and Oldest – Jewish Conspiracy: A Reply to the Mearsheimer-Walt “Working Paper”*. April 2006.

³⁴John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007). Dershowitz labelled the authors “liars” and “bigots”, and also challenged them to a public debate, declaring “I challenge Mearsheimer and Walt to look me in the eye and tell me that because I am a proud Jew and a critical supporter of Israel, I am disloyal to my country.” In Peter Beaumont, “Editor Hits Back Over Israel Row”, *The Observer*, Sunday April 2, 2006 (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2006/apr/02/pressandpublishing.highereducation> - accessed December 9, 2008) and Mik Awake, “The Israel Lobby: The Walt and Mearsheimer Essay That Started It All”, *The New York Inquirer*, September 5, 2006 (http://www.nyinquirer.com/nyinquirer/2006/09/the_israel_lobb.html - accessed December 9, 2008).

U.S.-Israel relationship, an issue in which this constituency has a particularly vested interest.

The opening chapter of this thesis investigates the mobilising role of Christian conservatives supporting presidential campaigns within the United States, and in particular their problematic relationship with the Republican Party. Starting with the 1980 election of Ronald Reagan, the Christian conservative movement sought to mobilise itself into a significant electoral constituency through appealing to the conservative values of the GOP. Eight years later, a driving determination to be an influence in the White House led Christian conservative leader Pat Robertson to run for the Republican Party nomination in 1988. Despite his eventual defeat, the nature of his campaign provided some important insights into the political motivations of the movement's leadership. Likewise, the presidencies of George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush have all been impacted in at least *some* way by Christian conservatives. While the effectiveness of their influence has risen and fallen across these administrations, Christian conservatives have continued to maintain a prominent position within the conservative coalition that has undergirded the Republican Party.

The second chapter moves onto the Christian conservatives' domestic agenda, focusing on the example of abortion politics within the United States. Since the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision of 1973, Christian conservatives have been highly active in seeking to overturn it through a variety of means. Organisations have played a major role in providing a framework for their pro-life activities, with many political action committees (PACs) having been established within the United States. Other groups, such as the militant Operation Rescue, have been deliberately confrontational in their struggle to end abortion, and the group's rise and fall

provides a number of insights into the evolution of the abortion issue for Christian conservatives. However, the crux of this chapter focuses heavily on the political implications of the abortion issue, in addressing three key elements: the problematic nature of legislating against women's reproductive rights, the ingrained pro-life position of the Republican Party, and finally the electoral implications of abortion as a major factor in single-issue voting.

The third chapter is a more exhaustive analysis of the role that Christian conservatives play within the relationship between the United States and Israel. This influence is motivated by deep-seated theological conviction, known as pre-millennial dispensationalism. This belief places Israel squarely at the centre of all foreign policy considerations, and often at the expense of the United States' own national interest. Christian conservative influence in encouraging the United States' support of Israel is predominantly channelled through a number of organisational structures, including political interest groups, various grass-roots networks, and also para-church operations through individual congregations. Over the years both Congress and the White House have been under considerable pressure to remain ardent supporters of Israel, on account of the lobbying strength of these organisations, as well as from internal demands from various Christian conservative politicians. Within such a climate, Christian conservative ideology in relation to Israel has truly become the status quo within the United States.

The final chapter is a case-study of the Christian conservative mega-church, Thomas Road Baptist in Lynchburg, Virginia. Founded and led by the late Rev. Jerry Falwell, Thomas Road is a bastion of Christian conservative ideology, with significant resources and media networks. From its pulpit, Falwell and a host of other leaders have propagated their agenda by both reaffirming the faith of Christian

conservative believers, while simultaneously attempting to reach new converts. This is done through appealing to such populist causes as the War on Terror, support for Israel, and prevailing anti-communism. These themes also continue to be discussed within the expanding realm of Christian conservative prophetic literature, an area also analysed within this first chapter.

These four chapters all work together to evaluate the questions of what has motivated Christian conservatives and why has their influence endured as a political and cultural movement since 1980. In the quest to find an answer, this study goes directly to Christian conservatives themselves in critically seeking to understand Christian conservative theology as the foundation for their culture and politics. Through this, their motivations and actions can be brought into a more focused context, especially within such controversial issues as Israel and abortion. The study of Christian conservative leadership is equally important in an assessment of the movement's enduring qualities. The changing nature of these leaders, and their capacity to project their values onto a national stage, has been both volatile and problematic. This has been demonstrably shown in the politicisation of their movement through increasing links to the Republican Party's campaign machinery, and it is on this key issue that the thesis begins.

CHAPTER ONE

“With friends like these...” Christian Conservatives, the Republican Party and the Quest for the White House.

Over the last two or three decades, the federal government seems to have forgotten that old-time religion and that old-time Constitution...It's time for God's people to come out of the closet. Religious America is awakening, perhaps just in time for the country's sake.³⁵

Ronald Reagan.

We have enough votes to run this country!³⁶

Pat Robertson.

To fully appreciate the electoral clout of Christian conservative voters, it is important to look back even before the ascent of Ronald Reagan to the White House. In 1976, the Democratic candidate Jimmy Carter won the Presidency, helped in no small part by Christian conservative voters.³⁷ Exit polls showed he received 56 per cent of the “evangelical” vote; an achievement secured by Carter without his doing much at all to actively mobilise this base, outside professions of faith regarding his personal “born-again” status.³⁸ However, as Carter's first term drew to a close, a number of Christian conservative leaders made public statements highly critical of the President. Jerry Falwell made his comments in the context of the Iranian hostage crisis, which began in November of 1979, claiming

³⁵ quote by Ronald Reagan in Paul D. Erickson, *Reagan Speaks: The Making of an American Myth* (New York: New York University Press, 1985), p. 73, cited in Bruce Nesmith, *The New Republican Coalition* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1994) pp. 73-4.

³⁶ Pat Robertson, cited in Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, p. 95.

³⁷ Dick Williams, “Falwell Aims at Shoring Up a Bush Weakness”, *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, August 25, 1992, p. A10.

³⁸ Kevin Merida, “Rough Times on the Christian Right”, *Dallas Morning News*, June 20, 1987, p. 6A.

While President Carter is a good Christian, he does not read Scripture carefully enough to understand the crucial place that Israel and the Jewish people play in God's plan, and, above all, he does not realize the threat of Islam against Christianity.³⁹

Ed McAteer was more generic in his critique, stating that,

From the beginning, I just knew that the presidency surpassed Carter's abilities. It was too big a job for him. He never understood how to govern a country like America and he never understood that any political mandate is God-given and God-inspired.⁴⁰

This sentiment was generally shared across their Christian conservative constituency, with many feeling that they had become "disenchanted" with Carter's performance.⁴¹ In fact some political academics have described the 1980 Presidential election as not so much an endorsement of Reagan, but rather a plebiscite which resulted in the rejection of Carter.⁴² Such "disenchantment" with Jimmy Carter led virtually all the key Christian conservative leaders to jump aboard the Reagan bandwagon leading up to the 1980 election. In Reagan they saw a person with significant electability, but more importantly they believed he could also be moulded and manipulated into an ideological messiah for their entire cultural movement.⁴³ Having previously shied away from active mobilization within the political arena, Christian conservatives were now so disdainful of U.S. culture that they felt compelled to move into new electoral forays. Far from being hesitant in travelling this new path, their leaders exuded an unmistakable confidence, secure in the belief that they were, in many ways, ultimately doing God's work.

³⁹ quoted in Pauline Maier, Merritt Roe Smith, Alexander Keyssar and Daniel Kevles, *Inventing America*, vol. 2, W.W. Norton, 2002, in Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, p. 94.

⁴⁰ Personal interview with Barbara Victor, March 2003, in Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, p. 96.

⁴¹ Bruce Nesmith, *The New Republican Coalition*, p. 73.

⁴² Jerome L. Himmelstein and James A. McRae, Jr., "Social Conservatism, New Republicans and the 1980 Election", *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 48.3 (Autumn 1984), p. 604.

⁴³ In *Last Crusade*, Barbara Victor recounts the pivotal moment where Falwell and Reagan are introduced (facilitated by Ed McAteer), with Falwell (according to McAteer) seeking to "guide" the presidential hopeful, and support him through the capacity of the Moral Majority, p. 96.

Rallying the Troops: Christian Conservatives and the Election of Ronald Reagan, 1980 & 1984.

To understand the nature of Ronald Reagan's conservatism and his appeal among Christian conservatives, it is imperative to understand the political concept of "Reagan as spokesman." Within this construct, journalist and author Haynes Johnson has aptly described Reagan as "a vehicle around whom conservative forces could and did rally."⁴⁴ Through Christian conservatism's ties to Reagan, its leaders would attempt to have a significant impact on both social and foreign policy within his administration. However, Reagan was far from "conservative by association," as he demonstrated public support of Christian conservative attitudes and values even before his relationship with such figures as Jerry Falwell and Ed McAteer. Utilising the subsequent support of such high-profile leaders, Reagan worked with renewed impetus to strengthen and expand his conservative credentials, primarily among their constituent base of Christian conservatives.

Paul Weyrich was arguably the main catalyst in mobilising this group during the 1980 election. He had previously founded the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress, which lobbied politicians on a platform of conservative issues. Weyrich believed that by encouraging the Republican Party to push social issues such as abortion as the major component of the campaign platform, a sizeable Catholic vote would split away from the Democrats.⁴⁵ This strong emphasis on social issues ultimately proved effective in unifying Christian conservatives across the Catholic-Protestant divide. Underpinning this considered approach was

⁴⁴ Haynes Johnson, *Sleepwalking Through History*, p. 49.

⁴⁵ Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, p. 66. Reagan succeeded in achieving a significant Catholic voting bloc in the 1980 election, the second Republican (Nixon being the first) to accomplish this, Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, p. 69.

Weyrich's perception that specific theological teaching on social issues, such as abortion and marriage, were generally similar in all Christian denominations. Weyrich understood that the majority of Christians, both Catholic and Protestant alike, would inherently position themselves as socially conservative on these distinct issues, and given sufficient motivation, would make this the decisive element of their voting intention.⁴⁶ This cause was taken up strongly by such organizations as Christians for Reagan, which had strong ties with Christian Voice and leaders such as Tim LaHaye.⁴⁷ Jerry Falwell was also heavily involved in this area through publishing the *Moral Majority Report*, which sought to politicise various aspects of the Christian conservative agenda. The report's circulation increased more than six fold in 1980 between January and October, helped substantially by access to extensive church membership lists and congregation details.⁴⁸ The significant reach and financial resources of such groups supporting Reagan left the Democrat campaign clearly disenchanted. In discussing campaign spending regulations, Jimmy Carter himself lamented that "none of this right-wing special-interest programming was charged against the Republican total."⁴⁹

A decade prior to Reagan's maiden election victory, Seymour M. Lipset and Earl Raab published *The Politics of Unreason*, in which they outlined the theory that conservative politics in particular required a marriage of constituencies across the policy spectrum, in order to build a sufficiently large support base.⁵⁰ In attempting to achieve this coalition, Christian conservative leaders' desire to reach out to the

⁴⁶ Kenneth Wald, *Religion and Politics in the United States*, pp. 202-3.

⁴⁷ David S. New, *Holy War*, p. 61.

⁴⁸ Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, pp. 60-1.

⁴⁹ quote from Jimmy Carter, *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President* (Toronto: Bantam, 1982) p. 562. cited in Bruce Nesmith, *The New Republican Coalition*, p. 78.

⁵⁰ Seymour M. Lipset and Earl Raab, *The Politics of Unreason* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), cited in Jerome L. Himmelstein and James A. McRae, Jr., "Social Conservatism, New Republicans and the 1980 Election", p. 593.

Republican Party was strongly reciprocated by Reagan and his staff. Co-founder of the Moral Majority, Bob Billings, was employed by Reagan for the explicit role as liaison between Christian conservatives and his campaign team. In addition, some 45,000 pieces of correspondence were sent by Reagan campaign staff to church leaders calling on them to hold voter registration drives for their respective congregations.⁵¹ This was truly fertile ground for the G.O.P., as barely half of all Christian conservatives were registered to vote before 1980, compared to 72 per cent for the nation as a whole.⁵² However, the breakthrough moment linking Reagan to the Christian conservative audience arguably came in the October 1979 Religious Roundtable's "National Affairs Briefing," held at the Dallas Coliseum.⁵³ The not-for-profit status of the Christian organisation forced its leadership to invite both Reagan and the incumbent Jimmy Carter; however Carter was dissuaded from attending by his advisors, who saw little benefit in "pander[ing] to his fellow born-again."⁵⁴

The Democrats' miscalculation played right into the hands of the new alliance between Reagan and the Christian conservative leadership. Although McAteer's group was unable to publicly endorse Reagan at an organisational level, he personally made no sincere attempt to hide his preference. Joining a group of other Christian conservative leaders in prayer with Reagan before the candidate took the stage, McAteer stated that "God would bless this man and make all the American people see the wisdom in electing him our leader." McAteer was also instrumental in creating the iconic phrase that Reagan used to attract organised Christian conservatives, both in this audience and later nation-wide: "I know that you cannot

⁵¹ David S. New, *Holy War*, p. 60.

⁵² Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 63.

⁵³ Sara Diamond has this taking place in August 1980, in *Not by Politics Alone*, p. 68.

⁵⁴ Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, pp. 96-7.

endorse me because of your non-profit status, but I endorse you and what you believe.”⁵⁵ Reagan used his subsequent appearance at the National Religious Broadcasters Association conference as a further opportunity to reaffirm his position of upholding “traditional moral values” and advocating the rights of voluntary prayer in schools.⁵⁶ Other aspects of Reagan’s new conservative stance were more controversial, including his comment that “the redemption of Israel” was the “redemption of the world,” as well as his infamous 1980 televised interview with Jim Bakker, where he speculated that “we may be the generation that sees Armageddon.”⁵⁷

While such off-handed comments may seem unfitting for a Presidential candidate, they nevertheless revealed Reagan’s willingness to continually incorporate the ideas and language of what he saw as a vital support base within his campaign. Through this he came to regard Christian conservatives as far more than just passive elements within his coalition of followers, but instead a “natural constituency.” Previously maligned by the liberal Democrats for their opposition to abortion and support for prayer in school, by 1980 Christian conservatives were looking for a reliable political base for their ambitious agenda. Only Reagan and the Republican Party came to offer this.⁵⁸ Furthermore, having made a significant alliance with Christian conservatives, the Reagan camp contemptuously dismissed the potential backlash from liberal voters, regarding this as largely a non-issue. To quote Lee Atwater, Reagan’s campaign manager,

⁵⁵ Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, p. 98.

⁵⁶ David S. New, *Holy War*, pp. 60-1.

⁵⁷ These comments were apparently made *days* after the initial meetings with Falwell, Eleazar Waldman, an extreme Orthodox rabbi, first coined the statement regarding the “Redemption of world depend[ing] on the redemption of Israel”, in Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, p. 96. And David S. New, *Holy War*, p. 63.

⁵⁸ A principal proponent of this thinking was Lyn Nofziger, who illustrated these points in an interview with Bruce Nesmith November 13, 1986, cited in Bruce Nesmith, *The New Republican Coalition*, p. 74.

We did not fear a backlash, because the people who strongly oppose fundamentalists usually also strongly oppose Ronald Reagan and what he stands for. You can't lose support where you never had it in the first place!⁵⁹

Throughout 1980, Reagan met with a number of Christian conservative leaders, described by Atwater as “routine contacts that any presidential campaign performs while trying to assemble a winning coalition.”⁶⁰ These included a hotel suite meeting, attended by Falwell and other leaders, where Reagan came to settle on George H. W. Bush as his running mate. Despite there being some concerns from the Christian conservative leaders present regarding Reagan's selection, their presence at such an important meeting is highly revealing.⁶¹ Bush, a former CIA director and Ambassador to the United Nations, was predominantly regarded as a centrist, moderating figure for the Republican campaign. Significantly though, he was also willing to exhibit flexibility where required, shown primarily in his position on abortion policy, where he moved to join ranks with the pro-life position.⁶²

The Reagan-Bush ticket proved ultimately successful in 1980, with the highest office in the land returning once again to the Republicans. In celebrating this victory, numerous Christian conservative leaders were quick to take credit for their perceived roles. Most of this incorporated new voter registrations, as evidence suggested a rapid mobilisation of Christian conservatives led to an increasing turnout. For example, during this campaign the Moral Majority reportedly registered some two million new voters.⁶³ Other heavily-financed groups, such as Christian Voice, proved highly effective in direct mailing pro-Reagan literature to voters

⁵⁹ quoting Lee Atwater, January 8, 1987 memo to Bruce Nesmith, cited in Bruce Nesmith, *The New Republican Coalition*, p. 76.

⁶⁰ Bruce Nesmith, *The New Republican Coalition*, p. 77.

⁶¹ Bruce Nesmith, *The New Republican Coalition*, p. 77.

⁶² Sara Diamond, *Roads to Dominion*, p. 209.

⁶³ This is approximately half the new registrations the Moral Majority actually claimed to have achieved. James L. Guth, “New Christian Right”, in Robert C. Liebman and Robert Wuthnow [eds.] *New Christian Right* (New York: Aldine, 1983) p. 37. Cited in Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, p. 67.

across the country.⁶⁴ On the last Sunday before the general election, Christian Voice also initiated a mass-distribution of “moral report cards” to churches throughout the nation. Branded an “aggressive, hit-and-run” style of electioneering, they nonetheless proved highly effective on two major fronts. The first was in their highly accessible and straight-forward composition, which gave a clear frame of reference to match a candidate to an individual’s priorities. Secondly, given the short span of time between the Sunday church meeting and the Tuesday polls, it was virtually impossible for candidates who were given negative assessments to defend or justify themselves, or even expose distortions of their policies.⁶⁵ The evidence of their effect on the result was starkly revealed in exit polling, which highlighted Reagan’s 60 per cent support of the “evangelical vote,” even larger than what Carter achieved four years earlier.⁶⁶

Throughout the election campaign, Christian conservative support for Reagan at times reached unparalleled levels of enthusiasm. Jerry Falwell’s claim just after the election that Reagan’s victory was “the greatest thing that has happened to our country in my lifetime” is just one example of this⁶⁷ However even amid such exaggerated rhetoric, this constituency remained extremely vigilant in its desire to see Reagan’s support for the Christian conservative agenda transform into tangible government policy. Cal Thomas, vice-president of communications for the Moral Majority, stated in late 1981,

⁶⁴ Sara Diamond, *Not by Politics Alone*, p. 69.

⁶⁵ Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 62. Includes a quote by Christian Voice director Colonel Doner openly describing the desired effectiveness of the “moral report cards” speaking at the Coalition on Revival conference in July 1986..

⁶⁶ Kevin Merida, “Rough Times on the Christian Right”. The New York Times/CBS exit polls put Reagan’s vote from “White Born-Again Christians”, at 63%, which was 12% higher than his national vote. Cited in Hal Straus, “Altar, ballot box may not be the right mix for GOP”, *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, June 1, 1986, p. A01.

⁶⁷ Robert McAfee Brown, “The Religious Right and Political/Economic Conservatism”, in *Border Religions of Faith: An Anthology of Religion and Social Change*, Kenneth Aman. Maryknowll [ed.] (New York: Orbis, 1987) p. 259. Quoted in David S. New, *Holy War*, p. 60.

If Reagan cleans up the economy and lots of babies go on being killed, I think we'll go down the tube. I think we'll forfeit the right to exist as a nation. The White House doesn't think we have any place to go. That's what they think.⁶⁸

However, such pious bravado remained just that, and was an example of how politically naïve much of the Christian conservative leadership was in those formative years. Rumours of Falwell boasting he could hand-select the next Supreme Court justices were deemed “stupid” by Reagan’s long-time associate Lyn Nofziger. He even went on to suggest that while “Falwell and his fellow TV ministers brought help...they were not so strong that we had to buy [them].”⁶⁹

Despite this pragmatic attitude within the White House, Reagan still sought to maintain regular contact with Christian conservative groups. While keen to justify the perception that he was one of them, he also succeeded in maintaining a position of remaining above any policy specifics. By the time of his re-election bid in 1984, Reagan had attended five National Religious Broadcasters conventions, hoping their reach to a constituency of millions would provide significant momentum for his campaign.⁷⁰ The President also spoke at a Washington rally under the auspices of the Youth for Christ organisation, declaring

Although we Americans have done much to put our national life back on the firm foundation of traditional values, there is still a great deal to be done. As a nation we must embrace our faith, for as long as we endeavour to do good...we will find our strength, our hope and our true happiness in prayer and the Lord's will.⁷¹

⁶⁸ quoted in Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 64.

⁶⁹ quoting Lyn Nofziger from interview with Bruce Nesmith, November 13, 1986, cited in Bruce Nesmith, *The New Republican Coalition*, pp. 75-6. Lou Cannon of the New York Times shares a similar narrative, where Reagan dismissed speculation that Falwell could “convince the president to put ‘two conservative-leaning members on the Supreme Court’ in his second term”, with the fact that he had already appointed Sandra Day O’Connor. Falwell had publicly declared the O’Connor nomination should be opposed by all “good Americans”, attracting the ire of the Republican heavyweight Barry Goldwater. cited in Lou Cannon, “How Church and State Made Their Match”, *The New York Times*, May 20, 2007 (<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/20/opinion/20cannon.html> - accessed February 14, 2008).

⁷⁰ Bruce Nesmith, *The New Republican Coalition*, p. 77.

⁷¹ Ronald Reagan, quoted in George W. Cornell, “Reagan: Preacher of ‘80s; President Focused on Traditional Values”, *The Washington Post*, January 14, 1989, p. B06.

Such rhetorical displays led religious commentator Rabbi A. James Rubin to suggest that while Reagan “is clearly the dominant American theologian of the 1980’s” his substantial output is “only sparkling optimism-theological Perrier.”⁷² Even Falwell, who had claimed to have a continued “personal confidence” in Reagan’s commitment to the Christian conservative agenda, expressed being “a little anxious that [Christian conservatives] haven’t had some aggressive support [from the White House].”⁷³

While Reagan remained hesitant to enact any of the Christian conservative policy agenda, he did maintain favour with some in the Christian conservative leadership by giving them key appointments within government departments. For example, Bob Billings, a former campaign liaison officer, was granted a post “high in the hierarchy of the Department of Education.”⁷⁴ It has been claimed that Billings used this position to lobby for the reinstatement of tax-exempt status for schools that maintained aspects of racial discrimination. While legislation actually allowing this was passed in 1982, it was subsequently overturned the following year by the Supreme Court, much to the disappointment of Bob Jones University, located in Greenville, South Carolina. Traditionally renowned for elements of racial discrimination and religious legalism, Bob Jones University was also notably Bob Billings’ alma mater.⁷⁵

⁷² Rabbi A. James Rubin, quoted in George W. Cornell, “Reagan: Preacher of ‘80s” p. B06.

⁷³ Jerry Falwell, quoted in Charles Austin, “Religious Right Growing Impatient with Reagan”, *The New York Times*, August 16, 1982, p. A13.

⁷⁴ cited in Lynn Rosellini, “How Conservatives View U.S. Posts”, *The New York Times*, June 21, 1982, p. A16. Despite acting dutifully as a liaison between Reagan and the Christian conservative constituencies during the 1980 campaign (a job description Billings sought to maintain) Billings instead was shifted to become a regional coordinator for the Education Department, and in his own words, “I am not high enough up the ladder to have a lot of influence”. Cited in “Robert Billings, Religious Activist and Moral Majority Co-founder”, *The Virginian Pilot*, June 1, 1995, p. B5. (<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/VANews/VAPilot/issues/1995/vp950601/06010439.htm> - accessed February 18, 2008).

⁷⁵ http://www.sullivan-county.com/news/bob_jones/bju.htm (accessed February 22, 2008) Also see

Another high-profile Reagan appointee was C. Everett Koop, an avowed Christian antiabortionist who became Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Health and Human Services Department.⁷⁶ After Koop's subsequent promotion to Surgeon General, JoAnn Gasper replaced him in the position. Gasper came to the department with a reputation for controversial public attacks, against "homosexuals and other perverts," as well as for lambasting the "social Gestapo" and "anti-family forces" within Washington.⁷⁷ Elsewhere, Morton Blackwell was promoted to Special Assistant to the President for Public Liaison, while having previously worked in Reagan's 1980 campaign overseeing efforts to mobilise young people. This early role was aligned with his position overseeing the Leadership Institute, a training school for political conservatives within the United States. In discussing his relationship with the Reagan administration, Blackwell summarised his new position as essentially a "White House liaison to conservative groups."⁷⁸ Finally there was the Christian conservative James Watt, who despite being blatantly antagonistic to environmental concerns was appointed Secretary of the Interior.⁷⁹ He remained in this post until 1983, when discriminatory comments he made led to pressures that forced his resignation.⁸⁰

"Student expectations at Bob Jones University". (<http://www.bju.edu/prospective/expect/> - accessed February 22, 2008). An example of Bob Jones University's racist policy is a ban on inter-racial dating by students. In Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, pp. 63-4.

⁷⁶ "Koop for Surgeon General, Billings in at Education", *Christianity Today*, March 13, 1981, cited in Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 63.

⁷⁷ Lynn Rosellini, "How Conservatives View U.S. Posts", *The New York Times*, June 21, 1982, p. A16.

⁷⁸ The Leadership Institute Morton Blackwell biography (<http://www.leadershipinstitute.org/AboutUS/?PageID=Morton> – accessed August 25, 2008). Lynn Rosellini, "How Conservatives View U.S. Posts", p. A16. Blackwell's job description has also been described as the President's "religious affairs advisor". Flo Conway and Jim Siegelman, *Holy Terror: The Fundamentalist War on America's Freedom in Religion, Politics and Our Private Lives* (New York: Delta, 1982) p. 361. Cited in Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 63.

⁷⁹ Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 63

⁸⁰ Francis X. Clines, "Watt Asks That Reagan Forgive 'Offensive' Remark About Panel", *The New York Times*, September 23, 1983

However despite such controversies within the administration, Reagan's own popularity proved sufficient in overcoming the Democratic contender, Walter Mondale, in the 1984 election. Despite Paul Weyrich's lament that "as conservatives we kid ourselves if we think the president's re-election in 1984 is going to deliver major gains to our movement," Christian conservatives felt they had little option other than to maintain the status quo.⁸¹ In the words of Reagan's communications adviser James H. Lake,

Evangelicals...are realistic in understanding that politics involves a lot of give and take. They understand that Ronald Reagan couldn't pass these things by himself. And certainly, no one could have tried harder than him. Certainly, no one could have expected Walter Mondale could have done more for them.⁸²

Thus the key ingredient to Reagan's success remained his ability to maintain effective political support, without committing himself to problematic social policy burdens. In this way, through totally pleasing none, he worked to placate all.

For Reagan to achieve this, Christian conservative leaders were continually encouraged to feel part of the political apparatus of the Republican Party. As was the case four years earlier, Reagan's campaign chairman sent out letters asking for support to some 45,000 Christian ministers.⁸³ In July 1984, 300 of these ministers met with the President, Vice-President and two representatives from the Cabinet.⁸⁴ High-profile preachers James Robison and Jerry Falwell attended the 1984 Republican Party convention to give the opening invocation and closing benediction

(<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?sec=health&res=990CE5DB1E38F930A1575AC0A96594820> – accessed December 19, 2008).

⁸¹ Paul Weyrich quoted in Richard V. Pierard, "Religion and the 1984 Election Campaign", *Review of Religious Research*, 27.2 (December 1985) p. 113., cited in Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 65.

⁸² James H. Lake, interview with Bruce Nesmith, quoted in Bruce Nesmith, *The New Republican Coalition*, p. 87.

⁸³ Kenneth Wald, *Religion and Politics in the United States*, p. 194.

⁸⁴ Dudley Clendinen, "Spurred By White House Parley, TV Evangelists Spread Political Word", *New York Times*, September 10, p. 1.

respectively.⁸⁵ Falwell's grandiose rhetoric was again clearly on display, as he declared to the audience that Reagan and Bush as political candidates were "God's instruments for rebuilding America."⁸⁶ The Republican Party was also keen to present itself in stark contrast to the "liberal" Democrats, targeting a perceived values "gap." That year the Republican Party platform included the statement that the Democrats "attacked the integrity of the family and parental rights. They ignored traditional morality. And they still do."⁸⁷ Even more ominous, however, were comments made by the chairman of Christians for Reagan, George Otis, who declared that electing Reagan "could make a difference in the timing of Jesus' return."⁸⁸ During this time, Reagan himself was forced to clarify his own position regarding "Armageddon theology." In a 1984 nationally televised debate, he assured his audience of his commitment to international peace, despite his interest in biblical prophecy.⁸⁹ However when speaking directly to Christian conservatives, Reagan found no need to temper his rhetoric. Amongst such an audience, he could confidently declare that "Within the covers of [the Bible] are all the answers to all the problems that face us today."⁹⁰

In practical terms, the American Coalition for Traditional Values (ACTV) made major inroads into the key area of voter registration.⁹¹ Established by Tim LaHaye and overseen by Joe Rodgers of Christian Voice, the group also had key

⁸⁵ Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, p. 72. Falwell also protested against political acceptance of homosexuality by organizing a 'Family Forum' convention to parallel the Democrat's convention, held that year in San Francisco. In Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 65.

⁸⁶ Gerard Straub, *Salvation for Sale: An Insider's View of Pat Robertson's Ministry* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1988) p. 305. Cited in David S. New, *Holy War*, p. 61. Also cited in Kenneth Wald, *Religion and Politics in the United States*, p. 194.

⁸⁷ cited in Kenneth D. Wald and Allison Calhoun-Brown, *Religion and Politics in the United States (Fifth Edition)* p. 216.

⁸⁸ George Otis, quoted in Larry Jones and Gerald T. Sheppard, "Ronald Reagan's Theology of Armageddon", cited in David S. New, *Holy War*, p. 61.

⁸⁹ Kenneth Wald, *Religion and Politics in the United States*, p. 166.

⁹⁰ quoted in Elizabeth Drew, *Campaign Journal: The Political Events of 1983-4* (New York: Macmillan, 1985) pp. 291-2., cited in Bruce Nesmith, *The New Republican Coalition*, p. 83.

⁹¹ Such efforts were largely in response to Democrats registration drives targeting the female and non-white vote. Bruce Nesmith, *The New Republican Coalition*, p. 83.

leaders Jerry Falwell and James Robison on its board.⁹² During this time the ACTV received one million dollars in federal funding to undertake voter registration and added another \$500,000 to its budget independently.⁹³ The organisation proved sufficiently endowed to orchestrate its evangelistic mission, with some 350 field directors guiding local “church captains” across numerous congregations to register as many attendees as possible.⁹⁴ However, the ACTV flagrantly highlighted to these new voters the view that only the Republican Party truly shared their organisation’s moral agenda, even as it stopped short of actually *endorsing* Republicans. Nevertheless, these actions constituted a breach of the ACTV’s obligations as a religious organisation providing tax-deductibility to donors.⁹⁵

Complementing this form of political outreach, various books supporting Reagan (including *Abortion and the Conscience of a Nation*) were published that year by three separate companies, all affiliated with the National Religious Broadcasters Association.⁹⁶ Even more explicit was the distribution of candidate report cards, again disseminated by Christian Voice. These report cards crudely outlined the differences between Reagan and Mondale on issues such as prayer in school, abortion, and gay/equal rights amendments. However the most dubious charge concerned “excessive government spending,” where Reagan was given a simple “no” and Mondale a blanket “yes.”⁹⁷ Against such claims, Christian

⁹² Bruce Nesmith, *The New Republican Coalition*, p. 84. and Kenneth Wald, *Religion and Politics in the United States*, p. 195.

⁹³ Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, p. 72. The organisation did not last the decade however, with allegations of financial support from cult leader Sun Myung Moon tainting both LaHaye and the ACTV. Robert Dreyfuss, “Reverend Doomsday”, *Rolling Stone (online)*, January 28, 2004 (http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/story/5939999/reverend_doomsday/ - accessed February 24, 2008).

⁹⁴ Estimates as to the actual number of new voters registered vary from 200,000 to as many as three million. In Kenneth Wald, *Religion and Politics in the United States*, p. 195.

⁹⁵ Kenneth Wald, *Religion and Politics in the United States*, p. 195.

⁹⁶ Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 65.

⁹⁷ Kenneth Wald, *Religion and Politics in the United States*, p. 197. This rating system was also utilized in congressional elections, but was proven flawed as the group of “top scorers” came to

conservatives became a leading demographic source of support for Reagan.⁹⁸ The level of Christian conservative organisation was so strong in some areas (at the expense of a more traditional Republican base) that it essentially hijacked the structural running of many local G.O.P. chapters.⁹⁹

The Christian conservative leadership's drive for power and control within the Reagan campaign was also regarded by some Democrats as an opportunity to incite a backlash in the hope of turning people away from the Republican Party. In September 1984, Mondale charged that "those who seek to inject government and the politicians into religion lack confidence in the wisdom and the decency and the good sense of the American people."¹⁰⁰ His running mate, Geraldine Ferraro, was more direct, declaring that "the President walks around calling himself a good Christian, but I don't for one minute believe it, because his policies are so terribly unfair."¹⁰¹ However for all their rhetoric, the Democrats failed to take full political advantage of the negative aspects surrounding the alliance between Reagan and the Christian conservative leaders. The possibility of a voter backlash was arguably legitimate, through such poor judgements as Falwell's public desire to shape the Supreme Court judiciary and Jimmy Swaggart's public stance against Catholicism.¹⁰² However, the Democrats did not fully utilise these issues as political ammunition.¹⁰³ Indeed, it can be argued that the misdirected rhetorical attacks by Mondale and other Democrats

include those caught in bribery, tax evasion and sexual misconduct – highly embarrassing to their Christian conservative judges. Kenneth Wald, *Religion and Politics in the United States*, p. 196.

⁹⁸ Bruce Nesmith, *The New Republican Coalition*, p. 83.

⁹⁹ This was especially the case in Minnesota. Kenneth Wald, *Religion and Politics in the United States*, p. 194.

¹⁰⁰ quoted in Elizabeth Drew, *Campaign Journal*, pp. 633-4., cited in Bruce Nesmith, *The New Republican Coalition*, p. 85.

¹⁰¹ quoted in Elizabeth Drew, *Campaign Journal*, p. 508., cited in Bruce Nesmith, *The New Republican Coalition*, p. 85.

¹⁰² as self-confessed by Reagan communications adviser James H. Lake, interview with Bruce Nesmith, November 11, 1986, in Bruce Nesmith, *The New Republican Coalition*, p. 86.

¹⁰³ cited in private interviews by Bruce Nesmith with Republican pollster Robert M. Teeter and Washington Post journalist Thomas B. Edsall, cited in Bruce Nesmith, *The New Republican Coalition*, p. 86.

only succeeded in further galvanising the Republican vote. The circumstantial evidence seems to support this, as more Christian conservative voters, particularly in the South, came out to the polls in 1984 than ever before to defend their cultural values and political agenda.¹⁰⁴

“If You Want Anything Done... Do It Yourself”: Pat Robertson’s 1988 Bid for the Presidency.

Those of us who are leaders are supposed to be servants. It seems like today there is a cry among people all over this land: ‘Give us public servants and statesmen and not politicians.’¹⁰⁵

Pat Robertson.

In both elections won by Ronald Reagan, the mobilisation of Christian conservatives through voter registration, campaign financing and voter turnout proved a strong indicator of the potential influence this constituency had over U.S. politics. Their newfound confidence also gave rise to Christian conservative leaders themselves considering whether they could elect a candidate from within their own ranks. By 1988, Reverend Pat Robertson sought to answer this question by running for the United States presidency himself.

Informal preparations for Robertson’s presidential candidacy arguably started as early as 1981, when he began to utilise the newly created Freedom Council as a generic fundraising vehicle. This organisation worked primarily through contacting

¹⁰⁴ according to Reagan Campaign Director Ed Rollins, from Jonathon Moore (ed.) *Campaign for President: The Managers Look at '84* (Dover, MA.: Auburn House, 1986) p. 185, in Bruce Nesmith, *The New Republican Coalition*, p. 87.

¹⁰⁵ Pat Robertson quoted in Kevin Merida, “Robertson Seeks to Broaden Appeal”, *The Dallas Morning News*, June 23, 1986, p. 1A.

members from Robertson's "700 Club" television show mailing list for financial support. While not an overt indication of intent, Robertson's actions would appear to counter his earlier claim made to academic Steve Bruce that he was decidedly "not involved in politics."¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, when he later resigned from the Religious Roundtable, Robertson cited his reasoning for this decision as "a personal leading from the Lord...to change society through spiritual rather than political means."¹⁰⁷ However allegations persisted that Robertson continued to siphon millions of dollars of revenues from his Christian Broadcasting Network directly into the Freedom Council. Sara Diamond has even further suggested that Robertson sought to use the auspices of The Freedom Council to acquire precinct delegates for the presidential nominating caucuses.¹⁰⁸ Following an eventual IRS investigation the Freedom Council was disbanded in 1986.¹⁰⁹

Despite receiving his fair share of negative publicity on account of these alleged transgressions, they failed to halt Robertson's drive for the presidency. In mid-September 1986, his campaign rented Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C. for a presentation broadcast to 216 pre-selected sites across the country via Robertson's personal satellite network.¹¹⁰ During the presentation he declared

If by September 17th, 1987...three million registered voters have signed petitions telling me that they will pray, that they will work, that they will give toward my election [a figure of \$100 per person was specified, according to

¹⁰⁶ The context of this statement came, according to Bruce, from a request to Pat Robertson in 1981 for an interview relating to the rise of the "new Christian right", which Robertson declined. In Steve Bruce, *Pray TV*, p. 170.

¹⁰⁷ Steve Bruce, *Pray TV*, p. 171.

¹⁰⁸ This was seen in the Michigan Republican Party, despite the Freedom Council's tax status prohibiting it to work on behalf of a specific candidate – in this case Pat Robertson. Cited in Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, p. 73.

¹⁰⁹ Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, p. 73.

¹¹⁰ *Time Magazine*, September 29, 1986, p. 31, cited in Steve Bruce, *Pray TV*, p. 172. According to Robertson, 3.3 million signatures had been collected just prior to this deadline, and he would thus officially announce his candidacy on October 1 that year. He also stated during the announcement a new goal of 7 million signatures of support. Jeffrey Hadden and Anson Shupe, "Words do little to stop a Robertson gospel train", *Atlanta Constitution*, October 2, 1987, p. A.23.

reports] then I will run as a candidate for the nomination of the Republican Party for the office of President of the United States of America.¹¹¹

This separate fundraising announcement was also prohibited by the Federal Election Commission regulations. Robertson was subsequently fined \$25,000 as he was not yet an official candidate who could publicly solicit such funds.¹¹²

The overarching need for Robertson to generate campaign finance also required him to obtain endorsements, and for this he turned to other Christian conservative leaders for support. He held meetings throughout 1986 with Charles Stanley, Bill Bright, Tim LaHaye and Jerry Falwell, among others.¹¹³ Although LaHaye and Falwell publicly endorsed other candidates (Jack Kemp and George Bush, respectively), their tacit support for the Robertson campaign was nevertheless important.¹¹⁴ According to one study, their high profiles offered “the best position to transmit political cues and mobilize their flocks to get political action.”¹¹⁵

Through effectively utilising such established networks, Robertson became “a serious candidate” who campaigned with “effectiveness and skill,” according to commentators Jeffrey Hadden and Anson Shupe. However, their assertion that he was leading a “gospel train that already has built up a head of steam sufficient to roll over Bush” would eventually be seen as a huge overestimation of Robertson’s

¹¹¹ Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, pp. 73-74. Quote taken from Steve Bruce, *Pray TV*, p. 172.

¹¹² Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, p. 74.

¹¹³ Charles Stanley was president of the Southern Baptist Convention and Bill Bright was president of Campus Crusade for Christ. Cites Lawton 1986 p. 34 in Anne M. Hallum, “From Candidates to Agenda Setters: Protestant Leaders and the 1988 Presidential Campaign”, in James L. Guth and John C. Green [eds.], *The Bible and the Ballot Box: Religion and Politics in the 1988 Election* (Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1991) p. 32.

¹¹⁴ Anne M. Hallum, “From Candidates to Agenda Setters...” p. 32.

¹¹⁵ quote from Michael Welch, Lyman Kellstedt and Kenneth Wald, “Pastoral Cues and Congregational Responses: Evidence from the 1989 NES Pilot Study”. Presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association. San Francisco, 1990, pp. 1-2. cited in James L. Guth, John C. Green, Corwin E. Smidt and Margaret M. Poloma “Pulpits and Politics: The Protestant Clergy in the 1988 Presidential Election”, in James L. Guth and John C. Green [eds.] *The Bible and the Ballot Box: Religion and Politics in the 1988 Election* (Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1991) p. 74.

political clout.¹¹⁶ Democrat Party chairman Paul Kirk sought to exploit this exuberant sentiment in using Robertson's campaign as a political wedge. Kirk frequently stated his hope that Robertson's presence in the campaign as a Republican candidate would conversely increase Democratic Party fundraising, as he took every opportunity to talk up Robertson's negative influence.¹¹⁷ Other commentators were more measured in their analysis of the Robertson campaign, noting his determined efforts to create an "invisible army" of electoral supporters.¹¹⁸ Media claims that Robertson had raised some ten million dollars even before announcing his candidacy also added a certain amount of intrigue to his campaign, but these assertions remained unsubstantiated, and may have originated from Robertson himself.¹¹⁹

Robertson officially launched his campaign for the United States presidency on October 1, 1987. Just days earlier he resigned both his role as an ordained Baptist minister, as well his position as chairman and CEO of the Christian Broadcasting Network, which he had founded and led for many years.¹²⁰ His choice of location for the campaign launch speech - the low income, predominantly African-American Bedford-Stuyvesant neighbourhood in Brooklyn - was significant. Robertson had spent three months living there with his family in 1959, while he completed his seminary studies.¹²¹ The choice of setting also implied the candidate's desire to allay fears within the black community that he would be another southern incarnation of the former segregationist Alabama governor George Wallace.¹²² Projecting himself

¹¹⁶ Jeffrey Hadden and Anson Shupe, "Words do little to stop a Robertson gospel train", *Atlanta*, p. A.23.

¹¹⁷ Steve Bruce, *Pray TV*, p. 171.

¹¹⁸ James L. Guth, John C. Green, Corwin E. Smidt and Margaret M. Poloma "Pulpits and Politics...", p. 74.

¹¹⁹ John Ellement, "Robertson Aiming to Convert Skeptics", *The Boston Globe*, September 20, 1987, p. 81.

¹²⁰ Steve Harvey, "Robertson Enters Presidential Race, Vows to Aid Poor", *Atlanta Constitution*, October 2, 1987, p. A02.

¹²¹ Steve Harvey, "Robertson Enters Presidential Race...", p.A02.

¹²² George Wallace was the former pro-segregationist Governor of Alabama, who also made

in largely inclusive rhetoric, his speech contained references to a personal “commitment to the cities of the United States and to the poor of this nation” and to his belief that “every person in the United States of America has a right to education, dignity, freedom and a job.”¹²³ However not all in attendance were welcoming of Robertson to the area. Democratic Congressman Major Owens, whose district included Bedford-Stuyvesant, bluntly declared “I consider [Pat Robertson] a menace. This is a political stunt. There’s no real affinity or concern for the issues important to the black community.”¹²⁴ This individual response underscored further problems Robertson would face as political candidate. While seeking to maintain a close connection with his support base, who had reportedly donated some \$11 million to his campaign, he simultaneously alienated many other voters.¹²⁵

A 1999 case study of Robertson’s presidential bid described support for his campaign as “remarkable,” on account of his not having the backing of the established G.O.P. political machinery, nor having held any previous political office.¹²⁶ The study also contended that “insurgent candidates” such as Pat Robertson “are an important engine of party change and renewal” that offer “a vital contest over the future direction of the party.”¹²⁷ Barry Goldwater could be regarded as another example of such a candidate, for despite losing the general election in 1964, he has nevertheless played a pivotal role in the political direction of the G.O.P.¹²⁸ Furthermore, both he and Robertson sought to give political agency to new

numerous attempts to be elected U.S. President. Robertson sought to reinforce this point of his difference to Wallace by bringing a church choir along to entertain the gathering. Gary Wills, *Under God: Religion and American Politics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990) p. 63.

¹²³ Steve Harvey, “Robertson Enters Presidential Race...”, p. A02.

¹²⁴ Steve Harvey, “Robertson Enters Presidential Race...”, p. A02.

¹²⁵ Steve Harvey, “Robertson Enters Presidential Race...”, p. A02.

¹²⁶ Gregory S. Pastor, Walter J. Stone and Ronald B. Rapoport, “Candidate-Centered Sources of Party Change: The Case of Pat Robertson, 1988”, *The Journal of Politics*, 61.2 (May 1999) p. 424.

¹²⁷ Gregory S. Pastor, Walter J. Stone and Ronald B. Rapoport, “Candidate-Centered Sources of Party Change...”, p. 427.

¹²⁸ Jeffrey Hadden and Anson Shupe, “Words do little to stop a Robertson gospel train”, *Atlanta*, p.

demographic constituencies, in representing voters previously unconnected to the traditional framework of the Republican Party and not truly represented by other candidates.¹²⁹ While Republican Party moderates generally saw economic concerns as paramount, the Christian conservative constituency prioritised foreign policy and social issues.¹³⁰

Robertson aimed to tap into such an agenda on the campaign trail and incorporate them into his own political platform. Within this he included such policies as increasing the birth rate, to maintain “our culture and our values”; a decree that atheists would be excluded from working in his administration; a call for a U.S. military blockade of Libya; and inflammatory allegations that the United States was again under the direct threat of Soviet warheads located in Cuba.¹³¹ Alongside such positions, Robertson underwent a makeover of some significance in order to run “a campaign for all people” and succeed in the politics of personality.¹³² This included altering the presentation of his credentials by de-emphasising his religiosity, while simultaneously reinforcing his experience as a lawyer, businessman, and media executive. Such a shift led the commentator Gary Wills to observe, “The preacher had to become a businessman in order to become a politician.”¹³³

A.23.

¹²⁹ Gregory S. Pastor, Walter J. Stone and Ronald B. Rapoport, “Candidate-Centered Sources of Party Change...”, p. 426.

¹³⁰ John C. Green and James L. Guth, “The Christian Right in the Republican Party: The Case of Pat Robertson’s Supporters”, *The Journal of Politics*, 50.1 (February 1988) p. 153.

¹³¹ “Robertson Urges Policy to Increase Birth Rate”, *The New York Times*, October 24, 1988; “Robertson would ban Athiests”, *San Fransisco Chronicle*, September 21, 1987; “Military Blockade of Libya Urged by Pat Robertson”, *Los Angeles Times*, January 27, 1987; “Robertson Comes under Fire for Asserting that Cuba Holds Soviet Missiles”, *The New York Times*, February 16, 1988. Cited in Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, p. 74.

¹³² quote taken from Robertson’s candidacy announcement, in Steve Harvey, “Robertson Enters Presidential Race...”, p. A02.

¹³³ Gary Wills, *Under God...*, p. 65. Robertson marketed this new persona by distributing multimedia which focused on him as a business leader. Cited in James L. Guth and John C. Green [eds.], *The Bible and the Ballot Box*, p. 20.

However despite all the planning, resources, and support networks he implemented, Robertson's official campaign was ultimately short-lived and ineffectual. There were numerous reasons behind this defeat, the most fundamental of which was voter's concerns raised from the outset regarding Robertson's perceived "electability" for the nation's highest office. Despite numerous attempts to recast himself to a broader constituency, Robertson's former role as a leading televangelist continued to shadow him. His reliance on a core constituency of Christian conservative supporters may have provided an initial foundation for his campaign, but by pandering to this group's ideology Robertson was unable to undertake the necessary task of building an effective electoral coalition.¹³⁴ Even his political allies regarded this dependence on Christian conservatives as a fundamental flaw in his campaign. For example the influential Republican donor Joseph Coors perceived Robertson's overt religiosity as a significant obstacle, while even his own campaign manager, Marc Nuttle, described Robertson as "a little radioactive."¹³⁵ In responding to such claims, Robertson often retaliated abrasively, blaming the media for creating a negative perception of televangelists in the first place.¹³⁶

Throughout the 1980s significant media attention was paid to the misdeeds of various high-profile televangelists, however the consequences of their association with Pat Robertson in terms of tarnishing his political campaign remains largely anecdotal.¹³⁷ For example, following the public exposure of Jim Bakker's marital

¹³⁴ James L. Guth and John C. Green make a similar point in "The Bible and the Ballot Box: The Shape of Things to Come" in James L. Guth and John C Green [eds.], *The Bible and the Ballot Box*, p. 218.

¹³⁵ Quoted in James L. Guth and John C. Green [eds.], *The Bible and the Ballot Box*, p. 18. and T.R. Reid, "'Invisible Army' Won Few Battles", *The Washington Post*, December 17, 1988, p. A03.

¹³⁶ Kevin Merida "Robertson Seeks to Broaden Appeal". Dean Dexter, a Republican state representative Dean Dexter similarly commented on the need to change perceptions of Christian conservative political figures, while acknowledging that in the current climate, Robertson would have the effect of polarizing the nation. Cited in John Ellement, "Robertson Aiming to Convert Skeptics", p. 81.

¹³⁷ Jim Bakker, the televangelist renowned for his extravagant lifestyle and subsequent sexual affair,

and financial failings, Gary Jarmin of Christian Voice commented that the scandal had “increased Pat’s negatives in the minds of the public and at least temporarily, if not permanently, damaged his strategy of trying to play down the TV preacher image.”¹³⁸ Jimmy Swaggart’s further admission of sexual impropriety compounded this problem of association for Robertson, only a fortnight before the vital “Super Tuesday” primaries.¹³⁹ Instead of moving to contain the damage, Robertson responded incredulously to the revelations, by claiming that his rival Republican George H. W. Bush was in some way responsible for triggering the scandal.¹⁴⁰ Given such a climate, Sara Diamond surmised that Christian conservative leaders were in fact “ridiculous scoundrels, not a serious political movement diligently in pursuit of power.”¹⁴¹

Amid these public revelations, Robertson desperately attempted to elevate himself above such heavily criticised personalities. However far from removing himself from the conversation, Robertson went squarely on the offensive in response. He criticised the use of the term “televangelist” as “a religious slur” and went so far as to compare the negative comments he received to prejudice directed against John F. Kennedy on account of his Catholicism.¹⁴² Robertson’s defensive demeanor may well have been justified, as he himself had numerous life experiences that would have hindered his campaign even further if the full account of his past had been widely publicised. In addition to the previous examples of his financial impropriety, Robertson was also susceptible to charges of hypocrisy, as a man who had married

was an early protégé of Robertson’s. Cited in Steve Bruce, *Pray TV*, p. 175.

¹³⁸ quote cited in Kevin Merida, “Rough Times on the Christian Right”.

¹³⁹ James L. Guth and John C Green [eds.], *The Bible and the Ballot Box*, p. 21. This may have contributed to Bush winning almost half the southern state’s evangelical vote in Super Tuesday primaries, with Robertson only managing to average 27%. Cited in Anne M. Hallum, “From Candidates to Agenda Setters...” p. 32.

¹⁴⁰ T.R. Reid, “Robertson Faded but Born-Again Christians Remain Potent Force”, *The Washington Post*, August 16, 1988, p. A17.

¹⁴¹ Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, p. 75.

¹⁴² James L. Guth and John C Green [eds.], *The Bible and the Ballot Box*, p. 20.

on account of an unplanned pregnancy, despite preaching the necessity of strict sexual conduct. His military service record also came under review during the 1988 campaign, after allegations were made that he had remained stationed in Japan during the Korean War after contacting his father, an influential Virginian senator, instead of actively serving in the conflict.

Alongside concerns regarding Robertson's past, many voters were also highly skeptical of his future intentions, as many questioned how he would govern if he did win. It was here that the Christian conservative theology of pre-millennial dispensationalism again came to the fore, as it had done for Reagan. While many suspected Reagan's penchant for "Armageddon theology" was merely a device to gain support from Christian conservatives, Robertson had actually *preached* the doctrines of Christian conservatism. Furthermore, he did this with great passion and commitment, endorsing a world view that would have dramatic consequences for the global society if he were given the capacity to act upon these convictions.¹⁴³

It was a combination of all of these factors which ultimately led to Robertson's eventual defeat. The stark reality was that he simply could not muster the electoral support required for him to be a viable candidate. Robertson's decision to tap into the increasing large Christian conservative constituency had some merit, with statistical research showing that potentially one quarter to one third of the total electorate was "evangelical." Furthermore, Robertson had the presumed inherent support of some three million voters he claimed had pledged to back him prior to his campaign launch. However, even these core "supporters" proved fickle, with Robertson securing just a million total votes in the primaries he contested.¹⁴⁴ All these developments largely vindicated previous polling undertaken to forecast his

¹⁴³ Steve Bruce, *Pray TV*, pp. 173-5.

¹⁴⁴ James L. Guth and John C Green [eds.], *The Bible and the Ballot Box*, p. 18. The lower figure of a quarter is cited from T.R. Reid, "Robertson Faded..." p. A17.

campaign chances. In September 1987, a *Time Magazine* poll showed Robertson dead last (by a significant margin) out of all Republican candidates when respondents replied to the questions “Who would you be proud to have as President” and “Would this candidate be effective in dealing with the Soviet Union.” On the question of being trustworthy, the former Baptist minister ranked last out of a group that included four establishment politicians – a stark revelation of voter perceptions.¹⁴⁵

Even among polling of traditional Bible Belt voters the Robertson camp was in severe electoral peril. A Roper poll gave him an unfavourable rating of 69% - the highest of *any* candidate for the 1988 race, Republican or Democrat.¹⁴⁶ This was further underscored by other data that revealed only 16% of Southerners would even *consider* casting their vote for Robertson, while yet another poll suggested only 14% of “evangelicals” would vote for Robertson, compared to 44% for Bush.¹⁴⁷ Research undertaken by John C. Green and James L. Guth revealed that “significant numbers of [registered] Republicans claim they could not support Robertson on the G.O.P. ticket *under any circumstances.*”¹⁴⁸ Green and Guth believed that the motivation for such a negative stance was due largely to the extreme nature of the Robertson platform, most evident in its over-exaggeration of policy initiatives. They also noted that “The Christian Right differs from mainstream Republicans precisely where [the] G.O.P. differs most from the Democrats and the public at large,” citing sexual regulation and overseas intervention as two such examples.¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, the

¹⁴⁵ Steve Bruce, *Pray TV*, pp. 175-6.

¹⁴⁶ A *Time Magazine* poll undertaken in February 1988 similarly found that Robertson was the least regarded of any candidate, with 72% of respondents citing him as the candidate they “would definitely not vote for”. Cited in Steve Bruce, *Pray TV*, pp. 178,6.

¹⁴⁷ Steve Bruce, *Pray TV*, pp. 176,8.

¹⁴⁸ Emphasis added. John C. Green and James L. Guth, “The Christian Right in the Republican Party...”, p. 161.

¹⁴⁹ John C. Green and James L. Guth, “The Christian Right in the Republican Party...”, p. 162.

Robertson “brand” was ultimately perceived by the public and media as particularly harmful. This bad image of Robertson even became evident among his campaign staff. Gene Ward, the co-chairman of Robertson’s campaign in Hawaii, later claimed that those merely *associated* with Robertson were publicly depicted as “fanatical and intolerant,” as well as “far Right.”¹⁵⁰

In the election’s aftermath, senior Robertson staffer Richard Pinsky concluded that “nobody knows if there really is a Pat Robertson vote.”¹⁵¹ This dilemma highlighted the significant question of whether there is even a constituent bloc that could be portrayed “the Christian conservative vote.” The 1988 presidential campaign clearly demonstrated that there are unifying Christian conservative values present within the United States, as well as an ambition by many Christian conservatives to have those values projected onto the nation-wide political arena. In this light, Falwell’s declaration that “none of us are looking for a born-again Baptist or Pentecostal or whatever to run for public office” seems somewhat deceptive, coming from the man who earlier in the decade expounded the power and influence of the Moral Majority.¹⁵² Furthermore, Falwell’s early endorsement of George H. W. Bush, rather than being incongruous with Christian political aspirations, displays an evolution in his political tactics, where compromise and patience have become crucial ingredients for successful relations between Christian conservatives and the broader political culture. Such a construct also demonstrated the political imperative of knowing and accepting one’s place. Endorsing candidates is one thing, but being immersed in the cut and thrust of the political machine is quite another. This was arguably the central lesson that Christian conservatives, and their leadership in particular, learned from Pat Robertson’s campaign.

¹⁵⁰ T.R. Reid, “‘Invisible Army’ Won Few Battles”, p. A03.

¹⁵¹ T.R. Reid, “‘Invisible Army’ Won Few Battles”, p. A03.

¹⁵² quote cited in Kevin Merida, “Rough Times on the Christian Right”.

Ultimately, Robertson's idealised view of his own political appeal, even to fellow Christians, was misplaced. He clearly overestimated his support and to a large degree was blinded by the intensity of what was a relatively small but zealous group of backers and support staff.¹⁵³ A chief promoter of this outlook was his campaign manager, Marc Nuttle, who made this analysis of the electorate:

Approximately 35% of the population is at least partially motivated in terms of how to vote, what to buy, what to watch on TV, by conservative moral values...These people are desperately seeking guidelines that will help them decide how to act. They are tired of drugs, the failure of schools, value-relativity. They will act on those values...they will become socially acceptable and more powerful...Power sources, like the press will have to pay attention.¹⁵⁴

Steve Bruce countered this viewpoint when he commented on Robertson's surprise second place in the Iowa caucuses. He argued that the momentum-generating publicity the media gave to this event had more to do with wanting to inject some energy into a relatively dreary Primary season, rather than genuine recognition of broad support for Robertson's campaign.¹⁵⁵ Other commentators noted a growing "political sophistication" of the electorate, whom Robertson could not successfully persuade to believe that he had the stature of a President-elect.¹⁵⁶

Sara Diamond has also charged that Robertson "was less interested in winning the Republican nomination than in securing a bigger bully pulpit," but this claim failed to consider the full consequences of his electoral defeat. Identifying Robertson's real support base at the time is problematic, as the only campaign "successes" he had were in the grass-roots caucuses that primarily involved actively mobilising loyal constituents. Outside of this, he could only win 15 per cent of the

¹⁵³ Anne M. Hallum, "From Candidates to Agenda Setters..." p. 33.

¹⁵⁴ James L. Guth and John C. Green [eds.], *The Bible and the Ballot Box*, p. 20.

¹⁵⁵ Steve Bruce, *Pray TV*, p. 177.

¹⁵⁶ Anne M. Hallum, "From Candidates to Agenda Setters..." p. 33.

primary vote in his home state of Virginia.¹⁵⁷ If Robertson's campaign was purely for publicity, as Diamond contends, it was very expensive advertising. Robertson outspent all other Republican candidates in a lengthy campaign leading up to the South Carolina primary, where George H.W. Bush convincingly beat him, as did Bob Dole, who came in second.¹⁵⁸ His 26 million dollar campaign spending to secure just 120 convention delegates (a paltry 5 per cent of the total) seemed largely irrational for a self-proclaimed "businessman," unless the motivation to climb to the uppermost reaches of political power also blinded the candidate from the reality of the situation.¹⁵⁹

Ultimately Robertson, as a man with intense religious convictions, simply could not contain his desire to lead the world's most powerful and influential nation. Demonstrating these "convictions" in largely activist and divisive terms throughout the campaign, his actions proved to have severely negative electoral repercussions. Writing on Robertson's 1988 campaign, Green and Guth categorised it as an example of a "purist" revival within the Republican Party, as the candidate was "willing to risk electoral defeat rather than compromise on important issues or cooperate with the more pragmatic party 'professionals'."¹⁶⁰ Other commentators have concurred with this analysis, arguing that Robertson's defeat has only redoubled "purists'" efforts to integrate themselves within the party apparatus, thereby facilitating their agenda to gain influence and control through generating multilateral coalitions.¹⁶¹ However, the continuing fight between religious purists and party moderates within

¹⁵⁷ Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, p. 74.

¹⁵⁸ Anne M. Hallum, "From Candidates to Agenda Setters..." p. 32.

¹⁵⁹ This included outspending Bush three to one within the Texas campaign, cited in Clyde Wilcox, *Onward Christian Soldiers...*, p. 40. Spending and delegate total accrued cited from Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 80. and Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, p. 75.

¹⁶⁰ John C. Green and James L. Guth, "The Christian Right in the Republican Party", p. 150.

¹⁶¹ Gregory S. Pastor, Walter J. Stone, Ronald B. Rapoport, "Candidate Centred Sources of Party Change", p. 442.

the G.O.P. was a fight that Robertson and like-minded Christian conservatives very much wanted to win. After endorsing George H. W. Bush as the Republican opponent of Democrat Michael Dukakis in 1988, Robertson spoke ominously. “If Bush doesn’t win, we want to see something happen in 1992. If he does win, I’ll still be a young man like Ronald Reagan in 1996.”¹⁶²

Four years of Bush and then eight in the wilderness: Christian Conservatives on the margins during the George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton administrations.

Bill Clinton would negate all our gains of the last 12 years.¹⁶³

Jerry Falwell.

Although Robertson claimed to speak for a strong and influential constituency of broadly-based Christian conservatives, his unsuccessful campaign in 1988 proved largely to be a one-man show. Garnering only tacit support from those who shared his political, and more crucially his theological views, most Christian conservatives believed their votes were better cast elsewhere. Attempting to profit from this discontent, Robert Grant, the president of Christian Voice, established the American Freedom Coalition (AFC) in 1987. With Christian conservative stalwart Richard Viguerie as the organisation’s secretary, the AFC promoted its political ambitions as “a major third party,” while working simultaneously to secure funds to aid the Contras in Nicaragua.¹⁶⁴ The AFC also acted in response to the perceived

¹⁶² quote from John Judis, “Feminists and evangelicals: the movers and shakers”, *In These Times*, August 31-September 6, 1988, cited in Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 80.

¹⁶³ cited in Dick Williams, “Falwell aims at shoring up a Bush weakness”, p. A10.

¹⁶⁴ quote from Robert Grant, in Fred Clarkson, “The New Righteous Plan a Third Party”, *The Washington Herald*, Feb 8-21, 1988, p. 12. Cited in Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 78.

lack of political progress Christian conservatives had made in implementing their agenda, with some leaders advocating the need to be “unequally yoked” with other groups, in order for their own constituency to become more “politically effective.”¹⁶⁵ However, instead of aligning itself with the Republican Party as a means of achieving political legitimacy, the AFC opted to undertake a financial partnership with the marginalised Unification Church.¹⁶⁶ Grant’s later decision to be the keynote speaker at the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations 1988 annual conference was even more controversial. This group, recognised as a proponent of anti-Semitic views, has been described as “the largest and most important umbrella for Nazi collaborators in the world.”¹⁶⁷

In contrast to the AFC as a fringe-dwelling political movement, New York Congressman Jack Kemp’s campaign proved popular among Christian conservatives not tied to Robertson. Christian Voice representative Gary Jarmin was a passionate supporter of Kemp and predicted as early as June 1985 that Kemp would “swamp” the Iowa caucuses in 1988, win New Hampshire, “and by that time, it’s all over.”¹⁶⁸ Similarly, Ed McAteer’s later endorsement of Kemp continued to highlight a desire by these leaders to support a more seemingly viable Republican candidate. Distancing himself from Pat Robertson “the politician,” McAteer stated,

¹⁶⁵ quote taken from an internal memo written by Rus Walton of the Plymouth Rock Foundation. Cited in Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 78. Essentially a “yoke” is a wooden beam used to connect two oxen, in order to haul a load. The term “unequally yoked” was used by the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 6:14, in reference to a marriage where one partner is a “believer” and the other is not as being “unequally yoked”. Walton uses this Biblical reference to suggest that Christian conservatives should be connected with other non-“believing” groups to act as a larger and more robust political coalition.

¹⁶⁶ Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 78. Unification church members also held important posts within the AFC, including Executive, Field and Administrative Director positions. In Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, pp. 255-6 (note 153).

¹⁶⁷ Scott Anderson and Jon Lee Anderson, *Inside the League* (New York: Dodd Mead, 1986) p. 35. Cited in Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 79.

¹⁶⁸ cited in Thomas B. Edsall, “Onward GOP Christians, Marching to ‘88”, *The Washington Post*, June 30, 1985, p. C01.

I agree a hundred percent with Pat's positions. But there is the question of electability. It's not always what you like, but it's what the customer likes. A lot of people are just not going to be comfortable in the voting booth voting for an ordained minister.¹⁶⁹

A number of Christian conservative leaders also endorsed other candidates. At the 1984 Republican national convention, Jerry Falwell had supported then Vice-President George H. W. Bush for a possible 1988 run for the presidency.¹⁷⁰ However, Bush had not actively endeared himself to many other Christian conservatives in the run-up to the 1988 primaries. One indiscretion included Bush publicly repeating the joke that a fundamentalist group had recently been formed named 'LORD', an acronym that stood for "Let Oral Roberts Die."¹⁷¹ However despite this relatively minor slip-up, the Bush camp was still very much attuned to the necessity of garnering Christian conservative support. Like Kemp, who frequently advertised his credentials on Christian radio networks, Bush also came to appeal specifically to leaders and congregations of the so-called "evangelical" constituency.¹⁷² For example, prior to the 1988 election and Jim Bakker's highly-publicised disgrace, Bush actively sought his endorsement.

While this external support was important, Bush's public declarations of faith and values proved to have a far greater impact. As United States Vice President for the previous eight years, Bush also benefitted from President Reagan's continued popularity among Christian conservatives. All of these factors led Bush to believe he had strong support from Christian conservatives when he entered the 1988 campaign. He even had a biography written that promoted his religious credentials that

¹⁶⁹ cited in Hal Straus, "Altar, ballot box may not be the right mix for GOP", p. A01.

¹⁷⁰ Dick Williams, "Falwell aims at shoring up a Bush weakness", p. A10.

¹⁷¹ Robert G. Grant, chairman of Christian Voice, was particularly offended at this, chastising the 'trite and disrespectful' behavior shown by Bush. Kevin Merida, "Rough Times on the Christian Right".

¹⁷² Allen D. Hertzke, "Harvest of Discontent: Religion and Populism in the 1988 Presidential Campaign", in James L. Guth and John C Green [eds.], *The Bible and the Ballot Box: Religion and Politics in the 1988 Election* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1991), p. 9.

appeared in Christian bookshops.¹⁷³ Bush later reinforced these credentials while campaigning for the South Carolina primary, unequivocally stating that he believed in “Jesus Christ as my personal saviour and always will.”¹⁷⁴ Coupled with his newly-acquired anti-abortion stance, these religious statements seemed to assuage Christian conservative anxiety and contributed to his primary victory in South Carolina that ended Pat Robertson’s run for President.

Bush’s central campaign theme of patriotism and a strong emphasis on law and order also dovetailed with the overarching values of Christian conservative ideology. For example, during this time Bush was persistently critical of Dukakis’ 1977 veto of a Massachusetts law which would have required public school students to daily recite the Pledge of Allegiance. On account of this criticism, approximately one third of voters felt negatively towards Dukakis, according to Gallup polling.¹⁷⁵ This arguably included many Christian conservatives, who can be regarded as having a theology imbued with a significant undercurrent of nationalism, stemming from inherited themes of manifest destiny¹⁷⁶. This has led to secular symbols, such as the national flag, being invoked as sacred religious icons. Bush gained considerable mileage from the Christian conservative constituency by playing on this conservative theological dynamic.¹⁷⁷

That the Bush campaign would utilise this approach was not accidental. Bush’s campaign manager, Lee Atwater, was instrumental in plotting this course, guided by the mantra: “The *conservative* wing of the Republican Party has become

¹⁷³ James L. Guth and John C. Green [eds.], *The Bible and the Ballot Box*, p. 22.

¹⁷⁴ Quote in Gerald M. Boyd, “Bush, a Cautious Front-Runner Again, Avoids Attacks and Personal Campaigning”, *The New York Times*, February 27, 1988 (<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=940DEFD9103EF934A15751C0A96E948260> – accessed December 17, 2008).

¹⁷⁵ Robert Justin Goldstein, *Burning the Flag: The Great 1989-1990 American Flag Desecration Controversy* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1996) pp. 73-74.

¹⁷⁶ This concept is analysed in more depth within the third and fourth chapters.

¹⁷⁷ Gary Wills, *Under God...*, pp. 80-1..

its *nominating* wing. Outside this church, there could be no salvation.”¹⁷⁸ The metaphor was significant, because Christian conservative leaders had done much to promote an increasingly theocratic brand of conservatism within the Republican Party. With this agenda, the 1988 election held special interest for Christian conservatives. After eight disappointing years under Reagan, many from this group were now emboldened to increase their conservative demands.¹⁷⁹ Following Bush’s successful nomination after the primaries however, the nominee needed broader presidential appeal, and in doing so needed to moderate his rhetoric particularly on issues surrounding social policy.¹⁸⁰ In this new setting, conservative supporters also sought to become more pragmatic in their political ambitions, led by the desire for ultimate electoral success.

Throughout this entire process, Christian conservative leaders felt relatively confident that if Bush won the general election they would have a grateful ally in the White House. They therefore increased efforts to temper their highly-publicised social conservative platform and become less divisive. This emphasis on party unity created the perception of a more restrained brand of conservatism; however some Christian conservative leaders proved incapable of being tamed.¹⁸¹ For example, Jerry Falwell made a provocative appearance grandstanding outside the 1988 Republican convention in New Orleans. He disseminated anti-Dukakis comic books depicting the Democratic nominee as a cross-dressing “women’s libber”, as well as illustrating an abortion doctor carrying a vacuum cleaner.¹⁸² These types of negative caricatures, as well as other charges levelled at Dukakis, had been featured

¹⁷⁸ E.J. Dionne Jr., *Why Americans Hate Politics* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991) p. 302.

¹⁷⁹ Gary Wills, *Under God...*, p 79.

¹⁸⁰ Gary Wills, *Under God...*, p 79.

¹⁸¹ E.J. Dionne Jr., *Why Americans Hate Politics*, p. 302.

¹⁸² “Group Assails ‘Comic Book’ Stunt on Dukakis”, *Los Angeles Times*, August 16, 1988. Cited in Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 80.

prominently by U.S. conservatives' for some time.¹⁸³ Journalist E.J. Dionne Jr.'s analysis of such campaign techniques is particularly insightful, as he has argued that “[while] conservatives *highlight* the government’s role in promoting individual virtue, [they] downplay the government’s *responsibility* to create a society in which virtue can flourish.”¹⁸⁴

Despite such continued attempts by Christian conservatives to hijack his campaign for their own purposes, Bush ultimately managed to bring together a broad coalition of supporters that could help consolidate the party’s previous electoral successes. This was no easy feat, on account of the large divide between the party’s “hard right” and “moderate” factions.¹⁸⁵ One of the major initiatives undertaken by Bush’s team was to utilise Christian conservative campaign workers already mobilised through Pat Robertson’s campaign. While their ideological convictions acted as a potential liability to Bush’s campaign, the need to harness such a widespread organisational network acted to counter such concerns.

During the political contest for the Republican Party nomination, the Bush campaign reportedly played a subversive role in facilitating Robertson’s political downfall. This included such actions as planting “spies” in selected churches, in the hope of preventing congregations “falling” to Robertson en masse. When Bush later secured the nomination, his campaign took on significant numbers of former Robertson staffers and volunteers.¹⁸⁶ As these new campaign workers were already familiar with campaign processes and tasks, most instructions given to them focused mainly on electioneering protocols. By incorporating Christian conservatives behind

¹⁸³ This, according to E.J. Dionne Jr. Included on the list are personal irresponsibility, flight from family life, sexual permissiveness and the lack of a work ethic. In E.J. Dionne Jr., *Why Americans Hate Politics*, p. 325.

¹⁸⁴ E.J. Dionne Jr., *Why Americans Hate Politics*, p. 324. Emphasis added.

¹⁸⁵ John C. Green and James L. Guth, “The Bible and the Ballot Box”, pp. 218-9.

¹⁸⁶ James L. Guth and John C. Green [eds.], *The Bible and the Ballot Box*, p. 22.

the scenes of his campaign, Bush could thereby consolidate support from other Christian conservatives, without overtly offending more moderate Republicans. As part of this effort, the campaign enlisted Robertson himself as a stump-speaker and highlighted his endorsement of a man he had previously derided as opposed to Christian conservatism.¹⁸⁷ By itself, this did little to change the narrow image of the G.O.P. as the party of traditional Protestantism, but it did build some much needed unity by working towards the bigger goal of winning the Presidency.¹⁸⁸

Despite George H. W. Bush's victory in 1988, after twelve years of a Republican President the White House subsequently fell to Democrat Bill Clinton in 1992. Voter's economic concerns contributing heavily to Bush's defeat, as New York Times/CBS News polls indicated that 75% of those surveyed believed Bush had poorly handled the economy.¹⁸⁹ Compounding this was the fact that his support among white Christian voters dropped by almost a quarter to 61 per cent.¹⁹⁰ However a number of other factors also foreshadowed the Republicans' loss, including a severe misreading of the nation's opinions on far-right social conservatism, as well as Clinton's pushing the Democratic Party toward a more centrist platform, through his "Third Way" or "triangulation" strategy.¹⁹¹

Following Bush's loss of the U.S. presidency, many within the Republican Party criticised the architecture of their 1992 campaign, with some taking particular aim at the overbearing involvement of Christian conservatives. Departing G.O.P. chairman Richard N. Bond lamented that "Our job is to win elections, not cling to

¹⁸⁷ James L. Guth and John C. Green [eds.], *The Bible and the Ballot Box*, p. 23.

¹⁸⁸ John C. Green and James L. Guth, "The Bible and the Ballot Box", p. 222.

¹⁸⁹ R.W. Apple Jr., "The 1993 Elections: News Analysis; The Economy's Casualty", *The New York Times*, November 4, 1992 (<http://www.nytimes.com/1992/11/04/us/the-1992-elections-news-analysis-the-economy-s-casualty.html?pagewanted=2&src=pm> – accessed 9 July 2011).

¹⁹⁰ Bruce Nesmith, *The New Republican Coalition*, p. 147. Clinton received 23% of the white Christian vote, bettering Dukakis' support in 1988.

¹⁹¹ Bruce Nesmith, *The New Republican Coalition*, p. 142. Dick Morris, a former political adviser to Bill Clinton, was the first to champion this new political direction, later utilised by Tony Blair under the banner of "New Labor".

intolerances that zealots call principles, not to be led or dominated by a vocal few who like to look good losing.”¹⁹² Even former Republican President Richard Nixon contributed to the political autopsy, suggesting that a large number of moderate Republicans were alienated by Bush’s public courtship of Christian conservatives.¹⁹³ Prominent Republican Congressman Newt Gingrich went the opposite direction and chastised Bush for not being aggressive enough in America’s “[cultural] civil war...All of his social instincts and his personal grace led him to conciliate. In a civil war, you have to pick sides and win.”¹⁹⁴

Arguments of blame aside, the biggest liability for Bush in 1992 proved to be the dissipation of any cohesive unity, required to maintain a majority coalition of support within his campaign. In exit polling undertaken by the recently formed Christian Coalition, the only demographic groups that Bush received decisive support from were voters whose annual income was \$200,000 or above, as well as the far larger “evangelical Christians” group. These “evangelical Christians,” accounting for some 24 million votes overall, were split three ways in the 1992 presidential election, with Bush receiving 55%, Clinton 28%, and Perot 17%.¹⁹⁵ Barbara Victor, in her analysis of the election results, has argued against suggestions the Reform Party candidate Ross Perot took “evangelical” votes away from Bush. Instead she cited the fundamental reason as being that Christian conservatives were not sufficiently unified to provide practical support for the Republican campaign.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹² Quote in Richard L. Berke, “Departing Chairman Scolds Republicans Over ‘Zealotry,’” *The New York Times*, January 30, 1993, p. 28. Cited in Bruce Nesmith, *The New Republican Coalition*, p. 148.

¹⁹³ Bruce Nesmith, *The New Republican Coalition*, p. 148.

¹⁹⁴ Quote in Andrew Rosenthal and Joe Brinkley, “Bush in a World Remade: Will the Old Compass Do?,” *The New York Times*, June 25, 1992, p. A1. Cited in Bruce Nesmith, *The New Republican Coalition*, p. 148.

¹⁹⁵ Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, p. 94.

¹⁹⁶ Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, p. 139.

Some aspects of the Christian conservative mobilising effort proved overly simplistic and divisive for many voters, exemplified in the 40 million voter guides distributed by the Christian Coalition on the eve of the 1992 election. Within these guides, much like previous incarnations, the total policy debate was reduced to six topics: taxation, abortion, school vouchers, gay rights, government funding of “obscene art,” and an amendment to balance the budget.¹⁹⁷ This effort proved to be another misreading by Christian conservative leaders of the mood of the American public. John C. Green, a renowned scholar in the study of religion and politics, warned at the time that Christian conservatives were decidedly *not* single-issue voters.¹⁹⁸ Also in addition to this division between leadership and the grass-roots were quarrels among Christian conservative leaders themselves. One such example featured Pat Buchanan, a former speech-writer during the Reagan administration, described the AIDS virus as “nature’s retribution for violating the laws of nature” while promoting his own political campaign in 1992.¹⁹⁹ From deep within the political fringes, he publicly criticised Pat Robertson’s endorsement of Bush’s 1992 campaign. Buchanan further attacked the credibility of the Bush campaign in an interview with a right-wing newspaper: “I think some folks saw me stealing the conservative movement, and were envious of my ripping a page out of the history books that might have been theirs had they made the race.”²⁰⁰

Internal feuds within the Christian conservative leadership highlighted not only its fragile position, but also the tenuousness of the broader coalition that made up the political base of the Republican Party. John C. Green’s op-ed piece in the

¹⁹⁷ Christian Coalition Voter Guide, 1992, cited in Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, p. 95.

¹⁹⁸ John C. Green, “The Race for the Born-Agains”, *The Washington Post*, September 1, 1992, p. A17.

¹⁹⁹ “Buchanan Calls AIDS ‘Retribution’”, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, February 28, 1992. Cited in Sara Diamond, *Not by Politics Alone*, p. 92.

²⁰⁰ “Buchanan Looks Back – And Ahead”, *Human Events*, June 13, 1992, p. 6. Cited in Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, p. 93.

Washington Post prior to the 1992 election proved largely prophetic: “Bush must remember these leaders need the G.O.P. as much as the party needs them, so he should not become captive of an overly strident or negative message.”²⁰¹ Nevertheless, the Republican Party hierarchy appeared to ignore this and other concerns regarding the Christian conservative agenda. This was highlighted when Donald Devine, head of the party’s Committee for a Conservative Platform, bluntly stated, “When you’re 26 points behind, the first thing you’ve got to do is firm up your base” [speaking here of Christian conservatives].²⁰² Devine and others like him failed to comprehend that the party “base” was built on tenuous partnerships that needed to work in harmony alongside each other. If this working relationship could no longer function in unity and cooperation, it did not matter that the G.O.P. still had the support of its more hard-line elements.

The election of former Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton as the forty-second President completely changed the dynamic of Christian conservative political activism in the United States. For example, just weeks after their election victory, Democrats called for the abolition of the White House Office of Liaison to Religious Groups, which had up to then been Christian conservative’s direct link to the President. Many calling for its demise perceived this office as “little more than a [White House] public relations arm” pandering to Christian conservatives.²⁰³ However, even though Christian conservative leaders became increasingly marginalised on a national level, they could take some solace in the significant gains made in numerous elections for state legislatures, city councils, and school boards.

²⁰¹ John C. Green, “The Race for the Born-Agains”, p. A17.

²⁰² Quote in George Hager, “Platform Ignores Dissenters, Holds to Core Values”, *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, 50:37 (August 15, 1992), pp. 2466-2470. Cited in Bruce Nesmith, *The New Republican Coalition*, p. 142.

²⁰³ Quoting Stan Hastey of *Alliance of Baptists*, a Washington-based group of which he is executive director. Cited in Gustav Niebuhr, “A Church-White House Separation?”, *The Washington Post*, December 25, 1992, p. A17.

States such as Iowa, Kansas, Florida, Texas and Oregon were dedicated targets for this constituency in these smaller, less publicised, electoral battlegrounds.

However even in these instances doubt was cast over the legitimacy of such “ideological” victories. Within this, the Christian conservative organiser Jay Grimstead admitted using electoral tactics that deliberately obscured the hard-line religious views of candidates. In late November 1992, *The New York Times* quoted Grimstead’s statement that “It’s not always the best idea to go down there with trumpets blaring and flags waving...So these people essentially did not announce loudly that they were pro-life and pro-family values.”²⁰⁴ This initiative of utilising stealth candidates largely backfired though, on account of condemnation brought down from various groups. Political opponents unsurprisingly derided these tactics as deliberate deception, while further criticism came from other Christian conservative groups who disapproved of Christian candidates’ inability to openly divulge their beliefs.²⁰⁵

While Walter Mondale openly brandished secular ideals in attempting to combat Ronald Reagan in the 1984 election, Bill Clinton used a far more inclusive approach to his campaign rhetoric in 1992. In this way Clinton was able to manoeuvre his opponent into the ideological fringes, while he himself carved out a path that tied government assistance to the need for personal responsibility.²⁰⁶ In his first speech as President elect, Clinton stated,

Frankly, I’m fed up with politicians in Washington lecturing the rest of us about “family values.” Our families have values. But our government doesn’t. I want an America where “family values” live in our actions, not

²⁰⁴ Cited in Seth Mydans, “Christian Conservatives Counting Hundreds of Gains in Local Votes”, *The New York Times*, November 21, 1992, p. 1.1.

²⁰⁵ Clyde Wilcox, *Onward Christian Soldiers...* p. 43.

²⁰⁶ Peter Steinfels, “Southern Baptist Team of Democrats Represent a New Strain of the Church”, *New York Times*, October 8, 1992, p. A13 and Darrell Turner, “Clinton’s ‘New Covenant’ Call Has Deep Religious Roots”, *Washington Post*, July 18, 1992, p. D13. Cited in Bruce Nesmith, *The New Republican Coalition*, p. 145.

just in our speeches. An America that includes every family...And if other politicians make you feel like you're not a part of their families, come on and be part of ours.²⁰⁷

This sent an important message of ideological moderation to the electorate, who throughout the campaign were bombarded with sound-bites from Christian conservative leaders attempting to discredit Clinton. Pat Robertson, for example, had claimed that, "When Bill Clinton talks about family values, he is not talking about families or values. He is talking about a radical plan to destroy the traditional family and transfer its functions to the federal government."²⁰⁸ He further asserted that Clinton stood for "blasphemies" such as abortion on demand, homosexual rights, anti-religious schooling, and support for women soldiers on the front lines.²⁰⁹ In the wake of Clinton's decisive electoral victory however, it became clear to Christian conservative leaders that they would need to start highlighting what they were for, rather than continually emphasising what they were against.

The young and ambitious Ralph Reed, who worked as Pat Robertson's right-hand man within the Christian Coalition, started the move in this direction within his mid-1993 article "Casting a Wider Net," published in the conservative journal, *Policy Review*. The article began with Reed's view that "The moral right has dedicated too much energy to the subjects of abortion and homosexuality." He later justified this position with the damaging statistic that "17 percent of self-identified evangelicals in 1992 cast their ballots for Ross Perot, only two percent less than the

²⁰⁷ "Nominee Clinton Describes Vision of 'New Covenant'", *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, 50:29 (July 18, 1992), p. 2128. Cited in Bruce Nesmith, *The New Republican Coalition*, p. 145.

²⁰⁸ Ines Pinto Alicea, Jeffrey L. Katz, and Charles Mahtesian, "Four Days in the 'Dome': A Convention Chronicle", *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, 50:34 (August 22, 1992) p. 2529. Cited in Bruce Nesmith, *The New Republican Coalition*, pp. 143-4.

²⁰⁹ "Buchanan Urges His 'Brigades' To Stand Beside President", *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, 50:34 (August 22, 1992) p. 2543. Cited in Bruce Nesmith, *The New Republican Coalition*, p. 143. Buchanan himself was far from a model candidate, according to a large bloc of Reform Party 'Evangelicals', who saw his belittling of the Allied forces against Hitler as virtual anti-Semitism, and thus played a vital role in delivering the Reform Party nomination to Ross Perot instead of Buchanan. Cited in Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, pp. 137-8.

total electorate.”²¹⁰ Reed’s further analysis of the election results is revealing for a number of reasons. Claiming success “where the real power is,” he identified specific grassroots bases that successfully elected state legislatures and school boards. However this boast appears somewhat disingenuous, for as a man of considerable political acumen, Reed’s consideration of these scattered lower-level victories as more effective for the Republican cause than the power and influence that comes with victory in the White House seems misplaced.²¹¹

Reed also claimed that it was the Republican’s poor campaigning on economic and local issues that ultimately sealed their fate. These issues, as well as a broad range of other policy initiatives, were areas that Reed was keen to turn back into positive territory for the G.O.P.²¹² He highlighted this in his *Policy Review* article by focusing on advocating policy directions such as tax reduction, greater punishments for criminals, and an emphasis on schools and education. He believed these approaches provided *tangible* benefit to voters, rather than just being generic “values.”

While attempting to establish his own political credibility, Reed’s article also displayed a tendency to opportunistically utilise the “Word of God” as a foundation for his views through erroneously manipulating a number of quotations from the Bible. For example, Reed asserted that

The Bible admonishes to “divide your portion to seven, or even to eight, for you do not know what misfortune may occur on the earth.” Diversifying one’s investments applies to political capital as well as financial capital. Building a political agenda around a single issue is a risky proposition, because when progress lags on that issue, as it inevitably will, the viability of the entire movement is threatened.²¹³

²¹⁰ Ralph Reed, “Casting a Wider Net: Conservatives Move Beyond Abortion and Homosexuality”, *Policy Review*, 65 (Summer 1993) pp. 31-36.

²¹¹ Seth Mydans, “Christian Conservatives Counting Hundreds of Gains in Local Votes”, p. 1.1

²¹² Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, p. 94.

²¹³ Ralph Reed, “Casting a Wider Net...”, pp. 31-36.

Here he alluded to Ecclesiastes 11:2, where most English translations start the verse with “give” rather than “divide.” This is an important distinction, for if the context of the verse is sufficiently emphasised, a more accurate interpretation follows the commentary of John Wesley, the eighteenth century theologian. Wesley understood this passage to articulate generosity in giving to the poor, instead of the need to “diversify investments,” which is a concept of modern capitalism totally foreign to the traditions of early Christianity. In its simplest meaning then, the verse has been paraphrased as the encouragement “Give now what you can, to as many as you are able, for misfortunes may beset you and make you unable to give.”²¹⁴ At face value then, Reed displayed a disturbing example of poor theological understanding and ignorance of the passage’s focus on Christian charity rather than to one’s own investment portfolio. An even greater issue however is that Christian conservative leaders such as Ralph Reed are willing to misrepresent the cherished values of fellow Christians for nothing more than cheap political gain.

Furthermore, despite Reed’s intentions to broaden the policy scope and create a more positive and practical message around the agenda of Christian conservative politics, the ensuing reality was largely the complete opposite. Publicity orchestrated by many Christian conservative leaders overwhelmingly became limited to vitriolic attacks directed at Bill Clinton personally, against his “liberal” social policies, and increasingly against his role as President. These attacks arguably attested more to a vindictive brand of conservatism rather than inherent Christian beliefs, since Clinton himself personally and publically shared the Christian faith. According to Barbara Victor,

²¹⁴ Parallel Bible Translations and Commentaries, (<http://bible.cc/ecclesiastes/11-2.htm> - accessed May 1, 2008).

From [Clinton's] first campaign in 1992 when he transformed himself into full preaching mode in black churches, and throughout his two administrations, he peppered all his speeches with phrases from the Bible, the one book he knew by heart, chapter and verse.²¹⁵

Although Clinton shared a personal Christian faith, he failed to overcome the huge political divide between his socially-progressive politics and the Christian conservative hard-liners that opposed him. For example, Ralph Reed announced in 1993 that the Christian Coalition would initiate a multi-faceted campaign directed against Clinton's federal budget.²¹⁶ The following year a number of major Christian conservative organisations coalesced to oppose Clinton's appointee for Surgeon-General, Dr. Joycelyn Elders. These groups claimed that Elders not only advocated a policy of "abortion on demand," but also endorsed "the *promiscuous* distribution of condoms."²¹⁷

Not content to merely attack Clinton's politics, some leaders personally denigrated the President in a manner approaching libel. Two "documentaries" entitled *The Clinton Chronicles* and *Clinton's Circle of Power* were widely distributed in 1994 by Jeremiah Films. Their narratives alleged that Clinton had connections to money-laundering and drug smuggling, while also declaring that he was "hooked on cocaine." The films also claimed that as Arkansas governor he was personally responsible for multiple suspicious deaths and further speculated about the President's moral failings, focusing in particular on his affair with then Arkansas state employee Paula Jones. The reaction of Christian conservative leadership to this material offers an interesting insight. Despite Ralph Reed's attempts to orchestrate a renewed politically-pragmatic approach within the movement, other Christian

²¹⁵ Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, p. 139.

²¹⁶ "Christian Coalition, Shifting Tactics, to Lobby Against Clinton Budget", *Washington Post*, July 18, 1993; "Christian Right Puts New Focus on Economy", *Washington Times*, July 15, 1993. Cited in Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, p. 96.

²¹⁷ Emphasis added. Heidi Scanlon, "Medicine, Politics Don't Mix", *Christian American*, September 1993, p. 8. Cited in Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, p. 97.

conservative leaders such as Jerry Falwell, Randall Terry and Pat Robertson could not resist personally attacking Clinton.

Using their extensive organisational networks, Falwell and Terry actively promoted and sold these salacious films. Falwell's distribution of *Clinton's Circle of Power* included a disclaimer that it did "not necessarily reflect the opinions of Liberty Alliance Inc." which led E.J. Dionne to comment in the *Washington Post* that, "Falwell is apparently willing to spread the sleaze but not to take responsibility for it."²¹⁸ However, Falwell did face some consequences for these actions, as his media programming in Florida was briefly suspended following complaints regarding his "relentless promotion" of the films. Pat Robertson's further advertisement of the films included having Paula Jones on his *700 Club* television show as a guest in 1994, which created further publicity. Randall Terry was also still distributing the anti-Clinton video tapes during the 1996 presidential campaign.²¹⁹ Despite these vitriolic attacks, Clinton continued to maintain his broad-based popularity and went into the 1996 campaign well positioned to claim a second term.

The successful nomination of Bob Dole as the Republican candidate for the 1996 presidential election reinforced the intent of the G.O.P. to "play it safe" with a relatively inoffensive choice. The pool of talent for the Republican Party was however decidedly limited, with the main alternative, Texas Senator Phil Gramm, notably antagonistic to the Christian conservative leadership.²²⁰ For his part, Dole made some minor overtures to this group, such as his attacks on "Hollywood culture." To the hard-line leadership however, his nomination was largely perceived as a rejection of their fundamental role within the party apparatus, which led to their

²¹⁸ E. J. Dionne Jr., "Sleaze on the Right", *The Washington Post*, 28 June, 1994, p. A17.

²¹⁹ Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, p. 98.

²²⁰ Having met with Gary Bauer and James Dobson in April 1995, it is understood Gramm boldly asserted to them that "I ain't running for preacher...That's your job!". In Thomas B. Edsall, "Not Running for Preacher", *The Washington Post*, June 22, 1995, p. A01.

throwing significant weight behind the firebrand social commentator Pat Buchanan.²²¹

A number of current and former organisers from the Christian Coalition had roles within each of these three candidate's campaigns; however it was Buchanan who received the strongest support from Pat Robertson's organisation. He quickly employed Guy Rogers (a former Christian Coalition national field director) as his campaign's senior adviser, as well as utilising the services of other successful organisers.²²² Although Buchanan was somewhat of a political maverick in 1992, his politics had become increasingly attractive to Christian conservatives, as he combined his nationalistic policy initiatives with the values of hard-right Christian conservatism. This focus had emerged in earlier criticisms of George H. W. Bush's administration, as Buchanan derided Bush's failure to adopt fundamental Christian conservative policies, especially tax cuts, isolationism, and "Judeo-Christian values." The innate popularity of Buchanan's agenda was not to be underestimated, as he went on to claim over a third of the vote in the 1992 New Hampshire primary.²²³ Four years later, he became the "standard bearer for the grassroots activist Right," and avidly promoted his social values agenda. Declaring that "within this party, a new party is being born," he then posed the question, "if conservatives aren't conserving families and neighbourhoods, what is it we're trying to conserve?"²²⁴ Through this type of rhetoric, Buchanan entrenched himself and his followers around a major battleground within the G.O.P.: that being the issue of abortion.²²⁵

²²¹ Thomas B. Edsall, "Not Running for Preacher", p. A01.

²²² Thomas B. Edsall, "Once-Derided Christian Right Is Now Key for GOP", *The Washington Post*, September 8, 1995, p. A08.

²²³ "Buchanan's Splendid Showing in New Hampshire", *Human Events*, February 29, 1992, pp. 1, 7. Cited in Sara Diamond, *Roads to Dominion*, pp. 293-4.

²²⁴ Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, p. 104.

²²⁵ Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, p. 4.

Dole's ambition to remove all anti-abortion language from the Republican Party platform was hotly contested at their 1996 San Diego convention. Following an emotive debate, the antiabortionist delegates emerged victorious, and even succeeded in having Jack Kemp, their preferred candidate, as Dole's running mate on the ticket.²²⁶ Ultimately though, the contentious issue of abortion highlighted the potential for policy fragmentation within the traditional Republican political coalition. Furthermore, political commentator Mark Shields noted that emphasising such social values would continue to alienate mainstream white, middle-class Americans from the G.O.P. Bogged down in a moralising socio-cultural quagmire, the Republicans would have arguably benefitted by putting more focus on broad-based economic issues that appealed to all voters.²²⁷ Others criticised Buchanan's right-wing populist agenda as encapsulating a "politics of resentment" that implied social empowerment, but arguably delivered only for its chosen demographic of white males.²²⁸ With no definitively viable candidate to support, polling within the Christian Coalition found its membership evenly split among Dole, Gramm, and Buchanan.²²⁹

This fractured climate led Gary Bauer to lament the "vacuum" of candidates "giving voice to the anxiety that Americans feel about [social] issues." He further

²²⁶ Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, p. 4.

²²⁷ Cited in Danny Duncan Collum, "Why, Pat, Why", *Sojourners Magazine*, May-June 1996, 25.3 (<http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=soj9605&article=960555> =- accessed December 24, 2008).

²²⁸ Danny Duncan Collum, "Why, Pat, Why". Fears of racist undertones in the Buchanan camp were further heightened by the revelation that a campaign aide (affiliated with the 'Gun Owners of America' organization) had attended white supremacist gatherings. "Buchanan, Beset by Many Critics, Still Unbowed", *The New York Times*, February 17, 1996. Cited in Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, p. 106.

²²⁹ Gustav Niebuhr, "Pat Robertson Declares Dole Is, At Heart, Conservative", *The New York Times*, September 11, 1995, p. B9. Other Christian Conservative leaders, such as James Dobson, came to reject the Republican Party altogether in the 1996 election. He instead decided to endorse Howard Phillips, a candidate for the Taxpayers Party. Jim Whittle, "All in the Family: Top Bush Administration Leaders, Religious Right Lieutenants Plot Strategy in Culture 'War'", *Church & State*, May 2002, cited in Esther Kaplan, *With God On Their Side*, (New York: The New Press, 2004) p. 73.

tore away at the already frayed fabric of the Republican's conservative coalition with his rhetorical question, "How will it profit us if our taxes are lower, but our culture is coarse and vulgar? How much will our military strength mean if we can't control the barbarian loose in our streets and in our hearts?"²³⁰ This statement highlighted the paradox of Christian conservative politics: that a movement imploring personal responsibility and lauding the need for limited government can at the same time promote an agenda that borders perilously close to theocracy.

In the quest for decisive action, Pat Robertson made a number of supportive statements for the nomination of front-runner Bob Dole in September 1995. Robertson stopped short of a direct endorsement of Dole, fearing a backlash against his role as the unaffiliated leader of the Christian Coalition, although he spoke warmly of Dole's conservative credentials and dismissed the notion he was "somewhat of a compromiser."²³¹ Robertson's motive was clearly to galvanize support around a potential "winner" who would then be obligated to return the favour when in power:

It's just impossible to ignore the activists in your party. These are the people who stuff the envelopes, and walk the precincts, and make the telephone calls, and do all the so-called grunt work that brings about a successful campaign. And without them, where are your people?²³²

However despite Robertson's best intentions, Bob Dole was no "winner" in the 1996 presidential election. Compared with Clinton, Dole appeared to lack the required charisma necessary for electoral success, while polling that year further suggested that over a quarter of those surveyed believed Dole was "too old" to be

²³⁰ Gary Bauer, quoted in Thomas B. Edsall, "Not Running for Preacher", p. A01.

²³¹ Gustav Niebuhr, "Pat Robertson Declares Dole Is, At Heart, Conservative", p. B9. Ralph Reed was similarly pragmatic in his assessment of the situation, described in Jim Wallis, "Would Pat Buchanan Vote for] Jesus?", *Sojourners Magazine*, May-June 1996, 25.3 (<http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=soj9605&article=960541a> – accessed December 24, 2008).

²³² Gustav Niebuhr, "Pat Robertson Declares Dole Is, At Heart, Conservative", p. B9.

President.²³³ In addition to this, after openly courting the right-wing Christian conservatives in the primaries, Dole became hamstrung by them and could not move quickly enough to secure the crucial centrist-vote, a situation predicted by Christian activist Jim Wallis.²³⁴ Gary Bauer responded to Dole's defeat by accusing Clinton of electoral "sleight of hand" in deliberately courting "values voters" for himself. He lamented, "this election loss is particularly hard to take. For the only thing worse than being beaten by an unworthy opponent is being beaten on your home field."²³⁵ Bauer's statement further revealed the naive sense of ownership Christian conservatives felt regarding voters of faith. This misplaced belief made it clear that while faith may be a loose indicator of voting intention, the variables of demographics, public opinion, and the candidates themselves bring an enormous amount of complexity to the equation.

In the wake of Dole's defeat, Christian conservatives had to ponder another four years of a Democrat in the White House. In the early 1980s, Christian conservatives had been the successful cornerstone of the coalition undergirding the G.O.P., but by the mid-1990s they had become its most severe liability, in large part due to the fractured nature of their own movement. As the organisational capacity of Christian conservatives grew and diversified, Republican Party leaders found this constituency harder to control and regulate, leading Henry McMaster, the South Carolina G.O.P. state chairman, to suggest "when you just have a handful of people, it's real easy to have a party...Now there's a lot more moving parts to the engine."²³⁶

²³³ Frank Newport, *Winning the White House 2008: the Gallup poll, public opinion, and the Presidency* (New York, Infobase Publishing, 2009) p. 315.

²³⁴ Jim Wallis, "Would Pat Buchanan Vote for Jesus?"

²³⁵ "What Difference Will We Make? An Open Letter to Conservatives from Gary Bauer", published by the Family Research Council in *Human Events*, November 15, 1996; *Christian American*, January-February 1997. Cited in Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, p. 109.

²³⁶ David M. Shribman, "As GOP Base Widens, Party Loses Its Harmony", *The Boston Globe*, March 1, 1996, p. 1.

Although the Republican Party and its Christian conservative backers were clearly in disarray post-1996, the spark of Christian conservative influence in the G.O.P. would be rekindled four years later, in the election of *truly* one of their own - George W. Bush.

“God’s Man at This Hour”: Christian Conservatives and the Presidency of George W. Bush

The job of the President...is to help cultures change.²³⁷

George W. Bush.

You’re no longer throwing rocks at the building; you’re in the building!²³⁸

Ralph Reed, speaking of his fellow Christian conservatives.

Between the 1996 and 2000 elections, Christian conservatives saw little improvement in their position within the political coalition of the Republican Party. This was largely typified in the failed attempt to impeach President Bill Clinton, an action which was strongly supported by Christian conservatives. Instead of establishing a moral high ground for the Republican Party and its backers, the impeachment fiasco instead publicly demonstrated the maliciousness prevalent among many prominent Christian conservatives. The proceedings also coincided

*The quotation contained within the section title comes from Tim Goeglein, White House liaison to Christian conservatives under George W. Bush. Dana Milbank, “Religious Right Finds Its Center in Oval Office”, *The Washington Post*, December 24, 2001, p. A02.

²³⁷ Laurie Goodstein, “Personal and Political, Bush’s Faith Blurs Lines”, *The New York Times*, October 26, 2004, p. A21.

²³⁸ Dana Milbank, “Religious Right Finds Its Center in Oval Office”, p. A02.

with untimely revelations that former Republican House Speaker Newt Gingrich had himself engaged in an extra-marital affair.²³⁹

Pat Robertson had initially described the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal as “a moral evil,” but later retreated from actively pursuing Clinton’s impeachment, declaring “In jury terms, they have a hung jury and the sooner they can wrap it up the better. If you don’t have the votes, what can you do?”²⁴⁰ This event also demonstrated the severe political repercussions within the Christian conservative constituency regarding their high sensitivity to moral concerns. George W. Bush’s chief adviser Karl Rove later acknowledged, in the wake of the 2000 election, that the United States may be “returning to the point...where fundamentalists and evangelicals remain true to their beliefs and think politics is corrupt and therefore shouldn’t participate.”²⁴¹

Aside from such opportunistic developments, the relative quiet from Christian conservatives at this time was also due to their continued leadership problems. Grant Wicker of Duke University Divinity School described the senior leadership as in “active retrenchment,” suggesting that “many of them want to rest, and assess, and see what’s wrong. The leaders of the Christian Right are in a tempered mood right now – not despair, but a moment of reverie.”²⁴² Working within this scenario was Missouri Senator John Ashcroft, a devout proponent of Christian conservative theology, who later became Attorney General in the George W. Bush administration. Despite his religious credentials, Ashcroft moderated his position significantly to court economic conservatives in his own short-lived

²³⁹ E. J. Dionne, “Testing Time for Religious Right”, *Denver Post*, January 25, 2000, p. B09.

²⁴⁰ Richard L. Berke, “Coalition Still Driving to Impeach”, *The New York Times*, February 8, 1999, p. A20.

²⁴¹ Richard L. Berke, “Aide Says Bush Will Do More To Marshal Religious Base”, *The New York Times*, December 12, 2001, p. A22.

²⁴² David M. Schribman, “Religious Right Yields The Pulpit”, *The Boston Globe*, October 12, 1999, p. A3.

campaign for the Republican presidential nomination in 2000. To justify this position, Ashcroft stated that “to the extent that we can engage both streams of the party, we win the election...when we don’t engage with them, we don’t win.”²⁴³

When candidates such as John Ashcroft and George W. Bush did choose to discuss social issues and morality, they attempted to frame the debate in vague terms outside of the traditional “religious right” agenda. This approach came from their understanding, articulated by John C. Green, that such an agenda “turns off even a lot of Republicans.”²⁴⁴ As a result, Gary Bauer was publicised as the only overt Christian conservative candidate within the 2000 Republican primaries. Journalist David M. Schribman described Bauer’s campaign as “offering...a safe harbor for religious conservatives worried about the moderate breezes coursing through the party.”²⁴⁵ However, Bauer ultimately failed to become a viable candidate, both in resources and personality, and was unable to rally the complex conservative coalition that underpinned the Republican Party. Those orchestrating Bauer’s campaign keenly felt these inadequacies, with one senior aide lamenting that, “The people are still there...but I think we’re a little bit leaderless.”²⁴⁶ However, this trend did not preclude grassroots Christian conservatives from attempting to further consolidate their influence behind the scenes. Their new activism focused primarily on participation in G.O.P. state committees, and by 2002 they potentially controlled eighteen committees throughout the South, Midwest and West Coast.²⁴⁷ For many in the movement, this level of activism would have to suffice for the time being.

²⁴³ Carl F. Leubsdorf, “Balancing Act: Religious and Economic Conservative Wings of GOP Leave Early Contenders For White House Scrambling To Satisfy Both”, *The Dallas Morning News*, August 30, 1998, p. 1J.

²⁴⁴ Terry M. Neal, “GOP Hopefuls for 2000 Woo Religious Right”, *The Washington Post*, February 6, 1999, p. A02.

²⁴⁵ In David M. Schribman, “Religious Right Yields The Pulpit”, p. A3.

²⁴⁶ Marlys Popma, cited in E. J. Dionne, “Testing Time for Religious Right”, p. B09.

²⁴⁷ Kimberley H. Conger and John C. Green, “Spreading Out and Digging In: Christian Conservatives and State Republican Parties”, *Campaigns & Elections*, February 2002, in Esther Kaplan, *With*

From the perspective of 2008, it appears peculiar that George W. Bush failed to garner more Christian conservative support leading up to the 2000 election. Revelations of his prior drink-driving charge may have posed an obstacle, while his broad appeal across the Republican base may have made some Christian conservative leaders somewhat suspicious as to his religious sincerity.²⁴⁸ G.O.P. pollster Bill McInturff confidently pegged the Texas governor as “the party slot-guy”, in which case “it would be up to him not to screw it up.”²⁴⁹ Christian conservative opinion however remained squarely divided over Bush’s leadership credentials. Paul Weyrich and James Dobson criticised Bush in predominantly defensive terms, with Weyrich asserting that “a successful Bush candidacy would probably be interpreted as a repudiation of people with strongly held views on values.” Dobson was also largely pessimistic, suggesting that “If the party can succeed while showing disrespect for the pro-life position and the pro-family and the pro-moral values position, then we have no representation at all, and that is what’s being threatened at this time.” Gary Bauer had even described Bush as a “clone” of Democrat candidate Al Gore.²⁵⁰

This rhetoric only reinforced the perceived “victim status” that some within the Christian conservative leadership maintained as an emotive tool to mobilise constituents. However, for Dobson to imply that Bush was somehow pro-abortion and not supportive of family and moral values was flagrantly dishonest.²⁵¹ Some of these criticisms can be attributed to Bush’s platform of “compassionate

God On Their Side, p. 73.

²⁴⁸ Elisabeth Bumiller, “Turnout Effort and Kerry, Too, Were G.O.P.’s Keys To Victory”, *The New York Times*, November 4, 2004, p. A1.

²⁴⁹ Carl F. Leubsdorf, “Balancing Act...”, p. 1J.

²⁵⁰ Thomas B. Edsall, “Bush’s Values Defense Team”, *The Washington Post*, August 13, 1999, p. A04.

²⁵¹ For example, as President, Bush privately made pro-life status a litmus test for his nomination of Supreme Court judges. In Kenneth D. Wald and Allison Calhoun-Brown, *Religion and Politics in the United States (Fifth Edition)* p. 232.

conservatism,” where Christianity is connected to goals of social inclusiveness and localised faith-based initiatives.²⁵² This platform was viewed by some Christian conservatives as a weaker, or “moderate,” political expression of their faith.²⁵³ In the area of foreign policy, Bush was also regarded as far more timid than many Christian conservative leaders would have liked. Their apprehension came largely from Bush’s statements during the campaign, such as when he declared in an October 2000 debate, “If we are an arrogant nation, they will resent us...If we are a humble nation, but strong, they’ll welcome us.”²⁵⁴

Bush’s policies were not the only reason for Gary Bauer’s antagonism. After he dropped out of the Republican primaries following the New Hampshire poll, Bauer endorsed Bush’s main rival, the Arizona Senator John McCain. This support grew partly from the friendship they had forged on the campaign trail, and also because Bauer saw no negative differences between McCain and Bush on social issues.²⁵⁵ However, McCain’s warm relations with Bauer did not extend to other prominent Christian conservative leaders. During a speech on February 28, 2000, McCain openly criticised Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson by name. He stated that “neither party should be defined by pandering to the outer reaches of American politics and agents of intolerance, whether they be Louis Farrakhan or Al Sharpton

²⁵² George W. Bush was significantly influenced in this by Marvin Olasky, who advised Bush as Texas Governor and as a presidential candidate. “An Interview with Marvin Olasky”, December 20, 2004, *The Roundtable on Religion & Social Welfare Policy* (http://www.pewroundtable.org/interviews/interview_upd.cfm?id=77&pageMode=general – accessed December 3, 2008). For an overview on ‘compassionate conservatism’ see Marvin Olasky, *Compassionate Conservatism: What it is, What it Does, and How it Can Transform America* (New York: The Free Press, 2000). Notably, the foreword to this book is written by George W. Bush.

²⁵³ Matthew Vita and Susan Schmidt, “The Interest Groups”, *The Washington Post*, November 2, 2000, p. A20.

²⁵⁴ Jim Wallis, “Dangerous Religion: George W. Bush’s Theology of Empire”, *Sojourners Magazine*, Sept-Oct 2003, 32.5 (<http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=soj0309&article=030910> – accessed December 24, 2008).

²⁵⁵ E.J. Dionne Jr., “...In Dirty Battles”, *The Washington Post*, February 18, 2000, p. A23.

on the left or Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell on the right.”²⁵⁶ He also remarked that both Falwell and Robertson were “corrupting influences on religion and politics and those who practice them in the name of religion or in the name of the Republican Party or in the name of America shame our faith, our party and our country.”²⁵⁷ McCain took further issue with his rival nominee George W. Bush for having made an address at Bob Jones University, implying that his presence there in some way connected him to the anti-Catholicism that anecdotally shrouded the institution.

McCain’s motivation for attacking these Christian conservative leaders appeared premised on his belief that significant votes could be gained by appealing to party moderates. McCain calculated that courting this constituency was more valuable and personally sincere than any political move he could make towards the Christian conservative movement. McCain’s campaign manager Rick Davis further indicated his own ambivalence to a potential backlash against his candidate, stating that “We’ve been stirring up a few hornet’s nests during the course of this campaign.” He continued by stating that Robertson and Falwell would be unlikely to ever support McCain’s bid for President, so “for us it’s no net loss.”²⁵⁸ In the days following his speech, McCain stood by its content, declaring that “I am not backing away from the speech” which was “carefully crafted and carefully thought out.”²⁵⁹ However, reporters travelling on McCain’s campaign bus later revealed that he had also characterised Falwell and Robertson as “evil.” This led Bauer, his chief Christian conservative ally, to issue a public statement urging McCain to apologise.

I must in the strongest possible terms repudiate Senator McCain’s unwarranted, ill-advised, and divisive attacks on certain religious leaders...Senator McCain must not allow his personal differences with any

²⁵⁶ Jill Zuckman, “Bauer says McCain Must Apologize”, *The Boston Globe*, March 2, 2000, p. A23.

²⁵⁷ David Barstow, “McCain Rips Falwell, Robertson”, *Denver Post*, February 29, 2000, p. A01.

²⁵⁸ Thomas B. Edsall, “Senator Risking Key Constituency”, *The Washington Post*, February 29, 2000, p. A14.

²⁵⁹ Jill Zuckman, “Bauer says McCain Must Apologize”, p. A23.

individual to cloud his judgement...Such rhetoric serves only to divide the party and place into the hands of the liberal elite material to falsely depict Christian conservatives as intolerant extremists.²⁶⁰

Jerry Falwell refused to respond to McCain's personal attacks, but Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition released a dismissive statement, emphasising the organisation's "pro-family message of faith and freedom" and encouraging "all people of faith to continue their active involvement in the process we call Democracy."²⁶¹ Within the broader Christian conservative religious community, commentators accused McCain of "name-calling for cheap political gain" and embarking on "a mean-spirited political ploy."²⁶² George W. Bush also attempted to gain political mileage from McCain's attack on Robertson and Falwell when he observed that "Senator McCain is someone who likes to castigate, not someone who likes to lead."²⁶³

This episode played a positive role in increasing Bush's popularity with Christian conservatives compared to McCain, however Bush was already significantly ahead in the race for the Republican Party nomination. After Bauer's exit following the New Hampshire primary, the more nuanced Christian conservatism of George W. Bush became particularly attractive. According to one Bush adviser, "In the old days, Republican presidential candidates went to religious conservative leaders to seek their imprimatur...George W. Bush was able to go

²⁶⁰ McCain later downplayed his use of the term "evil" as "a light-hearted attempt at humour", and that "If anyone was offended by it, I regret it". He maintained however his belief that Falwell and Robertson were "bad for our party". Jill Zuckman, "Bauer says McCain Must Apologize", p. A23.

²⁶¹ David Barstow, "McCain Rips Falwell, Robertson", p. A01. The *Christian Coalition* was, however, in no real position to claim the moral high ground against John McCain. The candidate had some years prior adopted a child from India – a fact which was twisted by the *Christian Coalition* (among other groups) into the slanderous fallacy that McCain had fathered 'a black child'. Linda L. Fowler, Constantine J. Spiliotes and Lynn Vavreck, "Group Advocacy in the New Hampshire Presidential Primary", in Paul S. Herrson, Ronald G. Shaiko and Clyde Wilcox [eds.], *The Interest Group Connection: Electioneering, Lobbying and Policymaking in Washington* (Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House Publishers, 2005), p. 90.

²⁶² Rev. Diane C. Kessler and Rev. Richard John Neuhaus, respectively. Cited in Michael Paulson, "Bush Cruises Past McCain in Va.: Primary Campaigns Turn To Religion As Weapon", *The Boston Globe*, March 1, 2000, p. A1.

²⁶³ Thomas B. Edsall, "Senator Risking Key Constituency", p. A14.

directly to those who sat in the pews.”²⁶⁴ Ralph Reed, who worked as an adviser to the Bush campaign, applauded Bush for consistently working with such “grass-roots constituencies...[in] a very symbiotic, effective and transparent relationship that was based on respect and in many cases longstanding friendships.”²⁶⁵ Reed regarded this relationship as having significant political benefits for mobilising support in the general election, suggesting that “the advantage we have is that liberals and feminists don’t generally go to church. They don’t gather in one place three days before the election.”²⁶⁶

This direct method of connecting to Christian conservative constituents ultimately paid significant dividends. Bush continued to hone his message and reveal his own private faith to this group, declaring Jesus as his favourite “political philosopher” and garnering increased support from within the Christian conservative leadership.²⁶⁷ Many conservative pastors now had a longstanding record of encouraging their congregations toward political action, which was heightened in the new millennium.²⁶⁸ Pastor John Hagee, a fellow Texan who led the Cornerstone mega-church, was unabashed in his belief that “George Bush is going to help Americans rediscover our moral foundation.” The evangelist James Robison was similarly full of praise for “Governor Bush [who] has the ability to help shape the thinking of the American people from a point of deep conviction.” Although the connection of a shared faith was an important aspect contributing to Bush’s nomination success, Christian conservatives acknowledged its presence within a

²⁶⁴ Dana Milbank, “Religious Right Finds Its Center in Oval Office”, p. A02.

²⁶⁵ Robin Toner, “Conservatives Savour Their Role As Insiders at the White House”, *The New York Times*, March 19, 2001, p. A1.

²⁶⁶ Ralph Reed cited in Kenneth D. Wald and Allison Calhoun-Brown, *Religion and Politics in the United States (Fifth Edition)* p. 206.

²⁶⁷ Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, p. 149.

²⁶⁸ From 1990 to 1995, over a third of regular church attendees surveyed were asked to either vote or engage in political activity by church authorities. Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman and Henry E. Brady, *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995) p. 147.

broad and inclusive campaign with understanding approval. Rev. Richard John Neuhaus was one Christian conservative leader whose views represented this group generally. He acknowledged Bush's intention "to run a conservative campaign in a way that...“doesn't frighten the horses” [and looked] forward to the prospect of a Bush presidency as something that holds very high promise.”²⁶⁹

The argument has been made that Bush did for Christian conservatives what Reagan did for foreign policy and economic conservatives, as both expressed their basic convictions in a non-confrontational and populist manner.²⁷⁰ A growing number of more politically savvy Christian conservatives admired Bush's tactical approach and understood that bombastic rhetoric on values would work negatively in either of two ways: as wasteful preaching to the converted, or harmfully dividing moderate Republicans from their party base.²⁷¹ Ralph Reed continued to personify this transition, declaring that,

Social conservatives have become increasingly mature and sophisticated about the political process, and understand that a political party is not a church, and that becoming a governing majority requires that you work with others with whom you occasionally disagree...If there wasn't a full understanding of that eight or ten years ago, there certainly is now.²⁷²

Ultimately, this careful and considered approach contributed to George W. Bush's successful campaign for President. While his victory was far from definitive (capturing only 47.9 per cent of the overall popular vote), he received solid support from churchgoers, including Christian conservatives.²⁷³

²⁶⁹ Thomas B. Edsall, "Bush's Values Defense Team", p. A04. Robison had also personally prayed with Bush in a private phone call just prior to the presidential campaign commenced. Reverend James Robison in an interview with Dick Staub, *Christianity Today*, March 10, 2003, in Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, p. 148.

²⁷⁰ Rich Lowry, "The President Keeps His Distance", *The Washington Post*, August 10, 2003, p. B01.

²⁷¹ Citing comments made by James Guth, in Matthew Vita and Susan Schmidt, "The Interest Groups", p. A20.

²⁷² Robin Toner, "Biding Time, Conservatives Hold Breath and Brimstone", *The New York Times*, August 3, 2000, in Esther Kaplan, *With God On Their Side*, p. 75.

²⁷³ Voter News Service data, November 11, 2000, in Esther Kaplan, *With God On Their Side*, p. 75.

Like his predecessor Ronald Reagan, the new President repaid this loyalty through offering key appointments to various leaders of the movement. They included senior roles in the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), and such government departments as Health and Human Services, State, and Justice. Christian conservatives were also employed within the White House, where Kay Cole James, former Vice-President of the Family Research Council, was put in charge of Bush's Office of Personnel.²⁷⁴ The significance of these appointments went largely unnoticed except by the most attentive political observers, however Christian conservatives viewed John Ashcroft's rise to Attorney General as the high-water mark within the executive branch for their movement.²⁷⁵

Bush also moved quickly to get the Republican majority in Congress to enact legislation central to the Christian conservative agenda, including a revival of the "Mexico City policy," also known as the "gag rule." Established during the Reagan administration, it barred any organisation that receives U.S. foreign aid from promoting, referring, or even providing education on abortion.²⁷⁶ While implementation of this policy can be regarded as a victory for Christian conservatives in the so-called "culture wars," this success was far from complete. Opponents of the policy have argued such punitive measures did nothing to reduce unintended pregnancies, and even potentially increased the number of unregulated and unsafe abortions, with subsequent rises of maternal mortality.²⁷⁷ Christian conservative lobbying for such draconian legislation, while neglecting the broader

²⁷⁴ Esther Kaplan, *With God On Their Side*, pp. 84-5.

²⁷⁵ Laurie Goodstein, "Personal and Political, Bush's Faith Blurs Lines", p. A21.

²⁷⁶ Laurie Goodstein, "Personal and Political, Bush's Faith Blurs Lines", p. A21.

²⁷⁷ "The Global Gag Rule" information on *Education For Choice* website (<http://www.efc.org.uk/Foryoungpeople/Factsaboutabortion/TheGlobalGagRule> - accessed August 14, 2008).

factors of poverty and the cultural status of women, further exposed the simplistic nature of the Christian conservative legislative agenda. Aside from this largely symbolic gesture of re-establishing the “gag-rule” on abortion, Bush’s early capacity to promote Christian conservatism from the White House went largely under-utilised. One central example of Bush’s policy link to his personal faith was the centrepiece of his social policy platform, articulated as “compassionate conservatism.” However, this bold attempt to augment an expansion of faith-based initiatives quickly stalled under unstable management and divisions in the implementation process.²⁷⁸ Despite the limited successes of these initial political forays, Bush finally found an alternative means of achieving traction for his leadership, in his response to the September 11 terrorist attacks in 2001.

From the time of their occurrence onwards, the events of 9/11 have had particular importance to Christian conservatives within the United States. As a group already prone to seeing world events in prophetic terms, their responses to 9/11 signalled not only a change of emphasis in their own political agenda, but also their influence on the presidency of George W. Bush. For many Christian conservatives, 9/11 was fundamentally a message from God, conveyed through the Islamic extremist group Al-Qaeda.²⁷⁹ Through this, such Christians believed that God had essentially decided to halt his divine protection of the United States and act in judgement against “national apostasy.”²⁸⁰ However, Jerry Falwell offered an even more extreme analysis, which he revealed to Pat Robertson in an interview on the *700 Club* television program on September 13, 2001. Falwell declared the terrorist attacks as “probably what we deserve” and laid the blame for the atrocities

²⁷⁸ Marvin Olasky’s offers good insight in his analysis of these circumstances in “An Interview with Marvin Olasky”.

²⁷⁹ Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, p. 149.

²⁸⁰ Editorial “Blame Game” in *Christianity Today Online*, November 12, 2001 (<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2001/november12/24.37.html> - accessed August 14, 2008).

specifically on the “pagans and the abortionists, the feminists and the gays and the lesbians...the ACLU, the People for the American Way...[who] helped this happen.”²⁸¹ Falwell and other Christian conservative leaders also attempted to position themselves squarely in the midst of the administration’s subsequent re-evaluation of U.S. foreign policy. Alongside the “War on Terror” played out in Afghanistan and Iraq, they reasserted their commitment to the significance of the U.S. partnership with Israel in fighting militant Islam.²⁸² President Bush aligned himself wholeheartedly with this ideological “crusade,” where the United States supposedly became God’s instrument against its “evil” enemies.²⁸³ As commentator William Galston has noted, Bush “succeeded in transforming the war in Iraq and the fight against terrorism into questions of basic values and American national identity.”²⁸⁴

Through these circumstances, the incumbent President also gained an unequivocal message he could take to the 2004 election campaign, by highlighting the connection between the “War on Terror” and American patriotism. Though this position was far from popular internationally, Bush’s trumpeting of U.S. exceptionalism to the American electorate had considerable appeal, especially among Christian conservatives.²⁸⁵ He also sought to reinforce this message by lacing his public comments with lines lifted from classic Christian texts. In a 2003 *Sojourners*

²⁸¹ Falwell quoted in Gorman Beauchamp, “Dancing on the Puritans’ Grave”, *The Midwest Quarterly* 48.1 (Autumn 2006) p. 37.

²⁸² Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, p. 150.

²⁸³ Michael S. Northcott, *An Angel Directs the Storm: Apocalyptic Religion and American Empire* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2004) cited in Kenneth D. Wald and Allison Calhoun-Brown, *Religion and Politics in the United States (Fifth Edition)*, pp. 60-1.

²⁸⁴ William A. Galston, *Public Matters: Essays on Politics, Policy and Religion* (Lanham, MD.: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005), p. 49.

²⁸⁵ William A. Galston, *Public Matters*, p. 50. William Kristol (editor of the *Weekly Standard*) also provides an example of how this approach tied together parallel interests of Christian conservatives with neo-conservatives. He has criticised Europe’s credentials as “corrupted by secularism” and also declared “what is wrong with [U.S.] dominance, in the service of sound principles and high ideals?” Cited in Jim Wallis, “Dangerous Religion...”.

article, Jim Wallis highlighted some examples of Bush's manipulative technique. In a speech delivered on Ellis Island to commemorate the first anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, Bush declared, "This ideal of America is the hope of all mankind...That hope still lights our way. And the light shines in the darkness. And the darkness has not overcome it." Wallis also cited comments made in Bush's 2003 State of the Union address. "The need is great. Yet there's power, wonder-working power, in the goodness and idealism and faith of the American people." By attempting to evoke an emotive response, these phrases clearly distorted their original Christian contexts. The "light" in the first speech did not necessarily refer solely to American ideals, but could also be construed as the "Word of God," as written in the Gospel of John. Similarly, the latter phrase transposed a nationalistic virtue onto what was originally a hymn rejoicing in the "blood of the lamb," referring to Jesus Christ.²⁸⁶

Leading up to the 2004 presidential election, the Bush administration continued a heavy reliance on the dichotomy of "good versus evil" for political gain. Karl Rove was a key instigator of this approach through deliberately courting the activist Christian conservative vote. Labelling this group "Evangelical[s]," Rove demonstrated his crass view of this constituency in his blunt assessment: "The bottom line is if you're not going to be Evangelical, why play the God game at all?"²⁸⁷ The Bush campaign was further motivated to mobilise Christian conservative voters primarily because their own religious leaders were growing increasingly marginalised and thus could easily be manipulated. Through this, President Bush became the de facto leader of Christian conservatives throughout the

²⁸⁶The 1899 hymn by Lewis E. Jones titled "There is Power in the Blood" includes the lyrical refrain, "There is pow'r, pow'r, wonder-working pow'r In the blood of the Lamb; There is pow'r, pow'r, wonder-working pow'r In the precious blood of the Lamb", cited in Jim Wallis, "Dangerous Religion..."

²⁸⁷Karl Rove, as stated in Bush campaign headquarters in Missouri, 2004, Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, p. 259.

United States, even more than his predecessor Ronald Reagan.²⁸⁸ Acknowledging this development, the long-standing political organiser Paul Weyrich believed that Bush had outdone Reagan in his capacity to communicate with and understand Christian conservatives during his first term.²⁸⁹

In addition to coalescing support around foreign policy, Bush and his team also sought to mobilise this constituency against same-sex marriage. Focus on the Family was just one of many organisations that rallied around this particular issue, especially following the 2003 decision by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court to recognise same-sex marriage.²⁹⁰ Its founder and president, James Dobson, declared “I felt [God] wanted me this time to pour myself into this, no matter how much pain or stress or physical inconvenience, to try to influence this [upcoming] election.”²⁹¹ Along with approximately eighty other Christian conservative leaders (including Gary Bauer), Dobson signed the pre-election open letter, “A Must Read Election Message,” which drew attention to a number of “ethical issues” tied to the presidency, including U.S. militarism, abortion, homosexual marriage, stem-cell research, and the utilisation of natural resources. On all these issues, the signatories of the letter advocated positions previously espoused by President Bush.²⁹²

In contrast to the 2000 election when Christian conservative support for the Republican Party was divided, by 2004 the entire Christian conservative organisational infrastructure was spurred into overdrive for President Bush.²⁹³ This

²⁸⁸ Dana Milbank, “Religious Right Finds Its Center in Oval Office”, p. A02. For just two examples displaying the extent to which Bush was ‘exalted’ see 2006 documentary *Jesus Camp* (dir. Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady).

²⁸⁹ Robin Toner, “Conservatives Savour Their Role As Insiders At The White House”, p. A1.

²⁹⁰ Quote from its Vice President of Public Policy, Tim Minnery. In Elisabeth Bumiller, “Turnout Effort and Kerry, Too, Were G.O.P.’s Keys To Victory”, p. A1.

²⁹¹ David D. Kirkpatrick, “Evangelicals See Bush As One Of Them, But Will They Vote?”, *The New York Times*, November 1, 2004, p. A22.

²⁹² “A Must-Read Election Message” *CitizenLink.com*, October 8, 2004 located in (<http://www.religiushypocrites.com/CitizenLink.pdf> - accessed August 20, 2008).

²⁹³ Esther Kaplan cites a number of these in *With God on Their Side*, p. 72. Of particular note is the

mobilisation increasingly took the form of grassroots church initiatives, where pastors were given creative freedom to rally their congregations in articulating “the moral choice.” For example, an Orlando church distributed “Why Would Jesus Vote” wristbands (a twist on the more recognised Christian mantra ‘WWJD’ – What Would Jesus Do). Others stuck to the more traditional distribution of issues-based “voter guides.”²⁹⁴ However, no matter what specific techniques were employed, the fact that eleven states were to have concurrent referendums on the issue of same-sex marriage was sure to bring Christian conservatives out to the ballot boxes.²⁹⁵

The results proved conclusive: same-sex marriage was banned in all eleven states by high margins.²⁹⁶ In Georgia, where Ralph Reed chaired the state’s Republican Party apparatus, the ban received 76 percent of the vote.²⁹⁷ This proved symptomatic of larger voting trends in the presidential vote, as exit polling nationwide revealed just under a quarter of all voters could be determined as Christian conservatives. This significant number not only voted for Bush, but cited “moral values” as their primary motivation.²⁹⁸ Although such exit-polling categorisations can never be totally accurate, Ralph Reed offered his own assessment of these “values voters” in the weeks following the election:

“farm system” of connecting with the young through campus and youth ministries.

²⁹⁴ David D. Kirkpatrick, “Battle Cry of Faithful Pits Believers Against Unbelievers”, *The New York Times*, October 31, 2004, p. 1.24.

²⁹⁵ Jim Galloway, “Election 2004: Religious Vote Fuels Victory for GOP”, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, November 4, 2004, p. B1. Other referenda, on issues such as gambling and gun ownership were also encouraged to be on the state ballots by the Republican Party. Kenneth D. Wald and Allison Calhoun-Brown, *Religion and Politics in the United States (Fifth Edition)* p. 230.

²⁹⁶ “Voters Decide High-Profile Issues on State Ballots”, *National Conference of State Legislatures* website, November 9, 2004 (<http://www.ncsl.org/programs/legismgt/statevote/ir2004.htm> - accessed August 20, 2008).

²⁹⁷ Jim Galloway, “Election 2004: Religious Vote Fuels Victory for GOP”, p. B1.

²⁹⁸ This 23% Christian conservative vote had jumped from only 14% four years earlier. Ralph Reed, “So Who Were Those Values Voters?”, *USA Today*, December 5, 2004 (http://www.usatoday.com/news/opinion/editorials/2004-12-05-values-reed_x.htm - accessed January 6, 2009) and Jim Galloway, “Election 2004: Religious Vote Fuels Victory for GOP”, p. B1.

Values voters, in the South or the heartland, are concerned about preserving marriage, protecting children from violent or sexually explicit entertainment, teaching the same values in school that are taught at home and reducing the number of teen pregnancies and abortions. More than any single issue, they seek to redress a coarsening of the culture and a loss of civility. They want a family-friendly society that is compassionate to the needy and holds people accountable for their conduct....Voters of faith see George W. Bush as personifying these values, a man of decency and character who is leading the nation with a rare mixture of courage and moral clarity. The more the left and the media attacked him, the more voters of faith organized and registered their friends to vote. The results on Election Day were a tribute to their tenacity and dedication.²⁹⁹

The high level of support provided by this vocal constituency led Bush to feel confident enough to ordain himself as God's man for the job just before the election. He declared that "God has chosen me to fulfil this duty for all Americans, whether they are Democrat or Republican, Christian or Jew," revealing what might be considered a deep spiritual conviction, but also a severe lack of political judgement. His later revision of this viewpoint ("I think God knows I've done the best job that I could, but only because I allowed myself to be guided by Jesus Christ") can largely be seen as a hasty attempt at humility, while seeking to further portray himself as a man of "Christian values." With such a leader to rally around, Christian conservatives within the Republican campaign machinery played a valuable part in the high levels of volunteer activism that mobilised support for Bush. The day after Bush's re-election, chairman of the Republican National Committee (RNC), Ed Gillespie, stated that this mobilisation was the critical element to the successful campaign:

1.2 million volunteers made over 15 million contacts, knocking on doors and making calls in the 72 hours before polls closed. The RNC registered 15 million new voters, enlisted 1.4 million Team Leaders, and contacted – on a person-to-person basis – 30 million Americans in the months leading up to and including Election Day. In the final 72 hours, we met 129 percent of our door-knocking goal; and met 120 percent of our phone-calling goal.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁹ Ralph Reed, "So Who Were Those Values Voters?"

³⁰⁰ Ed Gillespie quoted in Michael Cornfield, "The Congregation Factor", *Campaigns and Elections* 25.10 (December 2004) p. 73.

Summary

Christian conservative involvement in presidential elections since 1980 has often attempted to rally support around the notion of “moral values.” However the paradoxical nature of this social and cultural movement has largely belied its public image as a harbinger of such clear-cut “moral values.” This term, while convenient for the purposes of exit polling, does little to adequately explain the complexities of the voter mindset. For example, it could be argued that other categories in the 2004 *National Election Pool* exit poll, such as terrorism, the war in Iraq, and even the economy, all have moral underpinnings. Despite this inherent categorical blurring, numerous academics have continually taken such polling statistics at face value. William A. Galston’s admission that “we don’t know precisely what ‘moral values’ meant to the voters who selected this phrase as the principal determinant of their vote, [though] we can draw some inferences” highlights the inadequacy of such research in getting to the true motivation of Christian conservatives.³⁰¹

Alongside this difficulty in attempting to define a Christian conservative political agenda is the problem of objectively assessing the limitations in actually delivering such an agenda. Christian conservatives’ desire for theocracy remains an unattainable goal within the United States, however this has not stopped the movement’s leaders from attempting to enact it. The truth remains that no matter how many votes Reagan received in 1980 from the newly-mobilised Christian conservative bloc, he would not be their man exclusively in the White House, as other influences, such as private sector business and the military-industrial complex would all be apparent. Occasionally their interests did all coincide; however this should not be seen as any sort of “victory,” such as those heralded by self-proclaimed

³⁰¹ William A. Galston, *Public Matters...* p. 46.

spokespersons like Jerry Falwell. While the evidence conclusively demonstrated that Christian conservative leaders *were* effective in mobilising supporters, they were largely unable to direct this toward any substantive achievements. The failed nomination of Pat Robertson in the 1988 Republican primaries is a clear example of such limitations. Ideologically-driven forays into the political arena have only acted to reinforce the guiding political principles of moderation and compromise, thus keeping those on the political fringes in check. While extreme agendas of any persuasion may attract and mobilise populist support, their inherent divisiveness eventually leads to a lack of cohesive power.

It took many in the Christian conservative political apparatus a long time to appreciate this fact, which became even clearer during the administration of George W. Bush, as he came to personify the elected face of the movement's ideology. His initial popularity across the electorate nevertheless diminished over time, on account of the prolonged stagnation of the Iraq war and an increasingly deregulated and depressed economy. However, his support from Christian conservatives remained unwavering, as they continued to see him as "God's man at this hour."³⁰² With evolving electoral pragmatism, their calculating political machinations continued to be linked with the conviction that Bush was the right man to address their specific cultural needs and concerns, despite his loss of mainstream support.

This tenuous relationship between conviction and pragmatism has come to be a defining characteristic of the political ambition of Christian conservatives throughout the past thirty years. It has acted as a catalyst for their biggest successes, such as the re-election of George W. Bush. However it also led to their biggest failures, such as Pat Robertson's unsuccessful 1988 campaign, the numerous policy

³⁰² Dana Milbank, "Religious Right Finds Its Center in Oval Office", p. A02.

disappointments suffered under Reagan, and the Christian conservative's largely directionless decade of the 1990s. Throughout these highs and lows, Christian conservatives have come to tie themselves inextricably to the Republican Party, in a union with arguably as many liabilities as benefits, for all involved. While this may not be ideal for either group, it remains difficult to conceive of a situation where the two would fundamentally split, as it has become truly a political marriage of convenience.

CHAPTER TWO

The private and the public: Christian Conservatives and Abortion Politics within the United States.

Many authors and commentators who tackle U.S. domestic politics make reference to an abortion “debate” within the United States; however this would imply the notion of two opposing parties having a respectful discussion, which is seldom the case.³⁰³ More accurate is the notion of “abortion politics” which frames the topic through such facets as setting agendas, mobilising support, and influencing decision-makers. Christian conservatives have consistently opposed the practice of abortion throughout the twentieth century, as part of an inherent political activism that seeks “to ensure society remains committed to a traditional way of life that does not provide too many opportunities for poor choices.”³⁰⁴ This opposition only intensified after the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision, as well as through the ascendancy of Ronald Reagan to the United States Presidency in 1980.

Throughout this time there was a steady flow of judicial and legislative attempts at limiting, if not overturning, the practice of abortion. In most cases these were orchestrated by a plethora of anti-abortion organisations, largely headed and represented by Christian conservatives. These groups have also increasingly sought to tie themselves to the Republican Party, which has created both benefits and liabilities for anti-abortion organisations and Christian conservatives more broadly. This has been especially true in the pressurised climate of election campaigns at all the levels of government. Through investigating these key areas, this chapter aims to

³⁰³ Maureen Muldoon’s “The Abortion Debate in the United States and Canada: a Sourcebook” (New York: Garland, 1991) and Faye D. Ginsburg’s “Contested Lives: The Abortion Debate in an American Community” (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989) are just two examples.

³⁰⁴ Kenneth D. Wald and Allison Calhoun-Brown, *Religion and Politics in the United States (Fifth Edition)* p. 166.

provide both a synthesis and analysis of Christian conservative motivations and actions within abortion politics.

Polarising the Nation: The historical and contemporary political climate surrounding Christian conservatives and abortion in the United States.

The real question today is not when human life begins, but, *what is the value of human life?*

Ronald Reagan.

The above quotation comes from the book, *Abortion and the Conscience of the Nation*, published in 1984, to which the former U.S. President put his name in an apparent attempt to promote his own antiabortion credentials. Within this book Reagan outlined his understanding of the enormity of the issue, noting that fifteen million abortions had occurred in the United States since 1973 - ten times the total U.S. troop deaths in all fields of war. He also alluded to the moral “deficit” of the practice, stating that legalisation condoning abortion was parallel to the Dred Scott decision which validated slavery, while also quoting Mother Teresa in her description of abortion as “the greatest misery of our time.”³⁰⁵

Reagan had come a long way since 1967, when as Governor of California he oversaw passage of the “Therapeutic Abortion Act,” which made his state “the pre-*Roe* abortion centre for the western United States”.³⁰⁶ Furthermore, according to author and pro-choice campaigner Michele McKeegan, *Abortion and the Conscience*

³⁰⁵ Ronald Reagan, *Abortion and the Conscience of the Nation* (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1984) p. 15, 18, 19, 22. The “Dred Scott” argument is also articulated by Richard John Neuhaus in *The Naked Public Square*, p. 26.

³⁰⁶ Cynthia Gorney, *Articles of Faith*, p. 336.

of a Nation was in fact written by White House staffers who were also responsible for orchestrating the Mexico City policy.³⁰⁷ These circumstances raise legitimate questions regarding President Reagan's personal convictions on abortion. However, the fact that Reagan was so public in highlighting his antiabortion stance indicates both the significance given to the abortion issue within the United States, as well as the need for politicians such as Reagan to court and placate an antiabortionist constituency – namely, Christian conservatives.

According to the Christian conservative organisations Focus on the Family and National Right to Life, there have been another 25 million abortions in the United States since the 1984 cumulative total was published in *Abortion and the Conscience of a Nation*.³⁰⁸ For antiabortionists, this is a total of 40 million too many. However, these personal convictions have evolved into a politicised and heavily fought cultural battle, marshalling many into political action over the last quarter century.³⁰⁹ Despite this, such political momentum has largely failed to generate pragmatic solutions, for as Kenneth Wald has argued, the “harsh and uncompromising language” from either side of the argument has created far more animosity than political consensus.³¹⁰ Sara Diamond has offered a more emotive assessment, declaring that “constant reference to abortion as a ‘holocaust’ and to women having abortions as ‘murderers’ and ‘baby-killers,’ combined with the irrational attitudes encouraged by many fundamentalist churches, are a guaranteed

³⁰⁷ The Mexico City Policy was instituted in 1984 and severely limited U.S. funds received by NGOs that offered, or even informed women about abortion. *Time*, July 2, 1984, p. 21. Cited in Michele McKeegan, *Abortion Politics: Mutiny in the Ranks of the Right* (New York: Free Press, 1992), p. 96.

³⁰⁸ Esther Kaplan cites the following websites for this figure: Focus on the Family website (www.family.org); American Life League website (www.all.org) and National Right to Life Committee website (www.nrlc.org). Cited in *With God on Their Side*, p. 131.

³⁰⁹ Kenneth Wald, *Religion and Politics in the United States*, p. 278.

³¹⁰ Kenneth Wald, *Religion and Politics in the United States*, p. 275-6.

recipe for extremism.”³¹¹ Even former Republican Senator and Presidential candidate Barry Goldwater has conveyed his wariness of tackling abortion within the political setting, bluntly regarding abortion politics as a potential threat to “the perpetuation of [the United States] form of government.”³¹²

The politicisation of abortion has also had the effect of polarising U.S. culture, reducing an inherently complex issue into a binary equation, with the implicit “choosing of sides” in either of the two distinct camps.³¹³ Frequently this action is largely derived not from a thoughtful analysis of both claims and counterclaims, but simply by the desire to make a “statement.”³¹⁴ This scenario is highlighted in much of the rhetoric coming from Christian conservative leadership, who have demonstrated a preference for publicly preaching in moralising tones rather than seeking productive remedies for many of the social problems that ultimately lead to abortion. Jerry Falwell was an archetypal proponent of this rhetorical approach, for by tying the abortion issue to other social issues such as drugs, pornography, and child abuse, he aimed to invoke an emotional response for the purpose of mobilising supporters.

Survey data has shown consistent U.S. public approval of abortion since the *Roe v. Wade* decision, in the circumstances of securing the health of the mother, terminations following rape, or the baby having a severe medical defect.³¹⁵ The consistency of this “situationalist” position is underpinned by analysis articulated by pollster Harrison Hickman, in his argument that people’s understanding of topics

³¹¹ Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare* (Boston, M.A.: South End Press, 1989), p. 94.

³¹² Wald, *Religion and Politics...*, p. 276.

³¹³ Amy Sullivan, “Abortion: A Way Forward”, *Sojourners Magazine* (April 2006) 35.4, pp. 12-18 (<http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=Soj0604&article=060410> – accessed December 21, 2008).

³¹⁴ Amy Sullivan, “Abortion: A Way Forward”...

³¹⁵ Jacqueline Scott, “Generational Changes in Attitudes to Abortion: A Cross-National Comparison”, *European Sociological Review* (June 1998) 14.2, pp. 180-1.

such as abortion is based largely on ingrained premises that would not be shaken by impulse.³¹⁶ In tackling abortion politics, Christian conservatives also encounter what could best be described as a “moral contradiction,” where, according to polling, one in four respondents jointly saw abortion as *both* “murder” and “sometimes the best choice.”³¹⁷ While Christian conservative leader Paul Weyrich has boldly claimed that “ultimately, everything can be reduced to right and wrong,” commentators have observed that the imposition of “moral lectures” of this type has overwhelmingly lost traction within the United States.³¹⁸ It is justifiably legitimate therefore to see the moral dimensions of abortion as outside the traditional liberal/conservative paradigm, as suggested by Richard John Neuhaus.³¹⁹ This is tangibly seen in the politics of many Christian moderates, who, while opposed to the unmitigated deregulation of the market economy and continued cuts in social services, are simultaneously “conservative” in such issues as abortion.³²⁰

Surveys taken by George Gallup and published in *The People’s Religion*, appear to negate perceptions of a monolithic “white evangelical” belief, even in the case of abortion. For example, his analysis has revealed that more than one in three “white evangelicals” *oppose* a constitutional amendment against abortion.³²¹ Gallup’s findings also include the rejection by “evangelicals” 57% to 34% to the

³¹⁶ The “situationalist” terminology taken from 1988 National Election Study, dividing respondents into three categories: Pro-Life, Pro-Choice or Situationalist, cited in Clyde Wilcox, “The Sources and Consequences of Public Attitudes Toward Abortion”, in Ted G. [ed.], *Perspectives on the Politics of Abortion* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1995), p. 68. Hickman’s theory cited in William Saletan, *Bearing Right*, p. 19.

³¹⁷ data from 1989 CBS News/New York Times poll, cited by Clyde Wilcox, “The Sources and Consequences...”, p. 61.

³¹⁸ Weyrich’s comments cited in Michele McKeegan, *Abortion Politics...*, p. 33. Hanna Rosin and Thomas B. Edsall, “Bishops Launch War on Abortion”, *The Denver Post*, November 19, 1998, p. A17.

³¹⁹ Richard John Neuhaus, *The Naked Public Square*, p. 34.

³²⁰ Jim Wallis, “Pro-Life Democrats?”, *Sojourners Magazine* (June 2004) 33.6, p. 5 (<http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=Soj0406&article=040651> – accessed December 21, 2008).

³²¹ in Table 6.1, George Gallup Jr. and Jim Castelli, *The People’s Religion* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1989), p. 170.

public funding cuts for abortion delivered under the Hyde amendment, with only a quarter of those “evangelicals” surveyed believing abortion should be illegal in all circumstances.³²² Gallup’s use of the term “white evangelical” is certainly vague and problematic, especially when placed alongside such other distinctions as “protestant,” “catholic,” and “non-evangelicals.”³²³ These terms are not all-encompassing, nor mutually exclusive, and are hardly constructive for survey criteria. However, such data does offer general indications useful for this study. Most important is the recognition that the antiabortion agenda, engaged in by Christian conservatives, is overwhelmingly *not* orchestrated by the leadership hierarchy. Even the notion of “conservatism” is problematic within the context of abortion politics amongst Christians. While conservatism is traditionally regarded as a bastion of “family values” morality, it also encompasses the ideology of limited government, and with it the democratic freedoms of individual “choice.”³²⁴ Abortion politics sits awkwardly in the middle of these two pillars.

The perceived differences between moderate and conservative Christian positions in abortion politics are that while Christian moderates appear to offer women and families both direct and indirect practical support during pregnancy and after childbirth, Christian conservatives only care about the unborn as an ideological imperative.³²⁵ While this generalisation may in certain instances be unfair, there is some evidence to justify such assessment. For example, the consequences of neglecting social welfare needs are demonstrated in the fact that poorer women are three times more likely to have an abortion than those women on higher incomes.

³²² George Gallup Jr. and Jim Castelli, *The People’s Religion*, pp. 175-6.

³²³ George Gallup Jr. and Jim Castelli, *The People’s Religion*, p 175.

³²⁴ Gillian Peele, *Revival and Reaction*, p. 93.

³²⁵ Heidi Schlumpf, “No Place to Stand”, *Sojourners Magazine* (June 2004) 33.6 pp. 12-16 (<http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=Soj0406&article=040610> – accessed December 21, 2008).

Furthermore, by promoting abstinence and deriding the role of contraception, Christian conservatives must in some way take responsibility for the situation where over half of the unplanned pregnancies occurring in the United States are a result of nil or improper contraception use.³²⁶ It is therefore no surprise that abortion rates actually increased during the “conservative” administrations of Reagan and Bush, but declined under the “liberal” President Clinton’s tenure.³²⁷

In the introduction to *Bearing Right: How Conservatives Won the Abortion War*, social and political commentator William Saletan stated

Choice is sacrifice. That insight has always guided and defined the abortion rights movement. In every decision, even a decision to give birth, something important is compromised. If you think you’re compromising nothing, you’re overlooking what you’re compromising.³²⁸

Here Saletan refers to “pro-choice” campaigners, susceptible to focusing on specific individual elements of the issue, to the detriment of other factors. For example, Kate Michelman, the former head of the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL), is quoted as saying that “public funding of abortion has always, and will always, be such a top priority.”³²⁹ Others, such as Eileen L. McDonagh, have regarded abortion as a woman’s “self-defence” issue, arguing that the state is *required* to assist women “when their bodies are nonconsensually intruded upon by a foetus.”³³⁰ Both positions lie outside the majority opinion within the United States that seeks to limit abortion outside of certain circumstances, with McDonagh apparently disregarding any notion of personal responsibility relating to pregnancy. The circumstance of non-consensual sex (i.e. rape) is a heinous crime and adds a

³²⁶ Julie Polter, “Women and Children First”, *Sojourners Magazine* (May-June 1995) 24.2, pp. 16-20 (<http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=Soj9505&article=950511> – accessed December 21, 2008).

³²⁷ Heidi Schlumpf, “No Place to Stand”.

³²⁸ William Saletan, *Bearing Right*, p. 7.

³²⁹ Kate Michelman speech, July 11, 1987, cited in William Saletan, *Bearing Right*, p. 43.

³³⁰ Eileen McDonagh, “Abortion Rights Alchemy and the United States Supreme Court: What’s Wrong and How To Fix It”, in Ted G. Jelen, *Perspectives on the Politics of Abortion*, p. 39.

measurable level of complexity to the discussion of abortion politics. However what McDonagh refers to is consensual sex leading to non-consensual pregnancy, further described by McDonagh as “the bodily intrusion by a fertilized ovum.”³³¹ Such terminology creates an almost nonsensical battle between biological science and human will. A less extreme argument, articulated by Berkeley sociology professor Kristin Luker, outlines the pro-choice viewpoint that while an embryo is physically alive, it has no inherent social dimension and thus is subservient to the choices of the pregnant mother.³³²

Those who oppose abortion outright, especially in the case of Christian conservatives, have also exhibited similarly extremist views in their political campaigning. For example, the promotion of Ronald Reagan as a leading spokesperson of the antiabortion cause ultimately proved counterproductive for Christian conservative campaigners. Political activist Michele McKeegan has revealed that Reagan’s success at slashing California’s welfare payments during his two-term governorship was achieved in part through 250,000 state-funded abortions undertaken by low-income women, which reduced the number of dependent children and claims from single, unemployed mothers.³³³ Other questionable agendas endorsed by leading Christian conservatives included self-serving interference with foreign aid programs, which began in the 1980s during the Reagan administration. Through this, overseas aid programs for family planning, and especially those focusing on birth control, were consistently under-funded on ideological grounds. To put this neglect into perspective, McKeegan highlighted the 1984 federal budget appropriations, where foreign population assistance received \$212 million – slightly

³³¹ Eileen McDonagh, “Abortion Rights Alchemy”, p. 39.

³³² Kristin Luker, *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1985) p. 189.

³³³ Michele McKeegan, *Abortion Politics...*, p. 32.

over 2% of the \$9.2 billion foreign assistance package given for military spending.³³⁴ This is even more significant within the context of pre-existing high levels of trauma relating to illegal abortions in developing countries. In the late 1980s the most conservative estimates of pregnancy-related deaths in the developing world showed that more than one in five was attributable to unsafe abortions, with Central and South America being particularly affected.³³⁵ In light of these revelations, former Moral Majority spokesman Cal Thomas' declaration that ending the practice of abortion is even more important than economic prosperity through balanced budgets, appears mere rhetoric.³³⁶ Instead, while claiming a desire to end abortion in order to save lives, Christian conservatives have consistently rallied against recognised preventative measures such as government funded birth control distribution.³³⁷

This politicisation of abortion has also been compounded by inflammatory conduct, demonstrated in the high level of rhetorical and physical attacks undertaken by some Christian conservatives. Their portrayal of the Christian conservative message on abortion has evolved significantly over time within the public sphere. One of the earliest public mobilisation tools used was the 1979 touring film series *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?*, narrated by theologian Francis A. Schaeffer and C. Everett Koop, the latter of whom would later be appointed as U.S Surgeon General. The film claimed there was a Bible-mandated position

³³⁴ Stephen D. Mumford, *American Democracy and the Vatican: Population Growth and National Security* (Amherst, Mass.: Humanist Press, 1984) p. 193. Cited in Michele McKeegan, *Abortion Politics...*, p. 82.

³³⁵ Erica Royston and Sue Armstrong [eds.] *Preventing Maternal Deaths* (Geneva: World Health Organization, 1989) p. 111 and *The New York Times*, November 26, 1988 p. 1. Cited in Michele McKeegan, *Abortion Politics...*, p 78.

³³⁶ Cal Thomas, cited in Michele McKeegan, *Abortion Politics...*, p. 96.

³³⁷ This position has even led to a number of pharmacists refusing to distribute birth control to women with doctor's prescriptions and has also had international repercussions, with the United States failing to address the provision of contraceptives, even as part of HIV/AIDS reduction programs. Tilly Cowan and Meade Harris, "Pharmacists 'denying birth control'", *BBC News Online* April 10, 2005 (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/4425603.stm> - accessed November 27, 2008) Barbara Crossette, "Reproductive Health and the Millennium Development Goals: The Missing Link", *Studies in Family Planning*, 36.1 (March 2005) p. 73.

condemning the practice of abortion and declared that, “Without the Bible...there is nothing to stand between us and our children and the eventual acceptance of the monstrous inhumanities of the age.”³³⁸

During the 1980s, there was growing dissatisfaction among Christian conservatives with Reagan’s reticence in actively seeking to ban abortion. While their fundamental goal remained the same, more confrontational tactics began to emerge. A chief proponent of this radicalised position was Joseph Scheidler, who authored the inflammatory handbook, *Closed: 99 Ways to Stop Abortion*. Within its pages he advocated harassment techniques such as picketing and swamping telephone answering services with abuse. While Scheidler openly questioned the wisdom of attacking clinics, others like Thomas G. Klasen, author of *A Pro-Life Manifesto*, were inspired to consider this course of action, and even go so far as to hypothesise scenarios that this “civil war” may take.³³⁹

Since *Roe v. Wade*, the idea of imposing a legislated ban on abortion as part of an overarching moral agenda has been negated by its sheer difficulty. Nevertheless, overdramatised rhetoric has continued to be the main driver calling for its abolition. For example, the leading Christian conservative figure James Dobson declared before a Congressional vote to ban partial-birth abortion, “We all look forward, if we fail, to judgement upon this nation.” Similarly, Charles Colson stated at the time that, “A nation which sanctions infanticide is no better than China [or]...Nazi Germany.”³⁴⁰ Some Christian conservatives have claimed that there are parallels between the legislative need to prohibit abortion and current legislation to

³³⁸ cited in Cynthia Gorney, *Articles of Faith*, pp. 340-1.

³³⁹ cited in Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, pp. 95-6.

³⁴⁰ James Dobson and Charles Colson quotes both taken from Marc Fisher, “Judgment Day; Christian Right Looks Down on Abortion Loss as Political Winner”, *The Washington Post*, 27 September 27, 1996, p. D01.

prevent the spread of illicit drugs.³⁴¹ However, others including Christian moderates have questioned this line of argument, asking where does the legislative capacity of government stop? To this end they cite Christian conservatives' ideologically opposition to marital divorce, while the Catholic faith is more specifically opposed to artificial birth control.³⁴²

Those advocating the availability of abortion have also been required to change their tactics, specifically in the way their argument is framed. One of the most significant of these adaptations came from political strategist Harrison Hickman, who sought to shift the polarising “for or against” dichotomy into the more open question of “who should make the choice.”³⁴³ This took the abortion argument away from the realms of Christian conservative moralising and in doing so outflanked them on their own agenda – that of supporting limited government.³⁴⁴ However, there are some crucial limits to this argument, as William Saletan's analysis has indicated. For example, removing decision-making on abortion from governments does not necessarily place it completely in the hands of the pregnant woman. Spouses, parents of minors, and even businesses and tax-payers have varying influence in the decision of whether or not to terminate a pregnancy.³⁴⁵ Such circumstances have led to situations where parents have coerced their daughters to have abortions against their wishes, with resolution only occurring through the courts.³⁴⁶

Existing ideological divisions, especially those promoted on the Republican side of politics, have been clearly deepened by the abortion issue, with Christian

³⁴¹ Rev. James T. Burtchaell cited in Kenneth A. Briggs, “Catholic Theologians Have Mixed Reactions to Cuomo's Notre Dame Talk”, *The New York Times*, September 17, 1984 p. B12.

³⁴² Mario Cuomo, cited in Kenneth A. Briggs, “Catholic Theologians Have Mixed Reactions...”.

³⁴³ William Saletan, *Bearing Right*, p. 41.

³⁴⁴ William Saletan, *Bearing Right*, p. 66.

³⁴⁵ William Saletan, *Bearing Right*, p. 188.

³⁴⁶ William Saletan, *Bearing Right*, pp. 193-4.

conservative leaders the main protagonists of this.³⁴⁷ Overwhelmingly, their attempts to commandeer the Republican Party in order to politicise their own moral convictions have often been counterproductive. This arguably stems from the problematic nature of creating a broad-based political morality, with many political commentators, such as E. J. Dionne Jr., having argued that such activists do inherently regard their task as essentially moral, as opposed to political.³⁴⁸ Richard Neuhaus has more specifically suggested that “[Abortion] may be prior to, or it may transcend, what is ordinarily meant by the political.”³⁴⁹ This is not to say that the political realm has no place for such discussions. Abortion reduction efforts such as promoting adoption and offering broad support services to prospective mothers certainly deserve political debate and consideration.³⁵⁰ However, these policies also incorporate a basic acknowledgement of “the welfare state,” which can be regarded as anathema to conservatives across the board. Overcoming these ideological fears will potentially advance a more realisable policy of abortion reduction, while still maintaining the fundamental right of a women’s right of choice and privacy. However to reach this conservative constituency, and convince them to share in the belief held by former President Bill Clinton that abortion should be “safe, legal and rare,” may take a long time, if it is even possible.³⁵¹ Such a significant shift in one of the United States’ most rigid political constituencies remains a most unlikely scenario, and thus the policy divide between reducing and banning abortion remains a largely permanent obstacle.

³⁴⁷ Alan Gottlieb, “Abortion spurs GOP defections”, *The Denver Post*, October 6, 1992, p. 1A.

³⁴⁸ E. J. Dionne Jr., *Why Americans Hate Politics*, p. 342.

³⁴⁹ Richard John Neuhaus in *The Naked Public Square*, p. 27.

³⁵⁰ E. J. Dionne Jr., *Why Americans Hate Politics*, p. 342.

³⁵¹ Julie Polter, “Women and Children First”.

From the Sidelines to the Frontlines: The rise of Christian conservative organisations against abortion.

When government officials have to choose between jailing tens of thousands of good, decent citizens, or making child killing illegal again, they will choose the latter, partly because there are no jails big enough to hold us if we move together in large numbers.³⁵²

Randall
Terry.

One of the key pillars of Christian conservatism within the United States has been its largely inherent organisational structure. Church and para-church networks have spread exponentially across the nation and have grown at an increasing rate over the past quarter century. An integral feature of such networks is their capacity to mobilise members in support of specific agendas, which has been especially true in regards to the politics of abortion. Some have even characterised this involvement as more similar to a “crusade” than mere political participation.³⁵³ However, semantics aside, in the months and years after the *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973, Christian conservative-led groups such as the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC), American Life League, Concerned Women for America, Focus on the Family, and the Eagle Forum were all created with a strong emphasis on stopping women’s access to abortion.³⁵⁴

It would be wrong however, to regard this entire movement as purely driven by emotion. Tactics used by these groups, such as implementing multi-faceted organising techniques and networking with already established political groups, all gave significant impetus to this movement and required detailed planning and

³⁵² Sara Diamond, *Not by Politics Alone*, p. 138.

³⁵³ Gillian Peele, *Revival and Reaction*, p. 94.

³⁵⁴ Esther Kaplan, *With God on Their Side*, p. 131.

sophistication.³⁵⁵ This dynamic also increasingly came to incorporate an understanding of “mutual benefit,” where in the wake of the 1970s, political scandal and mediocrity plagued the Republican Party. The single-issue cause of abortion carried sizeable momentum, which helped to rejuvenate the G.O.P. and provide practical and financial support for the movement.³⁵⁶

Sylvia Tesh has identified further benefits of single-issue politics, particularly highlighting its role in legitimising “democracy” through encouraging participation.³⁵⁷ Whereas lobbying for various foreign policies, such as support for Israel, predominantly involves contact with federal government officials, domestic policies such as abortion issues can successfully be taken up at either federal or state level.³⁵⁸ While within this context the goal of democratic participation through single-issue politics successfully achieves its aim, it must be emphasised however that this participation is not always equitable, and is prone to divisive conflict.

This became especially evident in the early formation of a number of anti-abortion political action committees (PACs). One example is the Life Amendment Political Action Committee (LAPAC), established shortly after the *Roe v. Wade* decision. Created by husband and wife Paul and Judie Brown, LAPAC joined with other antiabortion groups such as the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC) in promoting “personal responsibility” when it came to reproductive rights. This position was succinctly summarised in the comments of a NRLC official, who stated in 1986, “No woman is forced to become pregnant unless she is forcibly raped. It

³⁵⁵ Gillian Peele, *Revival and Reaction*, p. 94.

³⁵⁶ Gillian Peele, *Revival and Reaction*, p. 94.

³⁵⁷ Sylvia Tesh, “In Support of “Single-Issue” Politics”, *Political Science Quarterly* (Spring 1984) 99.1, p. 44.

³⁵⁸ Kenneth Wald, *Religion and Politics in the United States*, p. 28.

simply gets back to choice and responsibility. Those who would dance usually have to pay the fiddler.”³⁵⁹

Despite having a broad policy consensus, there were also distinct divisions between the antiabortion groups. For example, the NRLC and LAPAC differed on the issue of exceptions permitting abortion in order to save a mother’s life, with the NRLC accepting this exception.³⁶⁰ The NRLC and LAPAC were further split on the question of affiliations with other conservative groups and causes. The NRLC became committed to a sole focus on abortion politics, while LAPAC openly sought support from other conservative organisations, such as Paul Weyrich’s Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress, along with his ties to Richard Viguerie’s direct mail networks.³⁶¹ Through this initial groundwork by LAPAC and other like-minded groups, a new conservative values coalition was born. Unlike the “seamless garment” espoused by moderate Catholics, which aligned the abortion issue with others such as poverty, capital punishment and war, Christian conservatives such as Jerry Falwell connected abortion with other attacks on “moral decency”, such as feminism, homosexuality and pornography. Falwell had claimed that before these ‘immoral’ developments gained a foothold in mainstream American society, principles existed that attacked them. These principles, he argued, “have been honoured in this country, and for that reason God has honoured the United States.”³⁶² Such a belief clearly demonstrated the inherently conservative nature of Falwell’s

³⁵⁹ Jim Lair, *Carroll County Tribune*, September 26, 1986. Cited in William Saletan, *Bearing Right*, p. 26

³⁶⁰ Sara Diamond, *Roads to Dominion*, p. 170.

³⁶¹ described in Sara Diamond, *Roads to Dominion*, p. 170.

³⁶² The “seamless garment” metaphor was first coined by Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, Archbishop of Chicago in a speech delivered on December 6, 1983. William D’Antonio, “The American Catholic Family: Signs of Cohesion and Polarization”, *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, May 1985, p. 400. Also cites a Jerry Falwell interview from Cynthia Gorney, *Articles of Faith*, p. 343.

cultural politics, as he displays a desire to *conserve* former social policies that he believes God would honour.

This trend towards increased emphasis on “family values” quickly overtook already established Christian institutions within the United States. For example, the Southern Baptist Convention, which for many years supported women’s right to choose abortion, reversed this stance in the 1980s under strong pressure from Christian conservatives, such as those connected to Jerry Falwell’s Moral Majority.³⁶³ Calls for increased involvement in the pro-life agenda also came from Pat Robertson’s Christian Coalition, as its 1996 conference called for an outright ban on partial-birth abortion.³⁶⁴ Two years later a meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (by then a predominantly conservative group) passed a resolution 217 votes to 30, in favour of specifically lobbying Catholic politicians to take rigid, antiabortion positions.³⁶⁵

Other groups sought to take more tangible action in the cause against abortion. In terms of physical demonstrations, the most noteworthy of these was Operation Rescue. Founded in 1988, the group was led by Randall Terry, a former used-car dealer turned preacher who had first picketed New Jersey abortion clinics some twelve months earlier.³⁶⁶ The organisation’s first foray into antiabortion action was a week of clinic blockades in New York City.³⁶⁷ Utilising similar civil disobedience tactics to those of the civil rights and anti-Vietnam War movements, the week’s action resulted in over 1600 arrests of antiabortion protestors gathered

³⁶³ Michele McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, pp. 168-9.

³⁶⁴ Sara Diamond, *Not by Politics Alone*, p. 151.

³⁶⁵ Hanna Rosin and Thomas B. Edsall, “Bishops Launch War on Abortion”. Further information on specific antiabortion lobbying by U.S. Catholic church organisations can be found in Mary C. Seger’s chapter “The Catholic Church as a Political Actor”, in Ted G. Jelen [ed.], *Perspectives on the Politics of Abortion*, pp. 90-124.

³⁶⁶ Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 91. And Steve Bruce, *Fundamentalism* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2000), p. 7.

³⁶⁷ Sara Diamond, *Roads to Dominion*, p. 251.

under the Operation Rescue banner.³⁶⁸ This was later followed by a six week campaign in Atlanta, Georgia, timed to coincide with the Democratic Party convention.³⁶⁹ In taking stock of his early achievements, Terry claimed that in its first nine months Operation Rescue mobilised some 11,000 antiabortion activists at blockades and credited his group with already reducing abortion procedures and increasing adoption.³⁷⁰

The following year Terry claimed to have coordinated over 20,000 arrests due to civil disobedience by Operation Rescue activists, with approximately 15,000 more arrests claimed in 1990.³⁷¹ These arrested activists found initial support from movement stalwart Jerry Falwell, who personally donated funds for their legal expenses.³⁷² However the compounding cost of these legal expenses made the group's existing strategy untenable. When Terry was ordered to pay a lawsuit settlement to the pro-choice National Organisation for Women, his group's sustainability was all but expired, and by early 1990 Operation Rescue relocated its headquarters from New York City to South Carolina.³⁷³ Other pressures came from a number of prominent pastors and leaders within the Christian conservative fold. These critics questioned the aggressive tactics surrounding Operation Rescue's activities, with some even drawing parallels to the French Revolution.³⁷⁴ Other local pastors were also concerned at the consequences of this antiabortion "crusade,"

³⁶⁸ Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 91.

³⁶⁹ Michele McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, p. 113. And Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 92.

³⁷⁰ Sara Diamond, *Not by Politics Alone*, pp. 136-7.

³⁷¹ Michele McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, p. 113. And Steve Bruce, *Fundamentalism*, p. 7.

³⁷² Michele McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, p. 113. This event is also recorded in Sara Diamond's *Not By Politics Alone*, p. 137. Furthermore, other Christian conservative leaders were more than willing to give public support and endorsements to Operation Rescue, with the list including Pat Robertson, James Dobson and Beverly LaHaye. See Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, p. 136.

³⁷³ Sara Diamond, *Roads to Dominion*, p. 252.

³⁷⁴ Sara Diamond, *Not by Politics Alone*, p. 139.

fearing perceptions they could be held responsible for the controversial actions of swarming Operation Rescue activists that had since moved on.³⁷⁵

Operation Rescue was further set apart by its planned and highly controlled approach to antiabortion activities. Participants were given documented rules of engagement prior to blockades, requiring them to sign their agreement observe the five rules of conduct. These rules included adherence to non-violent action and a ban on communications with the media. Furthermore, the documents also required participants to stipulate their desired level of involvement at blockades, dividing those who would welcome arrest for civil disobedience from the others who would simply support the cause through prayer, singing and picketing.³⁷⁶ During the early 1990s however, some in Operation Rescue lost patience with non-violent opposition to abortion and became increasingly militant. In *Not by Politics Alone*, Sara Diamond highlighted statistics revealing this trend, including figures that indicated a decrease in picketing of over forty percent in the early 1990s compared to the late 1980s, with a simultaneous increase in property damage, hate mail and phone harassment.³⁷⁷ However this was not a completely new phenomenon. In his analysis of the movement, Steve Bruce suggested that by the mid-1980s, over ninety percent of abortion clinics had been affected by physical attacks from antiabortionists.³⁷⁸ Some 60 fire-bombings targeted abortion clinics between 1977-1985 and averaged ten attacks per year between 1982 and 1985.³⁷⁹ Perpetrators included those from the “evangelical” Assemblies of God church who demonstrated the lengths to which Christian conservatives would go to try and stop abortion in the United States.³⁸⁰ In

³⁷⁵ Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 92.

³⁷⁶ Barbara Hinkson Craig and David M. O’Brien, *Abortion and American Politics*, pp. 60-1.

³⁷⁷ Sara Diamond, *Not by Politics Alone*, p. 142.

³⁷⁸ Steve Bruce, *Fundamentalism*, p. 7.

³⁷⁹ Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 93.

³⁸⁰ Steve Bruce, *Fundamentalism*, p. 7.

response to such increased militancy, leadership from the White House was almost non-existent. In fact President Reagan, whose election was crucially aided by Christian conservatives, only condemned such activities toward the end of his first term in office after receiving political pressure by pro-choice organisations.³⁸¹

The loose hierarchical structure of Operation Rescue also allowed for situations where the leadership could not adequately temper some of the more fanatical impulses of its members. Operation Rescue's "No Place to Hide" terror campaign against abortion doctors was a clear example of such extremism, which involved its members obtaining personal information regarding doctor's homes and families, and in numerous cases death threats followed.³⁸² In discussing the "No Place to Hide" campaign, Sara Diamond stated, "NPH was a reckless [sub]group...set[ting] no bounds on appropriate action and encouraged an 'anything goes' mentality."³⁸³ These tactics were subsequently mirrored by copycat websites, such as one entitled the "Nuremberg Files," which plastered doctor's images and personal information on computer generated "wanted posters."³⁸⁴

In 1993 Michael Griffin voluntarily surrendered himself to police after murdering abortion clinic doctor David Gunn, in Pensacola, Florida.³⁸⁵ Only five months later, clinic doctor George Tiller was wounded by a gunshot from Rachelle Shannon, a woman who had corresponded with Griffin during his incarceration.³⁸⁶

Less than a year after this attempted murder, Paul Hill, an excommunicated reverend

³⁸¹ Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 93.

³⁸² Laura L. SydeLL, "The Right-to-Life Rampage", *The Progressive*, August 1993, pp. 24-27 and Sara Diamond, "No Place to Hide", *The Humanist*, September/October 1993, pp. 39-41, cited in Sara Diamond, *Roads to Dominion*, pp. 302-3.

³⁸³ Sara Diamond, *Not by Politics Alone*, p. 144.

³⁸⁴ Julie Polter, "A Civil Discourse", *Sojourners Magazine* (May-June 1999) 28.3 p. 11 (<http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=Soj9905&article=990541c> – accessed December 21, 2008).

³⁸⁵ Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, p. 144.

³⁸⁶ Shannon received an eleven year sentence for the shooting, which was later increased by 20 years for her involvement in firebomb attacks on clinics in three separate states. Cynthia Gorney, *Articles of Faith*, p. 521.

at an Orthodox Presbyterian church and fellow Griffin sympathiser, killed another clinic doctor and his bodyguard.³⁸⁷ In his defence, Hill had previously cited the Bible as legitimising the “justifiable homicide” of abortion clinic workers.³⁸⁸ Three weeks after Hill was sentenced to death for the double murder, John Salvi III killed two female receptionists and wounded five others at two abortion clinics in Massachusetts. Sentenced to life imprisonment, Salvi hanged himself nine months into his sentence.³⁸⁹

The background story of Michael Griffin, who started this chain of events, is highly revealing. In the month leading up to his murder of David Gunn, Griffin came into contact with the Rescue America organisation, a group which drew upon the ideas of Operation Rescue but was far more openly militant.³⁹⁰ Operation Rescue founder Randall Terry condemned Gunn’s assassination as an “inappropriate, repulsive act,” but by that stage there was little he could do to control the new climate of violent aggression.³⁹¹ Splinter groups such as Life Advocate and Prayer and Action continued to engage people with their provocative antiabortion expressions throughout the 1990s. Prayer and Action even went so far as to publish a bomb-making manual in 1996 entitled “Army of God.”³⁹²

In response to this growing militancy, the Clinton administration advocated tough legislation, eventually passed by Congress, to counter this anti-abortion violence. This became the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act.³⁹³

³⁸⁷ Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, p. 148 and Sara Diamond, *Roads to Dominion*, p. 303.

³⁸⁸ references included “the Golden rule” (Matthew 7:12), as well as the book of Numbers – in 35:33 as well as chapter 25. In Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, pp. 147-8.

³⁸⁹ Cynthia Gorney, *Articles of Faith*, p. 521.

³⁹⁰ It’s regional director of the time, John Burt, was a former Klansman, and had personally had dealings with Griffin. In Sara Diamond, *Not by Politics Alone*, pp. 144-5.

³⁹¹ Sara Diamond, *Not by Politics Alone*, p. 145.

³⁹² Sara Diamond, *Not by Politics Alone*, p. 150.

³⁹³ Sara Diamond, *Roads to Dominion*, p. 303. Enacted in 1994, the F.A.C.E. act was protested loudly by Christian conservatives, claiming it infringed on their 1st amendment rights of protest. Julie Polter, “A Civil Discourse”. The F.A.C.E. Act was also responsible for some 38 civil and criminal

The antiabortion movement (and Christian conservatives by implication) also suffered a severe community backlash in response to the violence, with Operation Rescue feeling the brunt most acutely. An overwhelming majority of the American public disapproved of the group's methods and increasingly Operation Rescue generated shifting sympathies to pro-choice organisations.³⁹⁴ The seven murders of clinic personnel, over two hundred bombings of abortion clinics and countless threats made against clinic staff cannot all be solely attributable to Operation Rescue. However its culture of rhetorical and physical antagonism should be acknowledged as providing fertile ground for the eventual violence that occurred.³⁹⁵

Less antagonistic groups promoting an antiabortion agenda include Women Exploited by Abortion (WEBA) and Victims of Choice, both of which offer a Christian support network for women who have had abortions and struggle with the emotional aftermath. They also advocate seeking alternatives among those who might consider abortion.³⁹⁶ While these responses can be similarly problematic, their more personal services are far removed from the distant moralising other Christian groups have engaged in. Such advocating of alternatives to abortion has also given rise to mass increases in self-proclaimed "crisis pregnancy centres" across the United States. These centres have grown from 2100 in 1986 to as many as 4000 in 2003³⁹⁷. Most are openly transparent in their aim to offer support counselling and practical assistance as an alternative to abortion.³⁹⁸ Others, especially in the early 1980s, were less truthful about their mandate, such as those which operated through the Pearson

prosecutions, up mid-1997, with Paul Hill the first person charged for violating the Act (with two concurrent life sentences). Cynthia Gorney, *Articles of Faith*, p. 522.

³⁹⁴ Michele McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, p. 165.

³⁹⁵ Statistics from period between the late 1970's to 2004. Esther Kaplan, *With God on Their Side*, p. 133.

³⁹⁶ Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 97.

³⁹⁷ Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, pp. 96-7. And Ziba Kashaf, "The Fetal Position", *Mother Jones* (Jan/Feb) 2003 (http://www.motherjones.com/news/outfront/2003/01/ma_218_01.html - accessed November 15, 2007).

³⁹⁸ Julie Polter, "Women and Children First".

Foundation.³⁹⁹ These centres advertised in phone directories as abortion referral services, only to warn clients against the procedure on arrival.⁴⁰⁰ Many of these Christian conservative institutions go so far as to argue against unmarried women even using birth control, and instead promote abstinence as the only option against “sexual activity.”⁴⁰¹ This principally stems from an understanding which seeks to reinforce morality as opposed to practical support, especially regarding within the realm of teenage sexuality.⁴⁰²

Two of the major umbrella organisations facilitating these crisis pregnancy centres (CPCs) are the Catholic Church-aligned Birthright USA and the Protestant Christian Action Council. The latter incorporates the group Care Net, which focuses on skilling and resourcing CPC staff.⁴⁰³ James Dobson’s Focus on the Family organisation has a long-standing affiliation with this group, and provides much of their resource information, such as pregnancy-related literature and multimedia.⁴⁰⁴ Care Net has also recently sought to raise over a million dollars for purchasing sonogram machines used in CPC’s. This initiative followed the release of a survey conducted by Focus on the Family, which alleged that four out of five women contemplating abortion decided against the procedure after viewing their child through sonogram imaging.⁴⁰⁵ The publicly pro-life George W. Bush administration subsequently tripled Care Net’s funding specifically for purchasing these sonogram machines, while the Department of Health and Human Services further sought to grant all CPCs increased multi-million dollar funding.⁴⁰⁶ This substantial increase in

³⁹⁹ Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 97.

⁴⁰⁰ Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, pp. 152-3.

⁴⁰¹ Julie Polter, “Women and Children First”.

⁴⁰² Kristin Luker, *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood*, p. 172.

⁴⁰³ Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, p. 153.

⁴⁰⁴ Sara Diamond, *Not By Politics Alone*, p. 153.

⁴⁰⁵ Esther Kaplan, *With God on Their Side*, p. 143.

⁴⁰⁶ Esther Kaplan, *With God on Their Side*, pp. 143-4.

federal funding has however not brought with it a culture of unbiased implementation of services. Numerous complaints have been made against CPC training programmes where both instruction and resources have been given a distinctly overt “Christian” framework.⁴⁰⁷ Federal funding has also been given outside the standard CPC framework to other antiabortion agencies, such as the “Snowflakes” program, which offers embryo adoption through Nightlight Christian Adoptions. This group has received over a million dollars from the federal government, despite clients themselves paying up to \$18,000 for the service.⁴⁰⁸ However for all of their available programs and funding mechanisms, the perceived success of these centres in sustained abortion-reduction remains questionable. For example, estimates from staff at the Indianapolis-based “Life Centers” network revealed that up to a third of women continued to an abortion procedure despite having pro-life counselling.⁴⁰⁹

While government antiabortion funding increased rapidly under the George W. Bush administration, funding cuts in population aid programs began two decades earlier under President Reagan. Intense lobbying in 1981 by LAPAC founders Paul and Judie Brown led to the end of “Aid for International Development” (AID) funding to the International Planned Parenthood Foundation. The Browns claimed this cut created budgetary savings of nearly four billion dollars annually, however these figures are highly inflated. Michele McKeegan has stated that this stated amount is approximately ten times the total annual budget of internationally funded

⁴⁰⁷ Esther Kaplan, *With God on Their Side*, p. 138.

⁴⁰⁸ Esther Kaplan, *With God on Their Side*, p. 140. *Snowflakes Frozen Embryo Adoptions Frequently Asked Questions – Program Fees* (<http://www.nightlight.org/snowflakefaqsap.htm#Program> – accessed November 16, 2007). Some of this financial outlay may be offset by the *Hope for Children Act*, signed into law by George W. Bush on June 7, 2001, which increased the tax credit for all adoptions by \$10000. “Hope for Children Act Q&A” (<http://www.hopeforchildren.org/10k-tax-credit.htm> - accessed November 16, 2007).

⁴⁰⁹ Kristin Luker, *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood*, p. 175.

programs facilitated through Title X, which covers domestic family planning and AID population aid.⁴¹⁰ The George H.W. Bush administration also continued this international funding reduction with multi-million dollar cuts in grants. This process was legitimised from dubious information that certain recipients, such as the U.N. Population Fund and Reproductive Health for Refugees Consortium, were affiliated with coerced abortions in China.⁴¹¹

Ultimately, the Christian conservative movement and its antiabortionist organisations have played a pivotal role in the evolution of abortion politics within the United States, as the groups themselves have continually evolved. However while their membership numbers are certainly significant, there remains a huge cultural and political divide between groups such as Operation Rescue and the broader population. This fact alone makes Christian conservative claims of moral representation both naive and often counterproductive. The switch by antiabortionists to a stronger emphasis on CPC's and other service delivery programs has seen significant growth, especially in public and private sector funding. However, it is unclear as to whether these advances have made any tangible impact on abortion reduction.

⁴¹⁰ Michele McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, p. 80.

⁴¹¹ Esther Kaplan, *With God on Their Side*, p. 139.

Getting the Numbers: The trials and tribulations of legislating abortion politics.

The goal of the antiabortion movement is no abortion, with no exceptions. The next thing they will go for is birth control.

Judith Widdicombe chairwoman of Reproductive Health Services after the 1989 *Webster* decision upholding restrictions on abortion availabilities.⁴¹²

While organisational attempts by Christian conservatives to ban abortion have been frequently problematic, some gains have been made in restricting the practice through state-based legislation. This has been the result of a steep learning curve by Christian conservatives, and as such, their emphasis has somewhat shifted away from ambitious plans for a Constitutional amendment banning abortion.⁴¹³ Indications of such a shift were present even before the rise of Ronald Reagan to the U.S. Presidency, coming in the wake of the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision. Prior to this watershed event, only four U.S. states and the District of Columbia provided legal abortion on demand.⁴¹⁴ However most states prior to *Roe v. Wade* did in fact permit abortion on medical grounds, such as where it preserved a woman's life or protected her physical or mental health.⁴¹⁵ The "Therapeutic Abortion Act," which Ronald Reagan signed in 1967 as the California Governor, was rationalised by the latter of these.⁴¹⁶

Only two years after the Supreme Court decided on *Roe v. Wade*, Senator Jesse Helms first called for a Constitutional amendment banning abortion, which was

⁴¹² Cynthia Gorney, *Articles of Faith*, p. 487.

⁴¹³ A constitutional amendment requires the largely unrealistic condition of getting an electoral mandate from three quarters of the U.S. states. Anthony M. Stevens-Arroyo, "Bishops Must Rethink Anti-Abortion Strategy", *Washington Post Online*, November 11, 2008 (http://newsweek.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/catholicamerica/2008/11/catholic_disconnections.html - accessed November 28, 2008)

⁴¹⁴ Barbara Hinkson Craig and David M. O'Brien, *Abortion and American Politics*, p. 75. And William Saletan, *Bearing Right*, p. 12.

⁴¹⁵ Barbara Hinkson Craig and David M. O'Brien, *Abortion and American Politics*, p. 75

⁴¹⁶ Cynthia Gorney, *Articles of Faith*, p. 336.

emphatically rejected.⁴¹⁷ Other successive attempts occurred in 1982 and 1983, but despite some gains in obtaining Congressional votes, Christian conservatives were at best nineteen votes shy of the necessary two-thirds majority required for passage.⁴¹⁸ While this proved an obvious disappointment to Christian conservatives within the United States, a number of options remained available to them. One potential avenue related to the nature of abortion funding. This specifically connected with the ingrained Christian conservative tenet of individual rights, aligned with the notion that citizens have the right for their tax dollars not to finance someone else's abortion.

The concept of banning federal funds for abortion initially took legislative form in the Hyde amendment, which was passed by Congress in 1976 and subsequently upheld by the Supreme Court in 1977 and 1980.⁴¹⁹ Its premise was to remove funding for abortion procedures from Medicaid coverage, except in circumstances where there was danger to a woman's life.⁴²⁰ Other exceptions, accounting for rape or incest, were subsequently added to the Hyde amendment in 1994, in a somewhat cynical response to maintain the broad funding restrictions.⁴²¹ While some states maintained funding on account of their individual state's constitutional obligations, by 1984 onwards most states had imposed significant minimum public funding restrictions.⁴²² During that year there was also a

⁴¹⁷ Esther Kaplan, *With God on Their Side*, p. 132.

⁴¹⁸ Barbara Hinkson Craig and David M. O'Brien, *Abortion and American Politics*, p. 55.

⁴¹⁹ William Saletan, *Bearing Right*, p. 12. And Esther Kaplan, *With God on Their Side*, p. 132.

⁴²⁰ Esther Kaplan, *With God on Their Side*, p. 132. And Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 91.

⁴²¹ Raymond Tatalovich, *The Politics of Abortion in the United States and Canada: A Comparative Study* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1997), p. 98. Finding continual support for the funding restrictions was increasingly difficult, with even Republicans leading the charge to overturn the law. George H.W. Bush had to use his veto powers to stop legislation that would outlaw the funding ban, with the veto surviving by just a dozen votes. *The New York Times*, November 20, 1991, p. A12. Cited in Michele McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, p. 158.

⁴²² William Saletan, *Bearing Right*, p. 12. This agenda for national funding cuts was also felt by the longstanding "Title X program", which provides family planning services to the poor. In 1995 the House Appropriations Committee on labor, health and human services (chaired by House

broadening of the original Hyde amendment that included the exclusion of government funding for international organisations that financed abortion procedures.⁴²³ Gary Bauer was integral in orchestrating support for these restrictive policies and was able to establish his agenda largely on account of the relative autonomy provided by Reagan's hands-off management style.⁴²⁴ These and other restrictions, including a gag-rule on organisations providing information on abortion, were integral components of abortion-related legislation under Reagan and George H.W. Bush. However, Bill Clinton sought to re-engage debate on these issues when he was elected to the Presidency in 1992.⁴²⁵

As the national direction of abortion politics continued to evolve, clear differences between the states over abortion laws became apparent. The year before *Roe v. Wade* was decided in the Supreme Court, nearly fifty percent of women were forced to travel outside of their home state if they chose to obtain an abortion.⁴²⁶ In the years that followed, states continued to differ significantly in their legislative positions. During the 1980s and 1990s, most states had at least some abortion restrictions in place, such as time-delays on obtaining abortions, public funding limitations, requirements for parental/informed consent, or at minimum parental notification.⁴²⁷ Such restrictions came to be embodied within the *Webster v.*

Republican Bob Livingston) voted in favour of cutting nearly \$200 million from the program. Rachel L. Jones, "Vote Threatens family planning funds", *Denver Post*, July 21, 1995, p. A-02.

⁴²³ Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 91. While Clinton overturned this Reagan administration initiative during his first term in the presidency, it was later revived under George W. Bush in January 2001 – symbolically on the anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* decision. Esther Kaplan, *With God on Their Side*, p. 136.

⁴²⁴ Michele McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, pp. 117-8.

⁴²⁵ Rachel L. Jones, "Vote Threatens Family Planning Funds".

⁴²⁶ Interestingly, a significant proportion of these women were from the north and Midwest - outside of the Christian conservative "Bible Belt" of the south. Barbara Hinkson Craig and David M. O'Brien, *Abortion and American Politics*, p. 76.

⁴²⁷ Steve Bruce, *Fundamentalism*, pp. 77-8. And Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, pp. 99-100. Also discussed in Mike Allen, "Gilmore Backs Stricter Abortion Law", *The Washington Post*, September 16, 1997 p. A1.

Reproductive Health Services decision of the Supreme Court in 1989.⁴²⁸ One of the most significant state-level policies in the move to this decision was the enacting of a parental consent bill in California during 1987, where Christian conservative influence within abortion politics was particularly demonstrated. In the period leading up to the vote, there were major initiatives through non-profit Christian media, especially radio, in providing an important base for antiabortionists' lobbying.⁴²⁹

Christian conservative antiabortionists were further emboldened by the *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* Supreme Court decision in 1992. This decision upheld the power of the states to place restrictions on obtaining abortion, with the proviso that these restrictions not be an "undue burden" on women's rights.⁴³⁰ Following this mandate, virtually all the restrictions enacted by the states and supported by Christian conservatives were deemed appropriate under this new terminology.⁴³¹ In 2003 for example, Texas legislators passed a bill stipulating the following requirements before an abortion could be obtained: a 24 hour waiting period; prior face-to face contact between the pregnant woman and the doctor performing the abortion; the woman must view colour sonogram pictures of the baby's characteristics, updated fortnightly; and finally clinic doctors must inform women as to the medical theory linking abortions with instances of breast cancer.⁴³²

⁴²⁸ Sara Diamond, *Not by Politics Alone*, p. 140.

⁴²⁹ Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, p. 99. The bill has since been overturned with no consent now required - "Abortion Laws for Teens by States" website. (http://parentingteens.about.com/od/teenpregfact/a/abortion_laws.htm - accessed November 29, 2007).

⁴³⁰ Esther Kaplan, *With God on Their Side*, p. 133.

⁴³¹ Julie Polter, "Women and Children First", *Sojourners Magazine*. The only restriction overruled by the Supreme Court in this decision was a husband notification law, found in Pennsylvania. Cynthia Gorney, *Articles of Faith*, p. 519.

⁴³² Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, pp. 159-60.

Some states however failed to pass such rigid restrictions through their legislatures, while others settled for reduced restrictions, such as in Alabama.⁴³³ Elsewhere, Maryland and Connecticut actually passed bills *reinforcing* the right of their state to provide abortion.⁴³⁴ In 1990, Idaho Governor Cecil D. Andrus personally refused to support antiabortion legislation, due in no small part to pro-choice threats of a national potato boycott, which was significant because at the time the state produced a third of the nation's total output.⁴³⁵ The rigidity of the restrictions also had a likely bearing on the outcome in Idaho. According to commentators, the proposed restrictions on abortion would have been the most stringent in the entire country, banning all but five percent of total abortions.⁴³⁶

Christian conservatives have also fiercely sought to specifically ban the abortion procedure of intact dilation and extraction, colloquially known as 'D&X' or partial-birth abortion. The confronting details of the procedure give a highly emotive tenor to Christian conservative efforts, while the fact that the procedure is frequently undertaken past the point of foetal "viability" has led to charges of "infanticide."⁴³⁷ In 1997 President Clinton vetoed Congressional support for the ban, citing the need for an exception protecting women's health.⁴³⁸ Although Christian conservative

⁴³³ While consent from one parent is still required, this can be bypassed by a judge or overruled altogether in medical or welfare related circumstances "Abortion Laws for Teens by States" website.

⁴³⁴ Steve Bruce, *Fundamentalism*, p. 78. Maryland has however, swung back the other way. House Bill 742 passed in 2005 making parental consent mandatory (outside of a judicial bypass), overturning previous laws which gave doctors discretionary powers to proceed if they saw the minor as sufficiently "mature". Department of Legislative Services – Fiscal and Policy Note (House Bill 742) (http://www.mlis.state.md.us/2005rs/fnotes/bil_0002/hb0742.pdf - accessed November 29, 2007).

⁴³⁵ Timothy Egan, "Idaho Governor Vetoes Measure Intended to Test Abortion Ruling 26", *The New York Times* March 31, 1990. (<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9C0CE3D81438F932A05750C0A966958260&sec=&spon=&pagewanted=all> – accessed November 29, 2007).

⁴³⁶ Timothy Egan, "Idaho Governor Vetoes Measure...".

⁴³⁷ Julie Polter, "Outrage Over the Abortion Veto", *Sojourners Magazine* (July-August 1996) 25.4 pp. 9-10. (<http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=Soj9607&article=960741a> – accessed December 21, 2008).

⁴³⁸ Cynthia Gorney, *Articles of Faith*, p. 522.

lobbyists failed to get the Senate numbers to override the veto, their attempts were significant. Filling the Senate floor with graphic images and displays, many Christian conservative organisations came together in support of the ban, and to vent their ire at Bill Clinton.⁴³⁹ During his time as Arkansas governor, Clinton had publicly stated his opposition to public funding of abortion, but this position is largely regarded as an adherence to voter trends rather than deep-seated conviction.⁴⁴⁰

At the state level, bans on partial birth abortion have been introduced in more than twenty states, though like their federal counterpart, these had been opposed through court challenges and governors' vetoes.⁴⁴¹ However on 7 November 2003, President George W. Bush signed legislation in the White House mandating a national partial birth abortion ban.⁴⁴² This appeared to be in line with public opinion, as a national poll taken in January of that year indicated that 70 percent of people were in favour of the ban.⁴⁴³ In 2007, the Supreme Court upheld the legislation by a single vote of 5 to 4; however this decision has not meant a total ban on the practice. Numerous commentators have revealed the many various loopholes surrounding the narrow definition of "partial birth abortion", which can be exploited by doctors nationwide.⁴⁴⁴ Furthermore, the fact that partial birth abortions were only a fraction

⁴³⁹ These organisations included the Family Research Council, Christian Coalition, Focus on the Family and the Southern Baptist Convention. Marc Fisher, "Judgment Day...", *Washington Post*, p. D01.

⁴⁴⁰ William Saletan, *Bearing Right*, p. 27. He later clarified his position on public funding, supporting an exception for cases of rape or incest. William Saletan, *Bearing Right*, p. 220.

⁴⁴¹ Cynthia Gorney, *Articles of Faith*, p. 522.

⁴⁴² Those present at the signing included Christian conservative leaders Jerry Falwell, Ed McAteer, Charles Colson, and Jay Sekulow Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, p. 160. In this section, Victor also vividly depicts the prayer session between these men and the President, where Falwell declared to the President that they represented approximately 200,000 pastors and 80 million Christians – all supportive of the President as "a man of God" in Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, pp. 160-1.

⁴⁴³ USA Today/CNN/Gallup poll cited in Kathy Kiely, "Partial-birth' abortion ban nearly law after 8-year effort; Congress sends bill to Bush, who will sign it", *USA Today*, October 22, 2003, p. A01.

⁴⁴⁴ Richard John Neuhaus, "That decision on partial birth abortion", *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life* (June-July 2007) pp. 60-1. A number of federal judges have also ruled that such a ban is unconstitutional. Kenneth D. Wald and Allison Calhoun-Brown, *Religion and*

of the total number of abortions performed in the United States under Clinton brings into focus the question of why Christian conservative leaders put so much energy into this single facet of abortion politics.⁴⁴⁵

So while a broad national legislative trend against abortion on demand has been demonstrated in the United States, there has equally been a desire for clear legislative balance preventing restrictions from being detrimentally onerous.⁴⁴⁶ Despite the difficulty in using legislation as a clearly defining tool in abortion politics, its application in reducing abortion into a sequence of “bargainable questions” has only heightened cultural divisions, while ignoring the fundamental need for dialogue, resolution and consensus.⁴⁴⁷ Such a situation has led Amy Sullivan, an experienced author and reporter on religion and politics, to summarise:

[abortion] law is also a political football, intended to mobilize supporters and dollars...without providing a real solution to reduce some of the 1.2 million abortions performed in the U.S. each year. It would be a tragedy if a renewed fight about the law derailed the momentum gathering for a new strategy of prevention.⁴⁴⁸

Politics in the United States (Fifth Edition). p. 167.

⁴⁴⁵ according to 1993 statistics, partial birth abortions were fewer than 0.4% of the 1.3 million total number. Julie Polter, “Outrage over the abortion veto”.

⁴⁴⁶ “Abortion Laws for Teens by States” website.

⁴⁴⁷ Kenneth Wald, *Religion and Politics in the United States*, p. 277.

⁴⁴⁸ Amy Sullivan, “Abortion: A Way Forward”, *Sojourners Magazine*.

Party Platforms and Single-Issue Politics: Christian Conservatives, Abortion and the Republican Party.

The godless minority of treacherous individuals who have been permitted to formulate national policy must now realize they do not represent the majority. They must be made to see that moral Americans are a powerful group who will no longer permit them to destroy our country with their godless, liberal philosophies.⁴⁴⁹

Rev. Jerry Falwell.

It's all politics.⁴⁵⁰

Ralph Reed, after the Senate vote upholding Clinton's veto which maintained partial birth abortion.

In *Revival and Reaction: The Right in Contemporary America*, Gillian Peele cited the issue of abortion as integral in bringing Christian conservatives and “political tacticians” together, in creating “new political coalitions in specific regional subcultures of the United States.”⁴⁵¹ Within this, Christian conservatism has developed a strong resonance across U.S. society, filtering out from its initial foundations of the Southern and Midwest “Bible Belt.” The movement has now grown to propagating its message outside of its traditional heartland, making it in many respects a truly national phenomenon. This is not to say however, as Jerry Falwell often declared, that Christian conservative values and beliefs are the majority opinion within the United States.

Significant survey-based data has consistently suggested that many citizens within the United States support some restrictions on the availability of abortions, while simultaneously supporting the procedure's legality. Gallup polling in the mid-1980s highlighted that “evangelicals” and Southern Baptists were supportive of a

⁴⁴⁹ Jerry Falwell, introduction to Richard A. Viguerie, *The New Right: We're Ready to Lead* (Falls Church, Va.: Viguerie, 1981). Cited in Michelle McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, p. 13.

⁴⁵⁰ Ralph Reed, cited in Fisher, Marc, “Judgement Day; Christian Right Looks Down on Abortion Loss as Political Winner”.

⁴⁵¹ Gillian Peele, *Revival and Reaction*, p. 91.

constitutional amendment banning abortion with some exceptions, 66% and 60% respectively. However, this is far from “overwhelming” support, and is inconsistent with the overall national figure of 44% support for an amendment.⁴⁵² Furthermore, there are also significant differences within Christian denominations regarding abortion, especially among “evangelicals” and the more mainline Protestant denominations.⁴⁵³ While 40% of those surveyed attested to having “very strong feelings about abortion” only 19% described themselves as definitively “antiabortionist”. Nevertheless this broad constituency of Christian conservatives has been co-opted into the political fold, in giving impetus to the notion of abortion politics.⁴⁵⁴

Beginning in the late 1970s, political strategist Paul Weyrich perceived that targeting this specific group was a means to reinvigorate the conservative political landscape within the United States.⁴⁵⁵ While not a majority per se, Christian conservative numbers were expanding far more than the moderate mainline denominations.⁴⁵⁶ There was also the added element of their unashamedly vocal convictions, which placed abortion squarely in the centre of the “culture wars” conflict. Indeed, abortion has been regarded by many Christian conservatives as a cultural symptom of society’s “excessive individualism and personal liberties taken to unwise, unethical and immoral extremes.”⁴⁵⁷ Within this, Jerry Falwell became a chief proponent of the political mobilisation effort. In utilising his expansive

⁴⁵² George Gallup Jr. and Jim Castelli, *The People’s Religion*, pp. 168-9.

⁴⁵³ George Gallup Jr. and Jim Castelli, *The People’s Religion*, p. 171. Other Gallup polling sought to categorize the “Christian Right” within all Christian denominations (Protestant or Catholic) as: believers in the literal truth of the Bible, self-described as “very religious”, and self-assessed as to the right on the liberal-conservative scale. 23% of respondents were thus categorized, which is in keeping with previous survey data of those self-described as “antiabortionist”. In Michele McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, p. 14.

⁴⁵⁴ George Gallup Jr. and Jim Castelli, *The People’s Religion*, p. 178.

⁴⁵⁵ Cynthia Gorney, *Articles of Faith*, p. 343.

⁴⁵⁶ Michele McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, p. 15.

⁴⁵⁷ Kenneth D. Wald and Allison Calhoun-Brown, *Religion and Politics in the United States (Fifth Edition)* p. 190. Also see Cynthia Gorney, *Articles of Faith*, p. 345.

organisational network, Falwell essentially offered up his followers to the political cause, claiming that “Christians, like slaves and soldiers, ask no questions.”⁴⁵⁸ However, while Christian conservative individuals and organisations have gone to great lengths to politicise the abortion issue, the reactions to this from the two main political parties is significant.

The relationship between antiabortionist Christian conservatives and the Democratic Party over the last decades has largely been mutually antagonistic. For example, there have been numerous instances of Democrat leadership preventing their pro-life representatives from speaking at Party conventions. Furthermore, commentators have pointed to the Democratic National Committee’s refusal to permit a “pro-life” link on the Democratic Party’s website as another example of unreasonable Party governance.⁴⁵⁹ However these practices have been largely consistent with Democratic Party platform policies. In regard to the abortion issue, the Democratic Party supported the *Roe v. Wade* decision, opposed Constitutional amendments to overturn this decision, and declared its position that abortion be made freely available to all, “regardless of ability to pay.”⁴⁶⁰ Democrat politicians have also sporadically orchestrated fear campaigns against Christian conservative leaders who sought to counter them on the abortion issue. In *Bearing Right*, William Saletan highlighted how the Democratic Party had for instance threatened the onset of a “Falwellian Big Brother policing sexual matters.”⁴⁶¹

Christian conservatives have reciprocated such disdain in their own public criticisms of the Democratic Party, which was most sharply directed at both Bill and

⁴⁵⁸ Frances Fitzgerald, “A Disciplined, Charging Army”, *New Yorker*, May 18, 1981, p. 107. Cited in Michele McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, p. 15.

⁴⁵⁹ Jim Wallis, “Pro-Life Democrats?”, *Sojourners Magazine*. Also discussed in Heidi Schlumpf, “No Place to Stand”

⁴⁶⁰ selection of policy statements from the Democratic Party regarding abortion, in Barbara Hinkson Craig and David M. O’Brien, *Abortion and American Politics*, pp. 166-8.

⁴⁶¹ William Saletan, *Bearing Right*, p. 87.

Hillary Clinton. Christian conservative leaders have in recent times charged the pair with “promoting a form of national socialism” and having “radical views on children, families and the law.”⁴⁶² Such terminology signalled to Christian conservatives that social issues (and specifically abortion) were a major black mark against the Clintons, and through this, the entire Democratic Party by association. Many influential Christian conservative leaders, such as Beverly LaHaye, Pat Buchanan and Pat Robertson have also made similar remarks chastising Bill and Hillary Clinton for their stand on social issues, and abortion in particular.⁴⁶³ However, this antagonism was not directed solely at the Clinton family. Senator ‘score-cards’, distributed in 2003 and 2004 by the National Right to Life Committee, gave only two sitting Democrats a 100% approval rating, compared to 33 Republican Senators.⁴⁶⁴

With such disharmony between Christian conservatives and the Democrats, it was appropriate that this mobilised and politically active group would inevitably forge strong bonds with the opposing Republican Party. In many respects, this was their natural ideological home from the outset. The early connections Christian conservatives established with Paul Weyrich, who was already a known lobbyist to the Republican Party through his Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress, proved to be an important asset.⁴⁶⁵ However for the Republican Party itself, this new arrangement with Christian conservatives led to some uneasy policy considerations.

⁴⁶² Christian conservative activist Paul Busick, quoted in Thomas B. Edsall, “Buchanan Warns G.O.P. of Schism on Abortion”, *The Washington Post*, September 12, 1993 p. A08. And Gary Bauer, quoted in William Saletan, *Bearing Right*, p. 154.

⁴⁶³ William Saletan, *Bearing Right*, pp. 154-5.

⁴⁶⁴ Esther Kaplan, *With God on Their Side*, p. 132.

⁴⁶⁵ Weyrich’s connections with the Republican Party would endure for well over the next two decades, as he would also have a prominent role in the Clinton impeachment process, calling it “probably the most important thing we have done”, quoted in Ann Scott Tyson, “What Will Tip the Impeachment Vote”, *The Christian Science Monitor*, December 14, 1998, p. 1 and cited in Gregory A. Caldera and Christopher Zorn, “Strategic Timing, Position-Taking, and Impeachment in the

For example, in the wake of the 1970s, the Republican Party maintained a course of economic conservatism, while concurrently attempting to redefine its position on social issues, including abortion.⁴⁶⁶ This redefinition occurred again in the period after the *Webster* Supreme Court decision, when Republican politicians, and even some politically-pragmatic Christian conservative leaders, sought to reduce their public connections to the abortion issue.⁴⁶⁷ However, socially conservative policies were never completely off-limits to the Republican Party, as they attempted to generate a broad support base within the United States.

Through such organisations as the Christian Coalition and Family Research Council, this constituency has called for such measures as a family cap (enacting child restrictions for families receiving welfare assistance) and social security payment bans to unwed mothers.⁴⁶⁸ Both of these reform proposals would have serious repercussions not only to the abortion issue, but for the entire social framework of the United States. Antiabortionist pressure has also led to the congressional de-funding of Title X health services, which incorporate contraceptives distribution. Such action halting these programs was roundly condemned by many women's health organisations on a variety of grounds. For example, Judith Desarno, president of the National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association, lamented this "inexplicable move in a Congress that says it wants to lower abortions but is destroying supports that keep women from having them."⁴⁶⁹ Sociologist Jacqueline Scott had similar concerns, given that the

⁴⁶⁶ Michelle McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, p. x.

⁴⁶⁷ Clyde Wilcox, "The Sources and Consequences of Public Attitudes Toward Abortion", p. 81. A specific example is seen in the 1995 Congressional votes on legislation to ban partial-birth abortion, where 8 Republican Senators and 15 Representatives in the House voted against the legislation. Thomas B. Edsall, "Abortion Proposal May Dominate R.N.C. Meeting", *The Washington Post*, January 7, 1998, p. A08.

⁴⁶⁸ William Saletan, *Bearing Right*, p. 231.

⁴⁶⁹ Rachel L. Jones, "Vote Threatens family planning funds".

removal of contraceptives would consequentially lead to further unplanned pregnancies. Scott therefore argued that this campaign was another example of how “condemnation of single mothers and an antiabortion stance have tended to go hand-in-hand.”⁴⁷⁰

For its part, the Republican Party initially seemed to embrace the antiabortion campaigns of the Christian conservatives. The electoral success of publicly pro-life Ronald Reagan in 1980 offered Christian conservatives hope that the White House would be open to a working partnership aligned with their faith and beliefs. Reagan seemed to fit the bill perfectly, as during his Presidency he came to deride “godless” communism, extol the virtues of the Ten Commandments, and declare 1983 “The Year of the Bible.”⁴⁷¹ However, on issues of substantial social reform, such as abortion, the results were far from encouraging to Christian conservatives. With Reagan’s determined focus on pushing economic reforms, antiabortionists were largely sidelined from the President’s personal attention.⁴⁷² The best they could hope for would be an occasional symbolic gesture, such as his remarks to the National Religious Broadcasters Convention in 1984, where he declared his belief that “no challenge is more important to the character of America than restoring the right to life of all human beings.”⁴⁷³ Reagan was also politically shrewd enough to only address the annual pro-life rally in Washington by telephone, thereby somewhat reducing any bad press that would place him personally alongside the movement.⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁷⁰ Jacqueline Scott, “Generational Changes in Attitudes to Abortion...”, p. 178.

⁴⁷¹ Lou Cannon, “Reagan Renews Appeal for Anti-Abortion Action”, *The Washington Post*, January 31, 1984, p. A1.

⁴⁷² This was in part also the work of then Senate Majority leader Howard Baker, who actively sought to postpone social policy legislation, fearing a backlash against priority economic reforms. Michelle McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, p. 44.

⁴⁷³ in Barbara Hinkson Craig and David M. O’Brien, *Abortion and American Politics*, p. 171.

⁴⁷⁴ Michelle McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, pp. 45-6.

Within such a climate, the repeated calls from Christian conservative leaders to “use the Republican Party as a vehicle” were for the most part misguided, as the Republican Party proved determined to shape in its own policy focus independently.⁴⁷⁵ However despite the lack of significant progress on the abortion issue in Reagan’s first term, Christian conservatives remained committed to mobilising their numbers to re-elect the President, whom they saw as “the most promising leader nationally that evangelical Christians have ever known.”⁴⁷⁶ Such displays of unchecked loyalty led political strategist Paul Weyrich, the man who sought to bring Christian conservatives into the Republican Party fold, to bluntly state that “all [Christian conservatives] wanted really was to get out of their ghettos and have the President pat them on the head.”⁴⁷⁷

A decade later in 1996, Christian conservatives again tried to influence the G.O.P. by putting Party convention delegates under repeated pressure in the hope of obtaining a decisively pro-life vice-Presidential candidate. This heightened presence of an antiabortionist bloc at the convention concerned some delegates, who feared that the group would actively sideline those Party members regarded as economic conservatives but socially progressive. This perception was dismissed by Gary Bauer, who maintained that this group of mobilised antiabortionists “were the heart and soul of the party, the people that stuff the envelopes and ring the doorbells.”⁴⁷⁸ Seeking to reinforce this message, Ralph Reed cited presidential candidate Bob Dole’s poor polling figures among “evangelicals” as a direct consequence of his soft

⁴⁷⁵ Gary Jarmin quote from Sidney Blumenthal, “The Righteous Empire”, *New Republic*, October 22, 1984, p. 23. Cited in Michelle McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, p. 98.

⁴⁷⁶ *Newsweek*, September 17, 1984, p. 28. Cited in Michelle McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, p. 99.

⁴⁷⁷ Phone interview with Paul Weyrich by Michelle McKeegan, July 10, 1991. Cited in Michelle McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, p. 45.

⁴⁷⁸ Thomas B. Edsall and William Claiborne, “Dole Camp Retreats on Abortion”, *The Washington Post*, August 6, 1996, p. A01.

stance on abortion.⁴⁷⁹ Declaring the need for a “strong, clear clarion call” from the Republican candidate, Reed was adamant that “the Dole campaign is going to be very aware of the large number of religious conservatives on the floor...to be taken into account in the making of the vice presidential selection.”⁴⁸⁰

Such rhetoric by Christian conservative leaders has often led to claims that the Republican Party should instigate policy “litmus tests” for its candidates. This scenario where the G.O.P. is potentially split along deep ideological lines is a volatile proposition, especially in election years. While Republican Party leadership has consistently warned of such dangers, increasing Christian conservative influence within the party apparatus has worked to maintain this tension.⁴⁸¹ However the overarching magnitude of this pressure has recently been dismissed by Republican political strategist Karl Rove. In acknowledging the political muscle of Christian conservatives, Rove has sought to legitimise this as he argued that the convention process as one “designed to have friction.”⁴⁸² While this may be the case, Rove was himself very active leading up to the 2000 election in trying to minimise the “friction” that the abortion issue would cause his own employer, the Texas Governor (and Presidential hopeful) George W. Bush.

From the start of his presidential campaign, Bush attempted to negate any potential use of the abortion issue as a political wedge. Successful for the most part, Bush defined his position through appealing to both sides of the political argument, while focusing on the areas of general consensus, such as bans on public funding and partial birth abortions. Such a politically pragmatic approach was sharply rebuked

⁴⁷⁹ Thomas B. Edsall and William Claiborne, “Dole Camp Retreats on Abortion”.

⁴⁸⁰ Thomas B. Edsall and William Claiborne, “Dole Camp Retreats on Abortion”. Second quote cited in Thomas B. Edsall, “G.O.P. Convention Delegates Face Abortion Test”, *The Washington Post*, June 12, 1996, p. A01.

⁴⁸¹ Thomas B. Edsall, “Abortion Proposal May Dominate R.N.C. Meeting”.

⁴⁸² cited in Thomas B. Edsall, “G.O.P. Convention Delegates Face Abortion Test”.

by Gary Bauer, who claimed that Bush was “operationally pro-choice...say[ing] they are pro-life and then the inevitable next word is ‘but’, and every word after that explains that nothing can be done.”⁴⁸³ Other Christian conservative leaders, such as Pat Robertson and Ralph Reed, were more supportive, and understood the need for political realism in taking a largely “centrist” position.⁴⁸⁴ Ralph Reed especially had earlier proved to be somewhat opportunistic in his political positions in regard to abortion. In 1993 he changed his stance from advocating a softened antiabortion position within Republican Party policy to declaring that “[back-peddalling from a pro-life position] would be a disaster at the ballot box” – all within a matter of months.⁴⁸⁵

Elected President of the United States in 2000, George W. Bush subsequently refined and increased his use of political symbolism in regard to abortion. Within this context he came to borrow and consistently use the pro-life mantra idealising a day when “every child is welcomed in life and protected in law.” This phrase was lifted verbatim from a joint-document previously released by several key Christian conservative organisations.⁴⁸⁶ Bush also drew a somewhat tenuous link between the ideological fight against terrorism (another rallying point for Christian conservatives) and the abortion issue, as he claimed that battling both created “a culture of respect for life.”⁴⁸⁷ Crucial however was the fact that Bush, unlike his predecessor Reagan, was both willing *and* able to put his antiabortionist rhetoric into action. This was

⁴⁸³ Gary Bauer, cited in William Saletan, *Bearing Right*, p. 250.

⁴⁸⁴ William Saletan, *Bearing Right*, p. 252.

⁴⁸⁵ Thomas B. Edsall, “Buchanan Warns G.O.P. of Schism on Abortion”.

⁴⁸⁶ remarks from President Bush at the appointment of Attorney-General John Ashcroft, cited in Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, p. 159. And Mary Cunningham Agee et al., “The America We Seek: A Statement of Pro-Life Principle and Concern”, *First Things*, My 1996, cited in Esther Kaplan, *With God on Their Side*, p. 142.

⁴⁸⁷ Don Parker, “The President’s Vision for the Future: National Right to Life Leaders Meet with President Bush”, *National Right to Life News*, February 2002 (reprinted from *Catholic Register*), c cited in Esther Kaplan, *With God on Their Side*, p. 142.

initially demonstrated on his first day in office when he reinstated a federal funding ban on abortion-related organisations.⁴⁸⁸

In an ever-increasing fashion, the political machinery of both the Republican and Democratic parties has been largely woven together with rhetorical posturing and symbolism. The issue of abortion, as a highly emotive and controversial element, is in no way immune to this, and is in many cases responsible for some of the most glaring divisions within each party's political structure. Ultimately, both sides of politics have over time been damaged by demonstrations of hard-line positions on this issue of abortion. However the conservative side of politics has proved to be a great deal slower in recognising the clear social benefits for pragmatic abortion reduction initiatives, particularly among those who are economically and socially vulnerable.

“How will this affect your vote?” – Abortion politics and its effect at the ballot box.

What was once a lunatic fringe has become a driving force in the party...They did a rather thorough job of beating my brains out with Christian love.⁴⁸⁹

John Buchanan, Republican Congressman from Alabama, after losing the G.O.P. nomination in 1980.

Mobilising a constituency for political support may be just one component in a long list of factors comprising the U.S. electoral cycle, however it is arguably the most problematic. This is largely because the reasons behind voter intentions are as

⁴⁸⁸ Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, p. 159.

⁴⁸⁹ Quote from Sidney Blumenthal, “The Righteous Empire”, *New Republic*, October 22, 1984, pp. 23-24. Cited in Michelle McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, p. 36.

varied and numerous as voters themselves. Adding further complexity to the equation is the divide between highly-politicised groups, such as Christian conservatives, and the non-political remainder, who by choice or circumstances exist outside the political culture within the United States. Within this framework, academic Clyde Wilcox has analysed the intentions of political candidates in seeking to mobilise those already politically active, while jointly enticing those non-active members to support their campaigns. In Wilcox's view, this occurs primarily through a dualistic phenomenon which sees candidates taking "centrist" positions while "obscur[ing]...their differences" on policy issues. He also cited Richard P. McBrien's conclusions that policy issues are "relatively unimportant" in how people vote, compared to other aspects such as candidate personality evaluations and partisanship.⁴⁹⁰ However, this fails to sufficiently explain the relationship between a political candidate and the single-issue voter. Many of these single-issue voters subscribe to a Christian conservative world view, and through this actively pursue the electoral goal of ending the practice of abortion with the United States.

As previously stated, proponents of conservative politics have seen abortion as an "emotionally charged" issue, with the potential to successfully shift some socially-conservative Democrat voters to supporting Republicans candidates.⁴⁹¹ However the consequence of emphasising the abortion issue has inversely alienated socially-liberal Republicans. This may be attributable to the fact that in the early 1980s the hot-button issue of abortion was, in some significant cases, a litmus-test for electoral support. For example, during the 1980 election campaign in Massachusetts, the influential Cardinal Humberto Medeiros issued a public letter attacking liberal Democrats in the state's fourth and fifth districts, stating that "Those

⁴⁹⁰ Richard P. McBrien, "Abortion: The Moral Issue", week of July 13, 1992, cited in Clyde Wilcox, "The Sources and Consequences of Public Attitudes Toward Abortion", p. 71.

⁴⁹¹ Michele McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, p. 9.

who make abortion possible by law cannot separate themselves from the guilt which accompanies this horrendous crime and deadly sin."⁴⁹² Anything less than a complete adherence to the pro-life agenda by politicians would inevitably lead to attacks from Christian conservative groups, as Senator Frank Church, a Democratic Party incumbent from Idaho, would find out. Despite casting support for pro-life positions in a majority of congressional votes, Church suffered a significant public campaign against him from Christian conservative groups in 1980, which concluded with his subsequent re-election failure.⁴⁹³ In this and many other campaigns across the nation, *Christian Voice* distributed candidate "report cards" which judged politicians on a variety of issues, such as their stance on abortion.⁴⁹⁴

In the Presidential election, Ronald Reagan was publicly endorsed by the National Right to Life PAC (NRLPAC) and despite not garnering an official endorsement from the Moral Majority, he nevertheless featured heavily in the organisation's newsletters. Adding further weight to the group's tacit support were the pro-Reagan pamphlets widely circulated amongst Moral Majority members.⁴⁹⁵ Journalist and Berkeley Professor Cynthia Gorney described the incoming President as appearing "sincere, committed, trustworthy and electable – the most exciting presidential prospect [seen by Christian conservatives] in the seven years since *Roe v. Wade*."⁴⁹⁶ The results of the 1980 elections saw publicly pro-life candidates defeat more than a dozen incumbent Senators and House Representatives across a number

⁴⁹² Gillian Peele, *Revival and Reaction*, p. 95. And "The House: Matters of Morality", *Time Magazine*, September 29, 1980. (<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,952780-1,00.html> – accessed January 9, 2008). This practice has continued even into the 2008 Presidential election, where voters in north-eastern Pennsylvania were warned against voting for the pro-choice Democrat candidate Barack Obama. However, many voters disregarded this petition, with the region voting 63%-37% in favour of Obama. In Anthony M. Stevens-Arroyo, "Bishops Must Rethink Anti-Abortion Strategy."

⁴⁹³ Michele McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, p. 35.

⁴⁹⁴ Michele McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, p. 34.

⁴⁹⁵ Michele McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, p. 36.

⁴⁹⁶ Cynthia Gorney, *Articles of Faith*, pp. 336-7.

of states, from South Dakota to Georgia and even New York.⁴⁹⁷ This should however, be placed in the overall context of victory for 45 new Congressmen and women, four governors and 220 state legislators, and of course the new President - all of whom were members of the rejuvenated Republican Party.⁴⁹⁸

The *National Right to Life News* quickly sought to mitigate any premature celebration of these successes, declaring in its editorial, “We must not now bask in the glory of incomplete victory and allow our complete victory to slip away.”⁴⁹⁹ Such calls for restraint may have also stemmed from contentions over whether the abortion issue was in fact *the* election-deciding factor some in the movement might have believed. Exit polling suggested that abortion was “a critical issue” for less than three percent of voters, compared to the vast majority who saw inflation and government spending as the key issues.⁵⁰⁰

Attempts to recreate the electoral clout of the antiabortion agenda in the congressional elections of 1982 proved a dismal failure compared to the perceived “successes” of 1980. Pro-life advocates Ed McAteer, Paul Brown and Terry Dolan (of National Conservative PACs) were all unsuccessful in promoting the electability of pro-life Republicans, even within the seemingly supportive terrain of the southern ‘Bible Belt’. Christian conservatives, joined in this advocacy by specialist Republican Party consultants, naively took for granted the political gains previously achieved from promoting social issues, of which the abortion issue was a key component.⁵⁰¹ Such failures were again realised during the 1984 Presidential election, as Centre for Political Studies research showed abortion being the “most

⁴⁹⁷ Cynthia Gorney, *Articles of Faith*, p. 350.

⁴⁹⁸ Michele McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, p. 37.

⁴⁹⁹ cited in Cynthia Gorney, *Articles of Faith*, p. 351.

⁵⁰⁰ Michele McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, p. 38.

⁵⁰¹ Michele McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, pp. 59-60.

important problem” for only 0.4% of those surveyed.⁵⁰² This campaign also demonstrated a sense of the pendulum swinging back the other way, which had serious electoral repercussions for Christian conservative candidates. In 1986, five incumbent House representatives suffered electoral defeat in favour of pro-choice candidates.⁵⁰³

Other losses in 1989 for governor posts in New Jersey and Virginia were also affected by the abortion issue. The New Jersey Republican Governor Jim Courter had attempted to moderate his pro-life position in the hope of attracting a broader-based voting bloc, while still maintaining a pro-life platform. This policy of fence-sitting failed markedly, with Coulter convincingly defeated by the decidedly pro-choice Democrat, James Florio. In Virginia, the pro-life Republican candidate Marshall Coleman was confronted early and often in his campaign by Democrat L. Douglas Wilder, with Wilder’s pro-choice arguments focusing on individual rights and limited government. This put Coleman immediately on the defensive and his inability to respond to such arguments made his entire campaign appear weak and indecisive.⁵⁰⁴

Abortion politics was further complicated in the 1990 national elections, which had been heralded within the media as the “nation’s abortion referendum.” In that year’s contests in Iowa, the pro-choice Senator Tom Harkin was re-elected alongside the pro-life Governor Terry Branstad. This lack of uniformity was largely corroborated across the national stage, with an array of both pro-life and pro-choice candidates elected.⁵⁰⁵ If this was indeed to be a referendum, it failed dismally in

⁵⁰² Patricia Donovan, *When the Conventional Wisdom is Wrong: A Re-examination of the Role of Abortion as an Issue in Federal Elections, 1974-1986* (Washington, D.C.: Alan Guttmacher Institute, 1988) p. 9. Cited in Michele McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, p. 101.

⁵⁰³ Michele McKeegan, *Abortion Politics*, p. 106.

⁵⁰⁴ E. J. Dionne Jr., *Why Americans Hate Politics*, p. 292.

⁵⁰⁵ E. J. Dionne Jr., *Why Americans Hate Politics*, pp. 341-2.

achieving a decisive mandate on any level. However, these events should be placed in the context of the *Webster* decision a year prior, which sought to legitimise the government's capacity to legally restrict abortion on an individual state level.⁵⁰⁶ This decision, handed down by the Supreme Court, did little to achieve decisive action regarding the place of abortion within United States society. Social divisions thus continued into 1990 and beyond, in the electoral successes and failures of various state-level politicians.

The rise of militant Christian conservative groups during this time, such as Operation Rescue, only added to the fractured nature of abortion politics. In varying degrees these groups were an electoral liability to conservative Republicans, as their efforts in mobilising grassroots supporters were often tempered by a backlash from socially-progressive voters. In response to this volatility, Ralph Reed called for more “sophisticated calculations” from Christian conservatives to achieve pro-life electoral success.⁵⁰⁷ An example of such increased “sophistication” occurred in Georgia Republican Paul Coverdell's Senate victory in 1992. Coverdell publicly endorsed abortion restrictions, while not committing to a total ban of the practice. Despite the disclaimer, pro-life Christian conservative groups such as the NRLC and Christian Coalition unified around the candidate and ploughed significant resources into his campaign against the Democrat incumbent Wyche Fowler. Fowler was a chief target of the antiabortionist lobby, having previously cosponsored the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA), which sought to make abortion nationally available *without* restriction. In an extremely close vote requiring a subsequent run-off, Coverdell's eventual success was largely attributed to both the substantial funding and the unified support

⁵⁰⁶ Sara Diamond, *Roads to Dominion*, p. 252.

⁵⁰⁷ a term used by Ralph Reed in describing the more practical focus by Christian conservative voters to elect Paul Coverdell in 1992, cited in William Saletan, *Bearing Right*, p. 219.

he received from his Christian conservative backers.⁵⁰⁸ This was especially crucial in the case of an election run-off, as this mobilised and motivated constituency overcame the commonplace scenario of voter fatigue usually present in run-off ballots, to make a strong showing for their conservative candidate. This narrow victory however, was far removed from the bravado of the early 1980s where one Christian conservative leader was quoted as declaring, “We will create a climate where it’s not necessary to lobby in Washington.”⁵⁰⁹ Ultimately it remains in political candidates best interests to do as much as possible not to blatantly offend either side of the abortion issue, which Reagan successfully accomplished in the 1980s. By appealing to the conservative camp in rhetoric, as well as assuaging the liberal fold in his actions (or lack thereof), Reagan maintained his electability and set up George H.W. Bush to maintain Republican control of the Presidency after his own two terms in office.⁵¹⁰

Summary

It is one thing to achieve electoral success by “playing politics” in regard to the abortion issue, however it is something quite different altogether to achieve substantive policy outcomes that are built on a popular mandate. Ultimately, the entire nature of abortion politics rests on some critical and problematic realities, articulated by Anthony M. Stevens Arroyo, in his assertion that “no elected politician can vote to outlaw all abortions because the U.S. Constitution overrides legislation. As illustrated by Republican presidents going back to Ronald Reagan, saying you are pro-life will not end all abortions. But providing a better social and economic

⁵⁰⁸ William Saletan, *Bearing Right*, p. 219.

⁵⁰⁹ Quote by James Robinson in *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, September 6, 1980, p. 2629. Cited in Barbara Hinkson Craig and David M. O’Brien, *Abortion and American Politics*, p. 52.

⁵¹⁰ E. J. Dionne Jr., *Why Americans Hate Politics*, p. 290.

climate reduces the rate of abortions.”⁵¹¹ Many Christian conservatives regard this as ignoring the clear principle behind their conviction, which proclaims that abortion reduction should be the *result* of an outright ban and not an alternative compromise. However such advocates might indeed be careful of what they wish for, as the much heralded overturning of *Roe v. Wade* would essentially have the consequence of returning abortion politics to the state legislatures. This would potentially result in increased deregulation, and even the re-introduction of unconditional abortion-on-demand.⁵¹²

In 2002 the Christian conservative group, American Life League (ALL), charged John Kerry and Ted Kennedy (both pro-choice Catholics) with “risk[ing] their eternal salvation.” However the group simultaneously supported “pro-life” Republicans in advocating the death penalty.⁵¹³ Such a bold and clearly partisan stance opened the ALL to accusations of hypocrisy, as both practices involve the ending of life. As an alternative to this, pro-life moderates have increasingly sought to positively promote the benefits of their own values rather than merely attack “liberals” as the overarching enemy and thus perpetuating divisiveness.⁵¹⁴ Arguably the best chance for achieving an available consensus starts within the context of Bill Clinton’s remarks that abortion be “safe, legal and rare.”⁵¹⁵ While using the same rhetorical appeal as Reagan, his more moderating approach is constructed in the knowledge that while abortion is largely perceived by U.S. society as an unfortunate reality, this does not mean its application and impacts should be ignored or

⁵¹¹ Anthony M. Stevens-Arroyo, “Bishops Must Rethink Anti-Abortion Strategy”.

⁵¹² Kenneth D. Wald and Allison Calhoun-Brown, *Religion and Politics in the United States (Fifth Edition)* p. 233.

⁵¹³ Esther Kaplan, *With God on Their Side*, p. 132.

⁵¹⁴ seen in the efforts, for example, of Jennifer Roth who created the “Leftout” website in 1997 for “Progressive Pro-Lifers” (<http://prolife.liberal.com/> - accessed January 16, 2008). Cited in Heidi Schlumpf, “No Place to Stand”.

⁵¹⁵ cited in Julie Polter, “Women and Children First”, *Sojourners Magazine*.

trivialised. Even George W. Bush's admission that "We don't live in an ideal world right now" (in the context of ending abortion), demonstrates that the options available to Christian conservatives must in many respects centre on practical outcomes, moving away from hyper-idealised convictions, and towards the best interests of both the mothers and children.⁵¹⁶ It is here that the majority of voters sit, and where consensus can thus start to be built.

⁵¹⁶ cited in William Saletan, *Bearing Right*, p. 251.

CHAPTER THREE

A Faithful Partnership?: Christian Conservatives and the United States-Israel Relationship.

“I’m going to be their friend whether they want me to or not.”⁵¹⁷

Jerry Falwell.

The United States has had numerous foreign policy objectives since Ronald Reagan’s presidential election victory in 1980, however none have received more attention from Christian conservatives than the growing relationship between the United States and Israel. While a diplomatic relationship has existed since 1948, cultural ties between the two have been evident since the late nineteenth century, demonstrated within the activities of various Zionist groups and individuals.⁵¹⁸ This has come to significantly include Christian conservative networks, who have long been the largest active constituency in the United States in seeking to guide and influence this relationship. This chapter will analyse their influence, exhibited through their beliefs and actions, which links their own agenda to that of the U.S.-Israel relationship: politically, culturally and theologically.

Central to this agenda has been the issue of ideology, which has over the years taken a variety of forms. The nature of such religious ideology, enveloping both the Christian and Jewish faiths, has been a key component to the political relationship between Christian conservatives and Israel, and cannot be underestimated. Themes of national identity, as particularly understood by social

⁵¹⁷ Jerry Falwell, quoted by Kathy Sawyer, “Falwell Attempts to Mend Interfaith Fences Despite His Ties to Israel, Many Jews see Moral Majority Leader as Nemesis”, *The Washington Post*, April 4, 1985 p. A04.

⁵¹⁸ Timothy P. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon: How Evangelicals Became Israel’s Best Friend* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), p. 13.

conservatives within the United States and Israel, have also been a critical component to the discussion, as their similarities and differences have important ramifications in policy generation and the capacity for political stability.

An equally important factor alongside these ideological concerns has been the organisational framework which surrounds them. Various political, cultural and religious organisations within both the United States and Israel have consistently acted as the fundamental vessels through which such ideology is channelled into direct political action. Within these networks stand a number of leaders who have championed the religious and political links between the United States and Israel. Some, such as Ralph Reed and Pat Robertson, have effectively used the media to publicise the Christian conservative agenda in relation to Israel. However, many others have operated privately in generating grassroots support, and most importantly finance, to act in strengthening Israel's national identity. Alongside these organisations, both Congress and numerous Presidential administrations have also played a part in providing both tangible and moral support to Israel. While it is contentious to argue that Christian conservatives have an altogether controlling influence in respect to Israel, within these spheres of government significant influence has nonetheless been apparent since the 1980s.

These various factors all work together in contributing to the relationship between the United States and Israel, and Christian conservatives have frequently sought to impact all of them. Few areas of U.S. government policy, either foreign or domestic, are engaged with by Christian conservatives so intensely, by such a mass constituency. The ability of Israeli political leaders themselves to enter into the discussion on the side of Christian conservatives with political rhetoric and gestures is another unique element, which further increases the significance of Christian

conservative engagement. However, this connection is far from monolithic and absolute, with moderating voices continuing to be heard, such as that of Jim Wallis. However, despite the presence of such dissenting views, opposition is marginalised by the overwhelmingly capacity of Christian conservative organisations, which is further reinforced by their uncompromising ideology.

A Question of Faith: The Religious Culture of Christian Conservatism

Sure, these guys give me the heebie-jeebies. But until I see Jesus coming over the hill, I'm in favour of all the friends Israel can get.⁵¹⁹

Lenny Davis, former researcher for AIPAC
(American Israel Public Affairs Committee)

Before being able to critically assess the political aspirations of Christian conservatives in relation to Israel, it is essential to first understand the theological and cultural ideology that motivates this relationship. Within this, certain historical events are important, such as the missionary forays of John Nelson Darby, who throughout the 1870s took his evangelical message of pre-millennial dispensationalism to the United States.⁵²⁰ Darby's understanding was that history is divided into certain allocations of time, or dispensations, all of which are determined by God. Certain events are required to take place, as attested to in Bible prophecy, in order to facilitate a transition from one dispensation to another. Between ten and fifteen million people within the United States are identified as "doctrinal" believers

⁵¹⁹ In Paul Charles Merkley, *Christian Attitudes Towards the State of Israel* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), p. 204, cited in Robert O. Smith, "Between Restoration and Liberation: Theopolitical Contributions and Responses to U.S. Foreign Policy in Israel/Palestine", *Journal of Church and State*, September 2004, p. 848.

⁵²⁰ Timothy P. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon...*, p. 13.

of this theology, with the same amount again classified as looser, more “narrative” believers.⁵²¹

These, and other Christian conservatives, believe the world currently exists in the second to last of these dispensations. In order to get to the final dispensation, which involves the “Second Coming of Christ” and the time of the “Apocalypse,” the world’s Jewish population is required to return to the Holy Land, that being the state of Israel. This requirement is one of the catalysts for the “rapture,” where Christians are inexplicably taken from the earth up to heaven. Those remaining (including non-converted Jews) are left to endure seven years of tribulation, which will lead those who manage to survive to ultimately convert to Christianity.⁵²² This ideology of dispensationalism garnered significant support within the United States, where notions of “manifest destiny” were already well ingrained.⁵²³ Such believers were attracted to the concept of a further heavenly place of privilege, where God could provide order amid worldly chaos, and succumbed to the evangelists’ compelling narrative.⁵²⁴ While maintaining most of their fundamental beliefs, premillennial dispensationalism did however require a foundational understanding that the land of Palestine (now Israel) was the central point of Bible prophecy, as opposed to early Puritan belief that saw America as “God’s new Israel.”⁵²⁵

⁵²¹ Amy Johnson Frykholm, *Rapture Culture...*, p. 25.

⁵²² Ken Silverstein and Michael Scherer, “Born-again Zionists” in *Mother Jones* Sept/Oct 2002, pp. 60-1.

⁵²³ Julius W. Pratt provides a good overview of the origins of manifest destiny within the United States in “The Origin of ‘Manifest Destiny’”, *The American Historical Review*, 32.4 (July 1927) pp. 795-8. For a more contemporary analysis see Charles H. Brown, *Agents of Manifest Destiny: the lives and times of the filibusters* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1980) and Sam W. Haynes and Christopher Morris [eds.] *Manifest Destiny and Empire: American antebellum expansionism* (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 1997).

⁵²⁴ Joel Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) p. 71

⁵²⁵ Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992) p. 226 and Clyde Wilcox, *Onward Christian Soldiers...* p. 16.

Darby's teachings on premillennial dispensationalism even led the early evangelists Horatio and Anna Spafford to organise a group of sixteen others to journey to Palestine in 1881, in preparation for Christ's return.⁵²⁶ Another of Darby's American supporters was the evangelist, author and friend of the Spafford's, William E. Blackstone. Blackstone played an integral role within the early relationship between U.S. Christian conservatives and Jews, as he was one of the original instigators of a distinct Zionist campaign within the United States.⁵²⁷ In 1878 Blackstone published a major prophetic work entitled *Jesus is Coming*, which further popularised Darby's dispensationalist theology by making it accessible to a wide audience. Through financial support from Lyman Stewart, who also assisted in financing the *Scofield Reference Bible*, *Jesus Is Coming* proved so successful that it was published in three increasingly larger editions and translated into 42 languages.⁵²⁸ Blackstone also personally petitioned President Benjamin Harrison in 1891 for his support in the creation of a Jewish nation, planned for what was then Palestine.⁵²⁹ Seeking further publicity, in October of that year Blackstone stated in a widely-published article that

there is one spot toward which the eye of the Jew has turned...his beloved Palestine. There is room there for two or three millions more people, *and the ancient scriptural limits of the country would largely increase its capacity*. The rains are returning, agriculture is improving, its location promises great commercial opportunities, and only an independent, enlightened and progressive government is needed to afford a home for all of Israel who wish to return.⁵³⁰

⁵²⁶ David S. New, *Holy War: The Rise of Militant Christian, Jewish and Islamic Fundamentalism* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, Inc. Publishers, 2002), pp. 32-3. A century after this journey, Israel has a specific 'Pilgrim Promoting Division' of its Trade and Tourism ministry, and estimates that one in five U.S. tourists to Israel are Christian dispensationalists. Barbara Victor, *The Last Crusade*, pp. 107-8.

⁵²⁷ Robert O. Smith, "Between Restoration and Liberation...", p. 837.

⁵²⁸ The *Scofield Reference Bible* was produced by Cyrus I, Scofield, who added footnotes to the King James version that identified premillennial dispensationalist concepts within passages of the Bible. Amy Johnson Frykholm, *Rapture Culture...* p. 17. Timothy P. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon...*, pp. 102-3.

⁵²⁹ David S. New, *Holy War*, p. 32.

⁵³⁰ Emphasis added. Quoted in Anita Libman-Lebeson, "Zionism Comes to Chicago," in *Early History of Zionism in America*, Isidore S. Meyer [ed.] (New York: American Jewish Historical Society and Theodore

While President Harrison nevertheless refused to support Blackstone in this venture, the episode nevertheless demonstrated what was later described as “nascent support of Zionism within Christian and political circles in the United States...years before Jewish Zionism marked its official political beginning.”⁵³¹

Catholic conservative author Richard John Neuhaus has since tackled the issue of Christian theology intertwined with Zionism in his 1984 work, *The Naked Public Square*. Stating that “Israel...is not a historical idea to be exploited,” he also acknowledged that “For many Zionists, the State of Israel is itself a kind of theophany [a tangibly visible appearance of God] and fulfilment of divine promise.”⁵³² The Biblical roots of this perspective centre largely on the Abrahamic covenant, found in Genesis 15:18, which states “On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram [Abraham] and said, ‘To your descendents I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates...’”⁵³³ In accordance with this Biblical mandate, Ron Nachman, former Likud member in the Knesset and founder of the Israeli settler town of Ariel some 25 miles east of Jerusalem, has further argued that “in the Bible there is no mention of Occupied Territories or the West Bank or Gaza. There is only promised land for Israel in the Bible.”⁵³⁴

However other commentators regard Nachman’s view as an ultimately flawed assumption, on account of other Biblical qualifiers. In their article “How Christian is

Herzl Foundation, 1958) pp. 168-9. Cited in Timothy P. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon...*p. 104.

⁵³¹ Donald E. Wagner, “Short Fuse to Apocalypse?”, *Sojourners Magazine*, July/August 2003 32.4 (<http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=soj0307&article=030710> – accessed December 21, 2008). On the 75th anniversary of Blackstone’s petition to President Harrison, a memorial forest in Israel was dedicated to Blackstone’s honour. J.D. Douglas [ed.] *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1974), p. 135. Cited in Timothy P. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon...*p. 106.

⁵³² Richard John Neuhaus, *The Naked Public Square*, p. 167.

⁵³³ Genesis 15:18, *The Student Bible (NIV)* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996) p. 39.

⁵³⁴ Barbara Victor, *The Last Crusade*, pp. 217-20.

Zionism?”, Leslie C. Allen and Glen Stassen (both theological professors) counter Nachman’s claims of a Jewish monopoly on God’s covenant by arguing that Abraham was in fact father to many nations, including those of Arab descent, through the bloodline of Abraham’s first son, Ishmael.⁵³⁵ Allen and Stassen also cite the Apostle Paul, who declared in the New Testament book of Romans that Abraham was the father of both Jew and Gentile; circumcised and uncircumcised.⁵³⁶ Outside of such theological debates, the United Nations has also attempted to blunt the divisive elements of Zionism. In 1975 it passed a resolution that equated Zionism with the apartheid regime then present in South Africa.⁵³⁷ While the resolution’s passage provided some well-intentioned scrutiny to the issue, it nevertheless also gave pro-Israel hard-liners further cause to rally against this perceived persecution.

Christian conservatives have often been at the forefront of this support, with their religious beliefs figuring heavily in this conviction. “Why would we not stand with Israel?” declared Gary Bauer at a May 2002 prayer breakfast in Washington D.C., hosted by the Israeli embassy. “Why would we not stand with the nation about which God says, ‘if you bless it I will bless you, and if you curse it I will curse you’? That’s good enough for me. I don’t need anything else.”⁵³⁸ Bauer’s paraphrase of Genesis 12:3 is often quoted in Christian conservative circles, however taken in its entirety, it finishes with the statement “and *all* peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”⁵³⁹ Citation of this verse can also however highlight the not-so benevolent motivations some Christian conservatives have underlying their support

⁵³⁵ Genesis 17:3-6, *The Student Bible (NIV)* p. 40. Cited by Leslie C. Allen and Glen Stassen, “How Christian is Zionism?”, *Sojourners Magazine*, July/August 2003 32.4 (<http://www.sojournal.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=soj0307&article=030710c> – accessed December 21, 2008). And Genesis, 16:15, *The Student Bible (NIV)* p. 40. Cited by Allen and Stassen, *Sojourners*.

⁵³⁶ Romans, 4:11-12, *The Student Bible (NIV)* p. 1179. Cited by Allen and Stassen, *Sojourners*.

⁵³⁷ Edward Bernard Glick, *The Triangular Connection: America, Israel and the American Jews* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1982), p. 98.

⁵³⁸ Cited in Ken Silverstein and Michael Scherer, “Born-again Zionists”, p. 58.

⁵³⁹ Genesis 12:3, *The Student Bible (NIV)* p. 36.

of Jewish interests. Just as emigrating diaspora Jews to Israel can be regarded as a self-serving attempt by Christian conservatives to instigate the “Second Coming” of Christ, Bauer here also arguably revealed a self-serving desire for individual blessing as a sole justification for supporting Israel. Such sentiments have also been echoed by other Christian conservative leaders, such as Hal Lindsay, Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson.⁵⁴⁰ The specific nature of what entails God’s “blessing” remains somewhat problematic, especially when Gentiles are brought into the equation. Christian conservative author Tom Hess has asserted that “The *Palestinians* will find blessings coming to them like they can not imagine...if they embrace the Jewish people and if they bless them and if they stop violence and start blessing.”⁵⁴¹ However the question of what specific ‘blessing’ Palestinians would give Israelis, and themselves receive, is left as an unanswered abstraction by Hess.

Alongside a stance of broad and unflinching support for Israel, some Christian conservatives have also used divisive rhetoric to condemn Muslim Palestinians within the Occupied Territories who they believe would attack Israel in word or deed. Ralph Reed’s charge against “crazed and hate-filled suicide bomber[s]” as well as schools “that teach young Arab children to hate others simply because of their faith and ethnic background” are frequent targets in such verbal attacks.⁵⁴² While Christian conservatives are not unique in condemning Palestinian extremism, many of their tirades do however lack a fundamental understanding of the complexities surrounding it. More nuanced analysis has instead come from such

⁵⁴⁰ David S. New, *Holy War*, p. 119.

⁵⁴¹ Emphasis added. Chris Mitchell, “The Spiritual Roadmap to Middle East Peace”, *Christian Action for Israel.Org* Newsletter #155, Friday Oct. 10, 2003 (<http://christianactionforisrael.org/news/news155.html#1> – accessed December 21, 2008).

⁵⁴² Ralph Reed, *Israel and the United States: An Enduring Friendship, An Essential Alliance*, remarks given at the Anti-Defamation League Leadership Conference, Washington D.C., April 29, 2003.

sources as James Zogby, president of the Arab-American Institute, who has linked his denunciation of terrorism with the following analysis:

It is equally important to insist without condition or reservation that terrorist acts of violence by Palestinian extremists also end. These acts do nothing to alleviate Palestinian hardships, nor do they allay Palestinian rage. Their purpose is political and not in response to Palestinian suffering. Rather, they prey off of the Palestinian dilemma and serve to create conditions that compound the dilemma. They must, therefore, be unequivocally condemned – and those who order and organise them must also be condemned. There can be no defence for those who persist in taking life in this way.⁵⁴³

While terrorism is overwhelmingly regarded as indefensible and without justification, many Christian moderates have been far more willing than their conservative counterparts to address the underlying issues behind the cycle of violence. The prominent Palestinian Christian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi directly criticised the “Christian Right” in 2005 for maintaining a belief that Palestinians are “dispensable and disposable,” while also bearing responsibility for what she describes as “some sort of automatic and blind identification with Israel.”⁵⁴⁴ Evidence of this “identification” can clearly be found in an interview between Barbara Victor and Christian conservative leader Gary Bauer. In her book *Last Crusade*, Victor described a meeting with Bauer, in which he mentioned an anticipated conference call between himself, Esther Levens (founder and CEO of the National Unity Coalition for Israel), and Republican Senator Sam Brownback. This call was to discuss a jointly-written letter to President George W. Bush, outlining a plan for the forced transfer of Palestinians from the Occupied Territories. When queried on this highly controversial position, Bauer demonstrated no qualms with the

⁵⁴³ James Zogby, “Commentary: Assassinating Peace?: The Prospects for progress after Rabin”, *Sojourners Magazine*, Jan/Feb 1996 25.1 (<http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=soj9601&article=960141d> – accessed December 21, 2008).

⁵⁴⁴ Rose Marie Berger, “Full text of Hanan Ashrawi interview”, *Sojourners Magazine*, February 2005 34.2 (<http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=soj0502&article=050220x> – accessed December 21, 2008).

plan, stating only that, “It is a question of wording. Obviously it is a sensitive issue and we have to present it in a way that is not incendiary.”⁵⁴⁵

Bauer’s position on the Occupied Territories is largely regarded as justifiable by many Christian conservatives, who as a constituency also endorsed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s 1993 reference to the nation of Jordan as “East Palestine.” The motivation behind this statement lies in the belief that, with around 90% of that country’s demographic being of Palestinian origin, Jordan (as opposed to the West Bank or Gaza Strip) would be regarded by this group as appropriate geography for a Palestinian state.⁵⁴⁶ Alternative U.S. government-led attempts at brokering a peace deal regarding the Occupied Territories have also largely been criticised by Gary Bauer and Pat Robertson. The reasons behind their rejections include a stated belief in the inherent incompatibility on the part of Palestinians to be able to peacefully co-exist with Israelis. Within this discussion, Bauer and Robertson have also reaffirmed the ‘God-given’ mandate for Israel to occupy *all* the land given them through the Abrahamic covenant.⁵⁴⁷ To this end, Robertson has declared that “[Israeli’s] are faced with an overwhelming sea of Muslims who are hostile. They need friends. They have a friend in me.”⁵⁴⁸

As well as support from Robertson personally, Israel also benefits from special treatment from journalists at Robertson’s Christian Broadcasting News (CBN) media service. In a 2003 news segment prefaced with the statement “The Road Map sets up a current day drama between the ancient covenants and modern day diplomacy”, reporter Chris Mitchell overtly depicted the Israeli-Palestinian

⁵⁴⁵ Barbara Victor interview with Gary Bauer at his office in Virginia, July 2003 in *Last Crusade*, p. 230.

⁵⁴⁶ Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, p. 103.

⁵⁴⁷ Robert O. Smith, “Between Restoration and Liberation...”, p. 834.

⁵⁴⁸ Pat Robertson quoted in Eun Lee Koh, “Jewish Community To Hear Robertson: Some Members Wary of His Views”, *The Boston Globe*, April 13 2003, p. 4.

conflict through the lens of Old Testament prophecy. His principal interview for the segment was with David Rubin, spokesman for the Israeli settler town of Shiloh in the West Bank, who asserted that:

The only Road Map, legitimate Road Map is a Road Map of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob...If we look at that hill and the road going north from here, that is 'the Road of the Patriarchs'. The Road of the Patriarchs is the path that the Patriarchs took when they were travelling the land of Israel... So you're talking about the Biblical heartland here. And anyone who talks about giving up the Biblical heartland is going against the Bible. Is going against God's Word. I can't put it any clearer than that.⁵⁴⁹

Jerry Falwell provided similar comments to the *New York Times* in 1981, where speaking on the conflict he declared that, "The United States government should not be party to any pressure that could create a peace that is not lasting, equitable and scriptural."⁵⁵⁰ Within this statement, the qualifier "scriptural" acts as a not-so subtle message to other like-minded Christian conservatives by reinforcing a strong pro-Israel sentiment that many see as an unshakeable aspect of their faith. This sentiment is so pervasive that despite a strong affiliation with George W. Bush, approximately 40 Christian conservative leaders rejected his overtures to support the peace Roadmap during a clandestine meeting in July 2003.⁵⁵¹ It is therefore apparent that ideological conviction remains the dominant focus of many Christian conservatives regarding Israel, whereby even opportunities to consolidate a favourable political coalition within the United States are reduced to a peripheral consideration.

The nature of memory and its breadth of scope relating to the Middle East conflict is another crucial factor neglected by many Christian conservative leaders.

⁵⁴⁹ Chris Mitchell, "The Spiritual Roadmap to Middle East Peace"

⁵⁵⁰ *The New York Times*, November 1980. Quoted in Jerry Falwell, *Listen America! Sword of the Lord* Publishing, 1980. Cited in Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, pp. 103-4.

⁵⁵¹ This meeting was called by the White House Office of Public Liaison, and featured a detailed briefing by Condoleezza Rice. Reported by Douglas Turner, "Christian Zionists' Resist Bush on Mideast Peace", *Buffalo News*, 17 August 2003 and cited by Robert O. Smith, "Between Restoration and Liberation...", *Journal of Church and State*, p. 846.

For while Ralph Reed, among others, has been quick to draw upon Israeli memories of Palestinian terror attacks, he has consistently failed to acknowledge the broader suffering from violence that all parties involved in the conflict have faced.⁵⁵² Within the sphere of the Middle East conflict, such violence is inherently a product of memory largely guided by revenge. In his article “Remember This,” Dr. James W. Aageson has argued that “What we are able to remember is important, but *how* we remember is even more so.” He then relates this principle to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, by stating that

Each new incident of violence and provocation re-establishes the pattern [of revenge] and draws the long list of grievances, some from long ago, into the present as if they happened only yesterday. Time collapses and memory sharpens to the point of governing how the present is to be lived, and the spiral of violence goes on.⁵⁵³

Christian conservatives within the U.S. play a significant part in this, on account of their own perceptions of the conflict. In its formative years Christian conservatism was largely a defensive movement, seeking to conserve its theology purely on a domestic basis. However, this has now fundamentally reversed in both its rhetoric and action, especially in terms of U.S. foreign policy relating to Israel. This transition, according to William A. Galston, has involved a significant shift in characteristics, with the movement now more than ever possessing an intolerant outlook, uncompromising stance and totalist aspirations.⁵⁵⁴ Professor Richard Mouw, President of the Fuller Theological Seminary, has further defined the movement this way: “Christian Zionists want to see events unfold, but they aren’t so

⁵⁵² Ralph Reed, *Israel and the United States*, remarks.

⁵⁵³ James W. Aageson, “Remember This”, *Sojourners Magazine*, March/April 2001 30.2 (<http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=soj0103&article=010324> – accessed December 21, 2008).

⁵⁵⁴ William A. Galston, *Public Matters...*, p. 171.

concerned about justice.”⁵⁵⁵ This sense of justice, or lack thereof, is regarded by many moderates as a core value integral to alleviating the human suffering within the region, in contrast to many Christian conservative leaders who have often proved inconsistent in the application of justice. As Texas pastor and author Robert O. Smith has attested, “If human suffering (both Palestinian and Israeli) is one side of the Christian Zionist theological coin, the other is comprised of an abstracted, a-historical, highly sentimentalised and almost mythological philo-Semitic approach to Jews.”⁵⁵⁶

Many Christian conservatives have furthermore continually sought to perpetuate the belief that Israel is the sole victim of the Middle-East conflict, which has taken root in the broader political relationship between the United States and Israel. Within this conservative realm, hard-line Jewish groups find a willing ear to listen to calls of “moral legitimacy” and “exceptionalism” through the mandate of God’s covenant.⁵⁵⁷ Moderates such as Christian leader Jim Wallis and Israeli peace activist Jeff Halper have raised concerns that this position further encourages Israeli hard-liners to not take accountability for their part in this cycle of violence, which ultimately precludes any steps towards sustainable peace.⁵⁵⁸ Furthermore, it remains a telling irony that Israel’s “paranoid consciousness” of being “wiped out” by the Palestinians - fears which are legitimised and perpetuated by Christian conservatives

⁵⁵⁵ Richard Mouw, cited by Malcolm Foster, “Christian Zionists Feel the Heat for Fighting Peace: Extremists Wield Considerable Power within Republican Party”, *The Daily Star*, 26 July 2003, p. 3, in Robert O. Smith, “Between Restoration and Liberation...”, p. 854.

⁵⁵⁶ Robert O. Smith, “Between Restoration and Liberation...”, p. 858.

⁵⁵⁷ Richard John Neuhaus, *The Naked Public Square*, p. 167. And Gil Merom, “Israel’s National Security and the Myth of Exceptionalism”, *Political Science Quarterly*, 114.3 (Autumn 1999) p. 410.

⁵⁵⁸ Jim Wallis, “Against Impossible Odds”, *Sojourners Magazine*, Sept/Oct 2001 30.5 (<http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=soj0109&article=010910> – accessed December 21, 2008).

- are inherently motivated by over 1700 years of vilification and persecution of Jews at the hands of *Christians*.⁵⁵⁹

Christian conservative influence in U.S.-Israeli relations often garners a great variety of responses from Jewish perspectives. Some, such as the former President of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Rabbi Alexander Schindler, are deeply aware of the Christian conservative theology regarding Jewish people, and are highly critical.⁵⁶⁰ Those such as Schindler need only look back less than a hundred years to see advocates of pre-millennial dispensationalism as some of history's most virulent anti-Semites. Such behaviour included vocal support of the conspiratorial anti-Semitic work, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, which has been subsequently proved as inherently fraudulent. Other examples include the tacit acceptance of Nazi persecution of Jews, under the belief that such pressure would lead Jews to receiving Christian conversion.

Throughout the late 1930s some Christian leaders publicly stated that such persecution was God's punishment of the Jews for "apostasy," while linking this to the former treatment faced under Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians.⁵⁶¹ Furthermore, dispensationalist leaders who organised a December 1, 1939 "international day of prayer" for the Jews neglected to include within the event prayers for the persecution of Jews to stop, and instead focused principally on Jewish conversions.⁵⁶² "Prophetically speaking," stated author Timothy P. Weber, "the most

⁵⁵⁹ Michael Lerner, "Commentary: A Cry for Atonement", *Sojourners Magazine*, Jan/Feb 2001 30.1 (<http://www.sojournal.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=soj0101&article=010141c> – accessed December 21, 2008).

⁵⁶⁰ David S. New, *Holy War*, p. 36.

⁵⁶¹ Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 209 and Louis Bauman, *The Time of Jacob's Trouble* (Long Beach, Cal: Privately Published, 1938. Cited in Timothy P. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon...*, pp. 146-7.

⁵⁶² *Moody Monthly* 40 (December 1939), pp. 175-6. Cited in Timothy P. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon...*, p. 148.

crucial point was not that millions were dying, *but that some would survive.*”⁵⁶³ This allusion to the prophetic notion of a *remnant* of Jews, highlighted in a number of Bible passages, has special significance for premillennial dispensationalism’s understanding of eschatology (characterised by most Christians as the study of “End Times”, but also includes the broader contexts of death and judgement, heaven and hell).⁵⁶⁴

As recently as 1999, the Christian conservative leader Jerry Falwell made the inflammatory prediction that the ‘Antichrist’ was not only alive, but was also in fact *Jewish*.⁵⁶⁵ Accused of theological extremism by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), Falwell made contrite public apologies for his comments in the media. However, according to *Slate* journalist Jeffrey Goldberg, who later that year met privately with the Virginia pastor, Falwell continued to maintain his belief that the Antichrist was indeed both alive and Jewish.⁵⁶⁶ A less inflammatory, yet equally revealing perspective was revealed in comments made by Pastor David Cooper to his Atlanta mega-church congregation in October 2003. Not only did Cooper pray for a “hedge of divine protection” for Israel, he also raised the controversial topic of God-ordained conversion of Jews. Speaking to his congregation of over a thousand members, Cooper prayed “for the Good News of Jesus to bring the peace of God, the greatest of all peace, to the hearts and the lives of those in Israel, in the Middle East, and in the world.”⁵⁶⁷

⁵⁶³ Emphasis added. Cited in David S. New, *Holy War*, pp. 35-6.

⁵⁶⁴ For example, 2 Kings 19; 2 Chronicles 34; Isaiah 11, 37; Jeremiah 23, 31, 44; Romans 9, 11. Definition taken from Webster’s online dictionary (<http://www.websters-online-dictionary.org/es/eschatology.html> - accessed February 10, 2009).

⁵⁶⁵ Ken Silverstein and Michael Scherer, “Born-again Zionists” in *Mother Jones*, p. 60.

⁵⁶⁶ Jeffrey Goldberg, “I, Antichrist?”, *Slate.com*, posted November 5, 1999 (<http://slate.com/id/45483/> - accessed December 21, 2008).

⁵⁶⁷ Pastor David Cooper cited in Esther Kaplan, *With God on Their Side*, (New York: The New Press, 2004), pp. 26-7.

Other Christian conservatives, such as Ralph Reed, have been hesitant to be so bold, and have even gone so far as to publicly *deny* links between their own theology and the conversion of Jews. On April 29, 2003 at a Leadership Conference of the Anti-Defamation League, Reed remarked in his address that

[Christian support of Israel] is not an attempt to impose our faith on others, or a function of someone's eschatology, or some effort to help God usher in the End Times. Rather, Christians support Israel because of the shared commitment to liberty and the transcendent worth of every human being to which I alluded earlier.⁵⁶⁸

A similar position was also propagated by Pastor John Hagee in 1983, declaring that, "Our approach in honoring the Jewish people is absolutely non-conversionary...We have a very strong conversionary approach among the Gentiles, but it is absolutely forbidden among the Jews."⁵⁶⁹

Since the late 1970s, many Jewish leaders have increasingly been more than happy to accept this line, if only for its political expediency. At a December 2000 meeting of 1500 Christian Zionists in Jerusalem, former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon told the group that, "we regard you to be our best friends in the world."⁵⁷⁰ He was even more exuberant in his praise and gratitude of Christian support two years later at a festival organised by the International Christian Embassy – Jerusalem. Here he stated, "I tell you now – we love YOU. We love all of you." He went on to say, "When you come here, you don't need a 'guide book'. You have a guide book, you have the Bible in your hands."⁵⁷¹ Other signals have been more subdued, such as the *Dabru Emet* document. Signed by a number of prominent rabbis and Jewish

⁵⁶⁸ Ralph Reed, *Israel and the United States*, remarks.

⁵⁶⁹ John Hagee, quoted in Richard Bernstein, "Evangelicals Strengthening Bonds With Jews", *The New York Times*, February 6 1983, p. A1.

⁵⁷⁰ Ariel Sharon cited in Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, p. 146.

⁵⁷¹ Ariel Sharon quoted in Donald E. Wagner, "Short Fuse to Apocalypse?", *Sojourners Magazine*.

scholars in January 2000, it called on Jews to end their suspicion of Christianity and highlighted the vast similarities between the faiths.⁵⁷²

Through espousing such positive theological considerations and minimising those more problematic, many Jewish leaders have taken a largely pragmatic approach to their relationship with Christian conservatives. An example of this can be seen in the remarks of former Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, who stated “What fundamentalists believe about the conversion of Jews is sometime in the future, maybe a thousand years from now. Israel needs all the friends it can get right now.”⁵⁷³ Such friends were sought following Israel’s air strike against an Iraqi nuclear reactor in 1981, when Begin contacted Jerry Falwell *before* President Reagan. Begin hoped Falwell would support Israel by assuaging any of Reagan’s potential concerns regarding the attack, by framing the air strike within the context of self-defence.⁵⁷⁴ Following this, Christian conservatives also overwhelmingly supported Begin’s Likud government when it invaded Lebanon in 1982.⁵⁷⁵ Both of these events clearly highlighted the mutuality of hard-line religious conservatives in both U.S. and Israeli politics.

While conservative Christians and Jews within the United States work together to support hard-line Israeli government policies, the number of members within the coalition is overwhelmingly weighted on the Christian conservative side. According to former White House staffer Grace Halsell, this is primarily because there are in excess of forty million Christian conservatives in the United States, compared to approximately six million Jews.⁵⁷⁶ While it is problematic to assume all of these Jewish citizens would advocate Christian conservative positions, these

⁵⁷² Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, pp. 146-7.

⁵⁷³ Menachem Begin, cited by Richard John Neuhaus, *The Naked Public Square*, p. 108.

⁵⁷⁴ Donald E. Wagner, “Short Fuse to Apocalypse?”, *Sojourners Magazine*.

⁵⁷⁵ Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, p. 104.

⁵⁷⁶ Cited in David S. New, *Holy War*, p. 119.

figures nevertheless highlight the potential for Christian conservative power and influence to dominate the Middle East issue, given their strength of numbers. However, according to Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, a man deeply involved with U.S. Christian conservatives, their influence is far from threatening to Israel and Jews. Instead, he argues, “It’s a question of trust. Ralph Reed, even if he had the opportunity, he’s not going to try to make [Israel] into a Christian nation and erode Jewish liberties.”⁵⁷⁷ In fact conversely, Jewish groups such as the Anti-Defamation League have previously viewed moderate Protestant Christians as a far more destructive threat than their conservative counterparts. In 1982, the ADL published “The Real Anti-Semitism in America,” which attacked the moderate National Council of Churches (NCC) because its agenda focused on humanitarian issues that included public support for Palestinian rights. The ADL even regarded the NCC as being latent supporters of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), a group frequently linked at the time with terrorist activities. Christian conservatives, with their sole focus on Israel’s rights to land and security, were thus identified by the ADL as a far more acceptable Christian group within the United States.⁵⁷⁸ Nathan Perlmutter, as director of the ADL, reinforced this belief within “The Real Anti-Semitism in America” by stating that “We need all the friends we have to support Israel...If the Messiah comes, on that day we’ll consider our options. Meanwhile, let’s praise the Lord and pass the ammunition.”⁵⁷⁹

While the ADL was originally supportive of Christian conservatives, not all Jews felt the same way. Exit polls from the 1984 presidential election revealed that

⁵⁷⁷ Esther Kaplan, *With God on Their Side*, p. 26.

⁵⁷⁸ Richard Bernstein, “Evangelicals Strengthening Bonds with Jews”. Also described in Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, p. 105.

⁵⁷⁹ Nathan Perlmutter and Ruth Ann Perlmutter, *The Real Anti-Semitism in America* (New York: Arbor House, 1982) quoted in Grace Halsell, *Prophecy and Politics: Militant Evangelists on the Road to Nuclear War* (Westport, Conn.: Lawrence Hill Books, 1986) p. 155 and cited in Timothy P. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon...*p. 232.

over 75% of Jewish voters found the Christian conservative spokesman Jerry Falwell ‘distasteful’, despite his close ties with the Israeli government and friendship with its Prime Minister. This led some academics to conclude that the “[Jewish] memory of red-neck anti-Semitism was too strong [to consider someone like Falwell a palatable social leader].”⁵⁸⁰ Importantly also, virtually all those Jewish voters who felt distaste for Falwell cast their ballot for the Democratic candidate, Walter Mondale.⁵⁸¹ Furthermore, as Christian conservative influence has continued to develop since the early 1980s, the ADL has also become increasingly concerned by the Christian conservative movement. In 1994 the ADL delivered a report entitled “The Religious Right: The Assault on Tolerance and Pluralism in America” which charged Christian conservatives with “conspiratorial, anti-Jewish and extremist sentiments.”⁵⁸² A decade later, the ADL’s national director, Abraham H. Foxman, further declared that,

Make no mistake: We are facing an emerging Christian Right leadership that intends to ‘Christianize’ all aspects of American life, from the halls of government to the libraries, to the movies, to recording studios, to the playing fields and locker rooms...from the military to SpongeBob SquarePants.⁵⁸³

In response to these charges, the high-profile Christian conservative lawyer (and Pat Robertson employee) Jay Sekulow acknowledged the problem as primarily one of phrasing. Regarding the concept of the United States as being a “Christian” nation, Sekulow described it as “terrible terminology...but it sounds a lot worse than it really is.”⁵⁸⁴ Elsewhere, Marshall Breger, a law professor and senior fellow at the conservative think-tank, the Heritage Foundation, has stated that Jews *would* be included in any “Christianized” running of the state machinery. He also attempted to

⁵⁸⁰ Edward Tivnan, *The Lobby*, p. 252.

⁵⁸¹ Mondale secured 71% of the Jewish vote in 1984, according to Kathy Sawyer, “Falwell Attempts to Mend Interfaith Fences...”, p. A4.

⁵⁸² Steve Rabey, “Some Conservative Jews Join Hands With Religious Right”, *The Dallas Morning News*, February 18 1995, p. 1G.

⁵⁸³ Abraham H. Foxman, quoted in Alan Cooperman, “Among Evangelicals, A Kinship With Jews; Some Skeptical of Growing Phenomenon”, *The Washington Post*, January 8, 2006, p. A1.

⁵⁸⁴ Jay Sekulow, quoted in Marc Fisher, “Unlikely Crusaders; Jay Sekulow, ‘Messianic Jew of the Christian Right’”, *The Washington Post*, October 21 1997, p. D1.

clarify some of the problematic terminology used by Christian conservatives by claiming that “the word ‘Christian’ is just [Christian conservative’s] locution for the word ‘spiritual’.”⁵⁸⁵ This supposition is completely facile and clearly manipulative, aimed squarely at hiding the true nature of Christian conservatism. For as the historical and eschatological evidence shows, there remains a distinct and fundamental gulf in theology between Christian conservatism and the Jewish faith. This however continues to be largely dismissed, and in some cases outright denied, within the political partnership between the two groups.

A Question of Engagement: The Political Culture of Christian Conservatism and its Jewish Interests.

I am a Bible scholar and theologian and from my perspective, the law of God transcends the law of the United States government and the U.S. State Department.⁵⁸⁶

Pastor John Hagee in a 1988 press conference, after declaring a \$1 million donation to resettle Jews exclusively in Jerusalem and West Bank settlements.

Since Israel’s emergence onto the global geopolitical arena, Christian conservatives have continually had a pervasive role in the political engagement between the United States and Israel. This role has most frequently been revealed through the dominant way that the United States has acted in reinforcing the legitimacy of Israel’s political activities. For example, sociologist Avishai Ehrlich,

⁵⁸⁵ Marshall Breger, quoted in David O’Reilly (of the Philadelphia Inquirer), “Jews assess rise of Christian Right: Leaders Differ Over Uniting with or Battling Conservatives”, *The Dallas Morning News*, June 18 1995, p. A12.

⁵⁸⁶ Donald Wagner, “Reagan and Begin, Bibi and Jerry: The Theopolitical Alliance between the Likud Party with the American Christian ‘Right’”, *Arab Studies Quarterly* 20.4 (Fall 1998) p. 46.

of Tel Aviv University, has argued that the current climate of “post-Zionism” is in fact “a local version of U.S. ideological globalization” in which there is no peace, stability or liberty.⁵⁸⁷ Furthermore, Ehrlich regards the impact of religion as “*the* source of political legitimation for the state of Israel and for its *continued* control and colonization of the whole of Palestine.”⁵⁸⁸ While an initial majority of Jewish migrants to Palestine sought merely to escape religious persecution, subsequent others planned to implement a socialist society. Most recently however are those who have come specifically to inhabit the Israeli settlements of the Occupied Territories, in order to be part of Israel’s geographical expansion. The motivation for this rests largely in the living out of a politicised Zionism through what Aharon Kellerman terms the “settlement myth.”⁵⁸⁹ Many Israeli politicians, particularly from the hardline Likud party, have openly acknowledged their desire for inhabitation of this contested land. They include the current Likud Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who in 1996 flew a contingent of Christian conservative leaders to Israel, under the auspices of the Israel Christian Advocacy Council. Before returning to the United States, these Christian leaders publicly pledged their full support of the Israeli government, vowing that “America never, never, desert Israel.”⁵⁹⁰ Such an overt pledge of unity is only as meaningful as the actions that support it, and as even recent history demonstrates, Christian conservatives have been consistently active in displaying their support.

This was revealed in the period following the April 2002 Israeli attacks against the Jenin refugee camp, as well as other West Bank targets, in Operation

⁵⁸⁷ Avishai Ehrlich, cited in Bashir Abu-Manneh, “Israel in the U.S. Empire”, *Monthly Review*, 58.10 (March 2007), p. 8.

⁵⁸⁸ Abu-Manneh, “Israel in the U.S. Empire”, pp. 8-9. Emphasis added.

⁵⁸⁹ Aharon Kellerman, “Settlement myth and settlement activity: interrelationships in the Zionist land of Israel”, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, New Series, 21.2 (1996) pp. 363-78.

⁵⁹⁰ Ken Silverstein and Michael Scherer, “Born-again Zionists” in *Mother Jones*, p. 58.

Defensive Shield. Despite initially appealing to then Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to pull back the troops “without delay” and avoid further escalation, U.S. President George W. Bush subsequently muted his objections after being subjected to a coordinated lobbying effort by Christian conservative leaders and Jewish groups.⁵⁹¹ Following this, Bush’s language shifted to acknowledging the legitimacy of an Israeli-directed “timetable” for facilitating the eventual pullout of IDF forces. Furthermore, Bush publicly stated his belief in an Oval Office press conference that Ariel Sharon was “a man of peace.”⁵⁹² This stood in direct contrast to a *Time Magazine/CNN* poll at the time in which a majority of respondents cited Sharon as untrustworthy, and one in five even described the Israeli Prime Minister as a “terrorist.”⁵⁹³ Separately, President Bush later refused to acknowledge that following his initial comments demanding an Israeli pull-out from the West Bank, the White House allegedly received some 100,000 emails, coordinated by Jerry Falwell, which condemned his earlier criticism.⁵⁹⁴ This about-face by the U.S. President had significant and immediate repercussions in the wake of Operation Defence Shield, as on account of Bush’s leadership, the United States joined with Israel in blocking a United Nations fact-finding committee from assessing the destruction within Jenin and the neighbouring areas affected.⁵⁹⁵

⁵⁹¹ “President Bush, Prime Minister Blair Hold Press Conference”, *Office of the Press Secretary – White House*, April 6, 2002 (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/04/20020406-3.html> - accessed December 21, 2008). And Donald E. Wagner, “Short Fuse to Apocalypse”, *Sojourners Magazine*.

⁵⁹² “President Bush, Secretary Powell Discuss Middle East”, *Office of the Press Secretary – White House*, April 18, 2002 (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/04/20020418-3.html> - accessed December 21, 2008).

⁵⁹³ “Poll: Americans Support Cutting Aid to Israel”, *Reuters* April 12, 2002, cited in CommonDreams.org – News Center (<http://www.commondreams.org/headlines02/0412-06.htm> - accessed December 21, 2008).

⁵⁹⁴ Esther Kaplan, *God on Their Side*, p. 28. Also referred to in Tatsha Robertson, “Evangelicals Flock To Israel’s Banner: Christian Zionists See Jewish State Bringing Messiah”, *The Boston Globe*, October 21 2002, p. A3.

⁵⁹⁵ This episode is discussed within the broader discussion of Israeli-Palestinian conflicts in Joel Beinin and Rebecca L. Stein, *The Struggle for Sovereignty: Palestine and Israel, 1993-2005* (Stanford, Cali.: Stanford University Press, 2006) p. 295.

Another example of the United States condoning Israeli exceptionalism occurred in the months of June and July in 1981, when the Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin ordered pre-emptive strikes against an Iraqi nuclear reactor and bombed PLO targets in West Beirut. The United States' only response to these events, alongside some generally meek disapproval, was a token delay in delivering a shipment of F-16 fighter planes to Israel.⁵⁹⁶ Empowered by such an indecisive response, on December 14 of the same year, Israel seized and annexed Syria's strategic Golan Heights, adding further to their control of "covenant" lands.⁵⁹⁷

The sheer weight of Christian conservative influence in U.S.-Israeli relations through condoning such events has also encouraged the United States to consistently veto United Nations Security Council resolutions that publicly criticise any such actions undertaken by Israel. Between 1982 and 2006 the U.S. has instigated 32 such vetoes, significantly disproportionate when compared to other Council members.⁵⁹⁸ Rather than operating as "peacemakers" then, Christian conservative influence has instead actively encouraged a cycle of violence, as commentator Bashir Abu-Manneh has depicted:

U.S. support reinforces Israeli colonialism and occupation, which bolsters Israeli militarization of state and society, which generates new ideological and political justifications and breeds new religious fanaticisms, leading to further indigenous resistance and to more U.S. interventions in the region.⁵⁹⁹

Even when the United States has been perceived as promoting peace, such as its support of the "Roadmap" developed in September 2002, there remained a distinct gulf between the rhetoric and its implementation. For instance, a number of key factors were not even addressed in the document's framework, such as the return of

⁵⁹⁶ Edward Tivnan, *The Lobby*, pp. 151-2.

⁵⁹⁷ Edward Tivnan, *The Lobby*, p. 168.

⁵⁹⁸ John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby...*, p. 3.

⁵⁹⁹ Bashir Abu-Manneh, "Israel in the U.S. Empire", *Monthly Review*, pp. 17-8.

Palestinian refugees, the sovereign borders of Israel and Palestine, and the emotive issue of Jerusalem's political status.⁶⁰⁰ This could largely be attributed to the fact that many stake-holders see their demands relating to these elements as non-negotiable. For example, many Christian conservatives have no desire for Palestinian refugees to return to their former lands. This stems from the belief that the borders of Israel, as defined in the Biblical Abrahamic covenant, and inclusive of the totality of Jerusalem, should be solely controlled by Israel. These fundamental convictions, and the large-scale lobbying power from Christian conservatives surrounding them, was clearly brought to bear in George W. Bush's April 2004 decision that Israel not be required to withdraw from any settlements within East Jerusalem and the West Bank – in direct opposition to U.N. Resolution 242. This posture of political cooperation between the United States and Israel was ratified by both the House (407-9) and Senate (95-3); an unsurprising result considering the large-scale pro-Israel lobbying that takes place on Capitol Hill.⁶⁰¹ Ariel Sharon's earlier warning to the United States in 2001 against Arab "appeasement" – and declaration that Israel "not be [another] Czechoslovakia" appeared to have yielded tangible results.⁶⁰² Another pertinent factor may also have been 2004's status as an election year, with the incumbent President seeking to increase his percentage of the crucial Jewish, and even more importantly, Christian conservative vote.⁶⁰³

⁶⁰⁰ Duane Shank, "Commentary: Road Map or Dead End", *Sojourners Magazine*, July-August 2003 32.4 (<http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=soj0307&article=030741a> – accessed December 21, 2008).

⁶⁰¹ Jeff Halper, "The Narrow Gate to Peace", *Sojourners Magazine*, August 2005 34.8 (<http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=soj0508&article=050820> – accessed December 21, 2008).

⁶⁰² James Bennet, "Sharon invokes Munich in warning U.S. on 'appeasement'", *The New York Times*, October 5, 2001, pA6.

⁶⁰³ From 19% in the 2000 election. This was only just under half of what Reagan achieved in his first election victory in 1980 (39%). Alison Mitchell, "Pro-Israel Voices of 2 Parties Praise Bush Mideast Speech", *The New York Times*, June 26 2002, p. A14.

Just over a decade prior, George W. Bush had witnessed his father's claims over the Jewish vote slide dramatically by over two-thirds from 1988 to 1992. Some argued this was the result of George H.W. Bush's less conciliatory stance towards Israel, at the height of which he threatened to withhold loans in order to slow settlement expansion into the Occupied Territories.⁶⁰⁴ Bush's ire may also have been provoked by increased settlement activity within the Christian quarter of Jerusalem, which particularly included the transformation of the Christian-run St. John's Hospice into Jewish residential accommodation. This specific settler project, which gained close to two million dollars in funding from the Israeli Housing ministry, singularly threatened to undermine U.S.-Israeli relations, with Elias Freij, Mayor of Bethlehem and a Palestinian Christian, calling it "the beginning of a premeditated effort" by Jewish settlers to eventually take over Christian property.⁶⁰⁵ The move was condemned overwhelmingly by Christians within the United States, as well as two of the largest Jewish interest groups in the U.S. - AIPAC and the American Jewish Congress. The latter even threatened that while "Jews [in the United States] will give sacrificially to settle Soviet Jews in Israel...they will not do so if these funds are to be diverted surreptitiously for the provocative settlement of religious zealots."⁶⁰⁶

In the wake of this event, the U.S. Secretary of State James A. Baker insisted that the Israeli government not use any U.S. loans to finance settlements in any of the Occupied Territories; a scenario underpinned by the Israeli Supreme Court's decision

⁶⁰⁴ Esther Kaplan, *With God on Their Side*, p. 23.

⁶⁰⁵ Glenn Frankel, "Israeli Court Orders End to Settlement; 150 Jews Evicted From Christian Site", *The Washington Post*, 27 April 1990, p. A31. Peter Steinfelds, "2 Mayors Deplore Move in Jerusalem", *The New York Times*, May 6, 1990, p. A9.

⁶⁰⁶ Thomas L. Friedman, "U.S. Jewish Group Critical of Israel on Aid to Settlers", *The New York Times*, April 25, 1990 p. A1.

to revoke the contentious settler incursion of the Christian hospice.⁶⁰⁷ Caretaker Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, whose office had originally declared the hospice settlement “an ordinary commercial real-estate transaction” eventually took the unusual step of chastising his own Foreign Ministry, which authorised the action, by labelling the episode as “insensitive and provocative.”⁶⁰⁸ While this demonstrated that Israel did not have complete autonomy regarding its settlement program, it also importantly highlighted the hypocrisy prevalent among Christian conservatives, that they would oppose Israeli settlements that encroached upon obvious Christian targets, but would actively encourage wholesale settlement of Palestinian lands as part of Israel’s Jewish sovereignty.

A decade later, George W. Bush had indeed learnt from his father’s political ambivalence towards Israel, and staunchly emphasised U.S. support of Israel’s political and security objectives. While his rhetoric made some minor overtures as to the creation of a separate Palestinian state, he nevertheless remained vague on the important issue of its borders. Bush also undercut his advocacy of Palestinian statehood by supporting the Israeli ostracism and virtual house arrest of the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat within his Ramallah compound. Such a policy position was instinctively centrist in nature, as Bush aimed at appeasing the moderates within his party, while simultaneously pandering to Christian conservatives.⁶⁰⁹

Bush also favourably acknowledged Israel’s regional role in the Middle East and regarded it as a quasi-satellite of the United States. As a result of the U.S. agenda against militant Islam, Israel’s political connections with the United States

⁶⁰⁷ Thomas L. Friedman, “U.S. Jewish Group Critical...”, p. A11. And Glenn Frankel, “Israeli Court Orders End to Settlement...”, p. A31.

⁶⁰⁸ Thomas L. Friedman, “U.S. Jewish Group Critical...”, p. A1.

⁶⁰⁹ Alison Mitchell, “Pro-Israel Voices of 2 Parties...”.

have developed considerably, which has been actively encouraged by Christian conservatives. This was demonstrated in Weyrich's comments which stated in November 2003 that "Islam is the scourge of the world, and the Jewish people and Israel are the front line against that scourge."⁶¹⁰ Others, such as Ralph Reed, identified in the current "War on Terror" a number of parallels with former Cold War animosity against the Soviet Union. They included the United States' need for "eternal vigilance in opposing evil...a strong military and intelligence apparatus... [and] friendships and strategic relationships with allies" – alluding specifically to Israel.⁶¹¹ Reed had also sought to galvanise the political relationship by linking the United States and Israel as joint sufferers of terrorism. Through this, he projected the deaths of Israeli citizens during the Second Intifada (as a percentage of population) as equivalent to 25,000 U.S. citizens having hypothetically been killed during 9/11.⁶¹² The fact that the United States' intimate relationship with Israel can also be regarded as its most significant foreign policy liability, is absent from this discussion.⁶¹³ Furthermore, while Reed's analysis may be mathematically accurate, by publicly offering this purely hypothetical information, he distorts the reality of the situation through removing the Palestinian population from the equation - except as the sole perpetrators of terrorism. Through following Reed's previous example, the case could equally be made that Palestinian deaths during the Second Intifada (as a percentage of population) would be equivalent to a staggering 229,650 U.S. casualties.⁶¹⁴

⁶¹⁰ Paul Weyrich, cited in Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, p. 205.

⁶¹¹ Ralph Reed, *Israel and the United States*, remarks to the ADL.

⁶¹² Ralph Reed, *Israel and the United States*, remarks to the ADL.

⁶¹³ Rose Marie Berger, "Full text of Hanan Ashrawi interview", *Sojourners Magazine*.

⁶¹⁴ "People Statistics – Population (2006) By Country" (http://www.nationmaster.com/graph/peo_pop-people-population&date=2006 – accessed February 12, 2009), "U.S. Census: Population" (<http://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/01statab/pop.pdf> - accessed February 12, 2009), "Palestinian Population is 3.9 million in Gaza and West Bank", *Arabic News.com*, October 7, 2006 (<http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/060710/2006071016.html> - accessed February 12,

Extremist calls from such public figures as Iran's President Ahmadinejad for the destruction of the Jewish state and U.S. polemicist Ann Coulter's call to arms against Islamic states are responses which suggest an immediate and far-reaching national threat.⁶¹⁵ However, *Sojourners* journalist Neve Gordon has contended that the "personal threat" created by the deplorable and indiscriminate killing of Israeli civilians by Palestinian terrorism does "in no way jeopardize Israel's existence."⁶¹⁶ While this distinction between personal and national threats is an important concept, it has achieved little in stemming the systemic fears held by many Israelis. In response to the concept of "Arabs" thrusting Israel into the sea, then Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir in 1988 observed that despite his nation's determined survival for forty years, "our reality...has not changed. The Arabs are the same Arabs, the sea is the same sea. The objective is the same objective – the extermination of the Israeli state."⁶¹⁷ Such a statement revealed an imbedded sense of fear, not unlike those pervasive during the Cold War. As pastor and social ethics author Robert O. Smith has claimed, "The simplistic, Manichean worldview that provided a theopolitical framework for the Cold War has been revived by Israel's supporters as they assert the state's importance for U.S. interests."⁶¹⁸

2009), "Intifada toll 2000-2005", *BBC News (UK Version)*, February 8, 2005

(http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/3694350.stm - accessed February 12, 2009).

⁶¹⁵ Robert Tait and Ed Pilkington, "Move to bring genocide case against Ahmadinejad as Iran president repeats call to wipe out Israel", *The Guardian*, Dec. 13, 2006. (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,,1970659,00.html> – accessed December 21, 2008). After the 9/11 attacks Coulter stated, "We know who the homicidal maniacs are. They are the one cheering and dancing right now. We should invade their country, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity", in her article, "This is war: We should invade their countries", *National Review Online*, September 13, 2001

(<http://www.nationalreview.com/coulter/coulter.shtml> - accessed December 21, 2008).

⁶¹⁶ Neve Gordon, "Commentary: A Tale of One City", *Sojourners Magazine*, Sept/Oct 2002 31.5 (<http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=soj0209&article=020941b> – accessed December 21, 2008).

⁶¹⁷ Quoted in Daniel Bar-Tal and Dan Jacobson, *Security Beliefs among Israelis: A Psychological Analysis* from *Ha'aretz* 25 Jan 1988, cited in Gil Merom, "Israel's National Security and the Myth of Exceptionalism".

⁶¹⁸ Robert O. Smith, "Between Restoration and Liberation", p. 840.

Consolidating this argument further is the ardent anti-communist rhetoric still displayed by a number of Christian conservative leaders, which is highlighted in the following chapter. This reinvigorated sense of fear is now played out politically in the contemporary context of the U.S.-led “War on Terror,” through such unprecedented means as the creation and implementation of the USA Patriot Act, passed in October 2001. This legislation was a major step in what some have described as the “Israelization of American policy” because of its strong emphasis on “homeland security.”⁶¹⁹

The hard-line agenda of Israeli expansion continues to exert itself within the Middle East, to the satisfaction of Christian conservatives living back in the United States. Having desired for so long a day when Israel will take control of the full allocation of the Abrahamic covenant, they now witness a reality where Palestinians have control of only fifteen percent of the land formerly known as Palestine. What land the Palestinians do control is divided by concrete walls and wire fencing, with numerous Israeli checkpoints linking approximately 70 disconnected “cantons” or enclaves.⁶²⁰ According to former CIA analyst Kathleen Christison, such a scenario is allowed to occur and continue because “support for Israel preclude[s] support for any aspect of the Palestinian position.”⁶²¹ Wary of appearing overly “fundamentalist,” the political lobbyist Ralph Reed aimed to put forward a more pragmatic spin on the relationship: “Israel is our most reliable ally and a critical ally in the war on terror, because we’ve learned that the same

⁶¹⁹ Esther Kaplan, *With God on Their Side*, p. 24. And C. William Michaels, *No Greater Threat: America After September 11 and the Rise of the National Security State*, cited in Robert O. Smith, “Between Restoration and Liberation”, p. 841.

⁶²⁰ Jeff Halper, “The Narrow Gate to Peace”, *Sojourners Magazine*.

⁶²¹ Kathleen Christison, *Perceptions of Palestine: Their Influence on U.S. Middle East Policy* – cited by Robert O. Smith, “Between Restoration and Liberation”, p. 845.

infrastructure of terror responsible for the attacks on the United States is the enemy of Israel.”⁶²²

Such rhetoric supporting Israel coincides with the broader principles of the United States’ foreign policy agenda, which have been a virtually continuous theme since Harry S. Truman’s post World War II administration. While genuinely supportive of Israel’s statehood on the grounds of religious faith, Truman also factored in a number of other considerations to his decision in recognising the new nation. These included a desire to bring political order to the region, block Soviet expansion within the Middle East, while also reaffirming his executive authority over the State Department. Following Truman’s presidency, these first two points have also been emphasised by Presidents Carter, Reagan and finally George W. Bush.⁶²³ However, numerous other diplomats, politicians, and academics have all contended that it is the much-lauded alliance between the United States and Israel itself (at the expense of Palestinian populations) that continues to fuel terrorism both regionally and internationally.⁶²⁴

Further complicating this scenario is the complexity of the United States’ diplomatic relationships throughout the broader region, as well as its inability to develop and administer an effective and comprehensive Middle East policy. A specific example of this weakness was demonstrated in the controversial sale of Airborne Warning and Command Systems (AWACS) to Saudi Arabia in the early 1980s. This transaction, worth in excess of eight and a half billion dollars, was

⁶²² Esther Kaplan, *With God on Their Side*, pp. 27-8.

⁶²³ Kenneth D. Wald, *Religion and Politics in the United States*, pp. 171-2. Zvi Ganin, *Truman, American Jewry and Israel, 1945-1948* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1979) cited in Kenneth D. Wald and Allison Calhoun-Brown, *Religion and Politics in the United States (Fifth Edition)* p. 176.

⁶²⁴ John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, p. 5 – here they cite such people as Brookings Institute academic Shibley Telhami, Lakhdar Brahimi – former U.N. special envoy to Iraq and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

especially significant to Christian conservatives within the United States. This military sale invoked an internal conflict within this group, torn between supporting a perceived “moderate” Saudi state in order to offset Soviet intimidation, and the opposition of the Israeli government not to arm a neighbouring Arab state which Israel regarded as anti-Jewish.⁶²⁵ Such considerations have come to encompass five broad U.S. interests in relation to Middle East policy: (1) supporting Israel’s security; (2) generating political/economic influence with Arab states; (3) resisting anti-U.S. radicalism – both in governments and other organisations; (4) countering recent Russian influence in the region (though with less intensity than during the anti-Soviet Cold War era); (5) maintaining access and delivery of oil.⁶²⁶ Israeli Middle East policy, by contrast, is overwhelmingly dominated by security issues, and has far more emphasis on military action, such as provision for pre-emptive strikes. The Israeli Foreign Minister emphasised this position after the annexation of the Golan Heights in 1981: “Much as we want to coordinate our activities with the United States, the interests [of both nations] are not identical. We have to, from time to time, worry about our own interests.”⁶²⁷ The Israeli government and its Christian Zionist supporters have continued to further justify their position by citing innate “facts on the ground.” This chiefly refers to the thousands of Jewish settlers consolidated in territories whose presence there significantly complicates the establishment of a separate Palestinian state. This position held by Israel and Christian conservatives has contributed to a situation that may have described as an inevitable stalemate.⁶²⁸

⁶²⁵ Edward Tivnan, *The Lobby*, p. 146.

⁶²⁶ According to Steven L. Spiegel, Les Janka, Seth P. Tillman, cited in Edward Tivnan, *The Lobby*, p. 166.

⁶²⁷ Yitzhak Shamir in the *Washington Post*, Dec. 15, 1981, cited in Edward Tivnan, *The Lobby*, p. 169.

⁶²⁸ Conor Cruise O’Brien and Irving Kristol, cited in Edward Tivnan, *The Lobby*, p. 243.

A Question of Strength: The Organisational Culture of Christian Conservatism.

In a world filled with pain and suffering, in a world filled with terror and tyranny, in a world where the evil that gave rise to [the Holocaust] still lurks in too many places in the world, let us join hands together as Christians and Jews and others of good will, and say to the world: “Do not be afraid. We come in mercy. We come as liberators. We are Americans”.⁶²⁹

Ralph Reed

Christian conservatives within the United States have frequently consolidated their religious and political ideology within specifically defined identities and organisations. A significant part of this approach is demonstrated by a core focus on furthering their support for Israel. Located both within the United States and Israel, these groups are passionate, committed and well connected to both local communities and those in positions of power and influence. This scenario has led Ralph Reed to assert that “Christians have the potential to be the most effective constituency influencing a foreign policy since the end of the Cold War...They are shifting the centre of gravity in the pro-Israel community to become a more conservative and Republican phenomenon.”⁶³⁰

The Christians’ Israel Public Action Campaign (CIPAC), founded by former environmental lawyer and Republican Senate staffer Richard Hellman, is the only registered Christian lobby organisation.⁶³¹ This organisation, once referred to as AIPAC’s “little echo,” was created to oversee Congressional accountability in maintaining a pro-Israel line.⁶³² This is achieved largely through vigilantly updating its members (in excess of some seven million financial contributors) on relevant

⁶²⁹ Ralph Reed, *Israel and the United States*, remarks to the ADL.

⁶³⁰ Ralph Reed, quoted in David Firestone, “Evangelical Christians And Jews Unite For Israel”, *The New York Times*, June 9 2002, p. 1.30.

⁶³¹ Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, p. 210.

⁶³² Ken Silverstein and Michael Scherer, “Born-again Zionists”, *Mother Jones*, p. 59.

Senate and House votes, as well as giving advice on communicating pro-Israel views to both elected officials and media services.⁶³³ An example of the pro-Israel message proposed by Hellman has involved the resettlement of some 100,000 Palestinian families from the Occupied Territories to Jordan, in what is described as a “mini Marshall Plan.” This is a virtually identical policy to that described previously, espoused by Ralph Reed, Esther Levens and Sam Brownback.⁶³⁴

Bridges for Peace is another Christian organisation that has consistently aimed to encourage U.S. support for Israel. Established in 1976 and based in Jerusalem, the group has a range of programs including educational publications and Bible teachings, prayer and study groups, social assistance programs, and fundraising for Jewish immigration to Israel.⁶³⁵ Incorporating advertising streams to attract further financial donors, the group encourages people, “don’t just read about prophecy, when you can be part of it.”⁶³⁶ The unifying capacity of this sentiment among Christian conservatives should not be underestimated, as it imbues many of its broader organisations. For example, the Georgia-based Family Concerns Inc. actively propagates a pro-Israel message, despite having a predominantly domestic agenda. While largely operating as a conservative watch-dog group critical of declining moral values, Nancy Schaefer, the group’s president, has often been outspoken on the question of Israel, declaring that “Israel is not to be divided. I don’t believe Jehovah-God would want Israel to be divided. We are putting not only

⁶³³ Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, p. 210. And Christian’s Israel Public Action Campaign website (<http://www.cipaonline.org/>).

⁶³⁴ Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, p. 211.

⁶³⁵ Between 1998 and 2002, its fundraising was in excess of \$20 million. Bridges for Peace – “A Concise Summary of Who We Are”, Bridges for Peace website (<http://www.bridgesforpeace.com/h2n.php?fn=whoarewe.html> – accessed September 12, 2007). Also see Tatsha Robertson, “Evangelicals Flock To Israel’s Banner...”. and Timothy P. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, p. 225.

⁶³⁶ From the Bridges For Peace website (www.bridgesforpeace.com), cited in Timothy P. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon...*, p. 268.

Israel at risk, but ourselves.” She has also advocated the transfer of Palestinians from the Occupied Territories to Jordan.⁶³⁷

Larger organisations, such as the National Religious Broadcasters (NRB) Association also incorporate a distinctive, pro-Israel message within their broader, Christian conservative agenda. For example, during the April 2002 “Washington Rally for Israel,” the syndicated radio host Janet Parshall (appearing on behalf of the NRB) received a rapturous response when she declared, just months after the 9/11 attacks, “I am here to tell you today, we Christians and Jews together will not labor any less in our support for Israel. We will never limp, we will never wimp, we will never vacillate in our support of Israel.”⁶³⁸ Parshall has also been quoted as saying that “If I felt the administration or anyone in Congress was moving away from support of Israel, believe me, I’d encourage people to pick up the phone and tell their legislators, ‘Don’t you dare!’”⁶³⁹ Along with other Christian conservative leaders such as Gary Bauer, and organisations including the Christian Coalition, Christian Broadcasting Network, and the International Christian Embassy – Jerusalem, Parshall was also a contributor to the Interfaith Zionist Leadership Summit held in Washington in mid-2003.⁶⁴⁰ During this conference, its delegates declared opposition to Palestinian statehood, protested the Roadmap for Peace, and advocated “combat[ing] media ignorance and bias in Middle East coverage.”⁶⁴¹

Support for Israel by various Christian conservative organisations works as a significant enabler, as two thirds of Israeli settlements within the Occupied

⁶³⁷ Nancy Schaefer, quoted in Sheila M. Poole, “Georgia and the Middle East: Evangelicals Use Clout To Help Israel”, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, September 17, 2003, p. F1.

⁶³⁸ Janet Parshall, cited in Donald E. Wagner, “Short Fuse to Apocalypse?”, *Sojourners Magazine*.

⁶³⁹ Janet Parshall quoted in Mark O’Keefe, “Israel’s Evangelical Approach; U.S. Christian Zionists Nurtured as Political, Tourism Force”, *The Washington Post*, 26 January 2002 p. B11.

⁶⁴⁰ Jeff Jacoby, “Israel’s Unshakeable Allies”, *The Boston Globe*, May 15, 2003, p. A15.

⁶⁴¹ “Interfaith Zionist Summit set: Event to Combat ‘absurdity’ of Bush roadmap to Mid East peace”, *WorldNet Daily*, posted April 23 2003 (http://www.wnd.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=32195 – accessed September 12 2007).

Territories are recipients of funding from these organisations.⁶⁴² This finance provides tangible resources for maintaining a Judeo-Christian presence in what Christian conservatives regard as God's covenant land with the Jewish people. It also contributes toward further expansion of the settlement populations, such as in the West Bank town of Ariel, where over 15,000 Russian Jews have immigrated since 2002.⁶⁴³ The total Jewish settler population within the West Bank stood at over 260,000 in August 2006, compared to the total Palestinian population of approximately 2,500,000. Of these, 722,000 Palestinians reside in 19 official U.N. Relief and Works Agency camps as refugees in their own land.⁶⁴⁴

In terms of direct financial support, the Ariel settlement receives significant contributions from Faith Bible Chapel in Colorado. Overseeing a congregation of over 4000 and in excess of 125,000 affiliated members, Pastor George Morrison has orchestrated the raising of over \$10 million a year to support Ariel.⁶⁴⁵ This significant contribution is not only financial, but also has political repercussions. Ariel has increasingly become a strategic base for Christian conservative operations within the West Bank, beginning in the late 1990s when Pat Robertson also opened a Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) office in the township.⁶⁴⁶ Within the U.S.

⁶⁴² Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, p. 218.

⁶⁴³ Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, p. 220.

⁶⁴⁴ Etgar Lefkovits, "W. Bank Jewish population tops 260,000", *The Jerusalem Post*, 17 August 2006 (<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1154525893740&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull> – accessed December 21, 2008). Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 10/7/2006 (http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/pop_06e.pdf - accessed December 21, 2008). As of Dec. 31, 2006, U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees Publications and Statistics website (<http://www.un.org/unrwa/publications/index.html> - accessed December 21, 2008).

⁶⁴⁵ Brent Boyer, "Arvada church champions Israeli cause Christian Zionists back Jewish people", *Denver Post* 22 November 2002, A29.

⁶⁴⁶ Ilene R. Prusher, "Israel's Unlikely Ally: American Evangelists", *Christian Science Monitor*, April 24, 1998, p. 1, 6. Cited in Timothy P. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon...* pp. 226-7.

also, Faith Bible Chapel exists as a significant electoral bloc which has increasingly proved very useful to Republican election campaigns.⁶⁴⁷

Other churches, such as The Tabernacle in southern Virginia, also see their ideology as intimately linked with the nation of Israel. The Tabernacle's many financial contributions to Israeli projects have included a \$25,000 "Christmas offering," as well as donations to the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews (IFCJ) totalling in excess of \$175,000. Moved to tears by an International Christian Embassy – Jerusalem (ICEJ) infomercial, The Tabernacle's Rev. Lamarr Mooneyham has been a passionate advocate for Israel's position within the Middle East, stating that while "I'm a pardoned gentile...I'm not one of the Chosen People. They're the apple of [God's] eye."⁶⁴⁸

Not all of these financial resources have been used exclusively for settlement projects. Christian conservative fundraising has also supported activities in opposition to the Al-Aqsa Mosque, located on the Temple Mount - a site with significant prophetic implications. Undergirding this is the Christian conservative belief in the pre-tribulation "rapture" of the church, which entails the mysterious disappearance of believers to heaven, before a seven year period of tribulation on earth. Christians who follow this premillennial dispensationalist theology further believe that the Jews must first return to Israel before this "rapture" occurs. However, there are smaller clusters of believers who hold to more specific ideological requirements. These include those whose convictions are based on the rebuilding of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem, in the current location of the sacred Al Aqsa mosque. Historically, this thirty-five acre location was disregarded under

⁶⁴⁷ Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, p. 220-1.

⁶⁴⁸ Alan Cooperman, "Among Evangelicals...". The IFCJ also uses infomercials as a primary source of fundraising for its programs, and an analysis of their use is detailed in Timothy P. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon*, p. 229.

Constantine's Roman Empire and remained a landfill until Jerusalem was conquered by Muslim armies in 638, when the Al Aqsa mosque was subsequently constructed on the site. Overshadowing the Western 'Wailing' Wall, a Jewish holy site, the Al Aqsa mosque and its "Dome of the Rock" has been a contentious divide between Jews and Muslims for centuries.⁶⁴⁹

After the 1967 Six Day War, Israel further expanded its borders of influence to fully encapsulate Jerusalem and the Temple Mount. Israeli bulldozers immediately set to work on clearing land adjoining the Western Wall to create a plaza, thereby rendering hundreds of Israel's Palestinian residents homeless.⁶⁵⁰ Two years later when a mentally-ill Australian tourist set fire to the Al Aqsa Mosque, resulting in Palestinian outrage.⁶⁵¹ Later in September 1996, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu approved excavations on the northern border of the Temple Mount, again invoking Palestinian ire. Chaos ensued as localised violence between IDF and Palestinians spread into the West Bank and Gaza, escalating to proportions unseen since the Six-Day war.⁶⁵² Other more insidious plots against the Temple Mount have included an attempted attack by followers of Gush Emunim, a group of Zionist extremists.⁶⁵³ Sara Diamond has contended that Christians in the United States financially supported the Jewish activists arrested for attempting to blow up the mosque. While direct involvement in such plots has never been confirmed, Stanley Goldfoot, a co-founder of the Temple Mount Faithful and Jerusalem Temple

⁶⁴⁹ For example, Muslim Palestinians were incensed at the Jewish construction of a divider at the Western Wall on Yom Kippur 1928, regarding this as desecration of their sacred site. Under duress, the divider was removed by the British, who oversaw Palestine at the time. Timothy P. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon...*, pp. 160-4.

⁶⁵⁰ Timothy P. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon...*, p. 182.

⁶⁵¹ Gershom Gorenberg, *The End of Days: Fundamentalism and the Struggle for the Temple Mount* (New York: Free Press, 2000) pp. 107-10. Cited in Timothy P. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon...*, pp. 255-6.

⁶⁵² Timothy P. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon...*, pp. 254-5.

⁶⁵³ A detailed account of the plot is detailed in Timothy P. Weber *On the Road to Armageddon...* pp. 256-7.

Foundation (both of which have called for the destruction of the Al Aqsa mosque), publicly acknowledged that he received funds from the International Christian Embassy - Jerusalem (ICEJ) organisation.⁶⁵⁴

An “embassy” in title only, the ICEJ operates largely as an operational funnel for funds procured throughout the United States to be consolidated in Israel where they are used in coordinated programs.⁶⁵⁵ The group was established in 1980 by Malcolm Heddings and Timothy King largely as a protest against the Jerusalem Bill, which led to a majority of international embassies moving to Tel Aviv.⁶⁵⁶ As of 2004, the ICEJ had 65 staff in its Jerusalem headquarters, as well as 40 international offices.⁶⁵⁷ Its provided services include social assistance, homecare nursing, and immigrant support, all of which is detailed on the group’s website.⁶⁵⁸ However the ICEJ has also publicly “embraced” the expansionist program of West Bank settlements, describing the land (“Judea and Samaria” in Biblical phraseology) as “the right of the Jews.”⁶⁵⁹ The ICEJ has financially supported this commitment through its extensive resources and multi-million dollar budgets, which have grown from approximately \$1 million in 1984 to some \$80 million by 2005. These funds predominantly go to assisting immigration in recently-established settler areas, which include facilitating the emigration of Jews from the former Soviet Union to Israel.⁶⁶⁰

⁶⁵⁴ David S. New, *Holy War*, p. 127. And Grace Halsell, “Siege on the Mosque”, *Issues* (The Council for Judaism) Winter/Spring 1988 p. 14, cited in Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare: The Politics of the Christian Right* (London: Pluto Press, 1989) pp. 203-4.

⁶⁵⁵ Robert O. Smith, “Between Restoration and Liberation”, p. 847. And David S. New, *Holy War*, p. 124.

⁶⁵⁶ Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, p. 107.

⁶⁵⁷ Timothy P. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon...*, p. 216.

⁶⁵⁸ International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem programs website (<http://www.icej.org/articles/programmes>).

⁶⁵⁹ Quote from Jan Willem van der Hoeven, ICEJ official, in Edward Walsh, “Christian Right Embraces Israel”, *The Washington Post*, 21 November 1984, p. A1.

⁶⁶⁰ Edward Walsh, “Christian Right Embraces Israel”, p. A1, Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, p. 111. And David S. New, *Holy War*, p. 124.

This recent pattern of Jewish immigration has further demonstrated the distinct transition from those earlier immigrants fleeing persecution to those with more politicised motivations.⁶⁶¹ In defending this agenda, Jan Willem van der Hoeven (a former ICEJ official and current director of the International Christian Zionist Center) has reflected, “If this land is given back to Jordan, where will all the millions of Jews live *that we know* are coming back in the next few years?”⁶⁶² Jerry Falwell has similarly declared that, “The most dramatic evidence for [Jesus’] imminent return is the rebirth of the nation of Israel.”⁶⁶³ Such statements highlight the real implication that eschatology plays a considerable role in the policy agenda of such Christian conservative organisations. This notion is further underlined a former ICEJ spokesman who stated that Jews should be restored to the ownership of the Temple Mount site “even if it means Armageddon.”⁶⁶⁴ While this position has grave consequences, it nevertheless garners significant support, especially within the United States. Among the total number of Christian conservatives, there exists a sub-category of “nuclear dispensationalists” who have a belief structure built around the inevitability of nuclear war.⁶⁶⁵ Others, such as academic John Green, see as many as 15 million, predominantly Republican voters, as adherents to what he describes as “strict interpretations of biblical prophecy regarding Israel.”⁶⁶⁶

⁶⁶¹ Jeremy Milgrom, “Violence With a Brooklyn Accent”, *Sojourners Magazine* September/October 2001 30.5 (<http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=soj0109&article=010910c> – accessed December 21, 2008).

⁶⁶² Jan Willem van der Hoeven, quoted in Edward Walsh, “Christian Right Embraces Israel”, p. A1. [emphasis added]

⁶⁶³ Jerry Falwell, quoted in Gershon Gorenberg, “Unorthodox Alliance; Israeli and Jewish interests are better served by keeping a polite distance from the Christian Right”, *The Washington Post*, October 11, 2002, p. A37.

⁶⁶⁴ David S. New, *Holy War*, p. 124 cites Haddad & Wagner, *All in the Name* (1986) p. 120, which reproduces Louis Rapoport article in the Jerusalem Post (April 1984) “Slouching towards Armageddon: Links with Evangelicals”.

⁶⁶⁵ According to Andrew Lang, of the Christic Institute, quoted in Kathy Sawyer, “Falwell Attempts to Mend Interfaith Fences...”, p. A4

⁶⁶⁶ John Green, director of the Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics, University of Akron, Ohio, cited in Sheila M. Poole, “Georgia and the Middle East...”.

The ICEJ also operates as a direct lobbyist and public campaigner in support of aggressive Israeli expansion. Its various efforts to establish this have included meetings with White House officials and leaders of Congress, regarding their goal to “derail” the Middle East peace Road Map.⁶⁶⁷ The group has also hosted over 1500 attendees from 40 countries as part of the Third International Christian Zionist Congress, held in 1996.⁶⁶⁸ This congress aimed to reinforce the core values of the ICEJ, proclaiming that,

The Islamic claim to Jerusalem, including its exclusive claim to the Temple Mount, is in direct contradiction to the clear biblical and historical significance of the city and its holiest site, and this claim is of later religious-political origin rather than arising from any Quranic text or early Muslim tradition.⁶⁶⁹

Such sentiments were again reaffirmed five years later at the Fourth Congress, where a resolution proclaimed,

It is our sense that this generation of Jews is undergoing a divine testing of faith with regard to your people's ancient and profound attachment to the Land of Israel, and particularly to Jerusalem and the Temple Mount. We urge that Israel and the Diaspora not be intimidated by Muslim threats meant to coerce you into degrading or severing your deep spiritual and historic bond to this precious heritage, which remains central to your promised national redemption. We firmly believe that your cause is just and that the Lord God, King of the Universe, will preserve you and ultimately will vindicate you before all nations.⁶⁷⁰

Other efforts to lobby the U.S. government have been carried out by Gary Bauer, whose self-described pro-Israel sentiments are “very simple. A commitment to Israel ultimately means a bond against Islam.”⁶⁷¹ Bauer's American Values organisation distributes a daily email message, inclusive of pro-Israel rhetoric, to

⁶⁶⁷ Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, pp. 109-10.

⁶⁶⁸ Cites Paul Charles Merkley, *Christian Attitudes Towards the State of Israel*, Robert O. Smith, “Between Restoration and Liberation”, p. 847.

⁶⁶⁹ “Proclamation of the Third International Christian Zionist Congress”, convened 25-29 Feb. 1996 “A Sense of the Congress Resolutions 6(c)” (<http://christianactionforisrael.org/congress.html> - accessed December 21, 2008).

⁶⁷⁰ “Proclamation of the Forth International Christian Congress on Biblical Zionism, “Congress Resolutions”, Part III, paragraph 4”, (<http://christianactionforisrael.org/4thcongress3.html> - accessed December 21, 2008).

⁶⁷¹ Barbara Victor interview with Gary Bauer at his office in Virginia, July 2003, in Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, p. 227.

over 100,000 registered Christian conservatives.⁶⁷² Through his bulk email campaign, Bauer has also questioned the capacity of Palestinians to be functional peacemakers, stating that “Being a Reaganite, I’m all for democracy...But it’s not at all clear to me that when the Palestinian people vote, you’ll get a leader you can make peace with.”⁶⁷³

Another pro-Israel lobby group, the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews (IFCJ), was founded by Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein in 1983. Since its inception, it has recruited over 330,000 Christian donors who have contributed over \$20 million to support its various projects.⁶⁷⁴ These have included Jewish emigration to Israeli settler communities through the “On Wings of Eagles” program, as well as humanitarian assistance to Jewish communities outside of Israel, in particular those within the former Soviet Union.⁶⁷⁵ Stand for Israel, an offshoot of the IFCJ, was established in 2002 by Eckstein in partnership with Ralph Reed. This group primarily operates annual events bringing like-minded Christians and Jews together, with the ultimate goal of mobilising a million Christians in 100,000 churches all in support of Israel.⁶⁷⁶ For example, the “International Day of Prayer and Solidarity with Israel” is claimed to unite thousands of churches across the U.S., in simultaneously acknowledging their relationship with Israel.⁶⁷⁷ Despite being unable to directly lobby politicians due to its charitable tax status, the group has a direct mailing list of 100,000 churches and 250,000 people according to Reed, coordinated

⁶⁷² Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, p. 226.

⁶⁷³ Gary Bauer, quoted in Alison Mitchell, “Pro-Israel Voices of 2 Parties...”.

⁶⁷⁴ Esther Kaplan, *With God on Their Side*, p. 25.

⁶⁷⁵ Timothy P. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon...*, p. 228.

⁶⁷⁶ Timothy P. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon...*, p. 229.

⁶⁷⁷ “About SFI”, Stand for Israel Website (http://www.ifcj.org/site/PageServer?pagename=SFI_about – accessed December 21, 2008).

over the internet. The group also runs newspaper advertisements and radio commercials, all of which promote an overtly pro-Israel agenda.⁶⁷⁸

Alongside these primarily Christian organisations, Jewish conservative groups have become increasingly cognizant of their need to acknowledge mobilised Christian conservatives. This has been continually understood within the Israeli government itself, with its U.S. embassy operating an “Office of Interreligious Affairs.” This office has described itself as “educat[ing], engag[ing], and mobiliz[ing] faith-based communities on behalf of Israel.”⁶⁷⁹ In doing so, the Israeli government frequently conducts ‘information sessions’ at its embassy, where busloads of Christian conservatives come to hear Moshe Fox (the embassy minister of public affairs) discuss the Old Testament bond between Christians and Jews.⁶⁸⁰ Christian conservative leaders have also received numerous vacations to Israel, paid for entirely by the Israeli government.⁶⁸¹

In retrospect, the earliest institutional ties between the Israeli government and Christian conservatives emerged in 1977, with the relationship between the newly elected Likud Prime Minister Menachem Begin and the up-and-coming preacher, Jerry Falwell. During the time, the Israeli Tourism Ministry offered hundreds of Christian conservative leaders “familiarization” tours of Israel at no expense, as a deliberate means of garnering support from this influential group. These tours were rigidly orchestrated, with many regulations that offered only the official Likud party line on political and cultural matters.⁶⁸² Falwell accepted such a tour, and through this connection with Israel, and its Prime Minister in particular, the Christian

⁶⁷⁸ David Firestone, “Evangelical Christians and Jews Unite for Israel”.

⁶⁷⁹ “Embassy of Israel website”, Inter-religious Affairs section (<http://www.israeemb.org/interreligious.html> - accessed December 21, 2008).

⁶⁸⁰ Ken Silverstein and Michael Scherer, “Born-again Zionists”, p. 58.

⁶⁸¹ Mark O’Keefe, “Israel’s Evangelical Approach...”

⁶⁸² Timothy P. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon...*, p. 214-5.

conservative pastor adopted virtually all of Likud's hard-line policies on strengthening and increasing Israel's borders. Begin's gratitude over Falwell's newfound stance was grandly demonstrated three years later, as Begin presented Falwell with a Lear jet.⁶⁸³ This generous gift typified just how appreciative Begin and his Likud party were of the support they received from Falwell, and his mass Christian conservative base. Since that time, this support has been revealed through ever-expanding cultural connections between Christian conservatives and Israel, primarily demonstrated through sponsored travel tours. Falwell himself became one of the most prominent organisers of such tours, seeking to reinforce the belief that "God had given Israel to the Jews and that the Palestinians were obstacles to God's purposes."⁶⁸⁴ Throughout this, Israel's Likud party and Christian conservatives have consistently reached out to each other on a broad range of foreign policy issues, leading one commentator to label the "Christian right [as] a natural ideological partner of the Likud hawks."⁶⁸⁵

Consecutive Israeli governments have also shown themselves to be adept at working alongside the Christian conservative media, in the hope of shaping and influencing public perceptions. An example of this occurred in 1988, during the initial stages of the First Intifada, where more than any previous year Israeli representatives propagated a high profile presence at the National Religious Broadcasters (NRB) convention. In a subsequent meeting involving high-ranking Israeli officials and members of the NRB, the Israeli contingent distributed films, audio tapes, and information packets to the Christian media, to "tell the whole story

⁶⁸³ Ken Silverstein and Michael Scherer, "Born-again Zionists", p. 58.

⁶⁸⁴ Timothy P. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon...*p. 219. For a more detailed analysis of Christian conservative tours of Israel see Grace Halsell, *Prophecy and Politics: Militant Evangelists on the Road to Nuclear War* (Westport, Conn.: Lawrence Hill Books, 1986).

⁶⁸⁵ Stephen S. Rosenfeld, "Likud Reaches to Washington", *The Washington Post*, 15 September 1995, p. A25.

about the situation and counteract distortions currently being presented to the media.”⁶⁸⁶ Andrew Denton’s documentary film *God on My Side* further revealed the Israeli tourism ministry’s continuing high profile at the NRB convention, featuring the shell of a commuter bus blown up by a Palestinian terrorist to the 2005 event. This remains one of the most extreme symbols of Israeli marketing to Christian conservatives within the United States.⁶⁸⁷

Another important aspect to this relationship is the provision of financial support that Christian conservative tourism provides to the Israeli economy. Prior to the Second Intifada, which created a dramatic industry crash, tourism earnings within Israel reached a peak of almost \$3.5 billion in 1999. During this year, religious pilgrimages and affiliated sightseeing was the second most popular reason for people coming to Israel, while between 1998 and 2002 more than 30,000 tourists journeyed to Israel for religious conferences.⁶⁸⁸ These visitors, together with approximately 25,000 self-described Christian “semi-permanent” residents of Israel, provide a significant support base to the organisations previously mentioned.⁶⁸⁹ To this end, the late Christian conservative organiser and ardent Christian Zionist Ed McAteer once commented,

In order to bring the issue of Israel to the top of their list, we finance and encourage Christians to actually walk the land of Israel and see the Bible come alive. This does more to create support for Israel and the Jewish people politically here in the United States than anything else.⁶⁹⁰

⁶⁸⁶ “Update Briefing on Israel Unrest to be Held for NRB Members and Delegates”, National Religious Broadcasters Convention News, February 1988, cited in Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, pp. 200-1.

⁶⁸⁷ Eleven people were killed in 2004 when the Jerusalem bus 19 was the target of a suicide bombing, shown in the film, *God on My Side*, dir. & writer Andrew Denton, ABC 2006.

⁶⁸⁸ In the 1999 survey, visiting relatives was the most popular reason. Israeli Tourism Data, Central Bureau of Statistics website (http://www1.cbs.gov.il/reader/tayar_miuhad/miuhad_nosim_new_eng.html - accessed December 21, 2008).

⁶⁸⁹ Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, p. 217.

⁶⁹⁰ Barbara Victor interview with Ed McAteer, March 2003, in *Last Crusade*, p. 217.

The Israeli government has been largely proactive in its appeals to this support base, demonstrated through such examples as hiring Colorado consulting agency TouchPoint Solutions in late 2001. Throughout this relationship, the agency offered a number of strategies to increase foreign tourists to Israel, and in particular Christian conservatives. These included specifically targeting “Christian Zionist” leaders, while persuading them to visit and promote Israel. This was achieved through promoting the Israeli Tourism Ministry’s website with direct mail to some 450,000 evangelical churches, as well as instigating nation-wide “Israel Solidarity Days”, which incorporated prayer ceremonies focusing on the Biblical importance of Israel.⁶⁹¹ Binyamin Elon, in his capacity as Israeli Tourism Minister from 2002-2004, personally travelled to the United States to promote Israeli tourism to Christian conservatives during his tenure. In doing so, Elon “applauded” a campaign by Christian conservative groups which called on President Bush to support Israel and reject the “Road Map for Peace.”⁶⁹² Furthermore, in 2006 Andrew Denton interviewed Moodi Sandberg, a member of the Knesset Christian Allies Caucus, who represented the Israeli Tourism Ministry at that year’s NRB convention. Sandberg revealed to Denton that he was “deeply impressed from what I’ve seen here in the size, the numbers, the power of the people that are here. There are people here who deliver the message to so many millions of people and the common ground for so many of them is that they love Israel.”⁶⁹³

Since the early 1980s, Israel has been increasingly effective in seeking closer ties with Christian conservatives on an organisational level. To this end, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), which lobbies the U.S. government on behalf of Israel, has incorporated staff into their organisation that are

⁶⁹¹ Mark O’Keefe, “Israel’s Evangelical Approach...”

⁶⁹² Sheila M. Poole, “Georgia and the Middle East...”

⁶⁹³ in Denton’s film *God on My Side*.

specifically trained to solidify relations with Christian conservatives.⁶⁹⁴ AIPAC has been successful in this aim largely on account of its unparalleled ability to effectively lobby Congress and the White House. This was first significantly demonstrated through the AWACS political battle in the early 1980's. While President Ronald Reagan was ardently committed to the sale of military hardware to Saudi Arabia, AIPAC saw this as detrimental to the national security of Israel. AIPAC continued to maintain its opposition despite a proposition by Reagan offering Israel \$600 million in extra military credits over the next two years, as well as tabling eased restrictions on Israel's capacity to export its Kfir fighter plane. While the sale was ultimately approved by the U.S. Senate 52-48, the small four vote margin stands as a testament to the effectiveness of AIPAC in holding significant sway in the halls of U.S. policymaking against a hugely popular president.⁶⁹⁵

In more recent times, AIPAC representatives have articulated a highly politicised understanding of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, shown in the remarks of one anonymous AIPAC insider:

We want to offset [the belief that Israel is complicit in the human rights problems of the Palestinians] with the argument that Israel has been forsaken by the left [because of the invasion of Lebanon and the West Bank]; therefore we're becoming more 'neo-conservative'. We want to broaden Israel's support to the right – with the people who don't care about what's happening on the West Bank, but care a lot about the Soviet Union.

AIPAC's unwavering support of such Israeli leaders as Begin, Netanyahu, and Sharon has also had the effect of falsely promoting this "neo-conservative" image

⁶⁹⁴ David S. New, *Holy War*, p. 122.

⁶⁹⁵ Edward Tivnan, *The Lobby*, p. 141, 145, 160. It has been noted by Kenneth Wald and Allison Calhoun-Brown that pro-Israel lobbyists are essentially trumped by the executive on U.S. strategic policy in the United States, as they lose "three fourths of the battles when its policies conflict with the wishes of the chief executive". However, it could also be contended that the consistent military and economic support Israel receives from the United States is also a 'strategic' policy, which is very much influenced by pro-Israel forces, including Christian conservatives. Mitchell Bard, *The Water's Edge and Beyond: Defining the Limits to Domestic Influence upon United States Middle East Policy* (New Brunswick, NJ.: Transaction, 1991) and Kenneth D. Wald and Allison Calhoun-Brown, *Religion and Politics in the United States (Fifth Edition)*, p. 177.

onto broader Jewish identity within the United States. This perception stands in direct contrast to the fact that many of the United States' Jewish citizens are often some of its most progressive, especially in regard to social issues.⁶⁹⁶

However there are a number of significantly influential American Jews who have called for an increasingly hard-line U.S. foreign policy regarding the Middle East. One such figure is Rabbi Daniel Lapin, who leads a group called Toward Tradition. Established in 1991 and supported by thousands of conservative Jews and Christians, the group aims (according to its website) to “apply ancient solutions to modern problems” which broadly incorporate support for Israel through its “ancient” Old Testament mandate.⁶⁹⁷ Lapin also uses the site to promote his own catalogue of books, which include such titles as, *Though Shall Prosper – Ten Commandments for Making Money*.⁶⁹⁸ At a dinner hosted by Ralph Reed and attended by George W. Bush, Lapin stated that “The principles of the Republican Party and the convictions of our President more closely parallel the moral vision of the God of Abraham than those of anyone else.”⁶⁹⁹ Lapin's political connections have also included involvement in a corruption scandal surrounding the political lobbyist Jack Abramoff, which had also entangled other conservatives such as Ralph Reed and former House Whip Tom DeLay.⁷⁰⁰

⁶⁹⁶ Edward Tivnan, *The Lobby*, p. 177, 181, 208.

⁶⁹⁷ Steve Rabey, “Some Conservative Jews join hands...”.

⁶⁹⁸ “Toward Tradition: Our Mission” website

(http://www.towardtradition.org/index.cfm?PAGE_ID=435 – accessed September 13, 2007).

Lapin's book explains, for example, “How you can benefit from Jewish wisdom” – arguably self-propagating stereotypes potentially detrimental to Jewish interests. From Rabbi Daniel Lapin.com Online Store

(<https://ww2.micahtek.com/nexolive/nShopping.cfm?zITEM=TSP&sVar=N&&VISIBLE=false&CFID=11401521&CFTOKEN=68215354> – accessed September 13 2007).

⁶⁹⁹ Rabbi Daniel Lapin, quoted in Hanna Rosin, “The Republican's Rabbi-in-Arms; Christian Conservatives See a Soul Mate in the Man Who Stands by his Scandal-Ridden Friends”, *The Washington Post*, June 25 2005, p. C1.

⁷⁰⁰ David Postman and Hal Bernton, “Abramoff Used Area Foundation as Conduit for Money”, *The Seattle Times*, January 9, 2006, from the website

(<http://archives.seattletimes.nwsource.com/cgi-bin/texis.cgi/web/vortex/display?slug=lapin09m&>

Christian conservative leaders such as Lapin, have consistently argued that if Jewish groups do not increasingly shift to a more conservative stance, they may inevitably become “marginalised and irrelevant.”⁷⁰¹ Through promoting such a campaign, Christian conservatives have made no secret of their aim to connect Jewish groups with their own political agenda. In response to such action, Don Feder, a political columnist for the *Boston Herald* between 1983 and 2002, and self-characterised as “to the right of Sharon on Zionism,” once declared:

Do most [Christian conservatives] want to convert us? Of course they do. That’s part of their religion. I’m secure enough in my own religion that I’m not upset when people offer me their religion as an alternative... That bothers me much less than people with no religion.⁷⁰²

A Question of Power: The Legislative Culture of Christian Conservatism.

I am an Evangelical Christian from the Midwest who understands that Israel is the little guy in a tough neighborhood.

Congressman Mike Pence (R-Ind.).⁷⁰³

It has so far been established that there is a clear and sustained effort by Christian conservatives and their collective organisations to promote a specific agenda of U.S. support for Israel. The enabling mechanisms for this process are often highly centralised, being largely directed primarily at the White House and Congress.⁷⁰⁴ Christian conservative lobbying of these institutions has been so

date=20060109&qery=st – accessed September 10, 2007). Lapin has also led sessions for those in Congress on the topic of taxation, claiming that in biblical societies, the maximum tax rate was 20% - in Hanna Rosin, “Republican’s Rabbi-in-Arms...”

⁷⁰¹ David O’Reilly, “Jews Assess Rise of Christian Right...”.

⁷⁰² “Don Feder’s Cold Steel-Caucus Report: About Me” website

(http://www.donfeder.com/n_aboutus.ivnu - accessed September 17, 2007). And Don Feder, quoted in Steve Rabey, “Some Conservative Jews Join Hands...”.

⁷⁰³ Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, p. 208.

⁷⁰⁴ Kenneth D. Wald, *Religion and Politics in the United States*, pp. 173-4.

effective over the last decades that underlying support of Israel has in many ways now been taken for granted. This is especially true for those within the Republican Party, who have increasingly attempted to guide the policy agenda toward joint security issues between the United States and Israel.⁷⁰⁵

An example of this political dynamic can be seen in the views of Dick Armey, a Republican congressman from Texas, who held the position of House majority leader from 1995 to 2003. During an interview on the CNBC political talk show *Hardball* on May 1 2002, Armey advocated the forced eviction of all Palestinian residents living in the West Bank. He stated that “There are many Arab nations that have many hundreds of thousands of acres of land and...soil and property and opportunity to create a Palestinian state.”⁷⁰⁶ Further to this, Armey has also revealed his “number one priority in foreign policy” is not the protection of the United States, but rather “the protection of Israel”, which he justified by declaring that “an attack on Israel is an attack on America, in my estimation.”⁷⁰⁷

Armey has also positioned himself with fellow Texan Tom DeLay, a former Majority Whip and then Majority Leader of the House until 2006, who has publicly stated a belief that the West Bank and Golan Heights are the rightful property of Israel.⁷⁰⁸ Like many other Christian conservatives, DeLay’s perspective of regional security in the Middle East is framed by his religious zeal for a “clash of civilizations,” revealed in his 2003 speech at the Knesset’s Chagall Hall:

Freedom and terrorism will struggle - good and evil - until the battle is resolved. These are the terms Providence has put before the United States, Israel, and the rest

⁷⁰⁵ Seen in comments by Jack Rosen, chair of the American Jewish Congress, in Thomas B. Edsall and Alan Cooperman, “GOP Uses Remarks to Court Jews; Moran’s Comments Cited in New Appeal”, *The Washington Post*, March 13, 2003, p. A1.

⁷⁰⁶ Transcript of *Hardball with Chris Matthews* May 1, 2002 9:00pm ET, in “Rep. Dick Armey Calls for Ethnic Cleansing of Palestinians”, May 2, 2002, *Counterpunch* website, (<http://www.counterpunch.org/armey0502.html> - accessed August 28, 2007).

⁷⁰⁷ “Retiring, not shy”, *The New York Times Magazine*, September 1, 2002, p. 25.

⁷⁰⁸ Ken Silverstein and Michael Scherer, “Born-again Zionists” in *Mother Jones*, p. 60 and Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, p. 229.

of the civilized world. They are stark, and they are final. Those who call this world-view “simplistic” are more than welcome to share their “sophisticated” theories at any number of international debating clubs. But while they do, free nations of courage will fight and win this war. Israel’s liberation from Palestinian terror is an essential component of that victory.⁷⁰⁹

The means to achieve this liberation, according to DeLay, are not through bilateral or even multi-lateral peace negotiations, but rather, “The path to security and stability lies down the road that Israel has already travelled...The Israelis don’t need to change their course. They don’t need to travel the path of weakness as defined by the neo-appeasers.”⁷¹⁰

DeLay also sponsored the decidedly pro-Israel House Resolution 392 in May 2002, with its opening remarks, “the United States and Israel are now engaged in a common struggle against terrorism and are on the front-lines of a conflict thrust upon them against their will.”⁷¹¹ The resolution appeared largely to be an attack on Yasser Arafat, with only minor consideration of a desire for the “international community...to alleviate the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people.”⁷¹² While no tangible commitment toward these “humanitarian needs” was specified, the resolution nevertheless passed by a margin of 352 to 21.⁷¹³

Congressman Mike Pence (R-Ind) has also arisen as a strong advocate of U.S. ties to Israel. For example, he firmly demonstrated his support of United States financial assistance to Israel in his claim that,

We must continue and be willing to expand our financial commitment to the economic and military strength of Israel even if foreign aid to other nations contracts. The financial support we give to Israel is a bargain for the promotion of

⁷⁰⁹ Tom DeLay, “Be Not Afraid”, July 30, 2003, taken from the Ariel Center For Policy Research website (http://www.acpr.org.il/Israel's_friends/Tom_DeLay-july2003.html - accessed August 31, 2007).

⁷¹⁰ Tom DeLay, quoted in Thomas B. Edsall and Alan Cooperman, “GOP Uses Remarks to Court Jews...”.

⁷¹¹ House Resolution 392, cited from Library of Congress website (<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/C?c107:./temp/~c107BUFEiy> – accessed September 10, 2007).

⁷¹² House Resolution 392.

⁷¹³ Thomas B. Edsall, “GOP makes Gains With Jewish Voters; Democrats Worry Party Critics of Israel Are Costing Support”, *The Washington Post*, 25 June 2002, p. A13.

the interest of a people so cherished by millions of Americans, leaving aside entirely that Israel remains the only democratic nation in this strategically significant region of the world.⁷¹⁴

Rep. Pence has also staunchly opposed multi-lateral peace negotiations, as well as the concept of creating a separate Palestinian state, arguing instead that, “[The United States] must practice self-control in allowing the people of Israel to find their own way and prosper according to America’s beneficence and God’s good grace.”⁷¹⁵

Furthermore, during an interview with the political author Barbara Victor, Pence revealed,

I stand behind Israel because I believe in the dream that is Israel, and I believe in the special relationship that exists between the United States and Israel. But I ultimately believe that Israel was forged equally out of the hearts of American Jews for the horror of the Holocaust, as much as it is the dream of American Christians for the promises of God to reappear on earth as the Messiah and King.”⁷¹⁶

Pence’s conservative religious-based support of Israel has included sponsorship of a Congressional resolution that supported the Israeli government’s construction of its “security fence,” while condemning the United Nations for questioning its legality. The resolution stated that “the security fence is a necessary and proportional response to a campaign of terrorism by Palestinians,” despite the reality that its 220 mile length (three times that of the Berlin Wall) effectively divides many Palestinians from their schools, jobs, and even more crucially, their water supplies. This type of privation can be regarded as perpetuating Palestinian animosity and reinforces the cycle of terrorist violence which such Israeli initiatives have ironically attempted to deter.⁷¹⁷ Furthermore, such subjugation of the

⁷¹⁴ “Issues Center – Israel”, Congressman Mike Pence website.

(<http://mikepence.house.gov/Issues/Issue/?IssueID=987> – accessed August 28, 2007).

⁷¹⁵ “Issues Center – Israel”, Congressman Mike Pence website.

⁷¹⁶ Barbara Victor, *Last Crusade*, p. 208.

⁷¹⁷ H. Con. Res. 371, 108th Congress, introduced February 26, 2004 and sponsored by Rep. Mike Pence (R-In), in GovTrack.us website (<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/billtext.xpd?bill=hc108-371> – accessed August 28, 2007). And Ed Spivey, “Dividing the Conquered: Israel’s Wall of Separation”, *Sojourners Magazine* November-December 2003 32.6

Palestinian population has seriously undermined Israel's own democratic principles. Political sociologist Baruch Kimmerling, of Hebrew University has described Israel as a *Herrenvolk* democracy, an expression originally used to identify the nature of South Africa's former Apartheid regime. He characterised the situation as one where "one group of its subjects (the citizens) enjoys full rights and another group (the non-citizens) enjoys none."⁷¹⁸ This terminology was also recently adopted by Jimmy Carter in his book *Palestine: Peace not Apartheid*. In his concluding chapter, Carter urges that "It will be a tragedy [for all] if peace is rejected and a system of oppression, apartheid, and sustained violence is permitted to prevail."⁷¹⁹ Such sentiments appears to stand in direct contrast to what many in the United States, and especially those Christian conservatives such as Congressman Pence, believe regarding Israel's position as a beacon of democracy in the region.⁷²⁰

Attitudes similar to that of Armeiy, DeLay and Pence can also be found within the U.S. Senate, demonstrated by such representatives as the Oklahoma Senator James Inhofe. In his 4 December 2001 speech on the Senate floor entitled "America's Stake in Israel's War on Terrorism," Sen. Inhofe cited the fact that Arab citizens of Israel are free to vote as clear evidence of democracy at work. However, there are only three Arab parties in the Knesset, and these hold only 10 of the 120 available seats, despite the Arab population making up almost 20 percent of Israel's total citizens.⁷²¹

(<http://www.sojn.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=soj03111&article=031122> – accessed August 28, 2007).

⁷¹⁸ Baruch Kimmerling, *Politicide: Ariel Sharon's War Against the Palestinians* (London: Verso, 2003) p. 39.

⁷¹⁹ Jimmy Carter, *Palestine: Peace not Apartheid* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006) p. 216.

⁷²⁰ "Issues Center – Israel", Congressman Mike Pence website.

⁷²¹ Data taken before the 2009 elections, from Table 2.1 of the *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2006 No. 57* in the Central Bureau of Statistics, Israel website (<http://www1.cbs.gov.il/reader/> - accessed August 29, 2007). This figure also does *not* include what the bureau describes as Israel's "foreign workers population" – some 178,000. (Data taken from "Introduction – Explanatory Notes, Definitions and Sources", *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2006 No. 57*

Sen. Inhofe has also framed the 9/11 attacks on the United States as “a spiritual war...fought to destroy the very fabric of our society and the very things for which we stand,” as well as “a satanically inspired attack against America created by demonic powers through the perverted minds of terrorists.” He went on to claim that

We are under attack because of our character and because we have supported the tiny little nation [Israel] in the Middle East...One of the reasons I believe the spiritual door was opened for an attack against the United States of America is because the policy of our Government has been to ask Israelis and demand with pressure that they not retaliate in a significant way against the terrorist strikes that have been launched against them, the most recent one just two days ago.⁷²²

These are words that could have been spoken by such Christian conservative leaders Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson or John Hagee. Sen. Inhofe even shared the same fear-mongering tactics of these men when he made the largely nonsensical claim that, “If Israel were driven into the sea tomorrow, if every Jew in the Middle East were killed, terrorism would not end. You know that in your heart. Terrorism would continue.”⁷²³ This fear appears to have conditioned Inhofe and other like-minded Christian conservatives to advocate for an Israeli “security buffer” of Biblically covenanted land, legitimised by the irrefutable fact that “God said so.”⁷²⁴

(http://www1.cbs.gov.il/shnaton57/st_eng02.pdf - accessed August 29, 2007). The Arab political parties are Hadesh, the National Democratic Assembly - ‘Balad’, and Ra’am Ta’al (a joint ticket between the United Arab List and the Arab Movement for Renewal, “Current Functioning Parliamentary Groups”, Knesset website (http://www.knesset.gov.il/faction/eng/FactionCurrent_eng.asp - accessed August 29, 2007).

⁷²² Sen. James M. Inhofe (R-Ok), “America’s Stake in Israel’s War On Terrorism”, Dec 4, 2001 taken from Sen. James M. Inhofe U.S. Senate (Press Room - Speeches) website (http://inhofe.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=PressRoom.Speeches&ContentRecord_id=ccef26d9-1428-420e-ae7a-3b5c1643a8d9&Region_id=&Issue_id= - accessed August 29, 2007).

⁷²³ Inhofe, “America’s Stake...”

⁷²⁴ In arguing this point, Inhofe cites Genesis 13:14-18. Verse 18 explicitly mentions Abram’s moving to Mamre at Hebron, which is a now a major Palestinian city in the West Bank. Inhofe, “America’s Stake...”

Even more controversial has been Sen. Inhofe's attempted portrayal of pre-1948 Palestine as *terra nullius*, where he cited three sources as evidence. The first came from Mark Twain, who travelled Palestine in 1867 and described it as,

a desolate country whose soil is rich enough but is given over wholly to weeds. A silent, mournful expanse. We never saw a human being on the whole route. There was hardly a tree or a shrub anywhere. Even the olive and the cactus, those fast friends of a worthless soil, had almost deserted the country.⁷²⁵

Sen. Inhofe subsequently quoted a selection from the 1913 British report of the Palestinian Royal Commission that described the coastal plain north of Gaza in this way:

No orange groves, orchards or vineyards were to be seen until one reached the Yavnev village. Houses were mud, schools did not exist. The western part toward the sea was almost a desert. The villages in this area were few and thinly populated. Many villages were deserted by their inhabitants.⁷²⁶

The Christian conservative Senator finished this assessment by quoting Voltaire's depiction of Palestine as "a hopeless dreary place."⁷²⁷ This final source is relatively surprising, given the gulf between Voltaire's own exceedingly 'progressive' political views and those of Inhofe and his Christian kin.

Ultimately such rhetoric as this contributes to an atmosphere within Capitol Hill that incorporates pro-Israel support as a divisive "wedge" issue, where numerous politicians on both sides of the floor play manipulative games of one-upmanship. Politicians' desire to be perceived as more pro-Israel than their rivals can be particularly intense and personal, while also having significant consequences.⁷²⁸ For

⁷²⁵ Sen. Inhofe, quoting Mark Twain's *The Innocents Abroad*, in his speech to Senate. Twain's depiction of Palestine has been the subject of significant contention over the years, with perspectives that range from seeing it as travelogue satire: "He exposed the cant and second-hand enthusiasms of travelers and the romantic exaggerations and false theatricalities of travel books about the Holy Land" to the simple fact that his built-up expectations from Biblical reading could simply not be satisfied with the actuality of being there. John C. McCloskey, "Mark Twain as Critic in the Innocents Abroad", *American Literature*, 25.2 (May 1953) p. 150 and Jeffrey Alan Melton, "Keeping the Faith in Mark Twain's 'The Innocents Abroad'", *South Atlantic Review*, 64.2 (Spring 1999) p. 68.

⁷²⁶ Sen. Inhofe, quoting the Palestine Royal Commission in his speech to Senate.

⁷²⁷ Sen. Inhofe, quoting Voltaire in his speech to Senate.

⁷²⁸ Jim VandeHei, "Congress is Giving Israel Vote of Confidence; Both Parties Back Ally, Court

example, Rep. Jim Moran, a Democrat from Virginia, has been quoted in the *Washington Post* as stating that those in Congress “get rewarded politically and financially for being out front in their support [of Israel],” and that while the Israeli government “know[s] [it] can only go as far as the United States backs [it],” such magnified support “can encourage their leadership to overreach and create situations that become more problematic.”⁷²⁹

Summary

While the political fortunes of Christian conservatives in the United States have over time risen and fallen, their inherent relationship with Israel has consistently endured. This reality has persisted since Truman’s initial recognition of the fledgling state, continuing through the 1980s and beyond, with Israel all the while benefiting heavily from United States patronage. Christian conservatives have largely been at the forefront of such support, motivated by beliefs that have looked to both the present *and* future. These beliefs intrinsically stem from a prophetic interpretation of the Bible that legitimises a highly activist role for Christians in working to make such prophecies come to pass. While these views are ultimately theoretical, the sheer number of such believers within the United States works to orchestrate a significant constituency, with the capacity to lobby and organise various means of practical support for Israel.

As this chapter has demonstrated, the connections that Christian conservatives have forged with Israel range from the cultural to the political, governmental to the non-governmental, from openly transparent to the subversive. Such diverse forms of support have played a pivotal role in maintaining the strong

Jewish Support”, *The Washington Post*, July 19 2006, p. A5.
⁷²⁹ Rep. James P. Moran Jr. (D-Va), quoted in Jim VandeHei, “Congress is Giving Israel...”.

relationship between the United States and Israel, for if one specific area of connection becomes weakened, there are numerous others to keep the relationship secure. This framework, built largely upon the work of Christian conservatives themselves, has arguably become the status quo within the United States. However, the fact that one constituency has such a disproportionate influence on U.S. foreign policy, and particularly its strategic regional objectives, should be of significant concern to the country's democratic principles.

Electoral changes in the make-up of Congress and the White House have done little to shake the bond between the United States and Israel, as both Republican and Democrat politicians have come to appreciate the benefits of towing a decidedly pro-Israel line. While some are more vocal than others in offering this support, the political perils in questioning the U.S. alliance with Israel have become self-evident. For his part, President Barack Obama was obligated to indicate his own position on Israel during his campaign in early 2008, as he categorically told MSNBC's Tim Russert that Israel's security was indeed "sacrosanct."⁷³⁰

It remains difficult to see how the United States could change tack to a more nuanced position on Israel, even if Obama, or any other future President, would want to. Christian conservatives are more committed and more organised in advocating their support of Israel than any other foreign or domestic U.S. policy issue. This constituency, numbering tens of millions of Christians, is further strengthened by officials within the Israeli government who use the religious convictions of these Christians for their own political agenda. The fact that these two groups share inherently divergent religious ideologies is largely inconsequential

⁷³⁰ Jonathan Weisman, "Obama Rebuffs Challenges on His Israel Stance", *Washington Post*, February 28, 2008, p. A08. (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2008/02/27/AR2008022703512.html?id=ST2008022703658> – accessed November 10, 2008).

within the *realpolitik* of the Middle East, where they have become unified in what they regard as their battle against Palestinian extremism, which in practice has also eroded Palestinian legal and economic rights. The 2009 elections in Israel have only reinforced this, with the right-wing Likud party more than doubling its 2006 result, winning 27 seats. The ultra-nationalist Yisrael Beiteinu (Israel our Home) party also increased its representation in the Knesset from 11 to 15 seats to become Israel's third largest political party, with its leader Avigdor Lieberman espousing a contentious platform of Jewish immigration, settlement and defense.⁷³¹

Within this context, Israel will clearly continue to use its position in the region to benefit from United States aid, generated both publicly and privately. However there must also come a point where significant issues will need to be addressed, such as the creation of a viable Palestinian state and control over Jerusalem. The United States capacity to work as a legitimate mediator on these issues has been, and will continue to be questioned, insofar as it remains hamstrung by a domestic political situation dominated by Christian conservative influence on the issue of the U.S-Israel relationship. This matter demands resolution, as it is becoming increasingly untenable for the United States and its Western allies to justify their continued inaction. Persistent human rights abuses and threats of violence against all peoples within the region will not cease on account of simplistic calls against Palestinian extremism, nor will the tacit acceptance of exploitive Israeli land expansion provide Israelis or Palestinians with an ever-elusive "national security."

⁷³¹ "With 99% of votes counted Kadima leads Likud 28 to 27 seats", *Haaretz.com* (<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1063105.html> - accessed February 13, 2009) "Yisrael Beytenu: Israel Is Our Home" (<http://www.yisraelbeytenu.com/> - accessed February 13, 2009) "Election Resources on the Internet: Elections to the Israeli Knesset – Results Lookup" (<http://www.electionresources.org/il/knesset.php?election=2003> – accessed February 13, 2009).

CHAPTER FOUR

12 months from the Bully-Pulpit: An analysis of sermons from Thomas Road Baptist Church, Lynchburg, Virginia

We should not be expecting the Republicans, the Democrats, the media, Hollywood, the educators, to straighten out America. That should be done from the pulpit, and the pews of America's churches.⁷³²

Jerry Falwell.

Before his death on 15 May 2007, the Rev. Dr. Jerry Falwell was one of the leading Christian conservative speakers and organisers in the United States. His base at Thomas Road Baptist Church, in Lynchburg, Virginia, included a church membership of over 20,000, and a multi-faceted communications network consisting of radio, television and in more recent times, the internet. Falwell was firmly entrenched as the head pastor of this church, however he sporadically shared his pulpit stage with a number of other Christian conservative leaders, ranging from pastors, theologians and even political pundits.

The role of the preacher, whether pastor or lay, should not be underestimated as a source of cultural, social and political values, especially within this context of a Christian conservative mega-church. As Kenneth Wald and Allison Calhoun-Brown asserted in *Religion and Politics in the United States*, "Minister's views not only inform their own activity; they can shape the perspectives of their

* Research for this chapter has largely come from downloading full audio recordings of sermons from Thomas Road Baptist Church in mp3 format, freely available from the Church website (www.trbc.org). I then transcribed fifteen such sermons delivered between January 2006 and February 2007. Many of the quotes used in this chapter are taken from those transcriptions. This has been a hugely beneficial source, as it gives a unique insight into the thoughts and motivations articulated from what is, in essence, the heartland of Christian conservatism in the United States.

⁷³² Jerry Falwell, "Profane and Old Wives Fables", Thomas Road Baptist Church, March 5, 2006.

congregation.”⁷³³ Falwell and his fellow speakers have attempted to do exactly this, by drawing on many contemporary themes within their various sermons. Dan Brown’s *The Da Vinci Code*, which posited the notion of a lineage descended from Jesus Christ, came under heated condemnation from the Thomas Road pulpit in the wake of its on-screen portrayal in 2006.⁷³⁴ However Hollywood cinema aside, far more important matters of a political nature have also been dealt with from the bully pulpit of Thomas Road. Both spiritual and physical battles against ‘radical Islam’ dominated many sermons, as did an uncompromising support of Israeli “exceptionalism.” Alongside these was the continuing rhetoric of anti-communism and through this a strong reverence for the memory of such figures as Ronald Reagan.

These three themes are all linked by the theological brand of Christian conservatism, as they distinctively look to conserve this group’s perceived ideals of the past. Central to this is the deep conviction that long before the advent of ‘godless’ Communism, before Palestinians ever lived in the Holy Land, and even before Mohammed and the founding of the Islam religion, there was the Christian God. In seeking to carry out the ‘will’ of their God, these Christian conservatives hope to use their position within the United States to play an important role in world events.

⁷³³ Kenneth Wald and Allison Calhoun-Brown, *Religion and Politics in the United States (Fifth Edition)* p. 130.

⁷³⁴ Ed Hindson, “The Da Vinci Code Deception”, Thomas Road Baptist Church, February 12, 2006.

Thomas Road against Terrorism

It is time for this country to recognize that there is a war between Islamo-fascism and freedom. A war between the culture of death and the culture of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It is a war we must win – period.⁷³⁵

John Hagee.

Throughout 2006, some of the most frequent political messages delivered in sermons at Thomas Road Baptist Church were emphatic expressions against Islamic extremism. These expressions contain a number of specific elements, incorporating both conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as emotive recollections of the 9/11 attacks. The various speakers at Thomas Road often addressed these topics by frequently using language which was aggressive in tone and overtly bold in rhetoric. Falwell himself, as the senior church pastor, gave many examples of this. Espousing well-worn conservative, pro-war clichés, he declared on March 5, 2006, “We either fight the terrorists over there, or we fight them over here.”⁷³⁶ He further elaborated on the need for the United States to unilaterally fight terrorists within the same sermon, stating:

They’re not insurgents, they’re barbarians – they’re terrorists. And the Marines are doing the right thing – shoot them, and that is the only way. I’m glad we’re putting some airplanes there now that can help blow some of those people away. It is an absolute farce to think that you can tenderly treat people who are out to kill your children, and your children’s children. I mean the Bible says a man that will not care for his household, is worse than an infidel. And that’s why I’m a lifetime member of the NRA [National Rifle Association] (applause). I would hate to ever shoot anybody, but if they ever came to my house to hurt my family, I’d be known as the “pistol-packin’ parson – I’d blow ‘em away (laughter).”⁷³⁷

The above passage provides an important insight into how Falwell propagated his own worldview within this framework of a Sunday church service.

⁷³⁵ John Hagee, “World War III Has Begun”, Thomas Road Baptist Church, September 3, 2006.

⁷³⁶ Jerry Falwell, “Profane and Old Wives Tales”, Thomas Road Baptist Church, March 5, 2006.

⁷³⁷ Jerry Falwell, “Profane and Old Wives Tales”, Thomas Road Baptist Church, March 5, 2006.

Such a message would arguably appear to be in direct contrast to Jesus' commandment to "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."⁷³⁸ However the congregation is told in no uncertain terms that the U.S. Marines are doing the "right thing," and that shooting the terrorists is "the only way." This demonstrates the first method Falwell used in disseminating his message: *simplify the topic*. Phrases such as the "right thing" and "only way" exist inherently as generic assumptions, whereas outside of such preconceptions it remains readily apparent that the scope of the "War on Terror" is overwhelmingly complex. For alongside the military aspects Falwell alludes to there are other political, social and economic factors, all of which contribute to the overall conflict. However such considerations beyond an overtly military outlook are conspicuously absent from the Thomas Road pulpit.

Falwell's statement also relied chiefly on the Bible as an authority to support his argument. By asserting that evidence justifying his claims came from the Bible, which Christians see as the inspired 'Word' of God, Falwell ultimately attempted to align himself with such authority. However regardless of its source, the Bible should be treated the same as any form of informative writing, being read in context and interpreted as such. As such, it remains unhelpful at best and misleading at worst to declare "the Bible says..." without giving the audience a proper Biblical reference and context. This leaves the congregation to rely solely on their pastors' accuracy and honesty in preaching from this text. The perils of this become evident when, with a keyword search from an online Bible database, it becomes apparent that the verse alluded to by Falwell in the previous passage is 1 Timothy 5:8, which states, in the King James Version: "But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those

⁷³⁸ Taken from Matthew 5:44, *Holy Bible* (New International Version).

of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”⁷³⁹ The context and motive behind this statement implies that men *provide* for their families, as opposed to becoming the ‘pistol-packers’ that Falwell depicted in his sermon. This distortion of the Bible has a potentially far-ranging impact when considering Falwell’s position as senior pastor of a 20,000 member mega-church, with significant scope of influence within the community and beyond. Many of those hearing this message would consider the pastor’s words ‘gospel truth,’ with its subsequent conclusions applied, not through a personal weighing of his argument, but instead by a blanket acceptance on account of his given position by the congregation.

In such an environment, no room is permitted for difference of opinion, and even the simple act of questioning is categorically dismissed. This was demonstrated in Falwell’s message given on 23 July, 2006, in a sermon provocatively entitled “Are We Entering World War Three?” During this Falwell rhetorically asked his congregation:

Should America be waging war in Afghanistan and Iraq? That’s too dumb a question to ask, but I never know what somebody, from some major media might be present, so I’ll answer it for you: of course we have a right to be there, and of course we ought to be doing what we’re doing there and of course Mr. Bush is right, because we’re either going to fight them over there – or here. I’d much prefer to follow them into their caves and under the rocks where they are, and do whatever it takes to get the Saddam Husseins’ in a prison and a cage, and to find (if he’s still living) the Osama Bin Ladens’ and the Al-Zaqharis’ to do whatever it takes to wipe them off the face of the earth. Of course we should be there.⁷⁴⁰

This statement highlights another integral method Falwell used to politically influence his audience; that of encouraging divisiveness and stifling debate. In taking an indiscriminate snipe at commentators in the media and elsewhere who don’t align to his perspective, Falwell perpetuates a defensiveness that has long

⁷³⁹ 1 Timothy 5:8 Holy Bible (King James Version) *Bible Gateway.com* (<http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Timothy%205:8&version=9> – accessed February 16, 2009).

⁷⁴⁰ Jerry Falwell, “Are We Entering World War III?”, Thomas Road Baptist Church, July 23, 2006.

defined the Christian conservative movement. However he not only gives the impression that it is absolute madness to think that the war is anything other than essential to U.S. national interests, but the tone of violent revenge against listed enemies is also clearly apparent. Such sentiment works to further ignore the stark complexities of international relations, as well as underestimating the full consequences of military involvement.

Alongside these rhetorical techniques, Falwell also utilised fear as one of the most efficient tools in mobilising support for a specific cause. This is by no means unique, as many other powerful orators have drawn heavily upon this technique throughout history. In highlighting the rhetorical “War on Terrorism,” Falwell decisively sought to play upon the fears of his audience. However by raising a number of legitimate concerns as to the nature of extremism, he nevertheless failed to distinguish between legitimate threats and those that are merely subjective perceptions. An example of this can be seen in his sermon given on October 1, 2006 at Thomas Road, titled “Greater Churches and Pastors for Greater Days”:

But here we are today in terrorism. Islamic radical terrorism. We don't know where they are. We don't hear their armies coming because they're already here. And around the world – the whole world today in jeopardy, because of a few million radical Islamic barbarians, who believe that their mission in life is to kill all the infidels; i.e. Jews and Christians.⁷⁴¹

Here little effort was given in attempting to understand the motives and actions behind terrorism, as its perpetrators are described emotively as ‘barbarians’ who are sanctioned with a violent mission propagated from a reactionary interpretation of the Koran.⁷⁴² Indeed for many Christian conservatives, evil itself is personified in the

⁷⁴¹ Jerry Falwell, “Greater Churches and Pastors for Greater Days”, Thomas Road Baptist Church, January 10, 2006.

⁷⁴² Christianity has its own, less spoken of parallel to this phenomenon, through those believers who seek to re-establish fundamentalist Judaic law as the principal governing code of the United States. This practice, known as ‘Reconstructionalism’ or ‘Dominionism’, includes such directives as capital punishment through death by stoning. See John Sugg, “A Nation Under God: Let others worry about the Rapture: For the increasingly powerful Christian Reconstructionist movement,

‘Islamic radical’; a fear which has urgent implications, as Falwell warned his congregation that “they’re already here.”

Overarching this rhetoric is Falwell’s failure to acknowledge two crucial points incorporated in the issue of terrorism. Firstly, while many terrorist acts perpetrated by Islamic believers may be attributed to faith-based mandates, such as that of *jihad*, they are nonetheless encouraged and supported by circumstances of a significantly secular nature. These include the deprivation of human rights, limitations of economic opportunities as well as diplomatic provocation, among other factors. These areas of discrimination and persecution stand in direct opposition to many Biblical tenets, yet are completely ignored in Falwell’s terse analysis. Furthermore, terrorism has consistently proved to be virtually impossible to defend against pre-emptively; if a terrorist wishes to attack, there are few reliable options available to stop this. Such limitations are especially stark when the curtailing of civil liberties for the general population is factored in, as was seen in the implementation of the Patriot Act within the United States.

Falwell’s examples of fear-mongering implicitly encouraged strong and urgent measures against the perceived terrorist threat, while promoting an activist agenda that involved shaping the nation’s domestic and foreign policy priorities. Through this, Falwell could be seen to carry significant influence, especially through his friendly relationship with the Republican President George W. Bush. While there are many other groups who exhibit a conservative agenda of military build-up and unilateral foreign intervention, Christian conservatives are widely recognised as both motivated *and* active within this sphere.

the task is to establish the Kingdom of God right now – from the courthouse to the White House”, *Mother Jones*, 30.7 (Dec. 2005) pp. 32-36.

Jerry Falwell's was not the only conservative Christian voice to come from the Thomas Road pulpit, as a number of other like-minded men have also been invited to come and speak at the Sunday services. One of the more regular speakers was Dr. Ed Hindson, Assistant to the Chancellor and Professor of Religion at Liberty University, also situated in Lynchburg, Virginia. He is also somewhat of an eschatology 'specialist' (the study of 'End Times' prophecy) and has written and edited over 30 books on the subject, which include such titles as, "Fundamentalist Phenomenon" (1981), "End Times and New World Order" (1991) and "Antichrist Rising" (2003). It is in largely this capacity that Hindson came to the Thomas Road pulpit, such as in his November 5, 2006 sermon, titled "The Book of Revelation in Forty-Five Minutes". Here Hindson's message gave a strong example of the connection that many conservative Christians draw between Biblical prophecy (especially that relating to eschatology) and the politics of United States foreign policy. For in this sermon he stated:

...everything that is going on in the Middle East today oughta be like a flashing red light to get our attention that we are moving closer and closer to the time of the end. Every prophecy about the future talks about Israel being back in the land – they are back in the land. It talks about a crisis in the Middle East – there is a crisis in the Middle East. It talks about the threat of the use of weapons of mass destruction – and weapons of mass destruction already exist⁷⁴³.

Much can be gleaned from this statement of prophecy and its political implications. Most stark of all is the implied acceptance of Hindson that the United States involve itself in confrontations in the Middle East. In doing so, this leads Christian conservatives to view such events directly through the lens of prophetic fulfilment. Biblical prophecy, while a legitimate and important aspect to the Christian faith, should also be recognised as a complex and contentious area rife with

⁷⁴³ Ed Hindson, "The Book of Revelation in Forty-Five Minutes", Thomas Road Baptist Church, 5-11-06.

debate. For example, the willingness of certain groups and individuals, such as Hindson, to see symbolic connection between foreign policy and a ‘dawning Armageddon’ is certainly not a new phenomenon. However beyond the apocalyptic notions of preparing for the end of the world, there are a number of other factors revealed in Hindson’s statement. Firstly there is the assumption of Israel’s existence being a prerequisite for the “Second Coming of Christ”. Many Christians, even those outside the ranks of U.S. conservatism explored here, accept this element of Christian doctrine. However, the implications of that acceptance are paramount to understanding the relationship between the state of Israel and many Christian conservatives within the United States. The support given to the Israeli state by this group is monumental in size and scope.

The second factor of political importance within Hindson’s statement is his comments on the threat of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). Like Falwell, Hindson introduces such a theme with a vague simplicity that allows the audience to connect the remark with their own pre-constructed knowledge of the threat that has, in recent years, underpinned much of the fear and anxiety pervasive within Western culture. A number of aspects are tied to this, such as the Iranian and North Korean regimes, as well as potentialities for individual terrorist groups to independently procure WMDs. Christian conservatives, in understanding that the use of such weapons is a potential precursor for the prophesied ‘End Times’, can thus not only comprehend such an irrational and devastating scenario; to many it is a foregone certainty.⁷⁴⁴ Such a belief also has the capacity to legitimise power-brokers in avoiding commitments to nuclear non-proliferation through diplomatic measures, and instead engage in the brinkmanship of former years that would see national and

⁷⁴⁴ This is detailed further in the second part of the chapter, dealing with Christian prophetic literature.

regional security rest perilously on a knife-edge. Through this, the scenario changes from prophecy focused on the spoken word of God, to a self-fulfilling prophecy with certain attitudes and agendas driven towards specific objectives and outcomes.

One of these outcomes has been the increased presence of the United States in the Middle East, explicitly shown in the invasion and occupation of Iraq. The blind support of this military effort by Christian conservatives, such as the late Jerry Falwell, was demonstrated in his invitation to Lieutenant Colonel Steve Russell to speak at a Sunday service on January 21, 2007. During this time, Russell spoke of his total commitment to the conflict and U.S. policy within the region, stating that

America was not built on the labour and hard work of the cynic, and the critic. Americans of the past knew how to sacrifice – many of you, veterans in uniform here tonight. I thank you for your service. (applause) I have a country because of your service. Your generation knew how to sacrifice. You knew the difference between what was evil, and what was good. Who was a threat, and who was harmless.⁷⁴⁵

Here Russell reiterated some key themes espoused by Falwell and other Christian conservative leaders. For example, in exalting the value of sacrifice, Russell pandered to the congregation without addressing the critical question of what exactly the United States' current defence personnel are sacrificing *for*. Instead the Lieutenant Colonel offered a justification couched in the polarised terms of 'good' and 'evil'. However despite Russell's fighting for the moral high ground, it has become all too apparent that this 'Christian nation' is capable of both good *and* evil, revealed in such examples as the deliberate killing of civilians within the theatre of war and the dehumanising practices of Abu Ghraib prison, among others.⁷⁴⁶ This

⁷⁴⁵ LTC. Steve Russell, "Personal Testimony While In Iraq", Thomas Road Baptist Church, January 21, 2007.

⁷⁴⁶ "New 'Iraq Massacre' Tape Emerges", *BBC News Online (UK Version)* (http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/5039420.stm - accessed February 16, 2009). Adam Zagorin, "The Abu Ghraib Scandal You Don't Know", *Time Magazine*, February 7, 2005 (<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1025139,00.html> – accessed February 16, 2009).

contradiction between stated moral aims and actual events has gone a long way to severely damaging the righteous self-image of the United States and has underpinned charges of hypocrisy. However such claims have only strengthened the ideological resolve of Christian conservatives, and with self-doubt not an option, they continue to view the conflict as directed by a God-given mandate.⁷⁴⁷

While Russell spoke from the perspective of a military officer, Gary Bauer came to the pulpit at Thomas Road on the 22nd of October 2006 chiefly as a political lobbyist.⁷⁴⁸ Bauer's message was entitled *Two Wars in America*; the first recognised as the battle for Christian morality, while the second was described as the 'war against *Islamo-fascism*'.⁷⁴⁹ His use of such terminology is significant, as he sought to manipulate this concept to generate political mileage, using two emotive ideas, butchered together and used for fear-mongering. This again is merely another example of a Christian conservative spokesperson ignoring a subject's complexities, in this case the elements of fundamentalist Islamic religious belief and the political ideology of fascism. Bauer simplified these ideas to such an extent that an entirely new meaning is created, built on an inherently subjective foundation. However this was no aberration, as Bauer continued to employ trite, emotive rhetoric throughout his speech, shown explicitly in his pandering to the memory of 9/11:

⁷⁴⁷ Lt. Gen. (Ret.) William Boykin is another example of a hard-line Christian conservative within the U.S. military. An August 2004 report by the Pentagon's inspector general investigated 23 "religious-orientated events" that Boykin addressed, while he was deputy under secretary of Defence Intelligence. Of issue was Boykin's position that his "God was bigger" than Mohammed and that behind the United States enemies was "a spiritual enemy...called Satan" that could be successfully overcome "if we come against them in the name of Jesus." *The New York Times Online*, March 4, 2005 (http://www.nytimes.com/2005/03/04/politics/04boykin.html?_r=1# - accessed December 2, 2008). Fared Zakaria, "And He's Head of Intelligence?", *Newsweek*, October 27, 2003, p. 41.

⁷⁴⁸ One of the mainstays of the conservative political landscape for the past quarter century, Bauer was a Policy Director during the Reagan administration and later headed the Family Research Council lobby group. Leaving that post to nominate for the 2000 Presidential elections, he bailed out of the race in the early primaries. He has also led the Campaign for Working Families PAC (Political Action Committee), while also acting as President of the 'American Values' political lobby group.

⁷⁴⁹ Gary Bauer, "Two Wars In America", Thomas Road Baptist Church, October 22, 2006.

We watched Americans jumping out of hundred storey windows in the World Trade Centre towers in New York. We watched in amazement as other Americans in the sky over Pennsylvania fought back, and in doing that spared our nation unbelievable additional sorrow and pain... We watched in fact the day after 9/11 when people in Gaza and the West Bank rushed out of their homes and into the streets handing out candy to children and shooting guns in the air celebrating what happened to America.⁷⁵⁰

Here Christian conservatism is displayed at its most divisive, portraying a decidedly polarised view of brave, defenceless Americans on one extreme and Palestinians as sole aggressors on the other. The tenets of Christian love, compassion and forgiveness continue to be silent in this conservative context, or in any case are only viewed in relation to the United States and its citizens. However not all U.S. citizens are treated with such courtesy by Bauer, as former Democratic President Bill Clinton came under heavy fire in this sermon for his perceived inaction and inability to prevent other terrorist acts during his administration. The acknowledgement that the 9/11 attacks occurred during George W. Bush's administration is conspicuously absent from Bauer's tirade, showing a definite bias towards the Republican Party, which is hardly surprising considering Bauer's political background. This fact also further highlighted the ethical dilemmas of politicking from the pulpit, and gives credence to the Christian conservative belief that there should be *no* separation between church and state, especially in the realm of political influence and lobbying. This relationship between church and state incorporates a great number of diverse opinions, as the role of Christian conservative influence in the political arena is far from easily defined.

One such Christian conservative who continues to blur the line between religion and politics is the Texas pastor John Hagee. He stands as one of the leading Christian Zionists in the United States, giving him a platform from which to openly

⁷⁵⁰ Gary Bauer, "Two Wars In America", Thomas Road Baptist Church, October 22, 2006.

justify Israel's interests within the U.S. political realm. From the pulpit of Thomas Road on September 3rd 2006, he delivered a provocative sermon entitled "World War Three Has Begun". Here Hagee sought to combine his prophetic 'insights' regarding the nation of Israel with a history lesson that drew a tenuous link between Nazi fascism and the previously mentioned "Islamofascism." This term first gained wide publicity when it appeared in a press conference given by President George W. Bush on August 7, 2006.⁷⁵¹ It is therefore no surprise that as two ardent Bush supporters, both Bauer and Hagee utilised the term in the following months, despite the President himself discontinuing the use of such problematic phrasing.

During his Thomas Road sermon, Hagee also declared that the 9/11 attacks had nothing to do with "our [United States] support of Israel". He elaborated on this by stating, "Only someone dumb enough to buy the New York Times would believe that. They hate us because it's their religious duty to hate us. They hate us because they're trained from the breast of their mother to hate us. Radical Islam is a doctrine of death..."⁷⁵² In attempting to justify this verbose rhetoric, Hagee cited a *London Times* report which revealed an apparent plot by a young Muslim couple to use their infants feeding bottle as the vessel for a liquid bomb, to be used mid-air over the Atlantic Ocean. If carried out, this would have been another tragic example of terrorism, but sensationalising the plot does little to abate further terrorist actions. Hagee's attempt to take the moral high ground, in order to prove the Islamic faith as diametrically opposed to peace, is simplistic at best and dehumanising at worst. This is clearly apparent in his painting of all Muslims with the tar of violent fundamentalism.

⁷⁵¹ White House Press Release, *President Bush and Secretary of State Rice Discuss the Middle East Crisis*, August 7, 2006 (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/08/20060807.html> - accessed September 8, 2008).

⁷⁵² John Hagee, "World War III Has Begun", Thomas Road Baptist Church, September 3, 2006.

Elsewhere in his sermon, Hagee posed the question, “When did this Islamic threat begin?”⁷⁵³ He gave a number of possibilities, from the Iranian embassy crisis in 1979, through various other attacks on U.S. service personnel and installations in the following decades, up to the 9/11 attacks. However the actual answer, he asserted, could be understood in the following statement:

But the fact, this clash of civilizations started 1700 years before Christ was born, when Abraham the father of all who believed, married two women. [Abraham’s son through Sarah was Isaac, a patriarch of the Christian faith, while Ishmael was conceived by an Egyptian maid Hagar, who] had 12 sons and they became the Arabian nation – the Arab nation. And in time evolved to have a theology of Allah and Islam...This is a clash between two great positions of faith that will not be resolved until God himself resolves it. I ASSURE you, that we as a people must come to the position that WE MUST BE WILLING to defend our life as Americans against those who are committed to destroy us.⁷⁵⁴

This statement gives an important insight into the thinking of Christian conservatives such as Hagee, in terms of their understanding of cultural relationships and what they perceive as the innate futility of trying to achieve sustainable peace among different religious groups. For example, Hagee’s rhetoric depiction of a ‘clash of civilizations’ implicitly recalls the ruthless campaigns of the Crusades, where religious division fuelled by prejudiced ignorance, instigated the deaths of many Muslims, Christians and Jews. Furthermore, Hagee’s resolute belief that this clash “will not be resolved until God himself resolves it” justifies a deliberate position of inaction in attempting a dialogue across faiths, because he essentially believes there is nothing people can do to stop the violence. However, most controversial is the invocation of God’s will for the ‘American cause’ that Hagee alludes to. This overlooks the simple truth that *all* religious zealots believe that God not only endorses their actions, but that they are in fact doing the will of God.

⁷⁵³ John Hagee, “World War III Has Begun”, Thomas Road Baptist Church, September 3, 2006.

⁷⁵⁴ John Hagee, “World War III Has Begun”, Thomas Road Baptist Church, September 3, 2006. Emphasis added.

Another dubious connection Hagee made within his sermon was the constructed link between the fascism of the German Nazi Party, established under Adolph Hitler, and the so-called “Islamofascism” perpetrated by adherents to radical Islam. While full of provocative rhetoric, Hagee’s evidence demonstrating such a link never extended beyond the circumstantial. For example, Hagee claimed that the title of Hitler’s polemic *Mein Kampf* was congruous to the Islamic word ‘jihad’, because both can be translated as ‘struggle’. Other parallels cited by Hagee include perceived connections between the Hitler youth camps and fundamentalist radical teaching by some Muslim clerics. He also attempted to connect the annexation of Czechoslovakia by the Third Reich with the evacuation of Israeli settlements in Gaza and some areas of the West Bank, which he deliberately referred to as Judean Samaria.⁷⁵⁵ Such examples deliberately draw upon the historical memory of the Nazi regime in order to create an emotive response to the current political climate, pertaining to acts of terrorism. However the intellectual basis for drawing such conclusions is fundamentally flawed. Fascism as a political ideology intrinsically bears no resemblance to the hierarchy and operations of such organizations as Al-Qaeda and Hezbollah. Even more broadly, World War II and the current U.S. led ‘War on Terror’ as military conflicts have virtually nothing in common. In practical terms, Hagee’s refusal to acknowledge the unique circumstances surrounding the Occupied Territories, and instead compare them to a state in 1930’s Eastern Europe, largely distorts any attempt at objectively understanding the Israeli Palestinian conflict as a catalyst for terrorist acts. Overriding all of this is his agenda to fuel and maintain unwavering support for the Israeli state by whatever means necessary.

⁷⁵⁵ Hagee’s message instructed against Israel giving up these settlements, as Czechoslovakia had been prior to the Second World War. John Hagee, “World War III Has Begun”, Thomas Road Baptist Church, September 3, 2006.

Thomas Road United with Israel

One day the Dome of the Rock will be destroyed. I'm not advocating that, I'm not encouraging. I'm just making an observation.⁷⁵⁶

Ed Hindson.

Hagee's unwavering support for Israel's political and military objectives is in no way unique within conservative Christian circles. This was clearly demonstrated in messages from the Thomas Road pulpit, such as the distinctly Zionist ideology espoused by Dr. Tim LaHaye.⁷⁵⁷ Arguably most recognized for co-authoring the apocalyptic *Left Behind* series of novels, LaHaye has amassed a large body of work on the topic of eschatology. Heralded as more influential to evangelicals than Billy Graham, on account of his ability to politically mobilise this expanding demographic, he is also a significant benefactor of Liberty University, with multi-million dollar donations to such areas as a student lounge and an academic School of Prophecy.⁷⁵⁸ In the aftermath of the 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah forces in southern Lebanon, LaHaye gave a guest sermon at Thomas Road on September 10, on the theme of Israel and the apocalypse. Within this sermon, LaHaye stated "personally I think the Jews made a terrible mistake in calling it off [hostilities against Hezbollah forces], they should have wiped out Hezbollah just as a human instrument." Greeted with applause from the congregation, he continued,

But they're going to come back around with greater weapons, and more accurate...and when they come back the next time you can be sure it'll be more technologically advanced and it'll be more difficult for the Jews. But what the Bible teaches in Ezekiel 38, 39 is that when Russia and the Arab world coalesce and come down against Israel, Israel is forsaken by everyone, and I suppose that even includes

⁷⁵⁶ Ed Hindson, "Seven Future Events That Will Shake The World", Thomas Road Baptist Church, February 11, 2007.

⁷⁵⁷ Zionist philosophy here referring to support of Israeli power above other ethnic nations.

⁷⁵⁸ Lampman, Jane, "Apocalyptic – and Atop the Bestseller Lists", *Christian Science Monitor*, 29 August 2002, p. 14 and "Hiding the Truth at Liberty", *The American Vision* website (<http://www.americanvision.org/articlearchive/05-26-05.asp> - accessed September 10, 2008)

the United States. And when Israel is forsaken, they will look to God as their last resort, sound familiar? But God in his marvellous grace is going to perform a miracle, and that is he's going to destroy the Muslim army, the Arab army and the Russians on the mountains of Israel as a demonstration to the whole world.⁷⁵⁹

Here LaHaye is not merely advocating Israeli self-defence. Instead he calls for the “wiping out” of Hezbollah – rhetoric that if followed through to its conclusion would continue a cycle of violence within the region resulting in mass casualties, of which the majority would arguably continue to be civilians. However such consequences are either overlooked by LaHaye, or else are condoned as a necessary accompaniment to the apocalypse. Later changing hats from war general to prophecy scholar, LaHaye's reading of future developments are further revealing. Where LaHaye cites the 38th and 39th chapters of Ezekiel, the text is ambiguous as to whom Israel is actually fighting – they are simply titled the armies of Gog and Magog, a personification of evil.⁷⁶⁰ The issue surrounding when the battle written about was, or is to be fought, also remains unclear. With such uncertainties apparent, LaHaye nevertheless converts his simplistic personal opinions into fact, based on his own methodology of Biblical teaching.

While LaHaye is entitled to his personal views on prophecy, by publicly naming Russia as colluding with Muslim and Arab armies, he ultimately espouses intolerance and discrimination purely based along racial, religious and nationalistic lines. However, such statements given by LaHaye are not isolated to this particular sermon. In *Beginning of the End*, LaHaye declares that God's judgement would not be isolated to those within Russia, but would spread to the United States against “the Communists on the university campus”.⁷⁶¹ Also within the pages of *Left Behind*, he specifically labelled the ‘Antichrist’ as being Romanian, born in the town of Cluj,

⁷⁵⁹ Tim LaHaye, “The Best is Yet to Come”, Thomas Road Baptist Church, September 10, 2006.

⁷⁶⁰ However, LaHaye's statement certainly alludes to Russia, a theme on which I will elaborate when discussing the anti-communism of Christian conservatism.

⁷⁶¹ Tim LaHaye, cited in Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More*, p. 236.

coming from Italian heritage, and who would eventually attain international power through becoming the Secretary General of the United Nations.⁷⁶² While the novel is by all admissions a work of fiction, it remains nonetheless dangerous to label such groups and organisations with the stigma of the ‘Antichrist’ within this context of prophetic interpretation. Such a premise also has the capacity to reinforce other held beliefs and discriminatory tendencies, with the *Left Behind* narrative chastised by numerous commentators as driven by fear, chauvinism, homophobia and anti-Semitism.⁷⁶³

Another prominent individual to espouse hard-line support for Israel is Dr. Ergun Caner, President of the Liberty Theological Seminary since 2005. Raised a Muslim, Caner’s later conversion to Christianity led him to study at various Christian colleges and seminaries, such as Criswell College in Texas, where Caner was employed prior to his role at Liberty. Although Caner spoke a number of times at Thomas Road Baptist Church in 2006, his sermon on the 30th of July, 2006 is the most revealing of his Zionist position. For example, in referring to the hostilities between Israeli and Palestinian forces, he labels as ‘corrupt’ the “holocaust of the peace movement.”⁷⁶⁴ Use of such a term is purely sensationalist, as Caner deliberately aimed to shock his audience. In criticising efforts for Middle Eastern peace and stability in this way, Caner vandalises the memory of atrocities that occurred within the *actual* Holocaust during World War II. This similarly mirrors Gary Bauer and John Hagee’s rhetoric that takes the memory of the 9/11 tragedy and seeks to manipulate it into support for the current War on Terror.

⁷⁶² Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins, *Left Behind: A Novel of the Earth’s Last Days* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 1995), pp. 82, 195, 300.

⁷⁶³ Within *Rapture Culture*, Amy Johnson Frykholm presents a broad range of views and responses to LaHaye’s *Left Behind* series, including the views of other premillennial dispensationalists, liberal evangelicals, academics and media commentators, pp. 176-179.

⁷⁶⁴ Ergun Caner, “Racism in the Face of Diversity”, Thomas Road Baptist Church, July 30, 2006.

Caner also highlighted the perceived need for the United States to stand side by side with the Israeli government, no matter what circumstances may transpire. This was clearly shown in the following statement drawing from Caner's personal experience:

There has never been a time in history where the body of Christ has been as needed as it is now. Somebody has to be left to take a stand with Israel. And every time they call for peace [applause] – Amen! Every time, every time they stand up and call for peace it is always at the expense of Israel. I am one – please pay attention – I am one who was raised to HATE Israel. As a Muslim we were taught that the Jews drink the blood of the Palestinian children.⁷⁶⁵

Using a similar tone and style as other speakers at Thomas Road, Caner is unapologetic in detailing his message. Like Tim LaHaye, Caner depicts Israel as the sole innocent victim in this scenario of regional chaos. By describing the nation of Israel in this way, Caner clearly conveys to the need for the United States to support Israel. However the tangible nature of this support is left vague. This may be due to his belief that there should be no limits to such support, both in terms of its magnitude and scope. Indeed for many, the U.S.-led war in Iraq was also regarded as a regional effort in support of Israel's security.⁷⁶⁶

Caner's reference to the concept of blood libel also omits the important fact that both Muslims *and* Christians are equally guilty of having spread this anti-Semitic myth. Through such an omission, Caner reinforces his agenda which views only Muslims and "Arabs" as the enemies of Israel. This was further demonstrated in his subsequent comment, "They worry about 10 million Jews, when there are 400 million Arabs who want to see the death of every Jew, and the destruction of the

⁷⁶⁵ Ergun Caner, "Racism in the Face of Diversity", Thomas Road Baptist Church, July 30, 2006.

⁷⁶⁶ An example of this can be seen in comments made by Phillip Zelikow, who was a board member of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (PFIAB) between 2001-2003. Taken from Emad Mekay, "Iraq War Launched to Protect Israel – Bush Adviser", *Inter Press Service*, March 29, 2004. (<http://www.commondreams.org/headlines04/0329-11.htm> - accessed September 10, 2008)

nation of Israel.”⁷⁶⁷ While instances of religiously-motivated terrorism have clearly revealed there are numerous groups motivated to the goals that Caner suggests, to declare that such individuals number 400 million is simply sensationalist. Nevertheless, Dr. Caner’s message was greeted by rousing applause by the thousands of people within the Thomas Road congregation. It would be hard to imagine such an audience disagreeing with anything said from the pulpit at Thomas Road, especially from one who oversees the connected seminary that, in the words of Caner, is “called to prepare men and women to serve as Green Berets in the Lord’s service, trained for intellectual combat and spiritual warfare.”⁷⁶⁸

Caner’s former employer, the late Jerry Falwell, shared similar sentiments in the week before Caner’s sermon. On July 23, 2006, Falwell delivered a sermon heavily supportive of Israel and adamant in endorsing the support given it by the United States government. Maintaining rhetoric which depicted the nation of Israel as a victim, Falwell declared that, “Israel, about the size of New Jersey, is about to be driven into the Mediterranean; destroyed, become extinct, if in fact they do not do what they are doing.”⁷⁶⁹ This particular statement referred to Israeli strikes upon Southern Lebanon, in conflict with Hezbollah forces.

In the same sermon, Falwell rhetorically asked, “What should be the Christian’s response to the current Middle East crisis?”, before going on to answer:

Well you know the first thing I’m gonna say, it’s always the first thing – pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Pray for the peace of Israel. Pray for God’s chosen people. Psalm 122 verse 6 you oughta know by memory – “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. They shall prosper that love thee”. Do you hear that? If you’ll pray for the peace of Israel, the peace of Jerusalem, God will prosper you.⁷⁷⁰

⁷⁶⁷ Ergun Caner, “Racism in the Face of Diversity”, Thomas Road Baptist Church, July 30, 2006.

⁷⁶⁸ (<http://www.liberty.edu/academics/religion/seminary/index.cfm?PID=12788> – accessed March 6, 2007)

⁷⁶⁹ Jerry Falwell, “Are We Entering World War III?”, Thomas Road Baptist Church, July 23, 2006.

⁷⁷⁰ Jerry Falwell, “Are We Entering World War III?”, Thomas Road Baptist Church, July 23, 2006.

Such a statement appeared to indicate another double standard, where having previously condoned the loss of life and property for non-Jews, Falwell now regarded it as essential that Israel, and especially Jerusalem, is blessed with peace. In attempting to justify this position, Falwell further explained to his congregation that

God doesn't hate Arabs, God loves Arabs as much as he loves Jews. God hates prejudice, discrimination. This is all...this has nothing to do with individuals. It has to do with Biblical prophecy and the Abrahamic covenant – God's deal with his people. Has nothing to do with anything but love.⁷⁷¹

Within this sermon Falwell also sought to provide three reasons for the United States to support Israel, all of them based on emotive response rather than an understanding of the complex realities facing the situation. Falwell started by insisting on U.S. support of Israel for humanitarian reasons. He asked the rhetorical question,

What nation of people on the face of the earth have ever been persecuted and maligned like the Jews? Think of what Hitler did to them, six million in furnaces, slaughtered and murdered. Go all the way back to Pharaoh. Come on through the ages. And even today, anti-Semitism in Europe is at about a 1933 high right now, which set the stage for Adolph Hitler.⁷⁷²

Such continual reference to the rise of Nazism is unashamedly used for political traction to serve the Christian conservative agenda. Hagee similarly sought to perpetuate the tenuous link between Nazi fascism and his idea of “Islamofascism” previously within this chapter. Likewise, Falwell’s creation of a direct parallel from Europe in 1933 to the Middle East in 2006 is highly problematic. For while anti-Semitism continues to be a blight upon many nations throughout the world, it remains largely outside the political mainstream. Furthermore, the continual harking back to the Holocaust by Falwell and other Christian conservatives works to cloud objective judgment over the current Middle-East crisis in relation to the broader

⁷⁷¹ Jerry Falwell, “Are We Entering World War III?”, Thomas Road Baptist Church, July 23, 2006.

⁷⁷² Jerry Falwell, “Are We Entering World War III?”, Thomas Road Baptist Church, July 23, 2006.

politics of the region. Statements such as Falwell's arguably work to create a politicised guilt, that in the current context of the Middle East encourages the United States to support the Israeli government in acting any way it deems fit, justified by atrocities carried out more than half a century ago.

Falwell also cited the political reasons for the United States to support Israel. After initially highlighting Israel's democratic credentials as "the only [Middle East country] that no dictator rules", he subsequently moved on to more pragmatic politics, namely the interest of the United States in securing access to Middle Eastern oil.

[Israel is] a democracy, and the only real true friend America has in that area. Now people talk about Saudi Arabia, and we need their oil so badly. We shouldn't have to. We should do whatever we need to do off-shore in Alaska and all the rest and get self-sufficient, thumb our noses at all of them, but for some reason the Republicans, Democrats, don't have the nerve to do that. But at the same time we call these people our friends the fact is if you trace the money, follow the money, a lot of the money for the terrorists are coming from countries claiming to be our friends, and nobody's doing a thing about it there. And if we did not support Israel with billions of dollars, we would have to put enough military in all the oil countries of the Middle East to protect our own national interest that the cost would be prohibitive.⁷⁷³

Here the pretext of protecting and assisting "God's chosen people" is forgotten, and is instead replaced by the self-serving U.S. need for a satellite state within the region to act as a means of monitoring many of the world's oil suppliers. An overarching element behind this line of argument is the inherent belief in U.S. superiority. In broader terms however, Falwell's desire for the United States to 'thumb its nose' goes well beyond just the OPEC nations.

⁷⁷³ Jerry Falwell, "Are We Entering World War III?", Thomas Road Baptist Church, July 23, 2006.

In Praise of Reagan and the anti-Communist agenda

The Soviet Union is history, but there are still a lot of those residual, never-say-die socialists and Marxists who are teaching, most of them on university campuses.⁷⁷⁴

Jerry Falwell.

In the years following the collapse of the Soviet Empire, ‘Cold War’ rivalry between ‘democracy’ and ‘communism’ has diminished significantly as a U.S. foreign policy consideration. However within Christian conservative ideology, there remains a latent antagonism towards nations associated with the “communist spectre.” This has certainly been the case from the Thomas Road pulpit, and Jerry Falwell, as the church’s longstanding leader, was often outspoken on the issue. In a sermon given on the 5 March, 2006, Falwell reminded his congregation of how, during the 1980s, he broadcast an episode of his syndicated television show from the sidewalk outside the Soviet embassy, speaking out against the evils of Marxism.⁷⁷⁵ This recollection was discussed within the context of his preaching against various myths within society which included not just Marxism, but also the ‘myths’ of the anti-war movement, global warming and tolerance.⁷⁷⁶ By commenting on Soviet-Marxism explicitly however, Falwell could also send another unifying message to Christian conservatives, through lauding praise on the former Republican President Ronald Reagan:

I thank God for a guy named Ronald Reagan who came along – it wasn’t Gorbachev that brought Soviet communism down – it was Ronald Reagan, and a lot of praying people and courageous people who love freedom in Eastern Europe who brought communism down [Applause].⁷⁷⁷

⁷⁷⁴ Jerry Falwell, “Unpopular Doctrines That Must Be Preached”, Thomas Road Baptist Church, March 12, 2006.

⁷⁷⁵ Jerry Falwell, “Profane and Old Wives Tales”, Thomas Road Baptist Church, March 5, 2006.

⁷⁷⁶ Jerry Falwell, “Profane and Old Wives Tales”, Thomas Road Baptist Church, March 5, 2006.

⁷⁷⁷ Falwell, “Profane and Old Wives Tales”, Thomas Road Baptist Church, March 5, 2006.

Falwell again took up this theme later that year in his 1 October sermon. Here he said of the Soviet Union:

We knew where their headquarters were and we knew where their leaders resided, and a fellow named Ronald Reagan said, “Mr. Gorbachev, tear this wall down”, and with the prayers and support of many believers inside and outside the Soviet Union, and the strength of leadership of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher and Pope John Paul the Second...The leadership of that kind of resolve, those kinds of men, and the prayers of Christian involvement of saints inside and outside the Iron Curtain, communism came – Soviet communism came to a bloodless end – miraculously.⁷⁷⁸

Such a perspective is highly emotive, as Falwell depicts Reagan as a dominant conservative influence, while simultaneously portraying him as the almost single-handed instigator of victory. In direct contrast, the complexities of internal Soviet turmoil and universal fears of military build-up (particularly relating to nuclear proliferation) are completely removed from this equation.

The reasons why many Christian conservatives hark back to the Cold War and the resentments surrounding it are largely twofold. The first relates to a specific political ideology, which regards communism as congruous to atheism, and thus in direct opposition to the Judeo-Christian ethic projected by the United States. Within this perspective, the Cold War became a battle between ‘godless’ communism and ‘God-given’ democracy, and this sentiment remains readily apparent within the Christian conservatism of the Thomas Road pulpit. The second reason for the continued antagonism towards Russia by Christian conservatives can be construed as predominantly theological. For while in the post-Cold War environment Russia is no longer a communist nation (though a tenuous democracy at best), this has not cooled the ire it receives from Christian conservatives. This has been demonstrated both by the prophecy scholar Tim LaHaye, and firebrand Pastor John Hagee, both of whom see enmity towards Russia as having its roots in biblical prophecy. Hagee’s analysis

⁷⁷⁸ Falwell, “Profane and Old Wives Tales”, Thomas Road Baptist Church, October 1, 2006.

of the Gog and Magog war, described in the Biblical book of Ezekiel, seeks to portray Russia as the grand enemy of Israel, and therefore that of Christians everywhere. Speaking on the 3rd of September 2006, Hagee stated,

You can see the development of the Gog and Magog war now, as Russia is giving leadership to the Islamic nations – specifically Iran and Syria. Russia is all over the Middle East, in an antagonistic position against the United States of America. Our President needs to wake up and smell the coffee – Mr. Putin is not for us, he is against us [Applause].⁷⁷⁹

Such an assessment, while effective in inciting a crowd with hard-line rhetoric, lacks credibility when assessed within its biblical context. For example, the Biblical evidence used by Hagee to link Gog and Magog to Russia are found in Ezekiel 38:15 and 39:2. Both references describe the enemy of Israel (Gog and Magog) as ‘from the far north’, which is interpreted by Hagee and LaHaye as the former Soviet state.⁷⁸⁰ However, as no historical timeframe is given, it is equally plausible to suggest that such an event occurred in a time before Russia or the Soviet Union even came into existence. Such counter-arguments are roundly rejected by Hagee and other Christian conservatives, who would instead seek to promote a dangerous agenda of prophesy-driven brinkmanship. This problematic agenda has endured well after the end of the Cold War primarily because Christian conservatives continue to see Russia as inevitably linked to their own unique perception of Bible prophecy. Jerry Falwell epitomised this assured belief during the Cold War itself, when he indicated that “If God is on our side, no matter how military superior the Soviet Union is, they could never touch us. God would miraculously protect America.”⁷⁸¹

⁷⁷⁹ John Hagee, “World War III Has Begun”, Thomas Road Baptist Church, September 3, 2006.

⁷⁸⁰ Taken from *The Student Bible (NIV)* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996) p. 886.

⁷⁸¹ Jerry Falwell, cited in Erling Jorstag, *The New Christian Right, 1981-1988: Prospects for the Post-Reagan Era* (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen Press, 1987) p. 18.

Alongside Russia (and its former incarnation of the Soviet Union), China also continues to be targeted by Christian conservatives as a communist nation. For example, on July 23, 2006, Jerry Falwell declared that

The cost of this building went up like 20% during construction because of China's demand on...steel and concrete – the price has just shot upward, and we had no choice to pay prices we had not planned to pay, we had to adjust accordingly, because China is now cornering the market on construction, and they're running all the prices up.⁷⁸²

Taken in isolation, this statement indicates a certain amount of annoyance, as well as a not so subtle attempt at fear-mongering over increased prices. Such rhetoric is particularly effective within such regional communities as Lynchburg, Virginia, where Thomas Road is located. However even more provocative is the statement made by Falwell just prior to this, also relating to China, where he declares, “[China is] on record in recent years saying that they long to attack us, to put missiles on our West coast cities and they've flexed their muscle.”⁷⁸³ He cites no evidence to support this confrontational claim, which acts not only as a further hindrance to broader political relations between the U.S. and China, but also places further strain on the relationship between the pockets of persecuted Christians within China and their international brothers and sisters of faith.

For many Christian conservatives, their chief standard-bearer against the communist threat is personified in the memory of former U.S. President Ronald Reagan. A perennial cult figure for many Republicans and their supporters, this is especially seen in the demographic composition of Thomas Road. Within such a context, the mere mention of Reagan's name has come to operate as a dog-whistle to a specifically conservative set of ideals and values, as seen previously in statements made by Jerry Falwell. Both culturally and politically, reverence to Reagan and his

⁷⁸² Jerry Falwell, “Are We Entering World War III?”, Thomas Road Baptist Church, July 23, 2006.

⁷⁸³ Jerry Falwell, “Are We Entering World War III?”, Thomas Road Baptist Church, July 23, 2006.

legacy continues to the present day, despite the passing of more than two decades since the culmination of his presidency. An example of this was demonstrated in the first debate between the 2008 Republican Party primary candidates, where the memory of Ronald Reagan was palpably present. The Reagan Presidential library acted as venue for the May 3rd debate, with the former first lady, Nancy Reagan, as host. Furthermore, Reagan's name was positively mentioned *sixteen times* in the ninety minute debate. This fact is all the more striking considering the President at the time, George W. Bush, was only spoken of once, in being chastised for his policy on Iraq.⁷⁸⁴

The Thomas Road pulpit has also featured a Republican Party presidential candidate highly deferential to the former President. Gary Bauer, who ran as a candidate in the 2000 Republican primaries, gave a guest sermon at Thomas Road Baptist on October 22, 2006. His sermon was entitled 'Two Wars in America' and within it he recalled this story:

Back in 1964 I was 18 years old and I heard Ronald Reagan give a speech. It was a speech on television on behalf of Barry Goldwater, who was running for President at the time. My Dad and I sat in our living room, he was a janitor by trade, nobody in my family had ever finished high school, let alone gone on to college or law school or anything like that. We listened to Ronald Reagan give that speech and at the end of it I turned to my Dad and I said, "Dad, that guy's gonna be President someday – and I'm gonna work for him in the White House!" My Dad looked at me and he said, "Well, son, seems like a pretty tall order, but you know, if that's what you want to do, work hard, and you'll do it". Well all the way up to 1986, my friends, my Dad was able to visit me in my West Wing office in the White House, and he said to me, "You know, Gary, I actually thought you were a little nuts when you said that all those years ago, but what a country we live in, to be able to get all the way here".⁷⁸⁵

Full of nostalgic sentiment, this speech encapsulated numerous aspects of particular significance to the audience of Christian conservatives. Firstly, Bauer's narrative actively sought to reinforce the 'Protestant work ethic' ingrained within

⁷⁸⁴ Gerard Baker, "Commentary: Bush was debate's real loser" *Times Online*, May 4, 2007, (http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/us_and_americas/article1745521.ece?token=null&offset=0 – accessed September 10, 2008).

⁷⁸⁵ Gary Bauer, "Two Wars in America", Thomas Road Baptist Church, 22-10-06.

conservative Christianity. Simply put, this notion suggests that with hard work (and prayer) anything is possible. In contrast, examples of poverty or homelessness can be regarded as a direct consequence of lacking these attributes. This story also reveals not only Bauer's rise to the White House as a domestic policy adviser, but more importantly the rise of Reagan himself. This notion of 'manifest destiny' is a key component of Christian conservative belief, especially within the United States. While its biblical roots are seen in the "manifest destiny" of land being given by God to the Jewish people in Canaan, this was co-opted by early Christians in what is now the United States, as a belief in their own God-given mandate to control the land spanning from the Atlantic across to the Pacific Ocean.

This concept also has the capacity to be internalised, for as Gary Bauer intimated in his sermon, he perceived some degree of "manifest destiny" in the election of Reagan in 1980. Sixteen years after Reagan's ascent to the White House, Bauer recalled his prophetic statement as testimonial evidence of his own authority to understand the will of God. However, undergirding this prophetic insight was the fundamental role that Christian conservatives played in securing the electoral victory for the former Hollywood actor and California governor. With such organisational tenacity and the lack of a competitive opponent, Reagan's 1980 success was hardly miraculous.

Bauer's own role in the Reagan administration was also far from idyllic as he was, alongside other religious ideologues, ostracised in the later years of the Reagan administration, as their dogmatic approach came to irritate many within the regime.⁷⁸⁶ Therefore while the relationship between the G.O.P. and Christian

⁷⁸⁶ Michelle Cottle, "The right-winger to watch – Gary Bauer", *Washington Monthly*, April 1998. Taken from *Looksmart Find Articles* (http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1316/is_n4_v30/ai_20480059/pg_2 - accessed December 21, 2008).

conservatives is frequently portrayed as an intrinsic partnership, the reality is that behind the façade, it is much more a marriage of convenience, incorporating real complexities and fragilities.

Summary

As an analysis of its sermons reveals, Thomas Road Baptist is much more than a house of worship for Christians. In numerous sermons throughout 2006 and beyond there was a deliberate emphasis by ordained and lay preachers to convey a specific political agenda, which revealed itself as inherent Christian conservatism. The Rev. Dr. Jerry Falwell, as the head pastor of Thomas Road, was a chief proponent of this political ideology, as were a number of other speakers highlighted. These men all had a close attachment to Falwell, either as colleagues, benefactors, or political allies. Furthermore, the political topics discussed all have broad appeal within the constituency found at Thomas Road. Overwhelmingly, the rhetoric used in these scenarios is specifically designed to simplify topics in blunt and emotive terms, while also displaying a capacity to completely reject other points of view. While such messages can be seen to be enthusiastically received within the circles of like-minded Christian conservatives, other Christian groups have rallied against what they perceive as an undermining of Gospel values, as well as the divisions created by an agenda-based understanding of contemporary politics. This is especially true in matters of foreign policy, where Christians and non-Christians internationally have increasingly taken offence at the views and attitudes propagated by Christian conservatives in the United States. While Christian conservative activists and institutions, such as Thomas Road, in no way speak for all United States citizens,

their hard-line, fundamentalist rhetoric is often projected so loudly that it belies its rightful place on the fringes of mainstream society.

From the Pulpit to the Page: Christian Conservative Literature and the End of the World.

The world is in serious trouble, and everyone knows it. Something ominous is about to happen. Even the most powerful people on earth sense that we are running out of time...In fact, most would agree we are living in one of the most precarious, chaotic, and even dangerous times in history.⁷⁸⁷

Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson.

We're in a religious war and we need to aggressively oppose secular humanism; these people are as religiously motivated as we are and they are filled with the devil.⁷⁸⁸

Christian conservative leaders have often sought to utilise new technologies to continually broaden access to their audience. These evangelists have over time been assisted by improvements in transportation, inventions such as radio and television, and in recent times the onset of the internet, with its live-streaming and podcast opportunities. These mediums have successfully diversified the way messages are disseminated and received, however they have failed to make one of the earliest forms of communication obsolete – that being the written word. As mega-churches increasingly spread across the United States, the church bookshop remains an integral part of Christian life. Through this, the Sunday service experience can be brought back home with each congregation member, with recorded worship music, DVD's and books from the various church speakers. John

⁷⁸⁷ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning: Are We On The Brink Of World War III?* (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 2007) p. 5.

⁷⁸⁸ Tim LaHaye, cited in Jane Lampman, "Apocalyptic...", p. 14.

Hagee, in his September 2006 visit to Thomas Road, advertised his own book, *Jerusalem Countdown*, from the pulpit:

At the end of the service tonight my team will have in the lobby *Jerusalem Countdown*. It's a book that I wrote in April of 2005. Some of it has come to pass; most of it is going to happen. If you want to know where we are in the Middle East – read this book. It's an important book for every Christian to have as a biblical prophetic guideline for the future. It's been out about six months and sold 725,000 copies, and I know that you'll enjoy yours.⁷⁸⁹

This section will critique two books penned by speakers from the Thomas Road pulpit, both published in 2007. The first is a “revised and updated” version of John Hagee’s *Jerusalem Countdown*. The second is co-authored by Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, titled *Global Warning: Are we on the Brink of World War III?* Through an analysis of both books, a strong continuity in both the written and spoken words of these Christian conservative leaders emerges. Away from the mainstream media, these leaders are able to honestly articulate their controversial beliefs and opinions, to an open and receptive audience.

John Hagee’s *Jerusalem Countdown*: foreign policy through prophecy.

Jerusalem Countdown is a page-turning heart-stopper!⁷⁹⁰

Introduction to John Hagee’s *Jerusalem Countdown*.

John Hagee both begins and describes his book *Jerusalem Countdown* in the above statement. In doing so, Hagee deliberately prepared his readership for the editorial narrative in which he delivered his views regarding prophetic matters. A strong precedent for this methodology has been the success of Tim LaHaye’s *Left*

⁷⁸⁹ John Hagee, “World War III Has Begun”, Thomas Road Baptist Church, September 3, 2006.

⁷⁹⁰ John Hagee, (Lake Mary, Florida: Frontline, 2007) p. vii.

Behind series, where these, and other stylised narratives, have made a significant impact on the way Christians perceive the world. While Hagee's book is a largely editorial, as opposed to fiction, it nevertheless incorporates a similarly engaging style.

In acquiring its content, *Jerusalem Countdown*'s quality of information is severely limited by its sources, which include over 60 citations from non-academic internet websites including *Wikipedia*. Despite this, Hagee actually boasts about his information sources in the book's introduction:

Using my confidential sources in Israel, information from military experts around the world, and electrifying revelations from Bible prophecy, I will expose this reality: unless the entire world – including America, Israel and the Middle East – reaches soon a diplomatic and peaceful solution to Iran's nuclear threat, Israel and America will be on a nuclear collision course with Iran!⁷⁹¹

This introduction also highlights four key areas Hagee discusses in *Jerusalem Countdown*; the nature of what he calls 'Islamofascism', the looming threat of nuclear war, the critical need to support Israel, and finally his analysis of 'End Times' prophecy. While all these topics have overlapping connections, it is important to assess each area individually, in order to fully appreciate the agenda espoused by Hagee, and other like-minded Christian conservatives.

Islamofascism

The term "Islamofascism," used by Hagee and others from the Thomas Road pulpit, again re-emerges within *Jerusalem Countdown*. It appears in two contexts: the first being a broad reference to Islamic cultural extremism, while the second is aimed at articulating the theoretical nature of fascism, with Hitler's Nazism a specific example. In its most general sense, Hagee describes "Islamofascism" as a cultural signifier that highlights the divide between the good (the United States/Israel/other

⁷⁹¹ John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, p. vii.

Western democracies) and the bad (Arab terrorists and their allies/supporters). *Jerusalem Countdown* contains many sweeping generalisations in this vein, such as the statement that “many Arabs are Islamic fundamentalists...” as well as an assessment that the “Islamic Fascists’ Army,” at the most conservative estimate, contains some 200 million participants “willing to die killing Americans and Jews.”⁷⁹² To justify this claim Hagee cites two sources: an interview with Walid Shoebat (a self-proclaimed former terrorist who now sells books and tours lecture circuits repudiating his former culture) and also the website *www.adherents.com*, which Hagee contends as a “scholarly” source.⁷⁹³

Following this depiction of Muslims as a rampaging army, Hagee then provides a stark character assessment of Muslim culture, again citing Shoebat. This includes the practice of *Hudna*, where a peace treaty is created and then reneged on after concessions are gained and strength is restored. In acknowledging Shoebat’s testimony, Hagee articulates this as an inherent part of the Islamic faith, with the inference being that foreign policy treaties developed with Muslim nations are tenuous at best.⁷⁹⁴ A few pages later, a far more graphic critique of Islam is described by Shoebat, under the heading “Eyewitness Account of Terrorism”:

You see thousands and thousands of men in the square of Ramallah carrying body parts of a so-called collaborator. Somebody maybe was sympathizing with Israel. They cut his guts out, cut his heart out, and his kidneys, and put them on a platter. And you see the men and the children carrying the body parts through the streets, shouting, ‘*Allah Akbar*’ in a frenzied fashion, in a euphoric fashion.⁷⁹⁵

This scene mirrors another prominent recollection, described by numerous Christian conservative leaders, where in the wake of the 9/11 attacks the United States grieved

⁷⁹² John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, p. 6.

⁷⁹³ This website was created by Texan computer programmer Preston Hunter.

⁷⁹⁴ John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, p. 7.

⁷⁹⁵ John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, p. 10.

and “Palestinians danced for joy in the West Bank!”⁷⁹⁶ Juxtaposing this is Hagee’s recollections of the final moments aboard United Airlines Flight 93, described both in his 2006 sermon at Thomas Road and also in *Jerusalem Countdown*: “American passengers charged the terrorists bare-handed under the mantra, “Let’s roll!”...God bless the sacred memory of those brave Americans who gave their lives to protect our president.”⁷⁹⁷

Such contrasting depictions of Muslim extremism and American heroism seek to extol an emotive response, and only achieve heightened perceptions of fear and misunderstanding. However this appears to be Hagee’s desired result, as he continually reinforced reasons for United States citizens, and those in other Western nations, to be fearful. With a deliberate sense of urgency, Hagee declared, “Ladies and gentlemen of America, we are at war with Islamo-fascism. Jihad has come to America. We are in a war for our survival.”⁷⁹⁸ Elsewhere he warned that “The Islamic army is not coming...it’s here. Quietly living next door, they are waiting for the phone to ring for orders to attack you.”⁷⁹⁹ To bolster his claims, Hagee drew on interviews with Brigitte Gabriel, a Lebanese Christian, who like Shoebat has become a highly-publicised spokesperson against militant Islam.⁸⁰⁰ Within this interview Gabriel asserted:

They [radical Muslims] are here. They are working amongst us as any American living in the United States. You have shaken the hand of a terrorist. You have exchanged money with a terrorist. You have passed the terrorists on our soil. They are here.⁸⁰¹

⁷⁹⁶ John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, p. 68.

⁷⁹⁷ John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, p. 13.

⁷⁹⁸ John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, pp. 13-4.

⁷⁹⁹ John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, p. 35.

⁸⁰⁰ In a recent interview in *The New York Times Magazine*, Gabriel claimed that Muslims were “taking over the West”, adding “Do we want to become like “Eurabia”. She also stated that “The moderate Muslims at this point are truly irrelevant”. Deborah Solomon, “The Crusader: Questions for Brigitte Gabriel”, *The New York Times Magazine*, August 15, 2008 (<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/17/magazine/17wwln-Q4-t.html> - accessed September 12, 2008).

⁸⁰¹ John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, p. 25.

As well as this overt fear-mongering on account of “Islamofascism,” Hagee also sought to contextualise this culture within the existing ideological framework of other “fascisms,” particularly the Nazism established by Hitler preceding the Second World War. This argument, also articulated within Hagee’s Thomas Road sermon, has an entire chapter devoted to it in *Jerusalem Countdown*. Within this, Hagee articulated that the struggle faced by both the Nazis and Islamofascists “is exactly the same and against the same people [the Jews].”⁸⁰² The only significant difference he described between the two ideologies is that the Nazis were willing to surrender, with some in leadership even willing to assassinate the Führer to accomplish this end. However unlike these Nazis, Hagee argued that “Islam teaches that God commands Islamofascists to kill anyone who does not believe that Allah is the only God. Islamofascists consider it an honour to die fighting Christians and Jews [therefore] Islamofascism is far more dangerous than Nazism!”⁸⁰³

Hagee among others (including the former United States president George W. Bush) have used the term “Islamofascism” as a clarion call against an ethereal and menacing enemy. The memory of Nazi fascism, and American memorialisation of how it was defeated, is a theme that continues to pervade this description of contemporary threats. Furthermore, by giving the intangible menace of Muslim extremism a specific name, it has provided a refined focus for U.S. anger and retaliation, which was especially significant following the 9/11 attacks.

⁸⁰² John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, p. 31.

⁸⁰³ John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, p. 34.

The Threat of Nuclear War

Christian conservatives have long been interested in the implications of nuclear weapons, often as a way of understanding their own interpretations of the end of the world. That a human invention could have the capacity to cause global destruction and devastation is particularly of prophetic significance to this group. Believing that “wars and rumours of wars” on an unprecedented scale were a precondition of Jesus’ triumphant “Second Coming,” Christian conservatives such as John Hagee have increasingly viewed world events through this prophetic lens.⁸⁰⁴ Within *Jerusalem Countdown*, Hagee clearly reinforced the urgency of his belief that “World War III has begun.” He further claimed to offer “new revelations” regarding this “bloody battle.”⁸⁰⁵ In support of these claims of impending danger, Hagee cited individual quotes from George W. Bush, Rush Limbaugh and Cal Thomas.⁸⁰⁶

Within this, Hagee definitively labelled Iran as a chief instigator of this threat. In the very first chapter of *Jerusalem Countdown*, Hagee stated that:

There is a clear and present danger to America and Israel from a nuclear Iran. There will soon be a nuclear blast in the Middle East that will transform the road to Armageddon into a racetrack. America and Israel will either take down Iran, or Iran will become nuclear and take down America and Israel.⁸⁰⁷

As evidence of this threat, Hagee reprinted further interview transcriptions from Walid Shoebat, who argued the reality of Iranian control of Hezbollah and Syria, as well as their goals to make Iraq and Turkey subservient to the Iranian government’s brand of fundamentalism.⁸⁰⁸ The development of nuclear weapons by Iran was implicitly the overarching element to this influence. To this end Hagee cited a number of sources within *Jerusalem Countdown*, predicting that Iran would have the

⁸⁰⁴ Quote comes from the *Holy Bible*, Matthew 24:6.

⁸⁰⁵ John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, p. 1.

⁸⁰⁶ John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, pp. 3-4. Bush has increasingly sought to back away from his ‘Crusader’ rhetoric post 9/11. Limbaugh is a radio talk-show presenter with hard-line conservative views. Cal Thomas is a syndicated media columnist, also with conservative views.

⁸⁰⁷ John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, pp. 4-5.

⁸⁰⁸ John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, p. 11.

capacity to produce a nuclear bomb as early as 2006, or by mid-2007 at the latest. Underlining this, he also posed the rhetorical question, “as we approach 2007, can we doubt that Iran is ready with nuclear capabilities?”⁸⁰⁹

In posing this question, Hagee inadvertently exposed a contradictory flaw within his analysis. Such certainty of the Iranian nuclear capability appeared at odds with his and Shoebat’s conviction earlier in *Jerusalem Countdown*, that any nuclear weapons procured by Iran would “absolutely” be used against the United States and Israel.⁸¹⁰ Elsewhere Hagee pointed to the fact that there are approximately six million Jews currently in Israel, whose lives are threatened by the Iranian President Ahmadinejad. The fact that Hitler murdered some six million Jews in the Second World War is a parallel not lost on Hagee, who implied that this coincidence is further proof that the United States and its allies must urgently act against Iran.⁸¹¹ This need for pre-emptive action was further articulated by Hagee in his declaration that “if we do not fight them there, we will be forced to fight them here on American soil.”⁸¹²

This threat to United States security posed by a nuclear assault is a concept often repeated within *Jerusalem Countdown*. For example, Hagee cited a *WorldNetDaily* online article referring to comments by a former Pentagon chief that a terrorist nuclear attack within the United States is “not a matter of *if* but *when*.” Hagee also used a direct portion of the same article to restate concerns shared by Dick Cheney in 2004, that a nuclear attack by Al-Qaeda appeared imminent.⁸¹³

⁸⁰⁹ John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, p. 44.

⁸¹⁰ John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, p. 11.

⁸¹¹ John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, p. 32.

⁸¹² John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, p. 35.

⁸¹³ John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, p. 62. The article is by Ryan Mauro, “Paul Williams Details ‘American Hiroshima’, *WorldNet Daily*, September 3, 2005 (http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=46127 – accessed September 13, 2008).

Further information revealing that Al-Qaeda extremists located within the United States were in possession of multiple “tactical” nuclear weapons was also used by Hagee.⁸¹⁴ To this end he declared that:

I believe Iran already has the ability to enrich plutonium, giving them the capacity to make nuclear suitcase bombs that will be smuggled into America’s major cities to Islamic terrorist cells prepared to create an American Hiroshima. On a quiet street, the men next door are going about their business – the business of nuclear terrorism.⁸¹⁵

Such an unambiguous statement (including a reference to the recognisable Hiroshima nuclear strike) reflects Hagee’s staunch desire to connect his readership with the perspective of virtually inevitable nuclear apocalypse, framed though the ideology of premillennial dispensationalism.

In Support of Israel

One of the core theological tenets of premillennial dispensationalism is the central role that Jews (specifically within the state of Israel) continue to play. It may appear unusual to those outside the faith that Christian conservatives feel such a deep affinity to the Jewish people. However, Hagee succinctly articulated his view of the basis of this relationship within *Jerusalem Countdown*: “The Word could not be plainer: if you want the blessing of God upon your life, you must *bless* Israel, not *curse* it with hatred, persecution, and murder.”⁸¹⁶ Elsewhere in the book, Hagee is even more explicit regarding the portioning of blessings and curses:

In the eternal counsel of almighty God, He has determined to make Jerusalem the decisive issue by which He will deal with the nations of the earth. Those nations who align themselves with God’s purposes for Jerusalem will receive His blessing. But those who follow a policy of opposition to God’s purposes will receive the swift and severe judgement of God without limitation.⁸¹⁷

⁸¹⁴ John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, p. 62.

⁸¹⁵ John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, p. 5.

⁸¹⁶ John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, p. 100.

⁸¹⁷ John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, p. 90.

Hagee reinforced this point further still in the final chapter of *Jerusalem Countdown*, titled “Five Bible Reasons Christians Should Support Israel.” Here Hagee declared that “the scriptural principal of personal prosperity is tied to blessing Israel and the city of Jerusalem.”⁸¹⁸ Through these three passages, Hagee invokes the nation of Israel to like-minded people (and nations) as a convenient means of receiving God’s blessing. The only cost is to bless Israel first.

Throughout *Jerusalem Countdown*, Hagee provides numerous examples of how to specifically “bless” Israel. The first can be seen in his descriptions of the nation, and especially its spiritual capital. Here Hagee declares Jerusalem to be both “where heaven and earth meet” and “nothing less than the city of God.”⁸¹⁹ In using such emotive terminology, Hagee places the city on the highest of pedestals. This action also dovetails into the second example Hagee gives as a means of blessing Israel: defending its exceptionalism. This essentially incorporates the understanding that the Jews are God’s “chosen people,” with their land protected by God’s covenant with Abraham. Acknowledging this special relationship, Hagee is quick to defend Israel from criticism. For example, he sought to justify claims of Israeli expansionism by arguing that the 1946 attack on the King David Hotel was a liberating “act of combat” for the Israeli Irgun group, under the leadership of “freedom fighter” Menachem Begin.⁸²⁰ Overarching this argument is a conviction upholding the sanctity of Israel. Hagee extolled this belief within *Jerusalem Countdown*, as he declared, “Let it be known to all men far and near, the city of Jerusalem is not up for negotiation with anyone at any time for any reason in the

⁸¹⁸ John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, p. 233. As evidence to this, Hagee cites Psalm 122:6 “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: may they prosper who love you”. *The Holy Bible - New King James Version*.

⁸¹⁹ John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, pp. 83-4.

⁸²⁰ John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, p. 121.

future.”⁸²¹ This conviction that Jerusalem exist as the undivided capital of Israel is viewed by Christian conservatives as an ultimate imperative, despite calls for compromise as outlined in the Roadmap for Peace.⁸²² This creates the paradox that while Christian conservatives are seemingly obligated to “pray for the peace of Jerusalem” in order to receive God’s blessing, they cannot support the Roadmap for Peace because it contradicts their theology of Jewish exceptionalism.

Hagee does not see this conundrum as problematic, and within *Jerusalem Countdown* he attacked those who would revoke, or even question, the sovereignty of Israel’s national “inheritance.”⁸²³ Condemning the United Nations for depicting Zionism as racism, he also claimed that the communist division of Cold War Germany was God’s punishment for the Holocaust.⁸²⁴ Ironically though, Hagee’s strongest vitriol is directed against the United States government, for “forcing” Israel to give up Gaza. He paralleled this with Chamberlain’s ill-fated appeasement of Hitler in the 1930s, while also describing the hand-over as one that “clearly violates the Word of God” and cited the Biblical prophet Joel as evidence to this.⁸²⁵ This second point is especially significant, in the context of the book’s Christian conservative audience.

Hagee’s staunch support of Jewish exceptionalism within *Jerusalem Countdown* acts to reaffirm sentiments that he and others advocated from the Thomas Road pulpit. The centrality of Israel and its Jewish population to Christian conservative theology cannot be underestimated, especially in light of their

⁸²¹ John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, p. 86.

⁸²² John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, p. 62.

⁸²³ John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, p. 86.

⁸²⁴ John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, p. 235.

⁸²⁵ John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, pp. 32-3, p. 61. Joel 3:2 - “I will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will enter into judgement against them concerning my inheritance, my people Israel, for they scattered my people among the nations and divided up my land”. *The Holy Bible* – NIV.

interpretation of future prophetic fulfilment. The additional fact that this group believes God will tangibly bless those who follow a path of Jewish exceptionalism only seeks to heighten this conviction, and therefore polarise all relevant groups who have a stake in Jerusalem, and more broadly the entire Middle East. While “evangelical” leaders, such as Jim Wallis, have advocated a shared, multi-faith distribution of Jerusalem, it remains virtually impossible to see how those within the faith’s conservative camp would ever posit such a compromise.⁸²⁶

Coda: The End of Days

For all the fear-mongering and rabid speculation within *Jerusalem Countdown*, Hagee only devoted a relatively small portion of the book to his own prophetic insights. This largely occurred in the third section, which contains the provocatively titled chapter “Ezekiel’s War: The Russians Are Coming.”⁸²⁷ Here Hagee analysed Biblical passages from Ezekiel 38 and 39, and interprets them as clear evidence of a future Russian and pan-Arab military coalition against Israel. While the generic plausibility of this is widely accepted within Christian conservatism, Hagee goes further still in making some far more exacting claims. For example, Hagee uses the verse Ezekiel 38:12 - “[Russia invades] to take plunder and to take booty” as evidence for his claim that “Russia is going to move militarily against Israel from the north to seize the great mineral wealth and natural resources that are there.”⁸²⁸ The fact that Israel *has* neither significant mineral wealth, nor natural resources of note does not enter into the equation.

Hagee also makes another bold claim within *Jerusalem Countdown* regarding the nature, and crucially the identity, of the Antichrist. He declares that “in

⁸²⁶ Personal discussion with Jim Wallis in Adelaide, July 31, 2008.

⁸²⁷ John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, p. 137.

⁸²⁸ Bible passage taken from New King James Version. John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, p. 144.

Revelation 13, we have a description of the Antichrist, who will be the head of the European Union.”⁸²⁹ Christian conservative leaders have long speculated on the identity of the Antichrist, even from the pulpit of at Thomas Road. However amid such speculation, few have been brazen enough to assert any identifiable specifics.⁸³⁰ Hagee’s contention that the Antichrist would lead the European Union therefore, raises a number of issues. Firstly, it reaffirms his disdain for Europe as a political centre. Secondly, it also highlights Hagee’s selective exegesis of Biblical passages, as both Revelation and the Book of Daniel offer only loose, circumstantial evidence as to the identity of the Antichrist. It finally also provides another example of how Hagee uses identifiable scapegoats as perceived enemies, to mobilise his Christian conservative base.

In conclusion, *Jerusalem Countdown* is not merely sensationalised prophecy and idle warnings. Hagee’s book is a call to action; a vehicle which seeks to mobilise Christian conservatives. Through this, its lack of academic or even journalistic credibility is overshadowed by an emphasis on stylised rhetorical bravado. Alongside encouraging the United States and Israel to continue a practice of military and cultural exceptionalism, Hagee attempts to propagate deep antagonism of Iran and Russia among his readership. These positions have significant foreign policy implications, where Hagee would have the United States directed by hard-line theology rather than constructive dialogue and mutual cooperation. Rather than encouraging peace and security for all, Hagee instead extols the sanctity of Israel, above all others. He ends the book’s concluding chapter with the summation:

⁸²⁹ John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, p. 151. Hagee also cites Daniel 8 as describing the Antichrist’s “full résumé”.

⁸³⁰ In *Left Behind*, a prophetic adventure novel, Tim LaHaye described the Antichrist in great detail, offering a name, birthplace and occupation. The fictional nature of the book however, works as a convenient disclaimer.

At this very moment, America finds itself bogged down in an unprovoked, worldwide war with radical Islamic terrorists with no end in sight. America is very vulnerable to terrorist attacks in the future, whose consequences could be much more severe than the three thousand lives lost on 9/11. This is not a time to provoke God and defy Him to pour out His judgement on our nation for being a principal force in the division of the land of Israel.⁸³¹

Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson's *Global Warning: The End is Nigh*.

There is no doubt that we are fast approaching the final chapter of human history. The hoofbeats of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse can now be heard in the distance. The stage is set for the final act of the human drama. The clock is ticking away the last seconds of any hope for a reprieve. We are being swept down the corridor of time to an inevitable date with destiny.⁸³²

Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson.

Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson's *Global Warning: Are We Entering World War III?* was also written in a similar vein to Hagee's *Jerusalem Countdown*. Published by Harvest House, this book is one of their many promoted works that "affirm Biblical values" and "proclaim Jesus Christ."⁸³³ However like *Jerusalem Countdown*, LaHaye and Hindson's offering is not presented as an academic work of scholarship. For example, scant regard is paid to appropriate referencing, as the book containing over fifty citations from either the internet or other syndicated media. Furthermore, the authors reference their *own* previous works seventeen times as authoritative sources, as well as citing other Christian conservative leaders such as John Hagee, Ergun Caner and Pat Robertson. When LaHaye and Hindson do reference other books, they are disproportionately from Christian publishers, such as Zondervan, WaterBrook and their own publisher, Harvest House. Underscoring this

⁸³¹ John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown*, p. 230.

⁸³² Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 57.

⁸³³ Harvest House Publishers website (<http://www.harvesthousepublishers.com/> - accessed September 18, 2008).

is an admission within the book's introduction that "we have given preference to Dr. LaHaye's position on certain matters but in all things essential we are in agreement that the world is running out of time and Jesus is coming soon."⁸³⁴

The themes within *Global Warning* also mirror those contained in *Jerusalem Countdown*. LaHaye and Hindson put a strong emphasis on analysing "signs of the end"; in keeping with their numerous other publications on Biblical prophecy.⁸³⁵ However they also engage with the two tenets of the Christian conservative political agenda central to U.S. foreign policy: unwavering support of Israel and a critical view of Islam. In highlighting these three topics, LaHaye and Hindson openly perpetuate a world-view with significant consequences for the global society, and particularly the Middle East.

Signs of the End

For LaHaye and Hindson, the warning signs pointing to the end of the world are both obvious and ominous. From the very first pages of *Global Warning*, the authors' highlight such signposts as the spiralling economy, widespread crime, increasing natural disasters, the constant terrorist threat as well as the negative implications of technological advancements.⁸³⁶ Furthermore, LaHaye and Hindson argue within this book that the significant challenges of poverty and HIV are not so much critical struggles that should rallied against, but are additional proofs that end times are approaching.⁸³⁷ However through contradicting the implied inevitability of such circumstances, LaHaye and Hindson also point to the declining morality of Western culture as a significant catalyst in shaping world events. They state:

⁸³⁴ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 7.

⁸³⁵ *Global Warning* is the eighth book LaHaye and Hindson has co-authored.

⁸³⁶ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, pp. 5-6.

⁸³⁷ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, pp. 36-7.

God has been deliberately and systematically removed from prominence in our culture and in our intellectual lives. We have made Him irrelevant to our culture. Tragically, we have also made our culture irrelevant to God. In so doing, we have abandoned our spiritual heritage. The Christian consensus that once dominated Western culture is now shattered. The world of the twenty-first century is already mired in the quicksand of secularism, relativism, and mysticism. It is a wonder we have survived as long as we have.⁸³⁸

The consequences of this are discussed further within *Global Warning*:

It is obvious to virtually everyone that what has been viewed as the traditional Western culture is in danger of extinction. Whether this threat is real or perceived, it staggers the heart with the fear of a secularist future in which God, religion, and religious values have no place. A godless secular state is the environment necessary to justify war for the common good of the state. As our culture continues to become more secularised, the stage will be set for the justification of war against all who oppose the will of the state. As good a system as democracy is, it can only survive with a moral foundation.⁸³⁹

The above passages give a stark insight into the Christian conservative worldview, which comprises a number of problematic elements. For example, LaHaye and Hindson's condemnation of 'Western' secularism as a contributor to the coming apocalypse can be regarded as a significant motivator for Christian conservatives to establish the United States as "One Nation Under God." However in the case this cultural shift actually eventuated, the implications for its effect on the End Times remain unclear; could the 'apocalypse' thus be averted? Furthermore, the authors' claim that a godless state has the heightened capacity for self-serving warfare is itself a self-serving argument. As history (and recent events) has shown, nations specifically invoking the name and will of God have been equally indulgent of excessive military combat as those without such motivations. Finally though, the last sentence of the second passage remains the most problematic of all. Here LaHaye and Hindson inadvertently reveal the subversive nature of Christian conservative ideology, which places their theology even above the virtues of freedom and democracy. Through this, the authors do nothing to assuage longstanding fears held

⁸³⁸ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 54.

⁸³⁹ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 77.

by those outside the culture that they would seek to establish a political theocracy, where accountability with checks and balances would give way to “morality.” While potentially attractive to many of faith, especially in a climate where political integrity is perceived as lacking, a major stumbling block occurs when the question is asked, “Whose morality?”

Alongside the perils of secularism, LaHaye and Hindson categorise increasing terrorist and nuclear threats as further signs of a *Global Warning*. Like Hagee, LaHaye and Hindson attempted to provide tenuous evidence supporting these claims. An example of this is their reference to a June 2005 CBS news story, which discussed a report from the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations released that year. CBS reported the committee’s estimate of a 16.4% chance of a nuclear attack on the continental United States within the following five years. Despite the hypothetical nature of such a conclusion, LaHaye and Hindson demonstrated no qualms in highlighting the statement as evidence to their own beliefs.⁸⁴⁰ In continuing their fear-mongering rhetoric within *Global Warning* they further stated that “given the current world situation, nuclear war is inevitable...human nature being what it is, sooner or later the world will face the reality of a nuclear holocaust.”⁸⁴¹ In pronouncing this belief, the authors also criticised the U.S. government for their lack of preparedness for such an event, claiming the United States had only a single hospital emergency room specifically for the purpose of radiation hazard treatment.⁸⁴²

In addition to their warnings against the generic threat that nuclear warfare poses, LaHaye and Hindson also cite specific conflicts and nations as playing central

⁸⁴⁰ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 27. Cites “Experts Warn of Future WMD Attack”, *CBS News*, June 22, 2005.

⁸⁴¹ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 84.

⁸⁴² Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 13.

roles in the “End Times.” For instance, the authors state that World War I signalled “the beginning of birth pains”; a reference to Jesus’ own metaphor for the beginning of the “End Times.”⁸⁴³ More recently however the authors also highlight the significance of the U.S.-led conflicts against Saddam Hussein and his Iraqi regime. LaHaye and Hindson stated that the First Gulf War was “one of the most effective wars ever fought,” largely because of their view that “God intervened to give the world a reprieve.”⁸⁴⁴ The authors also spent a number of pages critiquing the “Axis of Evil,” as described by President George W. Bush. They even felt compelled to add more nations to the list, including Russia, China, Syria and even Venezuela.⁸⁴⁵ However the biggest evil, according to LaHaye and Hindson, is epitomised in the Antichrist. They declared in *Global Warning*:

We do not know the timetable of God, but we can all smell the ashes of a decadent society that may soon face extinction. It is only a matter of time before the human race faces the prospect of annihilation. But first the deceiver will arise, promising to bring peace to the world.⁸⁴⁶

However unlike Hagee’s stated belief that the Antichrist will lead the European Union, LaHaye and Hindson provided a more general analysis. They cited the seventh and ninth chapters of the Book of Daniel as evidence that “the Antichrist will lead the *Western powers*.” The authors also speculated on his ethnicity, suggesting the Antichrist could “be a European...or American Jew.”⁸⁴⁷ Importantly though, LaHaye and Hindson continued to propagate the view that “most Christians believe this leader will arise from the European Economic Community.”⁸⁴⁸ The authors’ fears of this governing body are motivated chiefly from their interpretation of specific Bible prophecies. From these, LaHaye and Hindson believe that the “End

⁸⁴³ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 38. Bible reference is from Matthew 24:8.

⁸⁴⁴ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 78.

⁸⁴⁵ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, pp. 64-6.

⁸⁴⁶ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 88.

⁸⁴⁷ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 189. Emphasis added.

⁸⁴⁸ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 52.

Times” will be ushered in by the establishment of a world government, world economy and world religion.⁸⁴⁹ With this in mind, some Christian conservatives have often considered the European Union as a precursor to these events. LaHaye and Hindson articulated such fears within *Global Warning*, stating that “we have to wonder if we are not now witnessing the coming together of the final alignment of the nations at the end of the age.”⁸⁵⁰ The authors stressed however that Christians should remain hopeful, as before the “End Times” and the Antichrist truly take hold, the Rapture will occur. Those unbelievers left on earth, according to the authors, will have to endure impacts in every city that mirror the abject desolation caused by Hurricane Katrina.⁸⁵¹

LaHaye and Hindson against Islam

From the first page of *Global Warning*, LaHaye and Hindson were quick to cite the threat of terrorism as an integral part of their End Times understanding. Their deliberate references to the 9/11 attacks, and subsequent terrorist plots in Tunisia, Pakistan and Spain were all framed in the context of the real and continued dangers terrorism presents. In attempting to broaden their analysis, the authors’ referenced comments by Rush Limbaugh and a 2006 *Newsmax.com* article, both discussing Newt Gingrich’s comments on the burgeoning circumstances leading to World War III.⁸⁵² Within this, LaHaye and Hindson appeared willing to use any circumstantial evidence available to support Gingrich’s thesis. For example, the authors contextualised the 2001 anthrax mail-outs as a key attack by terrorists within

⁸⁴⁹ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 55. The prophecies cited are from Revelation 13 and Daniel 7, *The Holy Bible*.

⁸⁵⁰ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 47.

⁸⁵¹ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 169.

⁸⁵² Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 11, 35. “Gingrich Says World War III Has Begun”, *Newsmax.com*, July 16, 2006. (<http://archive.newsmax.com/archives/ic/2006/7/16/155736.shtml> - accessed September 25, 2008).

the “War on Terror.” Specifically citing the contaminated letters sent to two U.S. senators, declaring “Death to America. Death to Israel. Allah is Great”, the authors concluded that this confirmed “that today’s terrorist warfare is rooted in religious belief.”⁸⁵³ That the FBI had long-suspected U.S scientist Bruce E. Ivans of the crime was overlooked by both LaHaye and Hindson.⁸⁵⁴

Within their broader cultural analysis of Islam, LaHaye and Hindson swayed between perpetuating fears of “Islamofascism” to condescending acknowledgement of Arabic artistry and architecture.⁸⁵⁵ However it is definitely the former that is most pronounced within *Global Warning*, especially in the authors’ reference to a global Islamic “caliphate.” This term refers to the creation of a far-reaching Islamic state governed by Sharia law, which some Christian conservatives fear “would stretch from Indonesia to Morocco.”⁸⁵⁶ As evidence to this intention, LaHaye and Hindson pointed to the existing entities of Hezbollah in Lebanon, and Hamas in Gaza. These two groups, by attempting to provide social services as part of their political agenda, have ingrained themselves and their fundamentalist religious ideologies within local communities.⁸⁵⁷ The authors also cited the Iraq war as a major battleground for Islamic militants, even alleging that WMD not only existed, but were relocated to Syria, as “many believe.”⁸⁵⁸ They concluded however, that “whatever the eventual

⁸⁵³ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, pp. 16-17.

⁸⁵⁴ “Anthrax Suspicions: Why an independent look at the FBI probe is essential”, *Washington Post*, September 19, 2008, p. A18 (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2008/09/18/AR2008091803383.html> - accessed September 25, 2008).

⁸⁵⁵ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, pp. 89-90, 98-99.

⁸⁵⁶ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 39. Authors cite James Brandon, “The Caliphate: One Nation, Under Allah, with 1.5 Billion Muslims”, *Christian Science Monitor*, May 10, 2006.

⁸⁵⁷ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 67-8.

⁸⁵⁸ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 82.

outcome in Iraq, it is painfully obvious to Western observers that Islam is anything but a religion of peace.”⁸⁵⁹

In attempting to provide context for this assertion, LaHaye and Hindson offered some comparative analysis between Islam and Christianity. For example, the authors asserted that Christians are called to love their enemies, and that it is the Christian “West” that is calling for peaceful resolution in the Middle East.⁸⁶⁰ This is so, according to LaHaye and Hindson, because “All are equal in Christ. It was this truth...that broke the bond of slavery in the Roman world.”⁸⁶¹ In reality however, numerous Christians, including LaHaye, Hagee and Falwell, have all called for continued military combat within the Middle East. Despite this, LaHaye and Hindson continued to assert Christianity and its encompassing principles as the “spiritual roots of democracy and freedom.”⁸⁶²

In contrast to this singularly positive depiction of Christianity, LaHaye and Hindson offered this description of the Islamic faith:

Islam combines the concepts of religion and politics, causing a cultural view that despises the democracy of America and its connections with Israel. From this worldview, radical Islam moves from anger toward “infidels” to violence, encouraging physical acts of jihad towards its enemies.⁸⁶³

While the authors’ earlier acknowledgment that “the vast majority of those who practice Islam do not practice acts of terror” goes some way in tempering such rhetoric, the overwhelming emphasis of *Global Warning* acts to undermine this sentiment.⁸⁶⁴ Their depiction of Islam as definitively anti-democratic is unashamedly divisive, and only works to polarise the extremist elements of both Islam and Christianity. Furthermore, for LaHaye and Hindson to highlight only the Muslim

⁸⁵⁹ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 90.

⁸⁶⁰ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 48.

⁸⁶¹ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, pp. 47-8.

⁸⁶² Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 56.

⁸⁶³ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 71.

⁸⁶⁴ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 40.

faith as having adherents that seek to blur the line between religion and politics is naive at best. However, the most contentious claim made by the authors is undoubtedly shown in their statement, “the anti-historical basis of [Islam] often causes Muslims to play loose with the facts when it comes to their responsibilities to the global community.”⁸⁶⁵ LaHaye and Hindson justify this generalisation with their analysis of how Saddam Hussein’s media minister was caught lying on television in 2003, when he declared that American tanks had not entered Baghdad. This, alongside Hagee’s claim that Muslims are theologically entitled to renege on treaties, supports the overarching perception that Muslims are inherently prone to lies and deception. Alongside this divisive rhetoric appears even more sensationalism from the authors, which aims to reinforce an undergirding fear of Islam, and more specifically its potential for extremism:

The religion of Islam is the fastest growing religion on the planet, claiming some one billion followers. Among them are hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of Islamic extremists whose stated goal is world conquest. They will stop at nothing – they will show no restraint, mercy, nor reason, when dealing with those whom they view as the enemies of Islam. Their targets are often innocent bystanders, including women, children, and the elderly.⁸⁶⁶

By reinforcing these two elements of cultural stereotyping, LaHaye and Hindson not only perpetuate the divisive nature of Christian conservatism; they also condone foreign policies that divide the United States from other nations, and even itself.

LaHaye and Hindson on “The Israeli Factor.”

Global Warning also places strong significance on the Jewish people in regards to the authors’ prophetic theology, where Jews themselves are frequently described as lacking agency. Events and circumstances are frequently depicted as happening *to* them, rather than portraying a capacity for Jews to create change for

⁸⁶⁵ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 93.

⁸⁶⁶ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 89.

themselves. For example, nineteenth century Christianity is described by LaHaye and Hindson as the overarching instigator of Zionism, on account of its reinterpretations of scriptural prophecy. Where Jewish individuals and organisations are discussed, they are portrayed as pawns in a broader geo-political game, such as in response to the Dreyfus Affair or the Balfour Declaration.⁸⁶⁷ LaHaye and Hindson are similarly one-dimensional in their analysis of the establishment of Israel as a nation. The authors' quoted the Biblical prophet Isaiah's rhetorical question "Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment?" before answering themselves, "in the case of the modern State of Israel, the answer is a resounding yes!"⁸⁶⁸ This declaration clearly demonstrated an overwhelming desire by the authors to see Biblical prophecy as "fulfilled," rather than give regard to the reality that the nation of Israel was many years in the making. Indeed, LaHaye and Hindson articulated this historical narrative within the pages of *Global Warning* itself, though the contradiction remained ignored.⁸⁶⁹

As well as portraying a lack of Jewish agency, LaHaye and Hindson also perpetuated the perception of Jewish victimisation. Within this understanding, Israel's existence and national vitality are viewed by the authors as "miraculous."⁸⁷⁰ This wording should be taken in its most literal context, as LaHaye and Hindson clearly sought to demonstrate that through God's intervention, Israel had overcome numerous threats and struggles. As evidence to this, the authors cited the 1967 Six-Day War, which they claimed, "[Egyptian President] Nasser provoked the Israelis into."⁸⁷¹ They also highlighted the more recent events of the Palestinian Intifada

⁸⁶⁷ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, pp. 108-10.

⁸⁶⁸ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 116.

⁸⁶⁹ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, pp. 108-111.

⁸⁷⁰ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, pp. 120-1.

⁸⁷¹ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 50.

against Israel, where they argued “Israel has suffered unjustly at the hands of her neighbours [through] unreasonable acts such as unprovoked missile attacks.”⁸⁷²

Having thus outlined Israel’s victimisation within the Middle East, LaHaye and Hindson then sought to justify Israel’s transition from victim to aggressor. In analysing the events of 1948, the authors omitted any reference to Jewish violence as a motivating factor for the exodus of some 300,000 Palestinians from their homeland. Despite the significant evidence acknowledging such Jewish action, LaHaye and Hindson instead promoted Zionist leader Theodor Herzl’s assertion that “There is a land without a people, and there is a people without a land.”⁸⁷³ These two decisions effectively condoned such marginalisation of Palestinians, both in terms of sovereignty and identity. This marginalisation continued despite protestations by LaHaye and Hindson that Christian conservatives do not “blindly support all that the secular Israeli government chooses to do...What [Christian conservatives] do oppose”, stated the authors, “is the unmitigated use of violence against innocent civilians to further political causes in the Middle East.”⁸⁷⁴

LaHaye and Hindson clearly demonstrated their support for Israeli hard-line responses to this violence, arguing that:

Terrorists continue to bathe Israeli streets in blood, and Israel – never given to letting such acts go unanswered – continues to respond with powerful and often disproportionate force. Many countries – with a few exceptions, such as the United States – decry the use of what is often called “excessive Israeli force” in retaliation for such attacks. But if you were a tiny nation like Israel, which can be flown over by jet in just a few minutes and is surrounded by a sea of enemies who want to push you into the sea, you might react strongly too! Many military strategists are convinced that Israel’s predictable and powerful responses have spared the nation from potentially more devastating attacks.⁸⁷⁵

⁸⁷² Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 51.

⁸⁷³ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 111, p. 49. It has been stated that while some Palestinians emigrated of their own accord, “hundreds of thousands of others [were] intimidated and terrorized, fled in panic, and still others were driven out by the Jewish army, which under the leadership of Ben-Gurion, planned and executed the expulsion. Simha Flapan, “The Palestinian Exodus of 1948”, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 16.4 (Summer 1987) p. 8.

⁸⁷⁴ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 117.

⁸⁷⁵ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 83.

While terrorism is indeed a reality within the Middle East (as it is all over the globe), the authors' refusal to acknowledge the destruction caused *by* Israel, as well as *to* Israel, work only to maintain the conditions under which terrorism flourishes. The distinct implication given by the authors is that sheer military might is the strongest defence against the threat of terrorism, and hence Israel is lauded as the third strongest global military power on earth. Within this context, LaHaye and Hindson delivered a not-so-veiled threat to Israel's enemies: "The world should not be fooled by Israel's refusal to utilize its full arsenal of weapons when the nation was attacked by Hezbollah in July 2006. That was a political decision that will most likely not be repeated."⁸⁷⁶ This reference to a "full arsenal of weapons" arguably alludes to Israel's nuclear capacity, which has inherent significance in the context of LaHaye and Hindson's Armageddon theology. This is so significant in fact, that the authors further suggest a potential scenario where Israel (or the United States) is required to target Iraq with nuclear weapons.⁸⁷⁷

In conclusion, *Jerusalem Countdown* and *Global Warning* are both positioned by their authors as prophecy guidebooks, aimed primarily at like-minded Christian conservatives. The result is something more akin to editorial journalism, where the agenda is predetermined and sources are gathered to support it. These sources are for the most part secondary references from suspect origins, or where primary sources are used, they are frequently from other Christian conservatives who offer nothing more than brief sound-bites. Charles Colson's musings within the pages of *Global Warning* are just one example of this, as he declares, "we sense that things are winding down, that somehow freedom, justice and order are slipping

⁸⁷⁶ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 137.

⁸⁷⁷ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 81.

away. Our great civilization may not yet lie in smouldering ruins, yet the enemy is within the gates. The times seem to smell of sunset.”⁸⁷⁸

Such fatalism pervades much of the prophetic analysis rendered by Hagee, LaHaye and Hindson. In assessing the impending destruction of nuclear war, or the poverty and vices that plague the global society, the one thread that links all these is the authors’ belief in the *inevitability* of such events. This negative perspective is significantly indicative of Darby’s pre-millennial dispensationalism, where Christians are fully cognizant of their future tribulation, complete with their own persecution and marginalisation.⁸⁷⁹ This belief, conceived within Biblical literalism, places the Word of God (the Bible) as the highest of authorities. So when LaHaye and Hindson view the passage Ezekiel 38:11 and its described implication of Israel as a land “without walls and without gates and bars”, this is deemed the truth, no matter what the facts on the ground would attest.⁸⁸⁰

⁸⁷⁸ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 54. Colson quote taken from Charles Colson, *Against the Night* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Publications, 1989), p. 19.

⁸⁷⁹ Amy Johnson Frykholm, *Rapture Culture...*, pp. 106-7.

⁸⁸⁰ Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, *Global Warning*, p. 137.

CONCLUSION

As the second term of George W. Bush's presidency drew to a close, most U.S. citizens would have had at least some notion of Christian conservatism and what it represented. From 1980 onwards, the movement had made significant strides in promoting its message, as it sought to generate ever-increasing political power and influence. However it has arguably been less clear as to what precisely has motivated this group, and it is this question more than any other which this thesis seeks to explain.

The catalyst for Christian conservatives' activity within the United States has fundamentally been guided by their interpretation of the Bible, a fact which cannot be overemphasised. As the case study of Thomas Road Baptist Church has particularly demonstrated, Christian conservative leaders have frequently locked onto key verses of the Bible and attempted to contextualise them in contemporary settings, whether they relate to foreign policy, domestic legislation or some other agenda. Furthermore, as this understanding has been perceived as "God's will", they have permitted no room for questioning or alternative views. It is primarily with this mindset that Christian conservative leaders have entered the political debate since the 1980 election of Ronald Reagan.

For over thirty years, the Christian conservative movement has been a dual-natured ally to the Republican Party. Within this, the vast organisational networks and fundraising capability of Christian conservative churches has been highly beneficial to many Republican Party candidates over this time. Their promotion of "moral values" and calls for limited government has also provided a rallying point for many disenchanted voters. However these strengths have similarly proven to be a debilitating weakness, as the Republican Party has increasingly been perceived as

beholden to a “religious right” whose policies are commonly labelled within some media as divisive and out-dated.

Through investigating what lies beneath these public perceptions, a murky and complex relationship between the G.O.P. and Christian conservatives becomes readily apparent. A most interesting component of this has been the levels of independence Christian conservatives have had in directing their own policy agenda. Not beholden to the political regulations and limitations weighed upon their Republican Party allies, this movement has engaged in numerous highly controversial campaigns. These have ranged from supporting Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, to reshaping reproductive services in both the United States and internationally. These and other initiatives have frequently made it difficult for the G.O.P. to reach out beyond its conservative base, even though the sheer numbers of Christian conservatives have been sufficient to regularly get these issues ingrained into Republican Party platforms.

Christian conservatives’ ability to provide time and funds for grass-roots initiatives has been another major factor in transforming what was previously a private set of beliefs into an agenda promoted by a mass political constituency. However these conservative initiatives have often been directed by a core cadre of leaders, with unique personalities and individual policy orientations, relating to this constituency in a number of key areas. Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson and others in the early “televangelist” mould successfully brought many followers into active service for the Christian conservative agenda and re-energised the movement to seek and assert political influence. At the same time, their naive expectations were frequently stymied by political realities, and so spokesmen like Robertson and Pat Buchanan

attempted to enter the corridors of power not merely as leaders of an interest group, but as elected representatives of the people.

Having largely been found wanting in such electoral contests, many Christian conservatives seamlessly moved into the era of the political consultant. Within this space, Ralph Reed and others like him attempted to bring Christian conservatives more in line with the G.O.P. mainstream. This tacit move away from rhetoric on hot-button issues such as Israel and abortion, and towards more inclusive strains of “family values,” may appear like good politics, but Reed and his colleagues could only paper over the more hard-line ideals which lay temporarily submerged. As the United States continued to ride a crest of prosperity throughout the mid-to-late 1990’s, funding for radical para-church organisations became ever more controversial. The tax-exempt status of Christian conservative organisations was used consistently as a way to call upon supporters to donate money to help Jews emigrate to Israel, or to values-based political campaigns against pro-choice Democratic Party candidates.

The global financial crisis that began in 2008 may have led donors to reduce their contributions to such organisations, but Christian conservatives have always had many other ways of shoring up their influence. One example is education, with Christian conservatives expanding the establishment of their own schools. Liberty University and Seminary, located near Thomas Road Baptist, and numerous other schools like it, all exist to instruct Christian conservative doctrine throughout young people’s formative years. Thousands of students, from pre-school right through to university, have been exposed to this type of education. The mega-church phenomenon is another example of how Christian conservatives frequently congregate together en masse. Often meeting multiple times a week, these citizens

are frequently instructed in definitive terms as to how to live their lives, and even how they should vote in election years. These types of institutions and their permeating influence are no longer confined just to the American South with its “Bible Belt,” but are now located throughout the entire country.

One final issue is the question of how much impact this capacity for Christian conservative growth will have on the future U.S. democratic system. If history is an accurate indicator, Christian conservative influence will rise and fall largely depending on the particular circumstances present at any one time. Given the checks and balances within the American political system, Christian conservatives will arguably never have a decisive or controlling influence on United States society. However, due to the religious liberty inherently afforded them, the political influence of Christian conservatives will equally never disappear. Indeed, Christian conservatives continue to remain highly active, through an overarching motivation to align the United States with their own interpretation of the Bible. Kenneth D. Wald and Allison Calhoun-Brown’s assertion that “religious politics hardly constitutes a culture war” is certainly a legitimate assessment, but this overlooks the fact that many Christian conservative leaders desperately desire a “culture war” within the United States.⁸⁸¹ The tension between this desire for religious influence, and the limitations imposed upon Christian conservative leaders in making it a reality, should thus be a feature of U.S. cultural politics for a long time to come.

⁸⁸¹ Kenneth D. Wald and Allison Calhoun-Brown, *Religion and Politics in the United States (Fifth Edition)* pp. 201, 203.

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