

Dr. Muhammad Arif Zakauallah

RELIGION **AND** POLITICS in America

The Rise of Christian Evangelists and their Impact



Al-Zaytouna Centre For Studies & Consultations

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by

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International Islamic University Malaysia



Al-Zaytouna Centre
For Studies & Consultations

Beirut - Lebanon

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The views expressed in this book are those of the author alone. They do not necessarily reflect views of Al-Zaytouna Centre For Studies and Consultations.

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Religion and Politics in America: The Rise of Christian Evangelists and their Impact¹

Introduction

It was hoped that in the post colonial era the relationship between the Muslim world and the powerful west would improve and mutual respect and care for each other's concerns would become the guiding principles of western policy towards the Muslim world. However, the post colonial experience of nearly half a century leaves a lot more to be desired. The pain, suffering and humiliation suffered by the Muslim peoples during the last half a century, and the helplessness of the Muslim governments and leaders has created a sense of disappointment and hopelessness amongst the Muslim masses. This situation has been exploited by extremists in both camps endangering world peace in the first decade of the 21st century.

The peace loving majorities in both the west and the Muslim world want to know the causes of this problem to

¹ This book is an expanded and updated version of the author's following earlier article. "The Rise of Christian Fundamentalism in the United States and the Challenge to Understand the New America," in *Islamic Studies*, No. 42, Vol. 3, Autumn 2003, 437 - 486. The contemporary political economy of the United States is the focus of the author's ongoing research. As a result the expanded version presented here adds some new dimensions of this phenomenon to the earlier version.



resolve it. The hawks in the west have developed a number of approaches (e.g. Islamophobia, clash of civilizations, etc.) to explain this situation to their people and the world at large. These approaches put the entire blame on Muslims and Islam. On the other hand in the Muslim world it is the other way around as all the explanatory models put the entire blame on the west and Israel.

This blame game has been going on for quite some time leading to actions by each side that, instead of solving problems, have caused further deterioration of the situation. This reality calls for a different approach.

Let us begin by asking the fundamental question: why has the Muslim world failed to communicate with the west and change its colonialist attitude? The response to this question comes mainly from two schools of thought. First, there is the most commonly accepted view which holds that the west is powerful and arrogant and hence there is no way to change its attitude. The advocates of this view may cite hundreds of examples of Muslim governments which always unconditionally support the west, and yet the west, despite legitimizing their roles and labeling them as allies, does not reciprocate by extending similar support to Muslim causes in return. This situation is further aggravated when the west shows little respect for the UN resolutions in support of Muslim causes.

After citing this evidence this school argues that nothing can be changed, let us surrender and accept the status quo. This in my view is a defeatist mentality and is part of the problem. Then there is the second school of thought, the extremists, who accept the basic defeatist premise that the west is powerful and arrogant and does not respect the Muslim world. After accepting this basic premise the



extremists, however, recommend a different prescription to solve the problem. They advocate violence, militancy and terrorism against the west and believe that this is the only way to solve the problem as these tactics will make the west change its course. But this approach, instead of solving any problems, creates more problems.

The above two approaches fail to recognize the stark reality that the Western countries are democracies and their policy makers can make and implement only those policies which are accepted and supported by the majority of their people. On the other hand, a vast majority of Muslim countries lack democracy. In these countries the rulers may make and implement policies against the wishes of their own people with full impunity.

Unfortunately in a vast majority of Muslim countries one can not blame the masses for believing that western governments make and implement policies in the same undemocratic manner that their own regimes do. The Muslim world has to learn to appreciate that in Western societies the bottom line is the public opinion and not the wishes of the President/Prime Minister and his cabinet.

The most recent example of this supremacy of public opinion over the wishes of the president and his cabinet is the November, 2006 mid-term congressional election in the U.S. which was centered on the Iraq war. The American public opinion disagreed with the President and his cabinet's position on the Iraq war. Consequently the Republican Party lost control of both houses of Congress and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and John Bolton, the U.S. Ambassador to the UN had to resign and the new reality is still unfolding as this introduction is being written. The moral of the story is that in the Western democracies the decisive role of public opinion



presents a window of opportunity to the Muslim world. If the Muslim world can interact with the Western public opinion in a constructive way it would result in a genuine, meaningful and effective inter-civilizational dialogue on issues of mutual concern. The challenge then for the Muslim world is to inform and educate the western public opinion.

Once the Muslim world attempts to reach out to the western masses and western public opinion, debates and critical analyses of the issues, behavior and policies of each party involved would come under sharply focused discussion. In order to generate a healthy process for this intercivilizational dialogue it would be imperative that the Muslim intellectuals, media and policy makers engaged in this exercise have a direct understanding of the way the Western societies work. This would entail an understanding of the framework of the western domestic political process which is the key to the formation of public opinion in those societies based on their ideologies, cultural and religious values, heritage and the role of various interest groups and how all these things are presented by their media.

In order to acquire this understanding of the ever changing dynamics of the democratic western world it is imperative that the Universities in the Muslim world establish programs in American and European studies both at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels. These programs would help the future generations understand how the west works. This understanding would cultivate their ability to deal with the west with the necessary expertise and confidence – hence saving them from the sense of helplessness that makes them prey to extremists preaching hatred and violence.

Hundreds of Universities in the west offer programs of study on Islam, Muslim societies and Muslim regions. These

programs are backed by rich libraries, experts, academics, and diplomats. Top universities in the United States, Canada, Europe and Australia take pride in offering undergraduate and doctoral programs focused on Islam and Muslim world. They have well endowed departments and institutions which gather the best experts who are provided with all the resources needed to pursue the scholarly agenda. Unfortunately the reality in the Muslim world is quite the contrary. There are hardly any good programs on American/European studies, Christianity and/or contemporary western civilization in the Muslim world. Similarly a world class research institute entirely focused on the study of U.S./West is non-existent in the Muslim world. In the Muslim world there is no tradition of a consistent scientific study of the west in the context of the issues, concerns and interests of the Muslim world. It is due to the lack of this intellectual input that our policy makers are not able to engage the western public opinion in a constructive and continuous dialogue in a dynamic and ever changing world. Thus there is a serious disconnect between the Muslim world and western public opinion. It is this disconnect between the Muslim world and the western public opinion that is the fundamental cause of the persistent western policies and attitude that are harmful to the interests of the Muslim world; hence giving rise to either the defeatist mentality or militancy.

The onus in principle is now on the educators in the Muslim world. It is high time that the Universities in the Muslim world establish programs in American/Western studies and initiate a culture of scientific study of and research on the west to produce both the experts and literature that contribute towards engaging the west in a constructive dialogue capable of eventually building bridges of understanding between the Muslim world and the west. This would allow both to identify their common long term interests which would motivate them



to cooperate voluntarily with each other to make this world a better one based on mutual respect for each other's people, interests and dignity.

It would not be surprising if many universities in the Muslim world respond to this proposal by saying that at this stage they are not in a position to offer programs on American/European/Western studies due to the lack of qualified staff in these areas. For this reason they may not be enthusiastic about establishing departments/centers/institutes to offer programs of study in these areas. This limitation is genuine and the resulting desire to adhere to the status quo is well understood. However, as the situation is becoming more and more complex by the day, there is an urgent need to make a beginning towards the establishment of such programs of western studies. It would be unfortunate if the lack of qualified man power became an excuse for inaction leading to the abandonment of the cause of western studies. The situation actually demands urgent action, and now.

The manpower problem faced by the universities in the Muslim world attempting to introduce western studies is in some ways similar to the manpower problem faced by universities in the U.S. trying to introduce programs in public policy. Both Harvard and Princeton have well established public policy programs offered by the Kennedy School and Woodrow Wilson School respectively. Each of these two schools is an entity by itself. Besides that, the UC Berkeley and the University of Chicago also have well structured programs in public policy. All of them offer degree programs, but Stanford lacks such programs in public policy. The major difficulty in establishing such a program is that it is a multi-disciplinary program and demands faculty with different specializations to come together to offer courses (and conduct

research) in an interconnected and coherent manner. Stanford University does not have a department/centre/institute with its own faculty to offer public policy studies. Instead in November, 2006 the University's Committee on Graduate Studies approved programs which would offer two Master's degrees in Public Policy. Reporting on these developments *The Stanford Daily* stated:

“Unlike at Harvard, Princeton, the University of Chicago or Berkeley, The Stanford proposal would not establish a separate school or department for public policy. Like its undergraduate counterpart the graduate program would depend on faculty from other departments like political science and economics.”²

Instead of totally shelving the proposal to introduce the American/European studies due to lack of staff to establish relevant departments, the Universities in the Muslim world can also make a beginning at the undergraduate level by using the Stanford Public Policy program model. Currently the universities in the Muslim world are offering undergraduate courses on the west through various departments e.g. political science, history, economics etc. The faculty members belonging to various departments and offering these courses can be asked to develop a minor/concentration package for the undergraduates with a focus on American/European studies. This minor should be available to a wider student body in arts, humanities and social sciences and be taught by

2 Niraj Sheth, “Public Policy Now up to Par,” in *The Stanford Daily*, November 15, 2006, 1 and 9.



the faculty members from the respective departments (e.g. history, political science, economics, mass communication, etc.). This approach is not perfect and may have its own shortcomings, but once these minors/concentrations are offered they will generate their own dynamics and with insights gained over time, improvements can be made. With this experience the programs can be further expanded or advanced. Once such minors/concentrations are introduced in the universities at the undergraduate level they will generate their own demand for qualified professionals in these areas and more young people would choose to specialize in these fields in their graduate studies. It is hoped that given the urgency of this issue, this proposal would be given serious consideration by the institutions of higher learning throughout the Muslim world.

Realizing the importance of developing a scientific understanding of the west, I undertook a study of the contemporary American scene. The outcome of this effort was published in the form of a book entitled: *The Cross and the Crescent : The Rise of American Evangelicalism and the Future of Muslims* (2004). This book (2006) draws heavily on certain chapters from *The Cross and the Crescent*.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the support of a number of people whose encouragement and cooperation made the research for and writing of this book possible. First and foremost among them is Dr. Mohsen Saleh, General Manager, al-Zaytouna Centre who came up with the idea of publishing this book in English as well as an Arabic translation. I am also grateful to the anonymous referees who read the manuscript and came up with constructive suggestions for improvement. I am also indebted to the Research Centre, International Islamic University Malaysia for the research grant that allowed me access to the resources

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Chapter 1

The 2000 and 2004 U.S. Presidential Elections

Conventional wisdom holds that in Western liberal democracies, the political fortunes of the party in power are directly related to the state of the economy. If during the tenure of a ruling party the country's economy has consistently enjoyed full employment, high growth and price stability, and the masses have also experienced general peace and prosperity then, barring a major catastrophe, the party in power is likely to be voted into the office in the election at the end of the term. Historically speaking, this causative relationship between economics and politics has generally been true in the case of the United States as well.⁴ However, the outcome of the 2000 and 2004 U.S. Presidential elections defied this trend.⁵

During the eight years of Clinton-Gore administration (1992 - 2000) the U.S. economy consistently enjoyed high

4 For the relationship between the performance of the U.S. economy and the vote for the presidential candidates (1932–1996) see: Thomas R. Dye, *Politics in America*, 2nd ed. (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1997), 281–282. See also: Muhammad Arif Zakaullah, “Values, the Economy and Metaeconomics in the 2000 US Presidential Election: A Historical Perspective (1896–1996),” in *Intellectual Discourse*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (2001), 1–28.

5 *Ibid.*, 1–28.



growth, full employment, price stability and the world's sole super power status. However, in the presidential election of 2000 it was not Al Gore but George W. Bush who made it to the White House, thus defying the conventional wisdom. Those who disagree with the process which led to the final outcome of the election may argue that it was not Bush but Gore who had received a majority of popular votes, so it was Gore who should have been the President. Or they may also argue that Bush became President because of the favorable Supreme Court ruling on the disputed Florida electoral vote count.⁶ Had it not been for the majority of the Supreme Court judges, who were appointed by the recent past Republican administrations of Nixon, Ford, Reagan and Bush Sr., Bush Jr. would not have been declared President by the Supreme Court's majority.⁷ The above arguments denying presidency

6 Although the millions of citizens who vote in the U.S. Presidential Election every four years, think they are deciding who shall be the President, only the members of the Electoral College who number 538 are, under article II and amendment XXXIII of the U.S. Constitution, entitled to vote directly for the President and Vice-President. Each state appoints a certain number of its members to the Electoral College using a common formula. The formula requires that the total number of members to the Electoral College from each state should be equal to the whole number of senators and representatives to which the state might be entitled in the Congress: but no senator or representative, or person holding an office of trust or profit under United States, shall be appointed an Elector. How states choose their electors is, under Article II, Section I, paragraph 2, of the Constitution, determined by state legislature. See: Walter Berns, ed., *After the People Vote: A Guide to the Electoral College* (Washington, D. C.: The American Enterprise Institute, 1992), 8 and 71.

7 Some quarters have attempted to argue that the U.S. Supreme Court's decision favoring G.W. Bush was partisan as the court consisted of a total of 9 judges of which 7 were appointed by the recent past Republican Presidents (Nixon, Ford, Reagan and George Bush Sr.) while only 2 were Democratic appointees under the Clinton Presidency. For details of the U.S. Supreme Court composition, see: "Flipping the Script," in *Time* (Asian Edition), December 18, 2000, 32–35.

to G.W. Bush do not help an objective analysis of the contemporary U.S. politics.

From the point of view of a scientific study of American politics, we take the position that whether Bush was declared President or not, does not matter much. What matters is that despite the Clinton-Gore team's eight years of stable, prosperous and growing economy, full employment and low inflation, Mr. Bush had such an impressive showing that he came so very close to the finish line and was eventually declared the winner. The issue for us is not why Gore did not win, rather why Bush had such a great showing that he never allowed Gore to take a decisive lead over him especially when the U.S. economy had done so well. It was this question that was investigated by the present writer in his earlier study concerning the 2000 Presidential election immediately after the dust settled over it and Bush was inaugurated as President of USA in January, 2001.⁸ The findings of this study were interesting in so far as they showed that during the election campaign Gore had consistently tried to make economy a major issue while Bush had very intelligently, and quietly, shifted the focus of the debate to morality and ethics of governance.⁹ It was this shift of focus, and Gore's failure to address its root cause, that resulted in Gore's inability to gain a decisive lead over Bush.

The other side of the coin is also very interesting; namely, that the voters almost totally ignored the economic fruits of eight years' growth and prosperity under the Democratic administration and chose not to vote for Gore, but for Bush.

8 Muhammad Arif Zakaullah, "Values, the Economy and Metaeconomics in the 2000 US Presidential Election: A Historical Perspective (1896–1996)," in *Intellectual Discourse*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 2001, 1–28.

9 *Ibid.*, 3–4.



The above study also showed that the voters who chose to ignore the record of excellent performance of the U.S. economy were mainly concentrated in the Southern part of the U.S. which, by virtue of being the centre of Christian fundamentalism, is also known as the 'Bible Belt'.¹⁰ In light of the detailed analysis of the facts on the ground the study concluded that it was the moral and ethical outlook embedded in religion-based moral and ethical values, and not the performance of the economy, that motivated the Bible Belt to vote for Bush, and hence to give him the strength and push that enabled him to keep the Democratic candidate in check, and finally overtake him. Similarly in the 2004 Presidential election, the American voters did not care about economy, and voted on the basis of the Christian fundamentalist agenda championed by Mr. Bush. Had economy been the criteria, G.W. Bush would have definitely been defeated. This is obvious from the fact during the first term of Bush (2000 - 2004) the economy had worsened. In 2000 when Clinton handed the White House to G.W. Bush the unemployment rate in the country was 3.97% which, by 2004 had risen to 5.53%.¹¹ During the first term of G.W. Bush

10 Geographically this region of the United States is identified with the deep South, the border states and the lower Midwest. The region is home to Christian fundamentalists and evangelical Protestants. These groups believe in literal interpretation of the Bible and rigid morality. Many states in this region, which had voted for Clinton in 1996, changed their mind and voted for Bush, Jr. in 2000. For further details of the region see: *Encyclopedia Britannica: Macropaedia*, 15th ed. (1989), s.v. "Bible Belt". See also: *Time* (Asian edition), (November. 20, 2000), 32–33, for the U.S. map showing the geographical standing of the two political parties in the 2000 Presidential election.

11 "The U.S. Unemployment Rate: 1948 to 2005", <http://www.miseryindex.us/urbyyear.asp>

poverty also spread¹² widely as the poverty rate had climbed to 12.5% by 2003 bringing 4.3 million people into poverty and yet in 2004 he won the election by a convincing majority as compared to the shaky outcome of the 2000 election. Given that despite the adverse economic conditions, people still elected G.W. Bush due to their Christian fundamentalist beliefs it is important for us to focus on this phenomenon. Concerned about the inter-civilizational implications of the events of September 11, 2001 and realizing that the U.S. is the sole super power; the writer feels that, from the point of view of inter-civilizational bridge building, it is the need of the hour to understand how the U.S. works. Given the rise of Christian fundamentalism in the U.S. and the process through which it impacts the American liberal democracy, it is hoped that the insights gained from this study would help us understand the contemporary American society and its future direction better.

There is no doubt that the U.S. is a liberal democracy with excellent constitutional checks and balances built into its power structure. However, the fact remains that in liberal democracies the leaders and the government machinery, at the end of the day, follow the dictates of their voters and opinions makers. Thus, as revealed by our earlier study, if at the dawn of the 21st century Christian fundamentalism is the dominant force in American society and politics, then it is appropriate that the concerned citizens of the globe understand and analyze its role in the American government and the country's power structure. It is with this goal in mind, that this study of the rise of Christian fundamentalism in the

12 "Poverty in U.S. Grew Last Year," in *The Asian Wall Street Journal*, August 30, 2004, A4. This *Asian Wall Street Journal* article uses the U.S. Census Bureau as its source of data on poverty quoted here.



20th century in the United States has been undertaken. Thanks to the extensive research that was done, not only was the initial question answered, but a number of issues were also illuminated, some of which are now the subject of ongoing research by this writer.

As this paper focuses on the 20th century, we begin with a brief historical background of the arrival and growth of Christianity in the United States.

Chapter 2

Christianity in America: A Brief Historical Background

The modern American history starts with the opening of the American continent to the Europeans. It begins with the discovery of America by Columbus in 1492, the year Islamic Spain fell. America, popularly known as the ‘New World’ became an attractive permanent settlement destination for many European migrants. The European migrants did not arrive in the ‘New World’ in a demographic vacuum. Actually what was a ‘New World’ to the migrants had been home to hundreds of tribes of ‘Native Americans’ for millennia, who were mistakenly called ‘Indians’ by Columbus.¹³ There were a host of factors that motivated many in Europe to settle in America. Some of the major factors responsible for this migration are as follows:¹⁴

13 Historically the Asians who crossed from Siberia over the Bering Straits to Alaska were the first to discover the American continent. This discovery, which took place between 16,000–18,000 years ago, started the Asian migration to the American continent. See: James West Davidson et al, eds., *Nation of Nations: A Narrative History of the American Republic*, 3rd ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1998), 13. See also: Alan Brinkley, *The Unfinished Nation: A Concise History of the American People*, 3rd ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2000), 1.

14 Alan Brinkley, *Ibid.*, 19–22.



I. Religious Strife:

These were very turbulent times in Europe. People were concerned about salvation - being saved in the eternal life. “Catholic doctrine taught that a person could be saved by faith in God and by his or her own good works by leading a virtuous life, observing the sacraments (such as baptism, the Mass, and penance), making pilgrimages to holy places, and praying to Christ and the saints”.¹⁵ The Church officials also sold indulgences. The believers who were afraid of punishment in the life hereafter could buy indulgences. “... the purchase of an indulgence promised to shorten that punishment by supposedly drawing on a ‘treasury of merit’ amassed by the good works of Christ and the saints”.¹⁶ The emphasis of the Catholic Church on rituals and good works combined with its ability to sell indulgences gave it enormous power in society, which was abused and exploited by the Church Officials. This caused disenchantment with the Catholic Church resulting in protests leading to the Reformation movement. Martin Luther (1483–1546), a German priest, and John Calvin (1509–1564), a French lawyer-turned-theologian were the main intellectual architects of the Reformation ideas of the time. Their major teachings can be very briefly summarized as follows:

(i) **Martin Luther:**¹⁷

- a) God is a loving deity who extends his mercy to sinful humankind.
- b) Salvation is the result of faith only, and faith is God’s ‘free gift’ to sinners.

15 James West Davidson et al, *Nation of Nations*, 24.

16 *Ibid.*, 24.

17 *Ibid.*, 24–26.

c) “The ability to live a good life could not be the *cause* of salvation but its *consequence*: once men and women believed that they had saving faith, moral behavior was possible”.¹⁸ This idea is known as ‘justification by faith alone’.

d) “He asserted that the church and its officials were not infallible; only the Scriptures were without error”.¹⁹

e) The Catholic Church had held “... that salvation came only through the church and its clergy, a privileged group that possessed special access to God. Luther asserted that every person had the power claimed by priests”.²⁰ This idea became the doctrine of ‘the priesthood of all believers’.

(ii) John Calvin:²¹

a) “Calvin conceived God as an awesome sovereign, all-knowing and all-powerful, the controlling force in human history who would ultimately triumph over Satan. To bring about that victory, Calvin believed, God had selected certain people as his agents for ushering in his heavenly kingdom. These people — ‘the saints’, or ‘the elect’ — had been ‘predestined’ by God for eternal salvation in heaven”.²²

b) A person could know whether he was an “elect” or not, by striving to behave like a saint. “God expected his elect to serve the good of society by unrelenting work in a ‘calling’ or occupation in the world”.²³ Thus in place of the Catholic emphasis on good works, Calvin emphasized the goodness of work itself and argued that success in self-discipline and self-

18 *Ibid.*, 24.

19 *Ibid.*, 25.

20 *Ibid.*, 25–26.

21 *Ibid.*, 26–27.

22 *Ibid.*, 26.

23 *Ibid.*



control and bringing order into one's life and the entire society were an indicator that a person might be among the elect.

c) Contrary to Luther, who suggested that Christians should accept the existing social order, "Calvin called on Christians to become activists, reshaping society and government to conform to God's Laws laid down in the Bible".²⁴

d) Calvin transformed the, "Swiss city of Geneva into a holy commonwealth where the elect regulated the behavior and morals of everyone".²⁵ Geneva became the centre of reformers from all over the world. He wanted the entire Europe to be modeled after Geneva.

e) As opposed to Luther, who wrote mainly for Germans, Calvin's book, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536), was intended for all Christians.²⁶

The first division in Christianity occurred in 1054 when it was split between the Eastern Church led by the Byzantine emperor and the Roman Catholic Church, led by the Pope.²⁷ After that the Roman Catholic Church maintained the unity of

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ The split of Christendom into the Eastern (Greek Orthodoxy) and Western (Roman Catholicism) was formally ratified in 1054, but the conflicts that led to this division were present from the very beginning. They were deeply rooted in every aspect of the religio-social identity of the followers on both sides, from the interpretation of the doctrine of the Trinity and other theological issues to tradition, geography, culture, language and calendar, to name a few. From Chidester's detailed discussion of these conflicts we briefly highlight here some of the major ones. According to the Eastern Orthodox belief, the ultimate religious authority resided in the Byzantine Emperor, as he was the source of the religious, political and cultural unity of the entire Christendom on a global scale,

Christianity under its banner in Western Europe. In the 16th century the Protestant Reformation created serious division in Western European Christianity too. Western Europe was now split on theological grounds. Broadly speaking, most of the southern countries remained Catholic while a majority of the northern countries turned to Protestantism.²⁸ Ireland, Italy and Spain continued to be Catholic. “England, France,

= whereas Western Christianity ascribed all of this power to the Pope. Eastern Christianity also believed that the imperial dignity implied a power from God which gave the emperor the jurisdiction over the management and the human affairs of the Church; hence the Pope was subject to the emperor’s authority. Western Christianity, on the other hand, advocated that the Pope, by virtue of being the heir of St. Peter (due to the unbroken succession) provided continuity and was ‘Vicar of St. Peter’. Hence in this capacity the Pope was undisputed leader of the Universal Church of Christ. (Note that St. Peter was one of the twelve apostles of Jesus and is said to have been designated by him as ‘fisher of men’ [or missionary] assigned the task to convert others to Christianity). Under this mission Peter is said to have gone to Rome where he was killed by the Roman emperor Nero during the persecution of Christians. The Eastern Orthodoxy designated Constantinople as the heir to the holy city of Jerusalem while Western Christianity bestowed this status upon the city of Rome, which is said to have been founded by St. Peter. The Eastern Orthodoxy adopted the Greek language as the language of worship while Catholicism adopted Latin for this purpose. The differences between Eastern and Western Christianity were so wide ranging that they encompassed almost every aspect of life - the calculation of the dates of Easter and Christmas, church practices and rituals, and management and organization of the church etc. For details see:

- David Chidester, *Christianity: A Global History* (New York: Harper San Francisco, 2000), 159–177.
 - *Funk and Wagnalls New Encyclopedia*, s. v. Peter, Saint.
 - Marvin Perry Et al, *Western Civilization: Ideas, Politics & Society* (Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Co, 2004), 199–204.
- 28 Marvin Perry, Myrna Chase et al., *Western Civilization: Ideas, Politics and Society*, 7th ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), 345.



Scotland, the Netherlands, and Switzerland developed either dominant or substantial Calvinist constituencies. Much of Germany and Scandinavia opted for Lutheranism.”²⁹ The competition for the loyalties of the believers and converts led to persecution and censorship. “*The Index of Prohibited Books* became an institutional part of the church’s life”.³⁰ The struggle for political power led to wars in the 16th century in which Catholics and Protestants slaughtered each other. These killings and the persecution of Protestants led to their mass migration from Europe to America.³¹

II. Frequent Disastrous Wars in the Continent of Europe:³²

The period from 15th to the 16th century saw frequent wars in Europe which brought ruin, misery and displacement to innocent masses, especially to the poor and deprived. Some of the major wars were: Hundred Years’ War (1337 - 1453) between England and France, Germany experienced three different civil wars within three decades (1522 - 1555), the Dutch fought the Spanish (catholic) occupation for nearly one hundred years and finally won independence in 1648. In the last quarter of the 16th century France went through the War of the Three Henries which were wars of succession rooted in the conflict between Catholicism and Protestantism. The thirty year war (1618 - 1648) started out as a struggle between Catholics and Protestants with Germany as the battleground but gradually it became a war involving Germany, Denmark, Sweden, France, the Hapsburgs, Spain and Austria. Thus there was no peace in Europe and many found migration to the New World appealing.

29 James West Davidson et al., *Nation of Nations*, 26.

30 *Ibid.*, 344.

31 *Ibid.*, 76–105.

32 Philip Dorf, *Visualised World History* (New York: Oxford Book Company, 1950), 130–143.

III. Structural Change in Agriculture and the Resultant Economic Hardship:

In the 16th century due to the growing world demand for wool many landlords converted their land from cultivation to pastures for sheep. The sharp decline in cultivated area resulted in massive unemployment of farmers who resorted to begging and crime. The problem was further aggravated by high population growth in England which rose from 3 million in 1485 to 4 million in 1603. Thus vast land mass of the New World offered great opportunities of economic betterment and many were attracted to it.

IV. Mercantilist Philosophy and Colonization:

Mercantilist philosophy propagated that the nations which exported more and restricted their import would get rich. This meant colonization was a sure way of becoming rich as colonies provided guaranteed captive market for colonizer's exports and also enriched it by enabling it to exploit their natural resources. Hence the colonization of the New World was a great way for the European investors and kings to enhance their wealth and riches.

V. A Tailored Religion and its Turmoil:

Just as Europe was engulfed by the Protestant – Catholic wars, King Henry VIII of England, a catholic, tailored a new religion to fulfill his ever-growing love for power and women. He wanted to divorce his wife Catherine but in Catholicism divorce is not allowed. He asked the Pope to grant permission but the Pope refused. Determined to marry his young and beautiful sweet heart Anne Boleyn, he broke relations with Vatican and established the Church of England. With this he declared himself as, “Singular Protector, only Supreme Lord,



and as far as law of Christ allows, even Supreme Head”³³ of the newly established Church of England. In his capacity as the head of the new religion he granted himself the permission to divorce his wife Catherine and married Anne Boleyn. Later on he beheaded Anne Boleyn and married another lady. During his reign he had six marriages. Although he claimed to have reformed Catholicism, everything in the newly formed Church of England was the same except the following three major changes:

- i) The new religion replaced the authority of the Pope with the authority of the King of England.
- ii) The clergy of the Church of England was subordinated to the King
- iii) The king could divorce and marry as many times as he pleased.

Given the appeal of Protestantism, the tide of religious reform was sweeping Europe, but the newly formed Church of England had not reformed along the Protestant lines and had remained fully Catholic in terms of its beliefs, dogma and spirit. There were many in England who wanted to reform the Church of England along the Protestant lines and thus purify it but instead they were persecuted. They came to be known as ‘Puritans’. The Puritans, many of whom were rising businessmen, were further disappointed when the government raised taxes and started giving priority to Catholics in granting business charters and other favors.³⁴ These religio-economic factors made the New World an

33 Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 84–86.

34 Alan Brinkley, *The Unfinished Nation: A Concise History of the American People*, 3rd ed. (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2000), 21.

attractive place for many Puritans as they believed that in the New World they would not only be able to purify their religion in line with the Protestant beliefs and teachings but would be free of economic discrimination as well. Consequently there was a mass exodus of Puritans from England to the New World. The Puritans claimed this migration to be a pilgrimage and called themselves ‘Pilgrims’. Hence in the American history they are also known as ‘Pilgrims’. Their first major contingent arrived in Plymouth, Massachusetts in December, 1620. Their first winter was so difficult that half of their population perished from disease and starvation but many survived with the help, support and cooperation of the local American Indian tribes.³⁵ The Indians also taught them to grow local crops and fishing methods. Over the decades the ship loads of Puritans continued to come from Europe to the Northeastern part of the U.S. which came to be known as New England³⁶, resulting in their huge population in the early New World.

VI. American Christianity and the ‘Other’:

The first pilgrims who came to New England were fortunate that they did not come “... to vacant land but to territory inhabited by tribes of Indians”.³⁷ As mentioned above, the entire population of these pilgrims could have perished had it not been for the kindness, humanitarianism, help and support of these native Indian tribes.

³⁵ Alan Brinkley, 42–43.

³⁶ New England is a region in the northeastern part of the United States. It comprises of the following six states: Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut.

³⁷ Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States: 1492 – Present* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2003), 13.



One would expect that this humanitarianism and kindness of Indians would have been reciprocated by the Puritan Christianity in the future. But the Puritans did quite the opposite they used their political skills and superior weaponry to grab the fertile agricultural lands of Indians and kill their families, clans even tribes when they resisted the ever expanding white settlements. The famous American historian Howard Zinn³⁸ writes that the governor of Massachusetts³⁹, John Winthrop, made new laws to grab the land which the Indian tribes had owned millennia before the arrival of Puritans. He declared the Indian lands to be legally a ‘vacuum’.⁴⁰

“Indians, he said, had not ‘subdued’ the land, and therefore had only a ‘natural’ right to it, but not a ‘civil right’. A ‘natural right’ did not have a legal standing.”⁴¹

Howard Zinn writes that the Puritans justified the land grab from Bible as follows:

“Ask of me, and I shall give thee, the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.”⁴² (Psalms 2:8)

The Puritans, the founders of American Christianity, cited the Bible (Romans 13:2) as follows to justify the use of force against the Indians who resisted the land grab:

“Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.”⁴³

38 Howard Zinn, 13–14.

39 Massachusetts is one of states of the North Eastern region of the United States called New England.

40 Howard Zinn, 13.

41 *Ibid.*, 13–14.

42 *Ibid.*, 14.

43 *Ibid.*, 14.



As the aggressive land grab policies continued, the resistance by the Indians also increased. Due to their resistance the Indians were now seen as the enemy. The use of force by Puritans against the Indians meant fighting battles which involved the loss of white lives. Thus terrorism⁴⁴ was adopted as a means to destroy the, "... enemy's will to fight."⁴⁵ The terrorist approach involved a number of tactics such as:

- i) deliberate attacks on noncombatant Indians⁴⁶
- ii) massacres of Indians⁴⁷
- iii) setting fire to the Indian villages⁴⁸

In his master piece entitled, *A Religious History of the American People*⁴⁹ which won two prestigious awards in the U.S. Sydney Ahlstrom argues that the U.S. was settled and shaped largely "... by those who brought with them a very special form of radical Protestantism..."⁵⁰

This radicalism has manifested itself in various ways over time. As far as the treatment of the 'Other' is concerned whether it is the treatment of blacks and slaves or other minorities it remains a sad chapter of the history of a country which takes pride in calling itself a 'city on a

44 *Ibid.*, 14.

45 *Ibid.*, 15.

46 *Ibid.*, 14.

47 *Ibid.*, 15.

48 *Ibid.*, 15.

49 Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972). This book won the following two prestigious awards in the U.S.:

- National Book Award, 1973
- Religious Book of the Decade Award (1979) by *The Christian Century*

50 Ahlstrom, 1090.



hill’.⁵¹ Ahlstrom mentions that starting with African slaves every new arriving immigrant community has been subject to discrimination, racism and exclusion, etc. Some of the communities mentioned by him are: Catholics, Jews, and the Spanish speaking citizens.⁵²

(i) Some Major Religious Characteristics of Early American Society:

Due to this massive inflow of Protestants into America the early modern white American society came to have the following major characteristics:

- a) An absolute Protestant majority,
- b) The prevalence of conservative Protestantism, and
- c) An emphasis on self-discipline and hard work, both of which were regarded as virtues.

The prevalence of conservative Protestantism meant that the idea of the personal salvation of the individual through his efforts fully dominated the thoughts and actions of the members of the society. Under this paradigm “... it was believed that good intentions and an abundance of zeal would with God’s help be adequate to handle the difficult problems”.⁵³

51 Michael Lienesch, *Redeeming America: Piety and Politics in the New Christian Right* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 197. Lienesch explains that the phrase ‘*city on a hill*’ is an adaptation from a verse from the book of Matthew in the Bible. It metaphorically implies that America is an example for the world, and the other nations would seek to emulate its experience.

52 Ahlstrom, 1090.

53 James Davison Hunter, “The Evangelical Worldview Since 1890,” in Richard J. Neuhaus and Michael Gromartie, eds., *Piety and Politics: Evangelicals and Fundamentalists Confront the World* (Washington, D.C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1976), 26, and Hunter quotes it from Robert Handy, *A Christian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 143.

(ii) Progress, Prosperity and Problems:

America's independence from British rule in 1776 unleashed the New World's vast potential and abundant opportunities for growth and industrialization. In the first century after independence this potential was exploited to a great extent. In the realization of this potential the use of science and technology played an important role which resulted in industrialization, urbanization, rapid economic progress and increasing prosperity. However, by the end of the 19th century it had become quite obvious that from the point of view of its social implications, rapid growth and industrialization had turned out to be a mixed blessing for the American people. On the one hand, it brought jobs, wealth and prosperity; on the other, it caused serious socioeconomic problems — increasing income inequalities, crowded cities, inadequate housing, rising crime rates, etc.

(iii) Reason Versus Tradition:

Soon the above problems occupied society's centre stage. Rapid industrialization and growing economic prosperity attracted non-Protestant immigrants, like Catholics and Jews as well. Unlike most Protestants, however, many of them were economic migrants and were looking for better economic opportunities and a peaceful life. Industrialization was propelled by scientific discoveries and technological advancements. This dominance of science and technology also led to the increasing use of reason in the society as against the blind following of tradition. These forces were pushing new ideas whose social and philosophical implications posed some serious challenges to conservative Protestantism which had all this while advocated the individual's pursuit of his salvation as the panacea for all the problems. The penetration of scientific thinking was also challenging the fixed religious views and positions on social issues and their



traditional solutions. New ideas like Darwinism had not only gained acceptance but were included in the curriculum by the education system at various levels.⁵⁴

The spread of social problems, rise of reason coupled with the dominance of a scientific way of thinking leading to new ideas like Darwinism posed a serious challenge to conservative Protestantism which had always explained everything within the traditional framework. The Protestant clergy, given the nature of their role in society, were the first group to face the intellectual challenge of these problems. Since many of these problems were new, tradition did not offer specific positions on them. Hence the clergymen gradually evolved their response to them which came to be known as ‘New Christianity’ and a ‘New Theology’. The new theology relied heavily on two related movements, namely the ‘Social Gospel’ and ‘Cooperative Christianity’.⁵⁵ The doctrine of the Social Gospel was articulated in the 1870s and in the last decade of the 19th century, it gained recognition and following in major churches.⁵⁶ Conservative Protestantism had all along believed in the effectiveness of the ‘Puritan Paradigm’ in solving all the problems. This paradigm focused on the individual’s efforts for his own salvation, implying that once each individual strived for his own purification and ‘elect status’, the entire society would automatically enjoy peace, harmony and well-being. Contrary to this, the doctrine of the Social Gospel recognized the gravity of the reality and advocated that the solution of social problems was not in ‘revival’ (the individual’s efforts for his own salvation) but in the improvement of the social

54 James Davison Hunter, “The Evangelical Worldview Since 1890,” in *Piety and Politics*, 19–53.

55 *Ibid.*, 27–29.

56 *Ibid.*, 27–29.



reality and structural conditions that were the actual cause of these problems. Hence the adherents of the Social Gospel advocated social reform which they justified on the basis of the Bible.

The growing influx of non-Protestant immigrants was seen as a threat to the Protestants. The ‘Cooperative Christianity’ movement was founded to respond to this threat. This movement aimed at uniting all Protestant Churches on a broad scale. Conservative Protestantism had reacted to new scientific and philosophical ideas like Darwinism and social Darwinism with suspicion and rejection. The new theology attempted to synthesize religion and science by adopting an accommodative approach. Consequently, the religious ideas which were rooted in supernaturalism and could not be accommodated in the dual framework of rationalism and scientific findings faced the danger of abandonment by the clergy.⁵⁷ James Hunter describes this development as follows:

“The distinguishing characteristic of the popular capitulation was a shift in emphasis from the spiritual to social and practical. The spiritual needs of humankind were to be treated not necessarily as paramount but one set among many. This shift indicated a growing doubt concerning

57 Rationalism in religion was the result of the Enlightenment, an intellectual movement that started in the seventeenth century in Europe. The movement was led by philosophers who “stressed the power of human reason to promote progress by revealing the laws that governed both nature and society”. This also influenced religious views and positions on various issues and led to the adoption of “... a more liberal theology that stressed the reasonableness of Christian beliefs”. The advocates of liberal theology “... believed that God’s greatest gift to mankind was reason, which enabled all human beings to follow the moral teachings of Jesus”. See: James West Davidson, et al., eds., *Nation of Nations*, 124–25.



the plausibility and viability of an essentially spiritual interpretation of human experience, as opposed to a more rational, naturalistic perspective.”⁵⁸

The conservatives had been able to respond neither to the new scientific ideas nor to the issue of social problems. Europe was full of intellectual energy and dynamism of the Enlightenment and was critically examining everything from the past. This critical examination based on reason had resulted not only in the rejection of a lot of traditional beliefs but had generated totally new and sometimes revolutionary ideas. Many of these new ideas were challenging both Christianity and its resultant socio-political establishment. In addition to Darwinism some of the other revolutionary ideas that could jeopardize the Puritan beliefs and status quo in the New World were as follows:

The rising philosophy of Humanitarianism, “... condemned slavery as a violation of natural rights of man.”⁵⁹ This condemnation of slavery was seen as a direct attack on Protestantism itself by the Puritans because the great Protestant reformist Luther had established beyond doubt that “... Bible actually supported slavery. All the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament had slaves, and the apostle Paul of the New Testament called upon slaves to accept their condition.”⁶⁰

Now the humanitarianism of Europe was going against the Bible and Luther by preaching the abolition of slavery. The

58 James Davison Hunter, “The Evangelical Worldview Since 1890”, 33.

59 Perry at al., *Western Civilization: Ideas, Politics & Society*, 7th ed. (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2004), 443.

60 David Chidester, *Christianity: A Global History* (New York: Harper San Francisco, 2000), 320.

biblical support of slavery had helped the whites in America keep costs in agriculture low by using cheap slave labor and enjoy prosperity. Hence humanitarianism was a serious threat to the status quo and deserved condemnation and rejection. This was especially the case in the South which was mainly agricultural.

The rational approach to religion had led to a new understanding of many biblical beliefs, advocated by a new school of thought whose followers were called Deists. “Deists viewed Jesus as a great moral teacher, not as the son of God, and they regarded ethics, not faith, as the essence of religion. Rational people, they said, served God best by treating their fellow human beings justly.”⁶¹ Besides denying Jesus being the son of God, these ideas demanded just treatment for fellow human beings. If people started practicing justice to fellow humans to serve God best, they would not be able to confiscate, expropriate and grab the fertile agricultural lands owned and cultivated by the native Indian tribes of America who had owned the prized fertile agricultural lands of the New World millennia prior to the arrival of Europeans in the 15th century. This rise of rational approach to Christianity based on the ethic of justice was a big threat to the Puritan economy. The best thing was to reject it in the name of Protestantism and retain the traditional literal understanding of Bible and religion as it ensured the perpetuation of the status quo by all means possible. “They generally reasoned that, if they successfully defended the doctrine of the Bible as the inerrant and infallible Word of God, they would maintain an adequate basis for dismissing all erroneous teachings”.⁶²

It was against this background that the conservatives saw

⁶¹ Perry et al., 433.

⁶² James Davison Hunter, 30.



New Christianity as a threat because it had succeeded in developing a viable and appealing alternative doctrine within the biblical framework which was based on reason and was capable of problem-solving through reform. But reform was a threat to tradition as it would lead to the change of status quo.

(iv) A Split in American Protestantism:

The Birth of Contemporary Christian Fundamentalism:

The success of the New Gospel advocates in making their doctrine relevant to the needs of society on the basis of the Bible posed a serious challenge to the conservatives. They were left with the following three choices:

(a) to rationally accept the New Gospel doctrine and abandon their tradition based philosophy;

(b) to adopt a rationalist approach to their own doctrine and reform it, and pave the way for the eventual change of status quo;

(c) to reject the rationalist New Gospel doctrine and maintain their own view of religion, and cause a split within Protestantism itself.

As the popularity of the Social Gospel increased with time, the conservatives, who had no intellectual response to this rational interpretation, responded by hardening their position. Their rigidity grew with time, ultimately leading to a split in American Protestantism. The indefensible conservative position led to a change of heart in believers. There was a mass exodus from conservative churches to the New Gospel doctrine. “By the 1910s, the majority of Protestant ministers and theologians had abandoned the conservative positions as indefensible”.⁶³

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 32.

The first decade of the 20th century saw a serious decline in the membership of conservative Protestant churches; clear evidence that American Protestantism had split and the conservatives were fast becoming a shrinking minority. In an effort to regain lost ground, the conservatives launched a strong defense of orthodoxy by publishing *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth* in the second decade of the twentieth century. It consisted of 12 volumes published under the supervision of the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago with the petrodollars funded by the California oilmen, Lyman and Milton Stewart.⁶⁴ All these volumes, edited by R.A. Torrey, collectively came to be known as *The Fundamentals*.⁶⁵ The 12 volumes of *The Fundamentals* contained a total of 90 articles which articulated and explained the orthodox position in defense of their doctrine. It is worth noting that terms like *Fundamentals*, *Fundamentalism* and *Fundamentalist* have their origin in the Christian fundamentalism of the United States and owe their survival as a philosophy to the hard-line, Protestant Christian fundamentalists. It is these fundamentalists who, at the dawn of the 20th Century, chose to reject a social reform (Social Gospel) based approach considered to be more rational by others, and consequently established an intellectual precedent for the fundamentalists in other religions around the world. *The Fundamentals* list and discuss the “Fundamentals of the Faith from which no deviation could be tolerated”.⁶⁶ The most commonly agreed

64 William Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America* (New York: Broadway Books, 1997), 10–11.

65 Iris V. Cully and Kendig Brubaker Cully, General Editors, *Harper's Encyclopedia of Religious Education* (San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, 1990), 263–265.

66 William Martin, 11.



upon fundamentals are as follows:⁶⁷

1. The inerrancy of the scripture;
2. The deity of Christ;
3. The Virgin Birth of Jesus;
4. The substitutionary atonement: The belief that by dying on the cross, the sinless Christ took upon himself the punishment rightly deserved by sinful humans;
5. The resurrection;⁶⁸
6. The imminent return of Christ or the Second Coming of Christ (i.e. Millennialism).⁶⁹

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 11. See also: George Marsden, “The Evangelical Denomination”, 58–60, and James Davison Hunter, *American Evangelicalism: Conservative Religion and the Quandary of Modernity* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1983), 3–10.

⁶⁸ Resurrection is the belief in the rising to life from death. That Jesus died, was buried, and was raised to life is a fundamental article of Christian faith. For details see the following:

- (i) *Harper’s Encyclopedia of Religious Education*, s.v. “Resurrection” by V.L. Wimbush.
- (ii) Geoffrey Parrinder, *A Concise Encyclopedia of Christianity* (Oxford: One World Publications 2001), s.v. “Resurrection of Christ”, and “Resurrection of the Dead”.

⁶⁹ The belief that Jesus Christ will return and rule this world is known as the Millennialism or the Second Coming of Christ. There is a deep confusion as to the interpretation of millennialism in the evangelical theology as there are three diverse views in this regard. One believes in postmillennialism and the other in premillennialism while the third one, advocated by Dwight L. Moody (1837–1899), is called “dispensational premillennialism. Postmillennialism was advocated at the beginning of the 19th century by the prominent fundamentalist preacher of Massachusetts, Charles Finney. Finney, looking at the progress of American society at the beginning of the 19th century, argued that the world, led by the U.S., would first experience a thousand years of peace and prosperity, after which



As stated by Martin:

“The keystone was and is the inerrancy of the scripture, meaning not only that the Bible is the sole and infallible rule of faith and practice, but also that it is scientifically and historically reliable. Thus, evolution could not be true, miracles really did happen just as the Bible describes them, and on Judgment Day all who have ever lived will be assigned for eternity to heaven or hell, both of which really do exist. Any attempt to interpret these or other features of the scriptures as myth or allegories strikes at the very root of the Christian faith and must be resisted with every fiber of one’s being.”⁷⁰

According to Hunter: “By 1919, it was clear even to the

= Christ would return to earth to rule forever. Since in this model the Second Coming of Christ would occur after the millennium, this view was called postmillennialism. This view was opposed by the premillennialists who argued that the world would increasingly face worse and bigger problems e.g. political anarchy, religious apostasy, moral turpitude, earthquakes, plagues, and the like. It is after these problems and miseries that the Second Coming of Christ will occur. As a result of this belief, premillennialism has usually developed a wider following in bad times than in good, since it offers hope in difficult times. The Dispensationalism offers further support to premillennialism by advocating that before the Second Coming of Christ the world would practically become a gloomy place to live. The last dispensation will be “the Rapture” at which point faithful Christians will be “caught up to meet the Lord in the air”, leaving the rest of humanity to face an unprecedented congeries of calamities known as the ‘tribulation’. The tribulation will be a seven year period in which the “Antichrist” will control the world. The tribulation period will end with the Second Coming of Christ, who will defeat the Antichrist in the battle of Armageddon which will be followed by the millennium and Final Judgment. See: William Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America* (New York: Broadway Books, 1997), 7.

70 *Ibid.*, 11.



man on the street that a bifurcation had arisen in American Protestantism”.⁷¹

With the publication of *The Fundamentals* the battle lines had been clearly drawn. On the one side there were the Fundamentalists, the defenders of the soul of religion and champions of orthodoxy. On the other, there were the ‘modernists’ or the liberals; the rationalists who championed the Social Gospel. The modernists were the target of the attack of the fundamentalists. The fundamentalists believed that the liberals had abandoned the fundamentals - the core - of the true Christian faith. To them Social Gospel Christianity was the Trojan horse of liberalism designed to infiltrate the forces of scientific rationalism in the realm of traditionalism and ultimately to destroy the orthodoxy. They were worried that the new methodologies developed under the influence of scientific discoveries and rationalism would give a distorted interpretation of the religious reality.⁷²

The liberals, on the other hand, had their own grievances against the fundamentalists. They “...caricatured fundamentalists as rude, anti-intellectual, and obscurantist in their theological orientation and presentation. Fundamentalists were accused of defending an antiquated interpretation of the Bible and religious experience on the basis of noisy dogma, not sound reasoning”.⁷³ Thus the 1920s ended with a permanent split in American Protestantism due to the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy.

Although the Social Gospel was becoming increasingly popular and conservative churches were experiencing a

71 James Davison Hunter, “The Evangelical Worldview Since 1890”, 32.

72 *Ibid.*, 35.

73 *Ibid.*

decline in membership, the fundamentalists were not willing to recognize their weakness. They were determined to fight back. It was under their pressure that a number of states passed the anti-evolution laws,⁷⁴ Tennessee being one of them. The law made it illegal for any public school teacher “to teach any theory that denies the story of the divine creation of man as taught in the Bible”.⁷⁵ The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) considered this law to be a repressive measure and “...offered free counsel to any Tennessee educator willing to defy the law and become defendant in a test case”.⁷⁶ In 1925 a biology teacher named John T. Scopes committed the violation. He was arrested and tried in the court.⁷⁷ It became a historic court case as its proceedings were widely covered by the newspapers, magazines and radio. William Jennings Bryan, a high profile politician, America’s leading fundamentalist spokesman and a highly effective orator and three-time unsuccessful presidential candidate (1896, 1900 and 1908)⁷⁸ came to the aid of the prosecution.⁷⁹ During the trial the prosecution’s position was severely challenged many times especially when the defense attorney cornered Bryan “... into admitting the possibility that not all religious dogma was subject to only one interpretation”.⁸⁰

Although the fundamentalists won the case on the grounds

74 Some of the states that passed these kind of laws were: Arkansas, Florida, Mississippi, Oklahoma and Tennessee. See: James W. Davidson et al., *Nation of Nations*, 858.

75 Alan Brinkley and Ellen Fitzpatrick, *America in the Modern Times* (New York: The McGraw Hill Companies, Inc., 1997), 226–228.

76 *Ibid.*, 226.

77 James West Davidson et al., *Nation of Nations*, 858–859.

78 Alan Brinkley, *The Unfinished Nation*, A33–A34.

79 James W. Davidson et al., *Nation of Nations*, 859.

80 Alan Brinkley and Ellen Fitzpatrick, *America in Modern Times*, 226–228. See also: James W. Davidson et al, *Nation of Nations*, 859.



that the teacher had violated the law, they lost the big debate of fundamentalism versus rationalism. After this showdown the fundamentalists changed their strategy. They had realized that their advocacy of orthodoxy lacked intellectual substance. Thus they withdrew from the public scene and focused on education and research. They aggressively launched a movement to establish their own private schools. They also started emphasizing and promoting a culture of wide reading and knowledge-seeking in the fundamentalist community at large.

(v) The Political Economy of the Split in American Protestantism:

Due to the rapid industrialization, the big cities where industries and trade and commerce were located experienced rapid population growth. These cities also attracted working class people, laborers and the poor and the unemployed because of the potential of job opportunities. Though rapid industrialization and economic growth had delivered unprecedented riches and wealth to the industrialist and business communities, they did not share this prosperity with workers who were paid very low wages and could not even afford proper hygienic living conditions. According to scholarly estimates 5 percent of the families possessed more than 50% of America's wealth.⁸¹ A vast majority of the population had little share in this growing prosperity and the wealth of the nation. Some of the major groups which contributed to national output (e.g. slaves, Indians, landless farmers, unskilled workers in factories) struggled for subsistence living. Most of the Americans were poor in the sense that they had to struggle to sustain themselves. "They were almost entirely without any resources, often

81 Alan Brinkley, 295.

homeless, dependent on charity or crime, or both for survival. Substantial numbers of people actually starved to death or died of exposure.”⁸² Hardest hit among all were the blacks many of whom could neither vote, nor attend public schools or access public services available to the whites in similar economic conditions.⁸³

Why were these socioeconomic problems so rampant in the 19th century? In his highly acclaimed book *A Religious History of the American People* which won the National Book Award⁸⁴ 1973, Sydney Ahlstrom answers this question. He says the U.S. suffered these problems because of:

“... the Protestant Establishment which presided over its early colonial life, its war for independence, and its nineteenth-century expansion. In theory, the Federal Union has been from its origins a nation of minorities, a land of freedom and equality. But it has never been so in fact. Radical inequality and massive forms of oppression have been features – fundamental features – of the American Way of life. The election of the first American legislature and the first importation of African slaves took place in Virginia in 1619, and from that time forward the rhetoric of American democracy has been falsified by the actualities of racism and bondage. Catholics were subjected to disabilities, intolerance, and violence from the earliest times; and anti-Semitism began to grow virulent as soon as Jewish immigration rate started to rise during the 1880s. The American Indian has been excluded from American life from the start, while Spanish-speaking

⁸² *Ibid.*, 295.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 296.

⁸⁴ National Book Award is one of the most prestigious literary prizes in the U.S. It was established in 1950 and is given annually for the best book in the following categories: fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and young people’s literature. See: <http://www.bookweb.org/news/awards/1289.html>



*citizens, whether gained by annexation of their territory or by immigration, have been consistently relegated to subordinate status.”*⁸⁵

After saying that the Protestant Establishment presided over the 19th century expansion and growth of the U.S. economy Ahlstrom elaborates the nature of this establishment. In this regard he says that since the beginning Puritanism has been dominant on American Protestantism, as from the early on, “... the future of the United States was settled and to a large degree shaped by those who brought with them a very special form of radical Protestantism which combined a strenuous moral precisionism, a deep commitment to evangelical experientialism, and a determination to make the state responsible for the support of these moral and religious ideas. The United States became, therefore, the land *par excellence* of revivalism, moral “legalism” and a “gospel” of work that was undergirded by the so-called Puritan Ethic. The popular revivalistic tradition of America tended, moreover, to be oblivious to the intellectual and social revolutions of the modern world. In its church life, and in its forms of popular democracy, intellectualism was deprecated and repressed. Since higher education was under the control of these same forces, many of the most powerful sources of modern thinking lagged far behind those of continental Europe, even though America’s cash outlay for education led the world. And due to the strength of these ideas in overrepresented rural constituencies, they had a kind of illicit hold on the national life even after their actual strength had waned”⁸⁶

85 Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 1090. Here italics are ours for emphasis.

86 *Ibid.*, 1090–1091.

(vi) Contemporary Christian Fundamentalists' Claim of America's Puritan Roots:

The contemporary Christian Fundamentalist Movement (CFM) of the U.S. seeks legitimacy by arguing "... in favor of America's religious founding."⁸⁷ To substantiate this claim they have produced literature that interprets American history accordingly.⁸⁸ Their major arguments quoted by Lienesch are as follows:

i) The Christian historians Marshall and Manuel argue that America's history begins with Christopher Columbus whose name means "...Christ-bearer."⁸⁹

ii) Most of them claim, "... America's first founders were the Pilgrims of Plymouth Colony..."⁹⁰

iii) They consider America as a nation that stands out vis-à-vis rest of the world. They regard it as a "shining city on a hill"⁹¹. This implies a "righteous empire"⁹² or "the last best hope"⁹³ of mankind, a redeemer nation. The Puritans who arrived in Massachusetts in 1620 elected John Winthrop as their governor. "Winthrop and other founders of Massachusetts believed they were founding a holy commonwealth, a model – a "city upon a hill" – for the corrupt to see and emulate. To that

87 Michael Lienesch, *Redeeming America: Piety and Politics in the New Christian Right* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 141.

88 Lienesch refers to the following history books:

- Peter Marshall and David Manuel, *The Light and the Glory*.
- Pat Robertson, *America's Dates with Destiny*.
- Rus Walton, *One Nation under God*.
- Tim LaHaye, *Bible's Influence*.

89 Lienesch, 141.

90 *Ibid.*, 142.

91 *Ibid.*, 197.

92 *Ibid.*, 196.

93 *Ibid.*, 196.



end, the ministers and the officers of the government worked closely together. Colonial Massachusetts was a “theocracy,” a society in which the church was almost indistinguishable from the state.”⁹⁴ Therefore the contemporary Christian Fundamentalist Movement also aims at breaking the walls of separation between the church and state.

After identifying the Puritan roots of America the fundamentalists go on to describe some of the major characteristics of Puritans which are as follows:

a) Puritans were the Christian radicals who were, “... seeking to recapture the purity of the early church.”⁹⁵

b) Puritans, “... made possible America’s foundation as a Christian nation.”⁹⁶

c) The Puritans migrated to America with the sole purpose of creating, “... a reformed social system”⁹⁷ as they had failed in achieving this goal in England.

d) “Puritans were authoritarian conservatives, believers in an established social order who came to America to create a Christian commonwealth and to rule it rightly.”⁹⁸

e) A leading contemporary Christian Fundamentalist author, Tim LaHaye, in light of the charters of a number of early New England colonies, argues that their people had largely “Bible laws”⁹⁹ and their moral and social standards were basically “Christian.”¹⁰⁰

94 Alan Brinkley, 44.

95 Lienesch, 142

96 *Ibid.*, 143.

97 *Ibid.*

98 *Ibid.*

99 *Ibid.*, 144.

100 *Ibid.*

f) “In fact, as unbelievable as it seems today, several of the early colonial constitutions actually required that any government office holder acknowledge personal belief in Jesus Christ before he could seek election.”¹⁰¹

g) Well known Christian fundamentalist author, Rus Walton, tracing the Puritan roots of America argues that the pilgrims of Plymouth colony were neither egalitarian nor democratic.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 142. (Lienesch quotes this statement from Rus Walton’s book *One Nation under God*)





Chapter 3

The Post-Second World War Rise of Christian Fundamentalism

After their withdrawal from the public scene the fundamentalists remained busy on the educational and organizational fronts of their movement until the end of the Second World War. This was also a period of soul searching, strategic thinking and organizational work. After the Scopes trial, new recruitment and organizational work had acquired central importance for the fundamentalists. This was due to the fact that the poor intellectual substance presented by the movement in the Scopes trial had created the danger that the younger generation would not be attracted to fundamentalism. Thus ways and means were found to take the message directly to the masses without confronting liberalism and rationalism.

Utilizing the freedom of expression and freedom of religion guaranteed under the secular but democratic constitution of the United States, the conservative leaders established their own radio/TV networks for religious programs. Millions of conservative and fundamentalist Protestants became regular audiences, members, and eventually donors of these programs. Some of the prominent tele-preachers were Jerry Falwell, Billy Graham, Oral Roberts, Pat Robertson and Jimmy Swaggart. “A study in 1963 showed that only



12 percent of all Protestants regularly watched or listened to religious broadcasts. Gallup polls taken in the late 1970s showed that this figure had more than doubled, and a poll in 1981 found that 27 percent of the national public claimed to have watched more than one religious program in the preceding month. A study in 1984 by Gallup and the Annenberg School of Communications placed the regular audience for religious broadcasts at about 13.3 million".¹⁰³ According to a 1978–1979 *Christianity Today* Gallup survey quoted by George Marsden, between 40 and 50 million Americans were classified as Evangelicals.¹⁰⁴ By 1980 the annual circulation of Billy Graham's newspaper *Decision* had exceeded 24 million.¹⁰⁵

This huge following brought weight and prestige to the fundamentalist TV preachers and Billy Graham obtained his first meeting with a U.S. President during Truman's presidency in 1950.¹⁰⁶ After this first meeting he was frequently invited to the White House by successive Presidents: Eisenhower, Johnson and Nixon. However, until the 1960s, fundamentalists adhered to a policy of political non-involvement.¹⁰⁷ This post-Second World War revival of Christian fundamentalism

103 A. James Reichley, "The Evangelical and Fundamentalist Revolt," in Neuhaus and Cromartie, eds., *Piety and Politics*, 75.

104 George Marsden, "The Evangelical Denomination," in *ibid.*, 59.

105 Grant Wacker, "Searching for Norman Rockwell," in *ibid.*, 330.

106 William Martin, 30.

107 A. James Reichley, "The Evangelical and Fundamentalist Revolt", 75–76. For Billy Graham's relations with and influence on the White House and the Congress, see also William Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America* (New York: Broadway Books, 1997), 25–46. Billy Graham even encouraged a reluctant general Eisenhower to run for the White House telling him that millions of Americans would like him to be the President of the U.S. Eisenhower responded positively. See: William Martin, 32.



and its rise was due to the well-organized efforts of its leaders and communities in a number of areas, like the spread of education; enhancement of the intellectual level of the community as a whole by cultivating a culture of wide reading; using a popular approach to recruitment; and creating a sense of urgency leading to missionary zeal. These points are elaborated on in the following sections.

I. Supreme Court Decisions Awaken the Sleeping Giant:

Although the fundamentalists had been committed to a policy of non-involvement in politics, the events of the 1960s and 1970s made many of them change their minds. The social tensions and the outcomes of legal battles shook the evangelists and fundamentalists and their leaders felt obliged to enter the political arena.

i) *The Desegregation Decision*: In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court had ruled against racially segregated schools; requiring public schools to open their doors to racial minorities. In response to this, many fundamentalist communities and churches had established their own ‘Christian academies’ where, “...children of believers could be educated in ‘creationist’ science and traditional values”.¹⁰⁸ These

108 A. James Reichley, “The Evangelical and Fundamentalist Revolt”, 76. In the *Plessy vs Ferguson* case in 1896 the Supreme Court upheld a law of the State of Louisiana which had legalized racial segregation on the railroads on the ground that segregation does not necessarily imply the inferiority of either race to the other. However, in *Brown vs Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* case in 1954 the Supreme Court overturned the above law and thus disallowed segregation. This was a major setback for the evangelicals who had established their own academies, schools and institutions of higher learning in which blacks were not allowed. See also: Brinkley and Fitzpatrick, *America in the Modern Times*, 56 and 434.



academies also fulfilled the hidden agenda of segregation, as only white children were accepted. These academies enjoyed tax exempt status. Then, in 1964, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act. This Act declared racial segregation illegal and demanded integration instead. The academies which wanted tax exempt status had to meet the Civil Rights Act's requirements.

ii) *The Supreme Court Decision on School Prayer*: In 1962, a Supreme Court decision ended the school sponsored prayer and devotional Bible reading on the grounds that it violated the constitutional separation of the Church and State. This angered the fundamentalists.¹⁰⁹

iii) *The Abortion Decision*:¹¹⁰ In 1973, in *Roe v Wade*, the Supreme Court granted women the right to obtain abortions.

iv) *The Stormy Sixties and Seventies*: The 1960s and 1970s witnessed the Vietnam War, violent social disorder, drug culture, the sexual revolution and Watergate, all of which shocked the country. "During the 1970s, divorce rate increased 67 percent. Families headed by unwed mothers rose 356 percent. By the end of the decade, 21 percent of families with children under eighteen were headed by single parents".¹¹¹ This situation disturbed the Evangelicals who felt that there was something wrong in society that needed to be corrected through social activism to influence the political system which had allowed this situation to occur.

These developments alarmed the fundamentalists, who

109 James West Davidson et al., *Nation of Nations*, 1071.

110 Matthew C. Moen, *The Christian Right and Congress* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1989), 12.

111 A James Reichley, "The Evangelical and Fundamentalist Revolt", 77.

found themselves under siege from every direction. In addition to these setbacks, they felt that under the tide of modernism, the moral foundations of American society were crumbling. The drug culture among youth, the sexual revolution, the general violence especially of the rebellious youth on the university campuses, the Vietnam war, and the corruption and abuse of power in high places epitomized by the Watergate scandals, all convinced the fundamentalists that the time had come to stand up and set things right. From the battlefields of Vietnam to the White House and to the family, everything was disappointing. Most people recognized these problems; yet the leadership in the mainline Protestant Churches, the Catholic Church and Jewish denominations were more concerned about the redistribution of income and wealth and economic justice.¹¹² The fundamentalists concluded that liberalism itself was the major cause of all these problems, and that the situation would improve only if traditional moral values could be restored. Since liberalism was being advocated and implemented by the state through its various organs and institutions, the state had to be tamed through political power. The Supreme Court was an obvious case in point. It was the liberal judges who were interpreting the constitution and the law in a liberal way. If the judges were conservative, this would not have happened. But the judges were nominated by the president and confirmed by Congress. So if the judiciary were to consist of conservative judges, the pre-condition was that both the executive and legislative branches should also be sensitive to, and respectful of the fundamentalist concerns. The only way to ensure this was to enter the political arena, set the agenda, mobilize the forces in the democratic system and get the right leaders elected to the White House and Congress to do the job.

112 *Ibid.*, 77.



II. Regrouping, Recruiting and Readying the Troops: The Post-Second World War Fundamentalist Strategy:

After the Scopes trial the fundamentalists had been severely weakened and had lost their influence in the denominational churches to which they belonged. “At the end of the decade of the twenties, then, fundamentalism appeared to have been defeated and relegated to a minor position. It had not only lost virtually every confrontation it had created but had been exposed to ridicule by its tendency toward intellectual rigidity and obscurantism, by its intemperate actions, by its propensity for attracting and lending support to anti-Semitic, anti-Catholic, and other nativist and right-wing political elements, and by its assertion that only Christians could be 100 percent American”.¹¹³ After the Scopes trial the fundamentalists faced problems with their Churches. They were all Protestants and belonged to the mainline large and historic denominational Churches, for example, The Disciples of Christ, The Presbyterians, The Episcopal Church, The United Church of Christ, The United Methodists, The Lutheran Church in America, The Reformed Church in America, The American Lutheran Church, and The American Baptists, among others.¹¹⁴ The tragedy was that the mainline Churches did not agree with the rigid views of the fundamentalists. It was only in the South that the fundamentalists had their own Southern Baptist Church, but even in that church numbers were not as numerous as they should have been. There were four major interconnected problems which, if not overcome soon, could have been fatal to the cause of fundamentalism in the U.S. These were:

¹¹³ William Martin, 16.

¹¹⁴ Richard G. Hutcheson, Jr, *God in the White House: How Religion has Changed the Modern Presidency* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1998), 67–68.



- i) The problem of image;
- ii) The problem of an unsympathetic majority and social system;
- iii) The lack of intellectual strength among the fundamentalists to defend and advocate their cause to their friends, neighbors and society at large; and
- iv) Alienation from the corridors of power.

A movement which was subject to nationwide ridicule by the mainstream opinion builders like the intellectuals, academics, caricaturists, media, and the clergy, needed an immediate boost to ensure its survival. If its bad image was allowed to continue, instead of attracting new adherents, it could start losing its own followers, and the first ones to withdraw would be the children and the youth who would succumb to stereotypes and peer ridicule.

The fundamentalists were faced with a basic dilemma in developing a response. If they allowed the new approach, they would lose. But if they challenged the system, then they would still be the losers because they were a small community which was not well-organized at the time, while the system as a whole was unsympathetic to them. In such circumstances, one would expect the extreme religious groups to react emotionally, take a rigid line and develop an extremist response, and end up defeating their own cause. But in this regard, the American fundamentalists demonstrated a very high level of maturity and adopted a strategy of not only not challenging the system but actually becoming a part of it and using it to their own advantage.

The fundamentalists focused their attention on their children. They were afraid that if they were not raised properly, they would be overwhelmed by the onslaught of liberalism. They



also realized that children, if given dry and boring sermons all the time, would lose interest in evangelicalism and drop out of the movement when they grew up. “To ward off this specter, evangelical and fundamentalist leaders all over the country began holding Saturday night rallies that offered people a blend of wholesome entertainment, patriotic fervor, and revivalist exhortation”.¹¹⁵ A New York City band leader-turned minister, Jack Wyrzten, had started these rallies and his radio broadcast, *Word of Life*, in 1940. These rallies were so popular that within four years they spread to nearly 200 cities across the United States and became a regular weekly feature.

With the end of the Second World War, the American forces were returning home from the front. American might and the ‘boys’ (a popular affectionate expression for American soldiers who fought in the war) had played a key role in bringing victory to the nation. Now as the ‘boys’ were returning home there were strong patriotic currents across the nation which had generated the following popular sentiments:¹¹⁶

First, everyone wanted to express the feelings of jubilation. There was a strong demand to find an explicit public expression that would involve the household and the family.

Second, there was appreciation of peace. This called for entertainment which could be participatory and enjoyable for all.

Finally, the servicemen who, after the end of the war, were returning home by the thousands were looking for moments of peace combined with entertainment and enjoyment. These servicemen used to wander aimlessly in the streets of big cities like New York, Chicago, etc. They found opportunities

115 William Martin, 25.

116 *Ibid.*, 25–28.



of healthy participatory entertainment provided by the fundamentalists which answered some genuine needs of the American society, especially in the major urban centers.

There were some visionary evangelical preachers who saw these demands as an opportunity to revive fundamentalism by presenting it in a popular form with a new and polished image. Using the golden rule of marketing — if you combine two popular products, you can create a third popular product — they developed healthy entertainment programs with patriotic themes for these servicemen and laced them with the fundamentalist message. One such preacher, Torrey Johnson, leased the 3,200 seat Orchestra Hall in Chicago and brought in a young pastor and radio preacher, Billy Graham, to address the inaugural rally of the ‘Chicagoland Youth For Christ’ (Youth For Christ: YFC).¹¹⁷

Billy Graham was an instant hit. The movement and its rallies continued to expand due to the popularity of the programs and their message and, “... in July 1945, more than six hundred youth leaders from all over North America met at a fundamentalist conference center at Winona Lake, Indiana, and formed Youth for Christ International”.¹¹⁸ Torrey Johnson was elected President while Billy Graham was chosen as the organization’s first Field Representative.

The YFC was immersed in patriotism, and given the tide of the times, it had a great appeal. On Memorial Day¹¹⁹ in 1945,

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 25.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 25.

¹¹⁹ A national holiday in the United States which honors the members of the nation’s armed forces who sacrificed their lives in wartime. It is observed every year on the last Monday in May. Traditionally the highlights of the day include: parades, memorial speeches, and ceremonies, and the decoration of graves with flowers and flags. See: *Funk & Wagnall’s New Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Memorial Day” or “Decoration Day”.



which also celebrated the German surrender, 70,000 YFC Youth sang the national anthem in Chicago in the shadow of hundreds of flags. They also sang patriotic songs to honor the war soldiers, many of whom stood in the crowd.¹²⁰ A high point of the program was an emotional appeal made to the crowd to buy war bonds.

In this great revivalist exercise the fundamentalists used all the modern means to attract attention and put the message across. The YFC leaders wore colorful suits and sport-coats; athletes, entertainers, military and civic leaders all presented various interesting programs of general interest, but the underlying message of every event was rooted in the fundamentalist philosophy. Every effort was made to offer this philosophy in a modern, attractive package. This was done by deliberately choosing pointed slogans like “Old-fashioned truth for Up-to-date Youth” and “Geared to the Times, but Anchored to the Rock”, implying that they were modern without being “Modernist”.¹²¹ From Bible quizzes, to magicians, to circuses, every aspect of entertainment was Christianized, as for example, there was a horse “who would kneel at the cross” and tap his foot twelve times when asked the number of Christ’s apostles, or three times when asked how many persons constituted the Trinity”.¹²²

The climax of all such rallies which mixed patriotism and entertainment with the fundamentalist message was always the sermon. Even for those youth who were not so enthusiastic about fundamentalism or were indifferent to it, after such great entertainment and fun, the sermon was a happy ending with a useful reminder of one’s duty to God. As the youth

¹²⁰ William Martin, 26.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹²² *Ibid.*



visited these rallies every weekend, the fundamentalist message slowly started sinking into their hearts and minds, presumably without any conscious effort on their part. This was a great success for the movement. In this regard, Billy Graham observes: “We used every modern means to catch the attention of the unconverted — and then we punched them right between the eyes with the gospel”.¹²³

This enthusiastic and emotional display of patriotism by the fundamentalists overwhelmed the nation, and the national media which in the past had treated the movement as a periphery was suddenly full of praise for them. The press praised the movement lavishly with headlines and full coverage of their stories. In February 1946, *Time* magazine’s story on the YFC was gilded with President Truman’s comment, “This is what I hoped would happen in America”.¹²⁴

The fundamentalists finally had managed to warm up the national media which had cooled towards them since the 1920s. With experience, the rallies were becoming more effective and popular as by 1947 they “were attracting perhaps a million young people each week”.¹²⁵ These millions of young, energetic and dynamic people were devoted to noble moral ideals, and were ready to be tapped for political causes. The rallies had also played a pivotal role “... in eradicating any feelings of cultural inferiority they may have harbored”¹²⁶ vis-à-vis mainstream America.

By the late 1940s, the Democrats were reaching 20 years of uninterrupted control of the White House, the longest in U.S.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*



history thus far.¹²⁷ During this period, there were occasions when things had not gone right, either at home or abroad, and the liberalism of the Democrats or their accommodative policy towards communism was blamed. Billy Graham knew that the post-war, post-depression nation needed assurance and hope so: “his bold and confident assertion that a virile, athletic, victorious, freedom-creating Christ was the answer held enormous appeal. After WW II communism, led by the Soviet Union, had emerged as a major challenge to the U.S. which championed capitalism and democracy. By 1947, warnings against communism began to be a regular feature of Graham’s preaching. As he noted the rapid spread of the atheistic ideology, he announced that ‘unless the Christian religion rescues these nations from the clutches of the unbelieving, America will stand alone and isolated in the world’ ”.¹²⁸ When in 1949 the Soviet Union had tested the atomic bomb, Billy Graham, speaking to a large audience in Los Angeles, declared that the line had been drawn between the Christian West and the communist world. He announced: “Western culture and its fruits had its foundation in the Bible, the Word of God, and in the revivals of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries. Communism, on the other hand, has decided against God, against Christ, against the Bible, and against all religion. Communism is not only an economic

127 The great depression started during the presidency of Herbert Hoover (1928–1932), a Republican. Hoover’s failure to clean up the economy’s mess resulted in his defeat in the 1932 election at the hands of Franklin D. Roosevelt, a Democrat. In his first term as president (1932–1936), Roosevelt implemented his economic policy package known as the ‘New Deal’. The success of the New Deal enabled the Democrats to keep uninterrupted control of the White House for a record 20 years (1932–1952) by winning successive presidential elections. It was only in 1952 that the Republican Eisenhower was able to wrest the White House from the Democrats.

128 William Martin, 29.



interpretation of life — communism is a religion that is inspired, directed, and motivated by the Devil himself who has declared war against Almighty God”. The fire of that war, he told his stunned listeners, would fall directly upon them, because communists were “more rampant in Los Angeles than any other city in America.... In this moment I can see the judgment hand of God over Los Angeles. I can see judgment about to fall”. The only reason America escaped the ravages of and destruction of World War II, he declared, was because “God’s people prayed, and its only hope now lay in repentance and revival”.¹²⁹

This was the turning point in Graham’s career and also for the entire fundamentalist movement. This speech was as much a declaration of war against communism as it was against the American government which had been in the hands of the Democrats since 1932, and had followed an approach of accommodation with communism around the world. The media, the big newspapers and magazines mostly controlled by the rich and powerful, who saw communism as a threat to their own wealth and power, jumped on the Billy Graham bandwagon. He was the instant headline maker in the country; that is how he came to the attention of the entire nation. It was interesting how the fundamentalists in one stroke had achieved the moral high ground of being champions of both America and Christianity, and also of capitalism. The evangelical strategy of making Christian fundamentalism synonymous with patriotism was finally working.

With this new limelight fixed on him, Billy Graham conducted a very effective five-week program consisting of prayer services and lectures in Washington, D.C. in 1952. This program was called the ‘Washington Crusade’. In this

129 *Ibid.*, 29



crusade: “He preached to a packed armory in virtually every service, and a climactic rally on the steps of the Capitol¹³⁰ that, despite rain, drew a crowd estimated at forty thousand”.¹³¹

When Graham first proposed the idea of praying at the steps of the Capitol, he was told it was impossible. After all, there was a clear separation of Church and State in the U.S. constitution. Graham was aiming at breaking this wall of separation step by step. As a first step, he succeeded in getting Congress to approve an act granting him permission to hold “the first-ever formal religious service on the Capitol steps”.¹³² This approval was a clear sign that the prestige, popularity and emerging power of the fundamentalist movement had succeeded in making a strategic dent in the wall of separation.

The growing influence of Graham’s efforts to narrow the separation of the Church and State was obvious from the fact that nearly one third of all senators and one-fourth of the House members requested special seats during his services at the Capitol. It was in these services that he developed close friendships with Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon, who later became Presidents. With such powerful people behind him, he easily obtained the permission to hold prayer sessions at the Pentagon as well. This growing support of politicians was either due to his religiosity or because they felt that it would be prudent for their political career to identify with him.

The U.S. presidential elections were due in 1952; and in 1951 Graham thundered on the basis of the strength of the fundamentalist voters. He said: “The Christian people of America will not sit idly by during the 1952 presidential

130 The U.S. Capitol building in Washington, D.C. It is the seat of both the Houses of the U.S. Congress (i.e. the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate).

131 William Martin, 30–31.

132 *Ibid.*, 30–31



campaign. [They] are going to vote as a bloc for the man with the strongest moral and spiritual platform, regardless of his views on other matters. I believe we can hold the balance of power". This bloc, he suggested, would put forth a coordinated effort in which church members would follow "the instructions of their religious leaders".¹³³

In the 1952 presidential election, the Republican Party had offered its ticket to Dwight Eisenhower but he was reluctant.¹³⁴ Through correspondence and meetings Graham very strongly persuaded Eisenhower to accept this offer and enter the campaign.¹³⁵ Graham succeeded in persuading Eisenhower, and the rest is history. It was during the Eisenhower administration that in 1954 the words "Under God" were added to the pledge of allegiance to the flag of the United States.¹³⁶ However, it must be acknowledged that

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹³⁴ During World War II, Eisenhower became the Supreme Commander of the Allied forces in Europe and directed the crucial invasions of Sicily, Italy, Normandy and Germany. Due to his accomplishments, he was highly respected in the United States and was popularly called 'Ike'. He had never expressed any political ambitions or interests. See: *Funk & Wagnall's New Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Eisenhower, Dwight David". Alan Brinkley writes: "Dwight D. Eisenhower was the least experienced politician to serve in the White House in the twentieth century. He was also among the most popular and politically successful presidents of the postwar era". See: Alan Brinkley, *The Unfinished Nation*, 904.

¹³⁵ William Martin, 32.

¹³⁶ Prior to the amendment the pledge's wording was as follows:

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands : one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

After the amendment in 1954 the pledge now reads :

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands: one nation under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for all."

For details see: *Funk & Wagnall's New Encyclopedia* s.v. "Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States.



Eisenhower had a much broader understanding of faith and religion in the context of American society and government as he declared, “Our government makes no sense unless it is founded in a deeply felt religious faith - and I don’t care what it is.”¹³⁷

Thus by the end of the first half of the 20th century, Billy Graham and his allies had restored the image of the fundamentalists; the barrier of the unsympathetic social system had been overcome; the national media was full of praise for them and ready to grace them with frequent headlines and prime time coverage; politicians were seeking their blessings; and the corridors of power were not only open for them, but they were now being invited into those corridors to bless the wielders of power.

137 Diana L. Eck, *A New Religious America: How a “Christian Country” has become the World’s Most Religiously Diverse Nation*, Paperback edition (Harper San Francisco, 2002), 61.



Chapter 4

The Intellectual Challenge and Response

When in the late 19th and early 20th centuries the fundamentalists tried to assert their religious positions, they were seriously challenged by modern scientific and liberal thought. Being a democratic society, this challenge resulted in an open debate in America. In this debate the rigidity of the fundamentalist arguments grounded in biblical truth could not hold the ground and the fundamentalists were forced to retreat. In their attempt to regroup and regain lost ground they were fully conscious of the need to develop intellectual strength and superiority. To achieve this goal their preachers and leaders adopted a multi-pronged approach which had the following distinguishing features:

I. Conscious cultivation of a culture of reading at the grassroots level, and encouragement of writing:

The fundamentalist leaders wrote constantly and published books and articles. The preachers themselves read widely and discussed books in their sermons, and encouraged their followers to read. In addition, fundamentalist magazines, newspapers and pamphlets proliferated in their communities throughout the country. “One result of this is that today, books sold by and to evangelical Christians regularly outsell



those that appear in the *New York Times* best-seller lists”.¹³⁸

II. Establishment of Strong Seminaries and Biblical Institutions:¹³⁹

The fundamentalists took the cause of knowledge to heart and started emphasizing high quality education at all levels. As a result, fundamentalist Bible colleges and institutes combining religious and modern education sprang up throughout the United States. Special attention was paid to seminaries and Bible Institutes. By 1930, the Moody Bible Institute had trained nearly 70,000 students to serve as ministers, church musicians, educational directors, Sunday-school teachers and missionaries. The Institute also operated a strong press, sponsored conferences and ran a Christian programming radio station. The Bible Institute of Los Angeles (BIOLA) and the Fuller Theological Seminary also enjoyed great repute. Among the latest to be added to the list is the Liberty University founded by Jerry Falwell in 1971 in his hometown of Lynchburg, Virginia. The University’s motto reads: “*Challenge Your Mind...Build Your Faith*”.¹⁴⁰

III. Assault on Liberalism by portraying Secular Humanism as a Religion:

The fundamentalists had lost to the modernists at the beginning of the 20th century on intellectual grounds. Their

138 *Ibid.*, 18. A youth fiction series entitled *Left Behind* had sold more than 50 million copies since 1995. The series is authored by Jerry B. Jenkins and Tim LaHaye. See: Robert Booth Fowler, et al., *Religion and Politics in America: Faith, Culture and Strategic Choices* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2004), 161. Tim LaHaye is a fundamentalist Prophecy scholar, minister and educator. By the late 1990s his 40 non-fiction works had sold more than 11 million copies. The same is true of several other fundamentalist works.

139 *Ibid.*, 17–18.

140 <http://www.liberty.edu>. Here the italics are ours for emphasis.

main problem was that they challenged modern science on the basis of biblical facts as the ultimate truth. In the second half of the 20th century, they changed their strategy and instead argued that the liberal ideologues actually believed in secular humanism as a religion.¹⁴¹ This meant that the

141 The Western philosophical tradition starts with ancient Greece. In the early period the Greeks had followed mythical thinking, but by the fifth century BC they had gradually moved towards the use of reason in the understanding and explanation of the physical world. The Greek exposure to the achievements of the Egyptian and Mesopotamian civilizations in mathematics and science played an important role in enabling the Greeks to make the breakthrough from mythological systems of belief to the construction of a system based on reason. The first Greek school of thought that used reason focused on the rational inquiry of nature (i.e. external physical world) came to be known as the Cosmologists. Later, the Greek thinkers shifted their focus from the external world to the study of human beings and society. They came to be known as the Sophists. The Western humanist tradition has its roots in the Sophist tradition. However, the march of reason in Western civilization came to a halt when in the fourth century CE. Saint Augustine (CE 354–430), the bishop of Hippo (North Africa), rejected the Classical humanist position of the primacy of reason. He argued that reason alone could not give wisdom to man to solve his problems. To him it was God's will in the form of Christian revelation that was the ultimate guidance of man. This view opened and widened the gulf between Christianity and classical humanism. The wide acceptance of the Augustinian interpretation and its popularity led Europe to the medieval period (5th-15th centuries). The medieval period is also known as the 'Dark Ages'. The dark ages, which lasted for almost a thousand years, came to an end mainly because of the renaissance movement which was rooted in humanism (i.e. the belief that man, by use of reason, could achieve excellence and perfection). The revival of humanism also sparked the Reformation in the 16th century which forever split the Western Christians into Catholics and Protestants. The sustained performance of the Renaissance led to the birth of modernity. Through the transformation of the Renaissance into modernity, man gained a new understanding of himself. Now man was to control his own destiny by use of reason, and destiny was no more controlled by God.



liberal worldview and paradigm were actually drawn from the philosophical foundations of secular humanism. This implied that secular humanism played the same role in liberal thought as religion. This attack on liberalism inspired titles for publications like *The Christian Beacon; Essentialist; Crusader's Champion; King's Business; Conflict; Defender; and Dynamite*.¹⁴²

The main architect of this intellectual position was Francis Schaeffer.¹⁴³ He authored nearly thirty books in his lifetime, the most influential among them being *A Christian*

= This understanding generated the present day notion of the dignity of man, and liberalism started challenging orthodox positions. This was a new sort of humanism – labeled by Francis Schaeffer as ‘secular humanism’. It should be remembered that secular humanism advocates freedom of the individual. See: Perry et al., *Western Civilization: Ideas, Politics and Society*, 7th ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), 75–79, 192–194, 308–321, 324–346. A brief definition of humanism as stated by the *Oxford English Reference Dictionary* is as follows: “an outlook or system of thought attaching prime importance to human rather than divine or supernatural matters. The term humanism does not refer to a unified theory. Historically, it was first applied to studies promoting human culture, and especially to the cultural movement of the Renaissance, which turned away from medieval scholasticism (with its theological bias) to value the human achievement of ancient Greece and Rome. In philosophy, the term has encompassed systems of thought stressing rational enquiry and human experience over abstract theorizing or orthodox religion. More broadly, humanist beliefs stress the potential value and goodness of human beings, emphasize common human needs, and seek solely rational ways of solving human problems”. Judy Pearsall and Bill Trumble, eds., *Oxford English Reference Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 689. See also: Paul Edwards, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. & The Free Press, 1967), 6, s.v. “Humanism”.

¹⁴² William Martin, 18.

¹⁴³ Walter H. Capps, *The New Religious Right: Piety, Patriotism and Politics* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1990), 58–88.

Manifesto,¹⁴⁴ which was written to serve the evangelical Christian community as the *Communist Manifesto* had served the Communist movement. Francis Schaeffer intended his *Christian Manifesto* to offer a new and compelling restatement of the major tenets of the Christian faith — phrased in twentieth century terms and highlighted according to his perception of contemporary needs — as well as providing a challenging call to radical Christian discipleship.¹⁴⁵

Schaeffer's primary goal was to establish the intellectual superiority of the Christian fundamentalist thought over modern liberal thought. He worked for this goal all his life and in this regard had a two-pronged strategy. First, he saw himself as an intellectual-ideologue for the Christian fundamentalists. Second, he was an activist for the cause of spreading education and consciousness among his people. In his mission to educate Christian fundamentalists he encouraged his people to establish Christian communities for the study of the Bible and reflect on issues of concern. For them he published study guides, produced educational films and TV series. As a result, Community Bible Study (CBS) became commonplace throughout the country.

As an ideologue, Schaeffer gave the fundamentalist position a contemporary global context by attacking secular humanism as the religion of the liberal. He popularized the idea of secular humanism as a destructive, anti-Christian religion in his books, speeches and through his activism.¹⁴⁶

144 Francis A. Schaeffer, *A Christian Manifesto* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1981), ii, lists *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), *Humanist Manifesto I* (1933), and *Humanist Manifesto II* (1973), to illustrate the intellectual environment that is being addressed. This reference is given as a footnote in Walter H. Capps, *The New Religious Right*, 226.

145 *Ibid.*, 59.

146 William Martin, 196. See also: Walter H. Capps, *The New Religious Right*, 58–87.



He knew that beneath secular humanism was the Western civilization's intellectual and cultural heritage of the Greco-Roman period to the present. He believed that contemporary Western liberal thought is the culmination of this cumulative heritage. Hence an assault on liberalism would not be effective unless it were clearly established what went wrong in the intellectual and cultural history of Western civilization, starting with the Greeks up to the present. He established this argument in his book; *How Should We then Live? The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture*. His goal was "... to measure all other prevailing attitudes against the absolute truth of Christian faith. Consequently, his approach to Greco-Roman philosophy is to contrast its 'weaknesses' against the 'strengths' of Christianity".¹⁴⁷ Schaeffer was followed by others such as Hal Lindsey, Timothy LaHaye, Onalee McGraw, etc. who have articulated the fundamentalist positions on various issues.

IV. The Power Base of Christian Fundamentalism:

At this point the question naturally arises: What is the power base of American Christian fundamentalism?

The term power base includes: (1) the philosophy or set of beliefs. (2) the kind of people who adhere to it.

The power base of American fundamentalism is a group of Protestants called 'evangelicals'. Evangelicalism is a phenomenon unique to Protestantism. However, it may be noted that:

- i) All evangelicals are Protestants, but not every Protestant is an evangelical.
- ii) An evangelical can belong to any Protestant

147 *Ibid.*, 64–65. For a detailed discussion on Schaeffer, see: *ibid.*, 58–88.



denomination or mainline church.

iii) In its broad sense, evangelicalism calls for a simple conceptual unity. According to Marsden, Protestants belonging to any denomination will be evangelical if they emphasize the following doctrines:¹⁴⁸

(a) “The Reformation doctrine of the final authority of the Scripture”.

(b) “The real, historical character of God’s saving work recorded in the Scripture”.

(c) “Eternal salvation only through personal trust in Christ”.

(d) “The importance of evangelicalism and missions”, and

(e) “The importance of ‘self’ through a spiritually transformed life (i.e. conversion or ‘having been born again’)”.

Experts warn that it will be misleading to speak of evangelicalism as one uniform phenomenon in its entirety by taking one prominent aspect of evangelicalism and generalizing it for all evangelicals. Timothy L. Smith, a well recognized authority on evangelicalism, prefers to treat it as more of a mosaic, thus recognizing diversity within unity.¹⁴⁹

The evangelicals take the importance of ‘self’ as emphasized in Protestantism to an extreme and the ‘self’ is given a new meaning in terms of the doctrine of a spiritually transformed life. “With few exceptions religious

148 George Marsden, “The Evangelical Denomination” in *Piety and Politics*, 59. For a detailed discussion see: *ibid.*, 55–68.

149 *Ibid.*, 57.



conservatives believe in conversion, the act of faith and forgiveness through which sinners are brought from sin into a state of everlasting salvation. And with few exceptions, they have experienced conversion themselves, having been born again in dramatic, life changing moments of transformation. Thus conversion (the experience of being born again) lies at the core of their character. It is this experience which transforms their character and personalities and changes their lives. Moreover, it serves as a starting point for constructing a sense not only of autonomy and identity, but also of social order and practical purpose.”¹⁵⁰ It is in this sense that Robert Zwier views the activism of the Christian Right as “born again politics”.¹⁵¹

The phenomenon of conversion, generally known as being ‘born again’, is at the core of evangelicalism. Describing this concept in simple terms, William Martin says, “...to those who use it, the term “born again” refers to the point in their lives at which they began seriously to consider themselves Christians”.¹⁵² Besides being a spiritual phenomenon, this experience has a number of implications for the individual, such as: (i) the individual gains the control of the ‘self’ as compared to the earlier life of wandering without a sense of direction; (ii) he has a sense of belonging to others who have also gone through the experience of being born again. This sense of belonging is a transdenominational phenomenon. Hence all evangelicals feel like one community irrespective of the churches or the denominations they belong to; (iii) the feeling of a strong urge to convert the others (where ‘others’ include not only Christians but non-Christians as

150 Michael Lienesch, *Redeeming America: Piety and Politics in the New Christian Right* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 23.

151 Quoted in *ibid.*, 23.

152 William Martin, 150.



well). Thus evangelicalism inspires a very strong missionary spirit among the fundamentalists and is a powerful source of transdenominational unity among them.

In the presidential campaign of 1976 the Democratic candidate Jimmy Carter declared that he was a born again Christian. This declaration started the first major public discussion of being ‘born again’. Most people did not know much about this phenomenon at that time, and hence there was general curiosity about it. In a nationally televised crusade service in May 1976, Billy Graham explained the biblical origin of the phrase. That explanation is quoted by William Martin as follows: “In the third chapter of the Gospel according to John, Jesus informs Nicodemus, an inquirer who has heard him speak and wants to learn more, that ‘except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God’. To Nicodemus’s understandably puzzled response — ‘How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb and be born?’ — Jesus answered, ‘Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of flesh is flesh. That which is born of spirit is spirit, Marvel not that I say unto you, ‘ye must be born again’.”¹⁵³

The understanding of sin, and then being saved through being born again, is an experience common to all evangelicals, and it contributes very strongly in shaping their views on the society and their surroundings. “For the fundamentalist Falwell, sin is original and inherited, passed down from Adam at the beginning of the world”.¹⁵⁴ Falwell tells of his own grandfather who was a “self-avowed atheist” and

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 149–150.

¹⁵⁴ Michael Lienesch, *Redeeming America*, 25.



hated preachers and refused to go to church. Jerry Falwell's father, Carey Falwell, had killed his own brother in a family argument, and never recovered from his guilt. The suffering from this guilt made him alcoholic. Falwell feels that he inherited his father's sins. "He thinks of his own life as a continuing struggle with the devil".¹⁵⁵

It is this consciousness of sin whether in one's own self, or in society, that brings all the 'born agains' together and gives them a common natural bond to unite as a community to lead the fight against sin in society and around the world. However, as individuals the evangelicals were scattered and had no formal organizational structure.

155 *Ibid.*, 26.



Chapter 5

Networking with God, Caesar and the Faithful

The American Evangelicals are “... one fourth of the total population of the United States and about two-fifths of all Protestants”.¹⁵⁶ They do not have a formally structured nationally and/or globally centralized hierarchical organization (unlike The Roman Catholic Church). They have a host of umbrella organizations that network with evangelical churches spread across the United States, and even around the world. Some of these umbrella organizations are: the American Council of Christian Churches (ACCC: established, 1941), the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE: established, 1942), the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC: established, 1945), etc.¹⁵⁷ They cut across different denominations and churches including the independent churches. Their organizational structure has evolved over the years and George Marsden, a professor of American Church history at Duke University’s Divinity School, describes it as follows:

“The structure is somewhat like that of the feudal system of the Middle Ages. It is made up of superficially friendly, somewhat competitive empires built up by Evangelical

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 72.

¹⁵⁷ William Martin, 22–23.



leaders competing for the same audience, but all professing allegiances to the same king. So we find empires surrounding the charismatic American televangelists like: Billy Graham, Jerry Falwell, Oral Roberts, Pat Robertson, Jim Bakker, Jimmy Swaggart, and other television ministers.”¹⁵⁸

These televangelists are credited with the revival of the American fundamentalist movement in the second half of the 20th century. However, what makes them unique is that despite belonging to different denominations, they are all under the umbrella of the Electronic Church. The extent of the Electronic Church can be appreciated from the fact that at the end of the decade of the 1970s “... the network of television preachers that consisted of some 1,300 radio and television stations, claimed audiences of up to 130 million, and boasted profits at anywhere from \$500 million to billions”.¹⁵⁹

The televangelists, despite having millions of evangelical followers, never used them in politics in the 1950s and 1960s, because the televangelists believed in political non-involvement. In 1965, Falwell said: “We pay our taxes, cast our votes as a responsibility of citizenship, obey the laws of the land, and other things demanded of us, we are cognizant that our only purpose on the earth is to know Christ and to make him known”.¹⁶⁰ However, by the end of the 1970s, their mood had changed and they had abandoned their earlier stance of political non-involvement. Instead, they began eagerly gate-crashing the American political arena. “Even

158 George Marsden, “The Evangelical Denomination,” in *Piety and Politics*, 65.

159 Michael Lienesch, *Redeeming America*, 1–2. Lienesch quotes it from: “The Christianity Today Gallup Poll: An Overview,” in *Christianity Today*, December 21, 1979, 12–19.

160 James Reichley, “The Evangelical and Fundamentalist Revolt”, 75–76.

more striking was the appearance of large numbers of Bible-carrying political activists, who beginning in early 1980 were seen in ever-increasing numbers at party caucuses, campaign rallies, and party conventions. Television evangelist Marion Pat Robertson announced, ‘We have enough voters to run the country’, and many apparently believed him. On election eve in 1980, pollster Louis Harris concluded that the followers of the television preachers had given Ronald Reagan his victory margin, and they had also contributed to the defeat of a long list of liberal candidates”.¹⁶¹

I. The 1976 Presidential Election: The Evangelical Voters and a ‘Born Again’ Candidate:

The 1976 presidential election took place against the backdrop of the crises and scandals that had shaken the confidence of the American people in both their government and the Washington establishment. It started with the Watergate scandal. In the midst of Watergate investigations, Vice-President Spiro Agnew resigned under bribery charges and allegations of financial malpractice. Gerald Ford took Agnew’s place. Then President Nixon was forced to resign due to the Watergate scandal and was replaced by Ford. Only a month after becoming president, Ford granted a full and complete pardon to Nixon. This quick pardon shocked the nation and raised questions about Ford’s own credibility.¹⁶²

In the 1976 presidential election, the incumbent Republican President Ford was challenged by Democratic candidate Jimmy Carter, a former governor of Georgia. The Carter campaign’s basic theme was anti-Washington. His slogan was that he was an outsider and he would clean up the Washington mess. Carter had also declared that he was

161 Michael Lienesch, *Redeeming America*, 1–2.

162 Alan Brinkley, *The Unfinished Nation*, 981–1001.



a born again Christian. Given the post-Watergate mood of the nation and Carter's proclamation that he was a 'born again Christian', Billy Graham understood the need of the moment and told his television audience that America was experiencing, "... a deeper national yearning, a turning toward spirituality, a yearning for morality. Americans want more than anything else in their president this year, the spiritual qualities".¹⁶³ For Falwell's evangelical audience, being 'born again' was the precondition to spirituality and Carter was a declared born again. So great was the enthusiasm for Carter among evangelicals that in a keynote address to fifteen thousand pastors and laypersons of the Southern Baptist Convention, the organization's popular future president, Bailey Smith, proclaimed that this country needs "a born-again man in the White House...and his initials are the same as our Lord's".¹⁶⁴ Carter also received a strong endorsement from Pat Robertson, the most popular TV preacher.¹⁶⁵

As evangelicals started taking an active interest in the presidential campaign, a Gallup poll reported that as many as fifty million Americans could be fairly categorized as evangelists, and *Newsweek* declared 1976 as "The Year of the Evangelical".¹⁶⁶ Throughout his campaign Carter was asked about his religion. His response always included three points to this question: first, his conversion; second, the importance of religious faith as a source of moral strength for a political leader; and third, his commitment to the separation of the Church and State.¹⁶⁷ Finally, in November, 1976 Carter won,

163 William Martin, 151.

164 Jimmy Carter and Jesus Christ both have the initials "J.C.". See: *ibid.*, 157.

165 A. James Reichley "The Evangelical and Fundamentalist Revolt", 78.

166 William Martin, 156.

167 A. James Reichley, "The Evangelical and Fundamentalist Revolt", 78.

defeating Ford by a margin of only two popular vote percentage points. In this election "...Carter outpolled Ford among white Baptists by 56 percent to 43 percent. Evangelicals gave him his margin of victory not only in the South (where he was also helped by regional pride), but also in such key northern states as Pennsylvania and Ohio with large rural populations that usually voted Republican. Because his national advantage in the popular vote was only two percent, Carter may fairly be said to have owed his election to the Evangelicals (though also, of course, to Blacks, Jews and other groups that favored him by wide margins)".¹⁶⁸ During his election campaign Carter had promised that, "...if he were elected, he would appoint qualified Evangelical Christians to positions in the federal government".¹⁶⁹ After winning, the Carter administration not only did not keep this promise, but did not even pursue priority evangelical agenda on issues like abortion, school prayer, etc. Instead, the Carter White House went in a totally opposite direction by supporting ERA¹⁷⁰ (Equal Rights Amendment) federal funding support for abortions, rights of homosexuals, etc. Although the Carter administration's policies were a

168 *Ibid.*, 78.

169 *Ibid.*, 79.

170 Under the U.S. constitution the women did not have the right to vote. Towards the end of the 19th century the women launched the movement for their political rights. This movement is known as 'Suffrage' (right to vote) movement. Finally they succeeded in winning the right to vote in 1920 with the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. This amendment guaranteed political rights to women. However, some feminist leaders felt that it was not enough and that women needed another constitutional amendment, "... that would provide clear, legal protection for their rights and would prohibit all discrimination on the basis of sex". See: Alan Brinkley, *The Unfinished Nation*, 638–640. Due to the increasing pressure of women's groups, in 1972 the U.S. Congress approved the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the constitution. In order to become law it was required to be passed by 38 states out of a total of 50 in the union, with a two thirds majority



letdown for the Evangelicals, at the same time they found the 1976 election a very enriching experience as it assured them that if they worked in an organized way they had all the necessary power to influence the election outcomes on their terms and in their favor.

II. The Marriage of Economic and Christian

Fundamentalisms:

A 'Born Again' Republican Party:

The Republican leadership had traditionally advocated conservatism in the areas of domestic economic policy and foreign policy. In the 1970s, the party had suffered two major setbacks. The first was the Watergate scandal and the second was President Ford's full and complete pardon of President Nixon. This had angered the voters and they lost confidence in the Washington establishment. That is why Carter, as an outsider, ran on an anti-Washington establishment platform and Ford, the incumbent, ended up losing to him in 1976. As the 1980 presidential election approached, a new thinking was emerging in the party. The Republican political strategists were looking for issues on the right that the party could champion and rally the support of the majority to win the White House in 1980.

On June 6, 1978 Californian voters approved proposition 13, which mainly aimed at a reduction in property taxes that were becoming unbearable for many working people in the

= of votes in each state. By 1973 thirty states had voted in favor of it. But then the opposition of the Christian Right, led by its female advocate Phyllis Schlafly slowed down the momentum of ERA. Five states, Nebraska, Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana and South Dakota reversed their endorsement. In the end the ERA failed to win the support of 38 states. See: Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God: Fundamentalism in Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 2001), 312–314.

state.¹⁷¹ The passing of proposition 13 in California had its impact on national politics as well. In the 1978 Congressional elections voters expressed a new mood of rising economic conservatism. Many outstanding liberal members of the House and Senate were defeated in their bid for reelection and were replaced by very conservative Republicans. The two leading liberal states, California and Massachusetts, had elected governors committed to economic conservatism. This wave of conservatism was evident in social areas also as indicated by greater support for school prayer and a pro-life stand. This new tide of conservatism also forced Carter to move to the right in the remaining two years of his term, as opposed to his first two years. In 1979, Britain followed the trend by electing Margaret Thatcher, a conservative, as Prime Minister.¹⁷²

As the 1980 presidential election approached there was a serious power struggle within the Republican Party. This struggle had started mainly with Republican presidential nominee Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater's presidential campaign in 1964. Goldwater was the hero of both economic conservatives and religious fundamentalists due to his lifetime stand on and contribution to a number of right wing causes.¹⁷³ Consider these examples: (i) He agreed with Senator McCarthy's anti-communist stand and delivered a speech in favor of McCarthyism.¹⁷⁴ (ii) He proposed a U.S.

171 William C. Berman, *America's Right Turn: From Nixon to Clinton* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 36–60, especially 49–50.

172 *Ibid.*, 53.

173 William Martin, 80.

174 Joseph McCarthy, a Republican Senator from Wisconsin, was in the forefront of the movement alleging that the Democratic administration of Truman was tolerant of domestic communists in the U.S. In 1950 he alleged that he had a list of 205 known communists currently working in the U.S. State Department. He generated anti-communist fervor in the country which has come to be known as McCarthyism in American history. For details see: Alan Brinkley, *The Unfinished Nation*, 870–871 and 905–906.



withdrawal from the UN if Communist China was allowed its membership. (iii) He threatened to destroy China in a nuclear war if China ever used nuclear weapons, because there were rumors then that China was developing a nuclear bomb. (iv) He considered integrated schools but regarded mandated desegregation as against the sovereignty of states. (v) He voted against the Civil Rights Act. (vi) He was a strong supporter of free trade and market capitalism, and to the delight of fundamentalists, supported prayer and Bible reading in schools. Goldwater's views were radical, and consequently he suffered a crushing defeat. There was strong opposition to these views within the party establishment which was liberal on many of these issues. New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller had blasted these tendencies as "radical right" and feared that the Republican Party was "in real danger of subversion by a radical, well financed, and highly disciplined minority".¹⁷⁵

During the Goldwater campaign, Richard Viguerie, an activist from the Radical Right, emerged as a remarkable organizer and effective fund raiser. After Goldwater's defeat, he used a list of 12,000 contributors to the Goldwater campaign and created a vast network of conservatives and radicals consisting of 4 million contributors and 15 million supporters.¹⁷⁶ After Goldwater's 1964 defeat, the struggle between the liberal and radical wings of the Republican Party picked up pace. Prominent among the radical wing leaders was Ronald Reagan, a Hollywood actor who had been a Democrat.¹⁷⁷ He caught the attention of the Republican leadership due to his highly impressive televised fund raising speech for the Goldwater Campaign. His ideas on "big government, the right to bear arms, lower taxes, and welfare reform"¹⁷⁸ won him

¹⁷⁵ William Martin, 80–81.

¹⁷⁶ Alan Brinkley, *The Unfinished Nation*, 991–992.

¹⁷⁷ William Martin, 89.



the backing of California's influential Republican leadership. With their backing he got the Republican nomination as the candidate for California's governorship and won the office in 1966. This allowed him national limelight. Reagan summarized his philosophy as follows: "if we ordinary citizens don't run government, government is going to run us."¹⁷⁹ The liberal wing of the Republican Party was backing the governor of New York, Nelson Rockefeller.

In 1968, Nixon was elected president. He was from the liberal wing of the party and the radicals were not happy with him. Richard Viguerie, Howard Phillips and Paul Weyrich, the radical Republican activists, were unhappy with the party's liberal establishment. They desired to build a new Republican Party whose majority members would be advocates of a radical right wing free market agenda and hence a new party leadership that would pursue this agenda. The Watergate scandal gave them this opportunity. Exploiting the general angry mood of the nation, in "... 1974 Viguerie and Phillips formed the Campaign for the Removal of the President, motivated by dislike, not for Nixon's Watergate evasions, but for his liberalism. They were even less happy with Gerald Ford, especially when he appointed Nelson Rockefeller as his vice-president".¹⁸⁰ Ford's decision to pick Nelson Rockefeller turned out to be the last straw on the GOP elephant's back, as later "...Viguerie attributed the birth of the new right to this event alone".¹⁸¹

178 *Ibid.*, 90.

179 *Ibid.*, 91.

180 Steve Bruce, *The Rise and Fall of the New Christian Right: Conservative Protestant Politics in America 1978–1988* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 58; for a detailed discussion on this issue see: *ibid.*, 56–59.

181 Alan Brinkley and Ellen Fitzpatrick, *America in the Modern Times*, 562–563. The Republican Party is also referred to as the GOP (i.e. the Grand Old Party) and its symbol is the elephant, while the donkey is the symbol of the Democratic Party.



Barry Goldwater was the hero of the right wing radicals as he championed their agenda. On the other hand a number of major policy decisions by President Ford were quite contrary to the radicals' agenda. For example, the amnesty program for Vietnam draft resisters, the continuation of the Nixon-Kissinger policy of détente with the USSR and the signing of SALT II, the return of the Panama Canal to Panama, and the acceptance of the reality of the fall of Vietnam.¹⁸² All these annoyed the Republican radicals, and strengthened their resolve to launch a movement to challenge and change the leadership of the party. The radicals in the Republican Party during the 1960s and early 1970s were mainly those elements who favored lower taxes, deregulation, free market, etc. Many of them came from the upper class rich and the business community, who were committed to pro-market economic conservatism, and wanted a shift to more pure capitalism in opposition to the strong leaning towards the 'welfare state' and social justice which made them pay high taxes to help the poor. The commitment to social justice was further boosted by President Johnson's 'Great Society' project.¹⁸³

182 Alan Brinkley, *The Unfinished Nation*, 990–992.

183 Lyndon B. Johnson was elected vice-president with John F. Kennedy in 1960. After Kennedy's assassination on November 22, 1963, Johnson assumed office as the thirty-sixth president of the United States. Kennedy had realized that despite general affluence, poverty was still a serious problem for many in America. He had initiated some policies in this regard but his untimely death did not allow him to continue the mission. Johnson not only took up the mission but widened its scope and gave the vision of a 'Great Society'. Under this vision welfare programs were extended beyond the scale and scope of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal with the sole aim of helping the poor and the disadvantaged and creating equal opportunity for all. Being a former school teacher himself, Johnson made it a top priority of his agenda to provide high quality education to the poor with federal funds for their long term self-sustained upliftment. His Medicare Act provided health

As these pro-market radicals were a minority in the Republican Party they did not have much influence on party affairs. Their main focus was to bring about more laissez-faire oriented economic reforms and they did not have any serious religious Christian agenda as such. These economic radicals were only a small group without much influence, as the party was dominated by liberals. However, the mission of this pro-capitalist group received great support from the huge influx of evangelicals in the second half of the 1970s. The evangelicals were social radicals and they had raided the Republican Party in large numbers with a plan to ride on it to the White House and the Capitol to ensure that their religious agenda was implemented by the government. The economic radicals wanted the economy to take a right turn to be pro-market while the evangelicals, being social radicals, were pushing for another societal right turn to make the country 'righteous'. Given this convergence of interests, the pro-

= insurance to cover hospital costs for the elderly, and Medicaid provided assistance to the poor who were not elderly. The poor families which could not find adequate public housing were given rent subsidy. A new Cabinet level Department for Housing and Urban Development (HUD) was established. It was headed by Robert Weaver, the first African American ever to be appointed as a Cabinet member in the history of the United States. Johnson also launched the Model Cities program. Under this program cities were offered subsidies for urban redevelopment pilot programs. In the 1920s, the U.S. had introduced an immigration policy which gave preference to the people of Northern European origin. The Johnson administration opened it to all parts of Europe, Asia and Africa. This all-out assault on poverty delivered the goods. As mentioned by Alan Brinkley, 21% of the American population lived below the officially established poverty line in 1959, but by 1969 this figure had fallen to 12%. The improvement had benefited the poor in the African American and white communities. See: Alan Brinkley, *The Unfinished Nation*, 917–921; James W. Davidson, *Nation of Nations*, 1078–1083; and *Funk & Wagnall's New Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Johnson, Lyndon Baines".



capitalism minority, realizing the power of the evangelical vote bank in the party, entered into a holy alliance with them.¹⁸⁴ This alliance is now known as the New Right. It consists of the pro-market economic radicals and the Christian radicals. This alliance soon flexed its political muscle. In the 1976 presidential election, the incumbent President Ford was challenged by Ronald Reagan for the Republican Party ticket. Reagan, with the help of the holy alliance, put up a very strong fight, but Ford survived. However, Ford had seen the power of the holy alliance. So in the end he surrendered to them by dumping Nelson Rockefeller as his running mate and picking up the conservative Senator Robert Dole of Kansas instead, and also by agreeing to a platform written mainly by Reagan's allies, led by Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina.¹⁸⁵

The Republican Party's capture was a very strategic move by the radical elements. After having been disappointed by Carter and having taken control of the Republican Party, the radical strategists in the Republican Party sat down to develop a winning strategy. They realized that neither the pro-market radicals nor the evangelicals alone would be able to propel the Republican candidate into the White House. This was due to the fact that the evangelicals were only a subset of the Protestant population in the U.S.. Bruce presents a breakdown of the religious identity of the entire American population. According to him, "...In 1984, 57 percent were Protestant, 28 percent were Catholic, 2 percent were Jewish, and 13 percent were 'other' or 'none'" (Gallup, 1985). The breakdown of denominational preferences among Protestants suggested that between 15 and 20 percent belonged to a 'conservative' denomination in 1984. Thus even if all conservative Protestants

184 Martin Durham, *The Christian Right, the far right and the boundaries of American Conservatism*, (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), 105–125.

185 Alan Brinkley, *The Unfinished Nation*, 990–992.



shared the same political aspirations (which they did not), and acted as a block, they would still need the support of others outside that bloc to become a majority of anything.¹⁸⁶

As the 1980 election approached, the Republican strategists sat down to work on the broadest possible conservative agenda that would have appeal to a wide range of right wing groups. They realized that in order to unite right wingers of all shades and colors, this agenda would have to encompass economics, morality and pro-family issues as well as being anti-homosexual and anti-abortion. The party strategists knew that they already had the expertise, manpower and networks to promote the pro-market economic agenda but they were also aware that they had neither the expertise, the organization, the networks, nor the volunteers to articulate and sell effectively the pro-family evangelical agenda among the voters. They realized that the pro-family platform was ideal to guarantee success in the 1980 presidential election but there was a dire need for an army of volunteers who could deliver the message door to door. The strategists, who themselves were from different denominations and faiths, knew very well that since evangelists were a fraction of the total Protestant population of the U.S., the only way they could succeed was to unite all the fundamentalists across all the religions and denominations.¹⁸⁷

186 Steve Bruce, 90.

187 These strategists themselves were from different denominations and faiths; e.g. Howard Phillips is Jewish, see: William Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America* (New York: Broadway Books, 1997), 199, Weyrich is Jewish, while Viguerie, Phillips and Phyllis Schlafly are conservative Catholics; and Falwell, Robert Billings and Tim LaHaye are Fundamentalist Baptists, see: Steve Bruce, *Rise and Fall of the New Christian Right: Conservative Protestant Politics in America*, 86. McAteer is a Fundamentalist Baptist from the Bellevue Baptist-Church, Tennessee, see: "Chosen People: How Israel Became A Favorite Cause Of Christian Right," in *The Wall Street Journal*, May 23, 2002, A1 and A8.





Chapter 6

The Moral Majority in a Liberal Democracy: God's Army to Subjugate Caesar

The Republican strategists believed that within the family values kit, the abortion issue was the one that could unite fundamentalists across the denominational and faith lines; that is, the evangelicals, other fundamentalist Protestants, fundamentalist Jews and the Catholics. The Catholics, who had traditionally voted for the Democrats, could now especially be pulled into the Republican Party due to an aggressive anti-abortion platform. Thus in May 1979, the conservative strategists of the Republican Party met Jerry Falwell in his hometown of Lynchburg, Virginia to share the plan with him and ask him to motivate, organize and mobilize the evangelicals politically in support of the new radical agenda of the Republican Party. Falwell agreed, and in June 1979 he announced the establishment of a movement-cum-organization by the name of the Moral Majority (MM). He was to lead it. Falwell listed the goals of the Moral Majority as follows:¹⁸⁸ "...to exert a significant influence on the spiritual and moral direction of our nation by: (a) mobilizing the grassroots of moral Americans in one clear and effective voice; (b) informing the Moral Majority what is going on behind their backs in Washington and in state legislatures

¹⁸⁸ William Martin, 201.



across the country; (c) lobbying intensively in Congress to defeat left-wing, social-welfare bills that will further erode our precious freedom, (d) pushing for positive legislation such as that to establish a Family Protection Agency, which will ensure a strong enduring America; and (e) helping the Moral Majority in local communities to fight pornography, homosexuality; the advocacy of immorality in school text books and other issues facing each and everyone of us”.

The Moral Majority defined itself in the following words: “Moral Majority Inc. is made up of millions of Americans, including ministers, priests and rabbis, who are deeply concerned about the moral decline of our nation, and who are sick and tired of the way many amoral and secular humanists and other liberals are destroying the traditional family and moral values on which our nation was built”.¹⁸⁹ Falwell’s main goal was the political mobilization of the evangelicals through the Moral Majority platform, but he faced the problem of motivating them for political activism because, since their defeat in the Scopes trial, the evangelicals had withdrawn from socio-political activism and focused exclusively on piety and worship. When he announced the formation of the MM, he met with resistance to this decision from amongst his own followers. His response was that it was the deterioration of American culture which compelled him to do something. His position was: “...*If not me, then who? And if not now, when?*”¹⁹⁰ In this regard Falwell identified abortion, divorce and secular humanism as the main targets of the MM.

After the establishment of the MM, during the remaining period until the presidential election of 1980, Falwell was

189 Steve Bruce, 81. (Bruce quotes from a Moral Majority Brochure).

190 William Martin, 200. Here the italics are ours for emphasis.

constantly on the move and traveled more than 300,000 miles addressing rallies and mobilizing pastors to energize the congregations. He urged each community to establish local chapters of the MM and use their churches for voter registration. These local chapters were fed with information on abortion and other issues of concern to them. Falwell's policy was that since the MM was a political organization, and not a religious one, its doors were open to all; whether Jews, Roman Catholics, Protestants or Mormons, and even non-religious people who shared its views on family, society, and the country, for example anti-abortion, strong national defense and support for Israel. It caused quite a stir among the evangelicals as it was hard for them to conceive that now they had to work together with Jews and Roman Catholics.

In order to convince them to work with people of other denominations and faiths, fundamentalist Falwell used the concept of 'co-belligerency' developed by the leading fundamentalist ideologue of the 20th century, Francis Schaeffer. The concept of co-belligerency means a situation in which a group of people aligns itself "...with people who might differ with them theologically or on certain key issues, but who were willing to fight on the same side in pursuit of specific goals. To veteran politicians, this was an old idea; to fundamentalists accustomed to severing ties over the smallest of disagreements, it was revolutionary".¹⁹¹ Falwell's move into politics through the MM did not come in a vacuum. Around the same time other televangelists such as Charles Stanley, D. James Kennedy and others, were also taking aim at America's moral perils. "By spring of 1979, Stanley, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Atlanta, had already sent hundreds of thousands of viewers a videotape of his sermon,

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 197.



‘Stand Up, America’, in which he had urged Christians to become more active in politics”.¹⁹²

Many other evangelical pastors had also started including political content in their sermons. Realizing that in order to forge a solid unity of concepts and action among the fundamentalists from various denominations and faiths, another radical activist named Edward McAteer founded and headed the Religious Roundtable.¹⁹³ Not only were many organizations established to tap the energies of the dormant volcano of Christian fundamentalism; these organizations were also complementary to each other and were interlinked so as to create synergy in the activism of the fundamentalist movement. “Between the three of them, Viguerie, Weyrich and Phillips created a mass of organizations so interlocked that ‘any diagram...looks like an octopus shaking hands with itself’”.¹⁹⁴ There already existed an active Christian fundamentalist group on the West Coast which called itself the ‘Christian Voice’. This group claimed to work toward a ‘Christian Majority in a Christian Democracy’. From time to time this group issued ‘Biblical Scorecards’. This scorecard rated the legislators according to their position on a number of issues of concern to Christian conservatives and fundamentalists.¹⁹⁵ But by asking Falwell to establish a new organization and lead it, the conservative wing of the Republican Party had made a very calculated strategic move. The goal was to use the Moral Majority to wake up, shake up and ultimately line up the conservative and fundamentalist evangelicals in support of the Republican Party’s pro-

192 *Ibid.*, 198.

193 Steve Bruce, 59.

194 *Ibid.*, 57. Bruce quotes it from L.J. Davis, “Conservatism in America,” in *Harper’s*, Vol. 261 (1980), 21–26

195 William Martin, 199.



capitalist platform of a free market economy, deregulation, lower taxes and a pro-industrialist stance — all this was to happen while the fundamentalists were assembled as a vote bank to vote for their moral agenda.

Since religiously devoted fundamentalists were committed to their church, there was an urgent need to ensure the active involvement of their pastors in politics. Once the pastors were activated and got involved, then their church members would automatically follow. Thus Falwell's real mission was to mobilize the pastors. Falwell had a very good image nationwide. "Since the bicentennial year of 1976, Falwell had been holding 'love America' rallies on the steps of state capitols throughout the country".¹⁹⁶ These rallies, in which evangelical students performed religio-patriotic songs and music, were attended by city officials and usually by thousands of citizens. The climax of these rallies was always a religiously inspiring patriotic speech from Falwell, which invariably received enthusiastic front-page coverage in the local media.

Thus Falwell had already cultivated a sterling image of religious uprightness, and of being a true patriotic citizen. Now, as he visited churches throughout the country to motivate and mobilize pastors to actively participate in the 1980 presidential election, he was not seen as a politician trying to barter votes for his promises; rather, he presented himself to them as a 'window of opportunity'. What kind of opportunity was that? The opportunity was, the voters were told, that if they actively supported the Moral Majority's platform and

196 *Ibid.*, 203. The United States won its independence from Britain in 1776. In 1976, the U.S. celebrated two hundred years of independence. The United States has 50 states. Each has its own legislature. The building in which a state legislature holds its sessions is popularly called the *State Capitol*.



candidate they could put America back on track to its destiny as a great nation in the world that would be a model, not only of economic, scientific and technological advancements, but also of a morally healthy and religiously upright nation; ‘a shining city on the hill’. “Throughout the remainder of 1979 and 1980, and indeed for the next several years, Jerry Falwell spent most of his time on the road, traveling upwards of three hundred thousand miles per year, often speaking several times a day, at churches, public gatherings, luncheons, dinners and press conferences, and meeting privately with the network of people who were helping set up Moral Majority chapters throughout the country”.¹⁹⁷

America is a very large country, yet despite all this regular traveling, Falwell made sure that every Sunday he was back in Virginia at his Thomas Road Baptist Church to preach. In order to raise funds for the Moral Majority, Falwell used the 250,000 donor mailing list of his “Old Time Gospel Hour” TV Ministry. The projected expenses of the Moral Majority for the first year were \$3 million, and one third of this amount was raised in only the first month. After one year of its establishment, by the middle of 1980, the membership of the MM had reached 300,000 out of which 70,000 were ministers.¹⁹⁸ In the 1980 campaign, *Christian Voice*, mostly focused on the West and Southwest, raised about \$500,000 for conservative candidates.¹⁹⁹ The large-scale grass roots political activism generated by the Moral Majority did not go unnoticed by the national media. “The *New York Times* surmised that Falwell had ‘created something very similar to a political party’ ”.²⁰⁰ The spirit and the zeal with which MM

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 203.

¹⁹⁸ A. James Reichley, “The Evangelical and Fundamentalist Revolt,” in *Piety and Politics*, 81.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 81–82.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 83.

had energized the fundamentalists was captured by the *U.S. News and World Report* when it wrote “a political holy war without precedent ... in full swing in this country”.²⁰¹

The fundamentalists were so unhappy with Carter that in the 1980 presidential election they were not only opposing him, but were also trying every possible means to hurt him. At a January 1980 White House breakfast meeting with president, Jerry Falwell asked the White House permission to tape his discussion with Carter. Permission was granted, but a White House staffer taped the same conversation between the President and Falwell as well. “Not long afterward, at a Moral Majority rally in Alaska, Falwell told a large audience, ‘I was at the White House not long ago and I asked the president, “Sir, why do you have homosexuals on your senior staff in the White House?”’” As Falwell told it, Carter had said that since he wanted to represent everyone, he had to hire some homosexuals. The story apparently drew the reaction Falwell wanted in Alaska, and he subsequently printed it in the *Moral Majority Report*. The problem was that the conversation had never occurred.²⁰² When confronted with the evidence by veteran reporters, Falwell tried to excuse his action by characterizing what he had said as a “parable” or “allegory”, which Southern Baptist James Dunn called “a new name for a lie”.²⁰³ In the 1980 elections, the Republicans nominated Ronald Reagan while the Democratic candidate was the incumbent President Carter. In the July 1980 Republican convention the fundamentalist agenda dominated the party’s platform as it:²⁰⁴ (i) withdrew the long standing support for ERA despite the clear disapproval of many in the party

201 *Ibid.*

202 William Martin, 211.

203 *Ibid.*, 211.

204 *Ibid.*, 213.



establishment; (ii) supported a constitutional amendment to declare abortion illegal; (iii) appointments to judgeships were recommended to be subject to the anti-abortion stand of the candidates; and (iv) the party's co-chair Mary Crisp had to step down because of her pro-ERA stand.

This was a major victory for the Christian fundamentalists as not only had they prevailed in writing the party's platform but they had also successfully chased out the liberal elements in the party and had instead installed those who adhered to their views. In contrast to the Republicans, the Democratic platform referred to family issues in one sentence only, as it pledged to support "efforts to make federal programs more sensitive to the needs of the family, in all its diverse forms".²⁰⁵ Even here, the phrase 'family in all its diverse forms' was inclusive of homosexual and single parent families.

Reagan's 1980 Victory and the Fundamentalist Agenda:

(i) The election results showed that co-belligerency had worked, as only the Blacks and Hispanics had stood behind the Democratic Party. Otherwise in every other traditional Democratic voting bloc, a good percentage had been diverted to the Republican Party.²⁰⁶

(ii) The election results established beyond doubt the fact that co-belligerency had definitely worked effectively in favor of the Republicans. The Catholics in areas like Dubuque, Iowa, had helped elect the evangelical candidate Charles Grassley, and evangelicals in places like Mobile had elected the Catholic Jeremiah Denton. There was a clear recognition in the press that the evangelicals had definitely influenced the election. Credit was also being given to Jerry

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 218–220.

Falwell who called this election “my finest hour”.²⁰⁷

(iii) One of the major contributors to Carter's defeat had been stagflation.²⁰⁸ Therefore, immediately after winning the 1980 election, Reagan and his team's priority was the economy. “Shortly after the election, both Reagan and Senate Majority Leader Howard Baker announced that serious consideration of the “social agenda” would have to be deferred for at least a year, to give the new administration time to focus on economic recovery”.²⁰⁹ This preoccupation of the leadership with the economy did not augur well for the fundamentalists and soon the *Washington Post* published a story in which the Deputy Chief of White House Staff, Michael Deaver, while referring to the Religious Right, was quoted to have said: “They'd be welcome in the White House, but they'd need to come in the back door”.²¹⁰ When Jerry Falwell informed Reagan about this incident, Reagan assured him that there was no such discrimination, and Falwell always continued to be welcomed in the Reagan White House. The Reagan Presidency was the first ever experience in politicking for the fundamentalists. On their domestic agenda, (school prayer, homosexuals and abortion), they were not able to change the status quo despite having contributed to Reagan's victory. In fact, Reagan annoyed the fundamentalists by appointing Justice Sandra Day O'Connor of Arizona to the U.S. Supreme Court, as she was a strong supporter of ERA and was also pro-choice.²¹¹ However, Reagan under fundamentalist pressure,

207 *Ibid.*, 220.

208 Stagflation is a situation when the economy suffers from both high unemployment and high inflation rates at the same time.

209 William Martin, 222.

210 *Ibid.*, 223.

211 In the debate on the divisive issue of abortion, those who are against abortion are known as “pro-life”, whereas those who support a woman's right to obtain an abortion are known as “pro-choice”.



became "...the first incumbent president to endorse a school prayer amendment. "²¹² Overall, the fundamentalists were happy with Reagan when he took a number of bold stands on foreign policy issues,²¹³ such as the following: (a) He opposed communism, and declared the Soviet Union to be an "evil empire". (b) Instead of going for detente he supported the Afghan resistance against the Soviet invasion of the country. (c) He increased the defense spending for Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). (d) He reduced taxes, which meant less money for the welfare state, and hence less for public schools. (e) In October 1982, his administration sent U.S. forces to invade the tiny Caribbean island of Grenada to topple a pro-Marxist regime there.

The 1988 presidential campaign achieved a new landmark in the politicization of Christianity in contemporary America. In this campaign the popular preacher and televangelist Pat Robertson mounted a campaign for the presidency and challenged Vice-President George Bush for the Republican ticket. He even managed to outpoll the Vice-President early in the year in the Iowa Caucuses.²¹⁴ Although Robertson's bid for the Republican ticket failed, it strengthened fundamentalist politics in a number of ways; for example: (i) being a high profile preacher his candidacy gave new confidence to those fundamentalists who had argued against the separation

212 Glenn H. Utter and John. W. Storey, *The Religious Right: A Reference Handbook* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, Inc. 1995), 35. Reagan endorsed the amendment in 1982. On March 20, 1984 it was voted by the Senate. It secured a 56–44 majority vote but fell short of the required two-thirds majority and hence failed but remains on the agenda of the Republican Party. For details see: *Ibid.*, 36.

213 Alan Brinkley, *The Unfinished Nation*, 994–1007.

214 Glenn H. Utter and John W. Storey, *The Religious Right*, 38–39.

of the Church and the State. (ii) It electrified the entire fundamentalist community including those who had never participated before as voters, to become volunteers. (iii) It led to the establishment of the Christian Coalition in 1989 which became an important fundamentalist organization for the political involvement of social activists.

The entire 12-year period of the Reagan-Bush Presidencies (1980–1992) was a period of learning for the fundamentalists. They realized that merely getting a president elected to the White House was not enough. It was also equally important to understand how Congress worked, because at the end of the day the members of Congress voted on bills, and if a bill failed to get the required majority of votes, then it was of no use. They learned that the members of Congress did not vote on the basis of ‘right’ and ‘wrong’. Instead, their criteria were very narrow. Their sole concern was about winning the next election. Thus they would vote in a way that the largest part of the active voters were happy with them, even if that meant voting for something which was morally wrong. William Martin quotes a fundamentalist, Connie Marshier, who finally understood the voting criteria in the American Congress under the highly acclaimed American democracy. “They did not realize”, she said, “the degree of depravity of most politicians, [who make] decisions on how they are going to vote based on ‘Who can put the most pressure on me? Who can cause me the most difficulty in my re-election campaign?’ rather than ‘What do I think is right?’ Leading somebody to salvation is very different from leading them to vote your way. You don’t lead them; you force them”.²¹⁵

During this period, the fundamentalists were occasionally able to bring certain family-issues based bills to the floor of

²¹⁵ William Martin, 230.



Congress, knowing that they would be defeated. The purpose of this was multifold. First, the exercise of bringing the bills to the floor was meant to train the fundamentalist activists in Congressional lobbying efforts. Second, many bills were deliberately designed to be extremist, so that many liberal and moderate law makers would not vote for them, and hence ignite the anger of those evangelicals who sympathized with the fundamentalists, but were not themselves active. These repeated defeats would lead to action by sympathizers in the form of both money and men. Third, many voters, especially the Southern Baptists, were traditionally Democrats but had chosen to vote for Reagan due to their support for radical causes. Now it was essential to keep them in the Republican Party, and this was done by making them feel the pain of defeat; deepening their commitment to the cause, and compelling them to stay in the party as the ‘Army of God’.

Another purpose of bringing extremist bills to the floor was to identify those members of Congress who did not agree with the fundamentalist position on issues, and voted against them. Once these members were identified, they could be targeted in their re-election bids, and extra efforts could be made to defeat them, and hence send signals to other members that if they voted against the fundamentalist causes their political careers would reach an abrupt end. Towards the end of Reagan’s second term, the White House was bogged down with the Iran-Contra scandal but the officer involved in the scandal, Colonel Oliver North, became a hero for the fundamentalists. In 1992, Clinton, a liberal, was elected president because at the time of the election, the economy was in bad shape due to the recession. Although President Bush was riding high in popularity polls in 1991 after defeating Saddam Hussein, recession had set in by the time of the election, and people wanted change so Clinton won the White House as he had made the economy an issue.

An important highlight of the 1992 election year was the bid for the Republican Party's presidential ticket by televangelist Pat Robertson. This campaign had energized millions of fundamentalists and established the Christian Coalition led by Ralph Reed to rally voters and dollars in support of Robertson. The fear of recession, and President Bush's inability to handle it effectively in time, made even the Southern evangelists vote for Clinton. As a result, Clinton won in a majority of Southern states.

Although Clinton was liberal, his liberalism was duly checked by the fundamentalists' right at the beginning of his first term. Within the first month of its presidency, the Clinton White House announced, "... that in the future, gays would no longer be discharged from the military".²¹⁶ Congress, the Pentagon and the fundamentalists all demonstrated such a strong opposition to this proposal that the White House retreated from this policy to a compromise based on the "don't ask, don't tell" principle.²¹⁷ The conservative forces also dealt a fatal blow to Clinton's healthcare plan which was prepared by first lady Hillary Clinton. On the social issues, Clinton outsmarted the Republicans and fundamentalists who had always blamed increased crime upon the liberals. "Seeking to win the support of suburbanites, Clinton proposed crime legislation that would put 100,000 new policemen on the streets, ban the sale of nineteen different assault weapons, and fund new prison construction. (Earlier, he also endorsed the Brady Bill, establishing a five-day waiting period to purchase a hand gun)".²¹⁸

The mid-term Congressional elections of 1994 witnessed

216 William C. Berman, *America's Right Turn*, 165.

217 *Ibid.*, 165.

218 *Ibid.*, 173.



a stunning victory for the Republicans, as it gave them a majority in both the houses for the first time since 1952. The incoming Republican speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich, started exerting pressure on the White House by developing a Republican program of federal government reform he called a “Contract with America”.²¹⁹ Tax cuts and welfare reduction were an important component of the Contract with America. The fundamentalists were also in favor of this as they wanted a reduction in the tax burden on families, and welfare work to be transferred to private charities by cutting welfare spending²²⁰. Given this convergence of interests Ralph Reed announced the ‘Contract with the American Family’ through which the Christian Right rallied support for Gingrich’s Contract with America.²²¹ This forced Clinton to abandon his liberal stance, and instead compromise on a number of issues. Most of the compromises were geared towards reduction in taxes and public spending on welfare state. This favored the rich but the Christian fundamentalists were left out in the cold as their agenda demanding a ban on abortion or reinstitution of Bible reading and prayer in schools remained unfulfilled.

219 On September 27, 1994, only a few weeks before the midterm Congressional elections of November, 1994, Newt Gingrich, the Republican Speaker of the House, signed the ‘Contract with America’ together with 367 Republican members of the House at the doorstep of the Capitol. It was a ten-point program designed to mobilize American public opinion in favor of the right wing Republican agenda and put pressure on the Democratic Party in the coming elections. Some of the highlights of the Contract included the demands for: a balanced budget amendment, welfare reform, increase in defense spending, stringent measures to deal with crime, and 50 percent reduction in capital gains tax. The issue of abortion was excluded because of the fears that it could be divisive. For details see: William C. Berman, *America’s Right Turn*, 164–187.

220 William Martin, 340.

221 *Ibid.*



Chapter 7

The Path to Christian Terrorism: From Hope and Expectations to Hopelessness

The response of fundamentalist Christianity to reason and modernity gradually evolved in the 20th century. In the early part of the 20th century the fundamentalists blamed the social problems on science, reason and the ideas of social change emerging from scientific thought. Hence they aggressively tried to ban the teaching of evolution in public schools but lost the court case in Scopes' trial in 1925. Then they, under the leadership of Francis Schaeffer, blamed liberalism for problems of society. When the Supreme Court started dismantling the conservative social order by abolishing racial segregation and slaughtering other similar sacred cows of the fundamentalist Christian society, they started blaming the courts. They realized that the challenge of modernity could be overcome if conservative judges (with fundamentalist world view) could be appointed to the judicial system, especially the U.S. Supreme Court. But the judges to the Supreme Court were appointed by the President with the approval of the Congress. So they now targeted the political arena and became active in the American politics in the 1970s. The hope was that by participating in the democratic system if they could put their candidate in the White House then they would be able to get conservative judges appointed to the Supreme Court. The goal was to get those politicians



elected to the White House and Congress who shared their views and would appoint conservative judges. They succeeded in getting the Democratic candidate Jimmy Carter (an evangelist) elected to the White House in 1976. With the election of Carter their expectations were that their agenda will be implemented but they were disappointed as on social issues he turned out to be liberal. After being disappointed by Carter who was a Democrat they switched to the Republican Party. Under this strategy they forged an alliance with the right wing rich class in the Republican Party which had a lot of money and was aiming at lowering of taxes and dismantling the welfare state because if the welfare state was weakened the government would need less money to fund its programs, consequently lowering of taxes would become very easy. In the 1980 presidential election they dumped Carter and instead supported the alliance's Republican candidate, Ronald Reagan, who won the election. This raised their expectations again. Reagan lowered the taxes and paid a lot of lip service to anti-abortion and anti-homosexual causes but did little in this regard. When a vacancy opened in the Supreme Court Reagan appointed Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, the first woman judge to Supreme Court in American history. She was known for her favorable views towards pro-choice²²² (i.e. right to choose abortion as one of the options) movement. This was a big blow to the fundamentalists' expectations and aspirations.

When despite having elected three presidents consecutively to the White House (Carter, Reagan and Bush Senior) the

222 Pro-choice is simply, "favoring or supporting the legal right of women and girls to choose whether or not to continue a pregnancy to term." See: <http://www.answers.com/pro-choice&r=67>. In other words pro-choice means those who support the right to abortion. Pro-life are those who are against abortion and want it declared illegal.



16 years wait under these presidents (1976 - 1992) did not deliver the goods the frustrations started running high and many radical fundamentalists lost all hope. They had done everything they could within the framework of the democratic system yet there was no progress on the horizon. Hence, those full of dynamism and religious commitment and eager for concrete results lost all hope, and the hopelessness led them to terrorism.

Hopelessness and the Rise of Christian Terrorism in the Ideological War:

During the last 30 years the Christian fundamentalists opposed to abortion have used force, violence and terrorism, “In the early 1990s, anti-abortion extremists concluded that murdering providers was the only way to stop abortion. The first provider was murdered in 1993.”²²³

The Christian terrorists have a vast underground network spread all over the United States and also internationally. This network enables them to commit acts of terror anywhere in the U.S. and escape from the crime scene and travel to and hide in the other states in the U.S. or to other countries overseas, especially in Europe. Some of the organizations that champion the causes pursued by the Christian terrorists are²²⁴: Operation Rescue (OR), Institute of Mobilized Prophetic Activated Christian Training (IMPACT)²²⁵, and Defensive

223 History of Violence, See: [http://womensissues.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?zi=1/XJ&sdn=womensissues &z=1http%3A%2F%2Fwww.prochoice.org%2F](http://womensissues.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?zi=1/XJ&sdn=womensissues&z=1http%3A%2F%2Fwww.prochoice.org%2F)

224 William Martin, 34–35.

225 A training institute organized by Randall Terry for Christian extremists immersed in the ideology of religious hatred recruited from throughout the country. The institute trains them in acts of harassment and various forms of violence and terror. See: William Martin, 355.



Action. One of the roles of these organizations is to provide sympathies and whenever needed, moral and material support to the Christian terrorists in general, particularly in situations when they are in trouble or on the run.

The OR was founded by Randall Terry in the 1980s. The OR plays two important roles for the Christian terrorists. First it conducts vigils, demonstrations and blockades in front of abortion clinics and harasses their staff. In these activities it attracts average peace loving religious citizens who are against abortion. Through these demonstrations and blockades the OR transforms these peace loving religious citizens into hardline activists for this cause. The process enables the over zealot recruits to be in the forefront and cultivates their potential for extremism. These extremists are ideologically indoctrinated to take the movement as a Biblical mission. This is evident from Terry's following philosophy:

*"Our goal is a Christian nation. ...We have a biblical duty, we are called by God to conquer this country. We don't want equal time, we don't want pluralism. ... Theocracy means God rules. I've got a hot flesh. God rules."*²²⁶

After indoctrinating the recruits that whatever they are being told to do is a Biblical duty, they are indoctrinated to undertake violence and terrorism. For terrorism the psychology of hate is cultivated in the minds of the recruits. This approach is outlined in Terry's following quote:

"I want you to just let a wave of intolerance wash over you."

226 Terry's speech at an anti-abortion rally in Fort Wayne (Indiana) reported by *News Sentinel* on August 16, 1993. Here the italics are ours for emphasis. The quote here is taken from the following sources:

<http://wnd.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE ID=37979>
<http://mediamatters.org/items/20050322001>

I want you to let a wave of hatred wash over you. Yes, hate is good... Our goal is a Christian nation. We have a Biblical duty, we are called by God, to conquer this country.”²²⁷

One of Terry’s close associates in OR, James Kopp²²⁸, who had been the disciple of Francis Schaeffer in the 1980s at his retreat in the Swiss Alps, Switzerland and had also been associated with Mother Theresa’s Missionaries of Charity in New York City, eventually became a member of the Army of God (AOG) and shot and killed an abortion providing doctor, Dr. Bennett Slepian on October 23, 1998. Dr. Slepian was murdered at his residence in Amherst, New York. Kopp was caught, found guilty of murder by the court and was given the maximum sentence of 25 years for life in prison in 2003.²²⁹

The *Army of God*²³⁰ is one of the most dangerous Christian terrorist organizations. According to the Manual of AOG (which was recovered from its members) the Army of God:

“... is a real Army, and God is the General and Commander-in-Chief. The Soldiers, however, do not usually communicate with one another. Very few have ever met each other. And when they do, each is usually unaware of other’s soldier status. That is why the Feds will never stop this Army. Never. And we have not yet even begun to fight.”²³¹

227 http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Randall_Terry

Randall Terry as quoted at an anti-abortion rally in Fort Wayne, Indiana by the *Fort Wayne News Sentinel*, 1993–08–16. Here the italics are ours for emphasis. William Martin also quotes Terry as advocating, “Intolerance is beautiful thing”. See: William Marin, 355.

228 James Kopp, see: <http://womensissues.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?zi=1/XJ&sdn=womensissues&zu=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.prochoice.org%2F>

229 Anti Abortion Extremists, see: <http://womensissues.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?zi=1/XJ&sdn=womensissues&zu=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.prochoice.org%2F>

230 Ibid.

231 Ibid. Here the italics are ours for emphasis.



The members of the AOG have been involved in murder, bombings, kidnapping, shooting, bioterrorism, harassment; etc. The manuals of AOG detail methods of various terrorist acts e.g. butyric acid attacks, arson, bomb making, etc.²³² A network named Prisoners of Christ (run by Linda Wolfe) offers emotional and financial support to those imprisoned for committing acts of violence and terrorism.²³³ The Army of God leader, Michael Bray, also known as the Chaplain of the Army of God, has written a book entitled *A Time to Kill*.²³⁴ This book gives Biblical justification for violence and terrorism in support of their mission.²³⁵ Using this kind of Biblical arguments the Christian fundamentalist groups advocate the doctrine of 'justifiable homicide'.²³⁶ The Army of God celebrates terrorism. This celebration is an annual event known as White Rose banquet, hosted by its leader Michael Bray.²³⁷

232 Ibid.

233 <http://womensissues.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?zi=1/XJ&sdn=womensissues&zu=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.prochoice.org%2F>,
see also: http://www.prochoice.org/about_abortion/violence/james_knopp.html

234 The Army of God Manual, see: <http://womensissues.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?zi=1/XJ&sdn=womensissues&zu=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.prochoice.org%2F>

235 Ibid.

236 Ibid.

237 Ibid.



Chapter 8

The G.W. Bush Presidency 2000: A New Millennium, A New Politics

The eight years of the Clinton-Gore (1992–2000) administration were a period of remarkable economic stability and growth, low unemployment and inflation in the U.S. economy together with domestic peace and the unchallenged global power of the U.S. Under these circumstances, Gore should have definitely won a decisive victory over George W. Bush; but in reality Gore was never even able to take a convincing lead over Bush during the entire election campaign. Finally, Bush came so close that he was within a hair's-breadth of effectively striking a fatal blow to Gore, which he did. The question is why, despite the economic boom, full employment and general prosperity, did the voters not give Gore a decisive lead over Bush? The answer lies in the new ideological map of the United States. Bush carried most of the South, which is the Bible Belt of the country, and the centre of evangelicalism. The South is the heartland of Christian fundamentalism. One is astonished to see Gore losing in his own state, Tennessee. Given its far right ideological leaning, Tennessee is popularly known as "...the old Buckle of the Bible Belt".²³⁸ The state of Tennessee is

238 "Bush and God," in *Newsweek*, March 10, 2003, 16.



also the home of Ed McAteer, the founder of the Religious Roundtable.²³⁹ In 1992, the fundamentalists of the South had voted for Clinton because Bush Senior had not only broken his promise by raising taxes but also failed to stimulate an economy in recession.

In 2000, the economy was doing fine but Clinton had earned a bad name due to his involvement in the Monica Lewinsky affair. Prior to that, Clinton was alleged to have had relations with Jennifer Flower when he was the governor of Arkansas. There had been some other alleged financial scandals involving Clinton which came to be known as the “Whitewater affair”.²⁴⁰ All these liabilities snowballed and the evangelicals, inspired by religious and moral values, voted for Bush Jr. Most of these voters were concentrated in the South and its extensions²⁴¹ In the end, it was the ‘Bible Belt’ (i.e. the evangelical voters of the South and its extensions) which emerged as the solid pro-Bush vote bank in the 2000 U.S. presidential election, and established itself as a political powerhouse in American politics. In the 2004 presidential election they repeated the same feat, sending a strong message to the politicians that unless they respected its views they would not get any where.

According to the U.S. constitution, although people vote in the presidential election, it is not the popular vote but rather the electoral vote that decides the ultimate winner. Each state is assigned a certain number of electoral votes.

239 “Chosen People: How Israel Became A Favorite Cause of Christian Right,” in *The Wall Street Journal*, May 23, 2002, A1 and A8.

240 William C. Berman, *America’s Right Turn*, 171–172. See also: Alan Brinkley, *The Unfinished Nation*, 1013 and 1018.

241 For a detailed discussion on the Bible Belt and the 2000 U.S. Presidential election see: Muhammad Arif Zakauallah, *The Cross and the Crescent: The Rise of American Evangelicalism and the Future of Muslims* (Kuala Lumpur: The Other Press, 2004), 112–138.

The total number of electoral votes in the U.S. is 538 and in a two way race a candidate winning 270 of them becomes the President of the U.S.²⁴² It is worth noting that in his 1992 election Clinton won 370 electoral votes and won his second term in 1996 with 379 electoral votes by capturing 31 states plus the District of Columbia (Washington, D.C.).²⁴³ In the 2000 election, Gore was able to win only 20 states, plus the D.C. The remaining 11 states Clinton had pocketed in his 1996 re-election were lost to Bush. These 11 states were Arizona (8), Arkansas (6), Florida (25), Kentucky (8), Louisiana (9), Missouri (11), Nevada (4), New Hampshire (4), Ohio (21), West Virginia (5) and Mr. Gore's own home state, Tennessee (11). The numbers given in parentheses here show the number of the electoral votes of the respective states. The total electoral votes of all these 11 states amount to 112. Except for New Hampshire, which is in the Northeast, all the remaining 10 states are located in the South and the Midwest of the U.S. These 10 states are traditionally conservative and fall in either the Bible Belt or Sun Belt regions of the country. These regions are traditionally conservative and the Bible Belt is the heartland of fundamentalist and evangelical Protestantism. The people of these regions are family oriented and believe strongly in traditional values and moral character. According to a survey, in the 2000 election, 56% of Protestants voted for Bush, while only 42% voted for Gore.²⁴⁴ According to the U.S. Electoral College Website in the 2004 Presidential election the total popular vote count

242 For a detailed treatment of the Electoral College System and the Electoral votes see Walter Berns, ed., *After The People Vote: A Guide to The Electoral College* (Washington, D.C.: The American Enterprise Institute Press, 1992), 8 and 71.

243 For the electoral votes of Clinton in 1992 and 1996, see: James West Davidson, et al., eds., *Nation of Nations*, 1192–1198.

244 “Breaking Down The Electorate,” in *Time* (Asian Edition), November 20, 2000, 57.



stood at 122,284,939 out of which 62,039,073 (50.7%) went to G.W. Bush and 59,027,478 (48.3%) to John Kerry while 1,157,759 (nearly 1%) to Ralph Nader and others.²⁴⁵ Out of the total 538 Electoral College votes Bush received 286 electoral votes and Kerry 251 while one Minnesota elector voted for Kerry's vice-presidential running mate John Edwards for both President and Vice-President.²⁴⁶ An analysis of the national vote by voter characteristics reveals the depth of support of Christian fundamentalists for Bush as shown below:²⁴⁷

	Bush	Kerry
i) once-a-week church goers	58%	41%
ii) moral values being the most important factor	79%	18%
iii) War on terrorism as the most important factor	86%	14%

Christian revivalism in the U.S. had started in the 1970s due to the problems created by materialism, unbridled capitalism, rising poverty due to growing income inequality, secularism and the abuse of power and corruption by political leaders. This revivalism manifested itself in many forms - cults, pseudo-faiths, the emergence of right wing racist groups and the rise of evangelical Christianity. Out of these, evangelical Christianity has been the most rapidly rising social and

245 http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/2004/popular_vote.html

246 http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/2004/election_results.html

247 "How Bush Pulled it Off," in *Time* (Asian edition), November 15, 2004, 30-31.

political force. As the American historian Alan Brinkley wrote in the year 2000: “Over 70 million Americans now described themselves as ‘born-again’ Christians — men and women who had established a ‘direct personal relationship with Jesus’. Christian evangelicals owned their own newspapers, magazines, radio stations, and television networks. They operated their own schools and universities”.²⁴⁸

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the Christian fundamentalists, at the end of the 20th century, had emerged as a formidable force on the American political scene and that no political party, whether Republican or Democrat, can make any significant headway in the elections without gaining their approval. Presidential candidate George W. Bush, in his bid for the Republican ticket had cultivated a moderate, centre right position to win the support of the broader spectrum of American society. With this goal in mind, he had publicly avoided a far right position on a number of issues dear to the hearts of the fundamentalists. He had experienced the power of the fundamentalists at first hand in his father’s 1988 campaign for the second-term in which he himself had served as “... liaison to the religious right”.²⁴⁹ This experience had convinced him that his father’s ways did not work with the religious right.²⁵⁰

The result was that Bush’s campaign, despite its moderate public posture, maintained its links with the fundamentalists “... below radar, via letters and e-mail”.²⁵¹ However, during his first campaign for the Republican presidential ticket when G. W. Bush lost the New Hampshire primary to the

248 Alan Brinkley, *The Unfinished Nation*, 990

249 “Bush and God,” in *Newsweek* (Asian Edition), March 10, 2003, 14–21.

250 *Ibid.*, 19.

251 *Ibid.*



challenger John McCain, he did not waste time in assuring fundamentalists of his loyalties and commitment to their causes and vision. In order to give this assurance and in return win their full backing "... Bush made his infamous visit to South Carolina's Bob Jones University, the ultra-fundamentalist and officially anti-Roman Catholic school. Strategists were opaque in public, unapologetic behind the scenes. 'We had to send a message — fast — and sending him there was the only way to do it', said one top Bush operative at the time".²⁵² The pilgrimage to Bob Jones University (BJU) established his fundamentalist credentials in the eyes of the devotees across the nation. The pilgrimage also helped him seal the deal with the fundamentalists. Consequently, the fundamentalist vote bank flooded the southern ballot boxes in favor of the Texan contender. Bush was the winner in the end. Under G.W. Bush's administration, the Christian fundamentalists "... form the core of the Republican Party, which controls all of the capital for the first time in half a century".²⁵³ Bible prayer groups are now widespread in the White House. "The atmosphere inside the White House, insiders say, is suffused with an aura of prayerfulness".²⁵⁴ In the hotly contested 2000 election, Bush rode to the White House on the shoulders of Christian fundamentalists who had a faith based agenda. Politics, principles and, above all, prudence demanded that he deliver on that count. Given the

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 20.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 17. Here the word capital refers to the nation's capital Washington, D. C. which is the center of American political power as the White House; the House of Representatives and the Senate are located there. Other powerful government departments (i.e. ministries) and agencies are also headquartered there. Hence, the group that controls Washington, D. C. controls not only the nerve centre of American domestic political power but also the global political power to a large extent.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

results of the 2000 election which saw the nation split right down the middle, George W. Bush could not afford to be another Carter or Reagan. He knew that he has two main constituencies; the economic conservatives and the CFM. As he wanted to be re-elected in 2004, he had to fulfill the agenda of both of these two constituencies during his first term at any cost.

As far as meeting the demands of the economic conservatives is concerned he did very well in this regard. The economic conservatives have two demands:

- i) Low taxes
- ii) A weaker and leaner welfare state

During his first term G.W. Bush successfully accomplished both of these goals. He proposed a tax cut package of a total of \$1.6 trillion and after a compromise with the Congress eventually he got \$1.35 trillion in tax cuts.²⁵⁵ These tax cuts have created a big budget deficit, and thus there is less money for domestic spending. Then there is the Iraq war which was apparently intended to be a short one, but the way things are moving it may turn out to be the War of Maximum Duration (WMD), which needs to be financed urgently and at any cost. Given the huge budget deficit and the diversion of funds to sustain the war, there need to be major cuts in domestic spending. And hence a clear and present justification for cuts in social spending items of the welfare state. This will make the welfare state leaner and weaker. The welfare state happens to be a sacred cow and it was not easy to slaughter it. Thanks to the Iraq war which naturally provided a logical justification to do so for the sake of national security, and

255 Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), 29.



coincidentally it happened to serve the interests of the economic conservatives as well.

The Bush administration had no choice but to fulfill the agenda of the CFM as they were to grade the first term of his administration on the Biblical score card. Their wish list was long and included domestic social agenda as well as foreign policy goals. The major items in their domestic social agenda are issues like banning abortion, revival of Bible reading and prayer in public schools, appointment of pro-life judges; etc. Their foreign policy agenda is rooted in their Biblical belief that the end of the world is near and soon in the Middle East there will be a series of big and prolonged wars leading to the battle of Armageddon (between the Arabs and Israel) which Israel must win.²⁵⁶ Therefore, some of the major items of their foreign policy agenda are as follows: increase in military

²⁵⁶ The evangelicals strongly believe in the end times view of the world advocated by the *Book of Revelation* in the Bible. They are eagerly waiting for the Second Coming of Jesus with whom they wish to physically enter in the Kingdom of God that he would establish in Israel from where it will spread to the whole world and bring peace and Christianity to the entire humanity in his one thousand year rule. It is because of this predicted one thousand year rule of Jesus that this belief is also known as Millennialism. Those who enter the Kingdom of God with Jesus will have a special salvation status. However Jesus is predicted to come around the time of the battle of Armageddon prior to which there will be a series of prolonged wars in the Middle East which will start with a long war in Babylon (i.e. present day Iraq). That is why the urge to create the conditions conducive for the battle of Armageddon in the life time of the present generation of enthusiastic evangelicals. For details see:

Hal Lindsey, *There's A New World Coming: An In-Depth Analysis of the Book of Revelation*, updated version (Eugene: Harvest House Publishers, 1984). See also:

Muhammad Arif Zakauallah, *The Cross and the Crescent: The Rise of American Evangelicalism and the Future of Muslims* (Kuala Lumpur: The Other Press, 2004), 139–164.

spending, control of Middle East to ensure supremacy of Israel in the region, creation of conducive conditions for the war of Armageddon so that upon his second coming Jesus should be able to establish the Kingdom of God in Israel with ease. It is perhaps a coincidence that the current U.S. foreign policy which, in principle, should serve the short term and long term interests of the U.S. serves the CFM's agenda as well. After the 9–11, the logic demanded the focus of all the effort and might to capture Osama bin Laden and take care of al-Qaeda. If it was accomplished successfully then there would be no prolonged war in Iraq, and tensions in the region would also have not been heightened. The healthier the conditions of peace, certainty and stability in the Middle East the weaker the forces of chaos, confusion and war which accelerate the process that is believed to be the prerequisite for the war of Armageddon. However, the shift of attention and resources from search and capture of Osama and al-Qaeda to the invasion of Babylon (i.e. present day Iraq) have incidentally fallen in line with the Biblical belief of the evangelicals that a prolonged war in Iraq, as stated in the *Book of Revelation* in the Bible, will be the beginning of a much wider, prolonged and destructive war in the Middle East that would lead to the battle of Armageddon, which is about time when the Second Coming of Jesus would occur.²⁵⁷ The Bush administration had its own reasons (e.g. WMDs) to invade Iraq but many Christian fundamentalists may tend to see it through the prism of their own apocalyptic vision of the future of our world.²⁵⁸ Hence the Christian fundamentalists

257 Hal Lindsey, 236–288.

258 The word *Apocalypse* is derived from the Greek word *apokalypsis* which means 'revelation'. The apocalyptic writings have a special place in the Jewish and Christian faiths. Most of these writings were produced between about 200 BC and 100 AD. This is the period during which both the faiths were facing exile or prosecution



are happy that this foreign policy move to bring war to Iraq is actually a major contribution towards the realization of the Armageddon prophecies of the Bible which the CFM would not have been able to do alone, no matter how much it tried.

The decision to clog trillions of dollars, hundreds of thousands of marines, and immeasurable resources of the U.S. and the allies in Iraq (under the false pretext of alleged WMDs) instead of using them to apprehend the real master mind of global terror (Osama bin Laden) may not make sense to the world and damage America's image globally but it may make perfect sense to the CFM and enhance Bush administration's value and contribution in their eyes. Thus despite the inconsistency in logic (i.e. invasion of Iraq instead of capture of Osama) the majority of Americans supported

= at the hands of the Romans. Some prominent characteristics of apocalyptic writings are as follows:

“that the present age of the world is irredeemably evil, ruled by a Satan figure, personifying evil.”

“... however, that evil age is soon to be ended, destroyed by God, who is good...”

“The following age, the Kingdom of God, will be ruled by God, will be perfect, and will last forever, and only the good, formerly oppressed, will enjoy it.”

Since most of the apocalyptic writings were written during the period of persecution, their authors used an indirect style of expressing themselves. Hence the apocalyptic literature has some secondary characteristics, like:

“pseudonimity, the ascribing of an apocalyptic work to some earlier revered figure (for example, a prophet or a saint); contending hierarchies of angels and demons; a faith in God who will fulfill the promises of the Bible; a belief in a heavenly city and a heavenly paradise reserved for the just in the age to come.” Certain books of the Bible or their parts are regarded as apocalyptic; especially the last book of the *New Testament* called ‘*Revelation*’ (in the King James Version) is a well recognized apocalyptic piece of literature. See: *Funk & Wagnalls New Encyclopedia* s.v. “Apocalyptic Writings”, and also s.v. “Revelation”.



the U.S. invasion of Iraq and they still do, despite the fact that the WMDs allegation turned out to be false. One of the major reasons for the U.S. public opinion being supportive of the prolonged war in Iraq is the fact that today the majority of American population, in one way or the other, associates itself with the beliefs, agenda and world view of the CFM, and the CFM is fully in favor of speeding up the creation of conditions that would ultimately materialize the Second Coming of Jesus. From the fundamentalist Biblical point of view whether Osama is caught and brought to justice is not so important as bringing the War to Babylon (i.e. present day Iraq).





Chapter 9

Millennialism, the Kingdom of God and Israel

As mentioned earlier the evangelicals believe in the Second Coming of Christ. According to this belief Jesus will return to this world and establish the Kingdom of God to which all on earth will surrender both in deeds and creed. The reign of this Kingdom is linked to one thousand years of peace and prosperity that is why the belief in it is called millennialism. However, there are three different interpretations of millennialism which are briefly stated as follows:

Premillennialism:²⁵⁹

This interpretation holds that history can be distinguished in terms of “... theologically distinctive eras, the last of which is to be the millennium, or thousand years of peace on earth. Prior to this final period of peace, however, the world will witness an era of cataclysmic events, called the “end times,” which will be characterized by earthquakes, revolutions, and wars, and which will culminate in the Battle of Armageddon, a world wide conflict centered in the Middle East. These terrible events serve as a kind of catalyst to the Second Coming of Christ, who will return to reign on earth at

259 Michael Lienesch, *Redeeming America*, 224–225.



the beginning (hence *premillennialism*) of the millennium.”

Postmillennialism:²⁶⁰

This version holds that the millennialism is already in operation as it started, “... with the events that took place at the time of the early church. As to the Second Coming, they predict that it will take place not at the beginning of this thousand-year period, but at the end (hence *postmillennialism*).

Amillennialism:²⁶¹

Only a small minority believes in this view. The adherents of this view, “... tend to see history as a story of struggle between the church and the forces of evil, a struggle that must go on endlessly on earth since this earthly realm will not be brought to an end through a literal Second Coming and thousand-year reign (hence *amillennialism*).”

The millennial theme has become dominant only in the second half of the 20th century due to the atomic warfare and creation of the state of Israel.²⁶² The continuous escalation of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East as witnessed by the world, has converged the majority of the evangelicals in support of Premillennialism which predicts worsening of global conditions due to disastrous wars and natural calamities, etc. The premillennialists see the battle of Armageddon as inevitable in the Middle East which would be the imminent sign of the Second Coming. Hence in the evangelical context of beliefs and history, “...Israel is considered to be the catalyst for the events of the end times.”²⁶³ This realization increases the enthusiasm of the

260 *Ibid.*, 224–225.

261 *Ibid.*, 225.

262 *Ibid.*, 224.

263 *Ibid.*, 229.



Christian fundamentalists for the support of Israel, and “... they are determined to support Israel if for no other reason than that Israel must be able to defeat its enemies in order to serve as a precursor to the millennial peace.”²⁶⁴ It is for these reasons that, “When it comes to formulating foreign policy, those in the New Christian Right consider American support for Israel to be an absolute requirement.”²⁶⁵

264 *Ibid.*, 230.

265 *Ibid.*, 230.





Chapter 10

Muslim World's View of the U.S. Foreign Policy

In western liberal democracies, other things being equal, the foreign policy of a country is contextual as given the vision and national interests it is the outcome of both internal and external factors. Anyone trying to understand the foreign policy of a super power has to analyze the dynamics of both the internal and external factors and goals to appreciate that the foreign policy of a super power is a response to both these factors. A scientific way to study the foreign policy in this framework which we may call the COINTEXTUAL approach (i.e. an approach based on the dynamics of the short term and long term role of both the internal and external factors) gives one the ability to understand a country's foreign policy better. The term COINTEXTUAL is important as here 'CO' stands for context, 'INT' for internal factors, 'EXT' for external factors. Most often in the Muslim world the U.S. foreign policy has been seen and understood as a response to the external pressures faced by the U.S. And whenever any connection to the internal factors has been made it has been reduced to the influence of the Jewish lobby, hence ignoring the role of various internal factors, the actual working of the American liberal democratic system, and its debates and power play. It is for these reasons that we prefer to emphasize



the role of internal factors and need to understand their complex dynamics. Despite being the torch bearer of human rights, liberty, equality and democracy, the U.S. continued to support the racist apartheid system of South Africa because of internal factors and when it opposed that system it was also due to the domestic pressure. The understanding gained through the COINTEXTUAL approach would enable one to develop not only proper responses but to also take effective pro-active measures to protect and promote one's interests when dealing with the U.S.

Given the fact that the growing influence of the U.S. as a super power has been a decisive factor in world affairs since WWII and more so in the post Cold War era, the Muslim World has not been immune to this influence. There is a general feeling among the Muslims that on the issues of concern to Muslims world, the U.S. role has, more often than not, been rather biased against the Muslim world. Though there have been occasional bright examples of bold American support to Muslim cause, such as Bosnia. However, the perception of anti-Muslim bias in American foreign policy remains a common view in the contemporary Muslim world. When it comes to understanding and explaining the reasons behind this bias the most common approach is that it is the Jewish lobby in the U.S. that constantly tilts the U.S. foreign policy against the Muslim world. No one can doubt the strong influence of the Jewish lobby in shaping American foreign policy, but on the other hand nobody could claim that the interests of Jewish lobby are the only dynamics that shape it. This approach to understand and analyze the American foreign policy undermines the ability of Muslim intelligentsia and the policy makers to engage their U.S. counter parts in constructive dialogue on issues of mutual concern. This approach deprives the Muslims of the appreciation and understanding of how the American liberal democracy actually works. What is the role

of the American public opinion in shaping and focusing the American foreign policy in one direction or another? What are the intellectual factors and physical means that influence the American public opinion and hence the American foreign policy? And what can be done to address those factors to effectively negotiate a better and more favorable U.S. foreign policy towards the Muslim world? A proper understanding of this issue requires that we develop an appropriate approach to study, understand and appreciate the U.S. foreign policy with the aim of identifying the factors and processes that construct and shape it. But this demands a direct and comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of internal and external factors affecting the American society, contribution of opinion makers, aims and tactics of various power groups, the role of media and the role of the White House and the Congress in actual policy making and the part played by the relevant U.S. government departments and agencies in the actual execution of the policy. In order to have such a comprehensive understanding of all of this on a regular and sustained basis and analyze the relevant developments in the American society from our perspective we need experts on various aspects of American society and system. However the irony is that there are neither significant well structured American studies programs in the Universities in the Muslim world nor are there any well endowed research institutes staffed by professionals with multi disciplinary skills who can undertake primary source based direct research on the American domestic issues/trends with a view to analyze their implications for the Muslim world. The purpose of such research should be to make recommendations to the policy makers and various other relevant parties on how to proactively engage the U.S. not just in a constructive dialogue but cooperation and partnership for a shared vision of peaceful coexistence based on mutual respect for each other's interests



and world peace and justice. It is true indeed that a large number of Universities in the Muslim world do offer one or two (or a few) courses on the American foreign policy but these courses suffer from such a wide range of flaws and weaknesses that they end up defeating the very purpose for which they were introduced in the first place. First and foremost, they do not give a comprehensive understanding of the domestic context and roots of the U.S. foreign policy. Second, they, more often than not, use the books and materials produced by the American scholars only, whose main purpose is to justify the American foreign policy as a reaction to foreign pressures with little emphasis on the domestic stimulants of push in that direction. Third, even when the literature used in these courses criticizes/praises a certain U.S. policy it is on the U.S. criteria and not from the perspective of developing countries, the world peace or the concerns of the Muslim world. And at times when in these courses an evaluation of the U.S. foreign policy towards the Muslim world is undertaken it is mostly superficial, emotional and lacks scientific rigor. Thus totally divorcing the students from any scientific appreciation of how the democratic system of the U.S. actually works and how to develop a proactive approach to the U.S. so that the Muslim world is able to achieve mutually respectable relationship with this super power of our time. It is the lack of this understanding which has created a sense of helplessness which has allowed the extremists on both sides (i.e. the Western advocates of war and the clash of civilizations, and the terrorists in the Muslim world) to dominate the two societies and successfully implement their agenda on the global stage. In recent history the American CFM has been in the forefront in shaping the American foreign policy in a number of areas e.g. in hardening the American attitude towards the former USSR, by labeling socialism as the devil's system Billy Graham in a 1949 speech raised the temperatures in both



Washington, D.C., and Moscow.²⁶⁶ Similarly the support of the Christian fundamentalists for the apartheid in South Africa kept American foreign policy pro-apartheid for quite some time.²⁶⁷ Presently despite the reservation of many main stream American political leaders and opinion makers, the Christian fundamentalists' favorable view of Iraq invasion due to their apocalyptic beliefs has contributed to the trend leading to American public opinion being supportive of Iraq invasion. The failure of Muslim intelligentsia to understand the relevant issues in this regard has again further complicated the already difficult situation.

²⁶⁶ William Martin, 29.

²⁶⁷ David Chidester, *Christianity: A Global History* (Harper San Francisco, 2000), 529–536.







Chapter 11

The Need for a New Intellectual Culture in The Muslim Academia and beyond – A Wakeup Call

In the post colonial period the foreign policies of Muslim countries vis-à-vis the foreign policies of super powers have at the best been reactionary i.e. when a super power has made any move the Muslim world has only reacted – and even that reaction has come with a lag. And most of the time the lagged reaction has been limited to the acceptance of the fate as it unfolds under the might of the superpowers. There are a host of factors responsible for this helplessness of the Muslim world and among them one of the most important ones is the total lack of advance understanding of the COINTEXTUAL factors of the super power's foreign policy towards a given Muslim country or the Muslim world at large. Had there been a proper understanding of the COINTEXTUAL factors of the super power's foreign policy the Muslim world would have been able to take both pre-emptive and pro-active measures to protect/promote its interests but this requires teams of professionals well qualified and trained to conduct regular studies on the superpowers using the COINTEXTUAL framework to predict their trends and moves that are yet to come. Once the Muslim world is able to develop this kind of research culture supported by institutional framework,



resources and committed professionals, then the things can be turned around as our qualified experts will keep track of what's happening in the real world – and with their input our governments, leaders and policy makers will be able to achieve better relations with the superpowers based on mutual respect and understanding. Actually this approach, if practiced with professional objectivity, commitment and intellectual freedom would be a giant step towards the empowerment of the currently helpless Muslim world in global politics.

It is for these reasons that there is a dire need to establish a tradition of the scientific and objective study of the American society in all its aspects from history, culture, politics, economy and military to religion and pop culture, to name a few. The only way this can be done is through the involvement of the teams of scholars, professionals and experts from and within multi-disciplinary background and capabilities. In order to organize and sustain these research efforts in the long run it is imperative to establish research institutions with relevant facilities, permanent resource base and guaranteed autonomy and intellectual freedom so that their output is objective and of highest professional standards capable of matching the needs of the institutions of higher learning, and of the policy makers of private business and interested governments and parties. Such studies would help the Muslim world have a better understanding of the American society and the functioning of its system hence enabling it to be proactive in reaching out to the American public and opinion makers, intelligentsia, policy makers and leaders, instead of being reactionary and emotional; as is the case presently. It is this failure to understand the American people and system that is the fundamental cause of miscommunication and hence misunderstanding and misgivings between the Muslim world and the U.S.; and the Western civilization in general. It is this



gap of mutual understanding and communication that has been exploited by certain quarters as the *clash of civilizations*. Once the Muslim world understands the U.S. better then it would be able to approach the American people, opinion makers and leaders in a more effective way. There is a whole lot of potential for improvement of relations between the two. This culture of the scientific study of the American society and its trends would also enable the Muslim intellectuals and opinion makers to reach out to the CFM as well, and both would be able to develop a mutually constructive view of the world's future because Muslims are also committed to moral values and believe in the Second Coming of Jesus.

And of course the Muslim world, its institutions of higher learning and intellectuals should not be confined to the study of the U.S. only. The world is changing very fast and we are witnessing the rise of Japan, EU, China, India and Brazil as the emerging powers of the 21st century while Russia and Israel remain important for the Muslim world in their own right. Hence there is an urgent need for the institutions of higher learning to establish faculties and programs for the study of these countries, their societies and systems and their implications for the Muslim world. Same is true for the study of Buddhism and its manifestation in statehood as there are serious human rights issues involved when it comes to the Muslim populations in a number of Buddhist countries like Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, etc. and there is need for a healthy relationship between these Muslim minorities and their respective majorities and governments in the Buddhist societies.

Since the U.S. is the sole superpower in the contemporary world and this is the age of globalization, nations having strategic interests in the U.S. actions and policies need to understand this new Christian fundamentalist politics



(discussed at length in this book) and the vision it inspires in Washington. Nations that ignore this reality and deal with the White House, the U.S. Congress and various U.S. government agencies under the old paradigm are destined to pay dearly for their ignorance. One should not be dismissive of the increasing vote bank of Christian fundamentalists. According to Columbia University historian Alan Brinkley²⁶⁸ in 1999 the evangelicals were 25% of total population of the United States (70 million out of the 278 million)²⁶⁹, and a *Time* magazine exit poll in the 2004 Presidential election found that 77% of them voted for G.W. Bush.²⁷⁰ Add to this the votes of those Afro-Americans, Catholics, Hispanics, Jews, Muslims and the Asian Americans (e.g. Philipinos, Vietnamese, etc.) who vote for the Christian fundamentalist candidates due to stand on issues like abortion ban, lower taxes, etc. Hence the vote bank of the New Right (which is an aggregate of Christian fundamentalist voters and the multi-religious voters supportive of Christian fundamentalists' stand on social and moral issues plus the economic conservatives) is huge and consistently rising. This aggregate forms the winning majority in terms of popular and electoral vote in the U.S. elections, as the rival vote banks are relatively much smaller and remain divided. In terms of its ideology, policy goals and the world view, the New Right is an overwhelmingly Christian Fundamentalist Movement. In this book we have discussed in detail the process through which the New Right has gained political power within the framework of the American liberal democracy. An understanding of this process is crucial for scholars, leaders and policy makers so

268 Alan Brinkley, *The Unfinished Nation*, 990.

269 The World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2001* (Washington, D.C., 2001), 14.

270 "Evangelicals Prepare Their Agenda," in *The Asian Wall Street Journal*, November 12–14, 2004, A12.



that if they want to develop any initiatives and responses, they would know how to address the social forces and their process that ultimately can educate the American public opinion about a certain view point or a vision. It is the ability to understand this process and work through various democratic institutions and intellectual means to influence it that allows a certain vision to influence the American public opinion and hence impact both the domestic and foreign policies of the U.S. in various ways. For any meaningful understanding of impact assessment, the understanding of the process is crucial so that when an attempt is made to respond to that impact and its pressures one can also address role of the process that has generated that impact. The New Right is now moving beyond policy recommendations and agenda implementation as it is now attempting to have an impact on the nation's vision. This is being done by putting pressures such that the Democratic Party also moves to the right. The impact of the power of the New Right is being felt by the Democrats too, as they are softening their opposition to issues championed by the New Right and inching closer to the right wing positions on a number of the issues including the social issues. Hillary Clinton, the Democratic Senator from New York (one of the potential Democratic hopefuls for White House in 2008), feeling the pressure of the New Right, after the 2004 election in a speech praised, "... faith-based programs²⁷¹ and reminded every one, that she is "a

271 Immediately after taking office in his first term President G.W. Bush established the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. This office provides federal funds to faith based organizations to run, administer and implement programs aiming at solving social problems e.g. drug addiction, homelessness, etc. In the beginning the organizations and political groups/leaders who advocate separation of Church and state opposed this and were critical of it. See: "Bush Sets up faith-based office," in *The Star*, Kuala Lumpur, January 30, 2000, 20.



praying person.””²⁷² She also urged the Democrats, “... to support measures to reduce the number of abortions – encourage abstinence among the young and force insurers to cover contraceptives and surprised some by saying the goal was not just making abortions rare but eliminating them all together.”²⁷³ This means that no matter who is in the White House (whether Republicans or Democrats) America is increasingly leaning to the far right and both the parties will race to appease the growing fundamentalist vote bank. This new dawning reality is a wakeup call for the whole world in general and the contemporary Muslim world in particular. In order to achieve mutually respectable permanent peace and constructive cooperation with the U.S. and the rest of the world it is essential for the Muslim world to study scientifically and objectively various thoughts, ideologies, social trends and movements in the U.S. that have the potential to influence the world view and hence the politics of American voters to the extent that they exert pressure on their leaders to change the country’s foreign policy and make the war and peace moves accordingly. These American studies should be undertaken with a view to use the acquired knowledge to achieve better understanding and relations with the U.S. If this task is not undertaken on a priority basis, there is a serious danger that our increasing ignorance of the rapid changes in the American world view would create unnecessary additional problems in our attempt to achieve economic development and prosperity for our masses, and acquire and promote science and technology, and even maintain sovereignty in many areas. However to make the American studies a permanent part of our academic and intellectual culture there is a need for freedom of expression and media in our societies so that our

272 “The Democrats: Trying Out More Soulful Tone,” in *Time*, (American Edition) February 7, 2005, 32.

273 *Ibid.*



media can encourage a well informed intellectual debate in our societies to articulate our position on relevant issues with the same objectivity and confidence as is the characteristic of the Western media today as against the current Muslim World culture of emotional outbursts on foreign policy issues which have little favorable lasting impact in the long run.

The real benefits of such an intellectual culture would accrue to the society only when our scholars will be able to engage the American intelligentsia in a serious dialogue and if necessary even in a debate. It is only through such dialogue and debates and the resultant shared common vision of present reality and future directions that our people's views, concerns and preferences will be understood, appreciated and respected by the American people who would then, through the instrument of public opinion, guide their leaders and government to adopt positive attitude and policies towards the causes and issues of concern to the Muslim world. By advocating this approach of reaching out to the American people my basic argument is that so far the Muslim world's narrow focus on Washington D.C. (as the only deciding factor in the determination of U.S. policy towards the Muslim world) has resulted in a flawed approach by Muslim countries towards the U.S. This approach is flawed because it ignores the fact that the U.S. is a well established democracy in which the leaders and policy makers are bound by the public opinion. Since this approach does not reach out to educate and inform the public opinion, it has failed in delivering the goods. This failure has led to disappointment and frustrations which have caused a sense of helplessness leading to anger. This anger has been capitalized by extremist elements who have used it to preach violence and terrorism. Terrorism in turn has been capitalized by the extremist elements in the west inspired by a number of visions such as Clash of civilizations, crusade



mindset of some fundamentalists, racism and hatred against Islam, etc. The mainstream Western media which thrives on sensationalism and is controlled by corporate interests eyeing the wealth and resources of Muslim lands has also joined the bandwagon and leaves no stones unturned to fan the anti Muslim fire. All of this contributes to instability in Muslim lands which is further accelerated by harsh Western policies towards one Muslim country or another resulting in capital flight from Muslim countries to the West. This capital flight benefits various Western financial and corporate interests. Due to this instability and unrest a vast majority of rulers and ruling elites in the Muslim world also keep their wealth (accumulated from the resources of Muslim lands and hard work of Muslim masses) in the West.

This perpetuates the cycle of mutual hatred between the West (especially the U.S.) and the Muslim world in which extremists on both sides preaching violence, terrorism and war thrive. In this situation the rational, moderate elements on both sides are squeezed out. This scenario, dangerous as it is for the peace and harmony of human race, is not insurmountable. If the dialogue and debate approach, as suggested above, is adopted by the Muslim world with the goal of reaching out to the American public opinion in particular (and to the Western public opinion in general), the situation can improve for the better significantly.

However, in order to ensure complete success through the continuous dialogue the Muslim world needs to put its own house in order too. The efficacy of this dialogue would be enhanced substantially if the Muslim countries establish and practice democracy both in letter and spirit. This is needed because unfortunately in the post colonial period in a majority of newly independent Muslim countries, the ruling elites have robbed the masses of their status as citizens and have instead



reduced them to a defacto status of ‘subjects’ by establishing autocratic/dictatorial/dynastic systems of governance.²⁷⁴ Prior to French revolution the masses in Europe were the subjects of absolute monarchs, emperors, etc. By virtue of being subjects they were bound to be loyal to the ruler/monarch/emperor. The requirement of loyalty blurred the distinction between the ruler and the state. Any disagreement/difference of opinion of a subject with the ruler was tantamount to treason against the state and hence punishable accordingly. In a vast majority of Muslim countries today a disagreement with (or opposition to) the ruling authority is equated, for all practical purposes, with treason against the state and hence punished accordingly. Whereas in democratic societies the ‘citizens’ have the right to disagree with or even oppose the views/policies of the government/ruling authority, and these rights are protected and guaranteed within the framework of democracy. Any discussion of democracy in Muslim countries raises concerns among Muslims because the Western model of liberal democracy rooted in the idea of absolute freedom of man some times does not hesitate to violate basic moral principles, even to the extent of negating Islamic values and Shari’ah principles. In view of the unlimited freedom of the individual under liberal democracy (which can threaten the moral fabric of society founded in Shari’ah) many in the Muslim world reject the very idea of democratization. Although they do want accountability and transparency, their opposition to liberalism fails to differentiate between liberalism as a philosophy and democracy as a system of governance committed to equal opportunity for all, accountability, transparency and supremacy of law.

274 For an interesting discussion on the citizen vs subject issue, please see: E.J. Hobsbawn, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 84.



Maintaining this distinction between liberal philosophy and democracy we propose the introduction of *liberation democracy*²⁷⁵ in the Muslim world. Liberation democracy liberates man from the absolute rule of man manifested by the systems of governance run by absolute dynastic rulers/dictators, etc. Liberation democracy recognizes God as the ultimate Sovereign, Shari'ah as the touchstone of all legal framework, code of behavior and transactions while at the same time ensuring the separation of powers, restoring the individual to the highest level of dignity which is his birth right as a citizen of the Islamic civilization. It considers power as a trust. No one is above the law and rulers are subject to the same law as ordinary citizens. There is a transparent process of accountability. The leadership is elected and is accountable, and judiciary is independent while freedom of expression in line with Islamic moral standards is guaranteed to every one including the press.

Once liberation democracy is introduced both in letter and spirit it would enhance the efficiency of dialogue with the West in a number of ways. First and foremost it would generate a process of internal reform to clean up the system from the irresponsible practices that cause mismanagement and corruption which weakens the nation's strength in negotiations and dialogue. Freedom of expression would generate internal debate that would help us identify our weaknesses that are exploited by outsiders. Various schools of thoughts would emerge and through the democratic process either a synthesis would be reached or common ground would be found to determine the position that the Muslim society

275 The discussion on liberation democracy here is substantially reproduced from the author's earlier article entitled: "Global Governance, the Nation State and Muslim Unity: The Need for Peaceful Conflict Resolution," in *International Journal of Muslim Unity*, 2004, Vol.2, No.1, 47–84.



would take in the dialogue with the West. The convergence of all schools of thought, communities and groups would be an indicator to the West that the Muslim world is united and committed to serious discussions in a transparent way hence there is no possibility of either blackmailing them or bribing a few individuals at the cost of the rest of the masses. This success of liberation democracy would also cultivate trust of Muslim masses in their leaders. With this trust the Muslim world would enter the dialogue with the west with confidence, dignity and constructive ideas all of which add to its bargaining strength. On the other hand our free and independent media, our diplomats trained in the democratic tradition of reaching out to the masses, and our intellectuals equipped with positions and arguments tested in open and free domestic debates would interact with the West, and the West does respect and appreciate this kind of interaction. The outcome would be nothing else but constructive and lead to a win-win situation for both the Muslim world and the West – In this environment extremism would lose appeal and the new reality would indeed help the extremists on both sides see the light of the day, and join the constructive path. The effectiveness of this approach would enable the Muslim world (its media, intellectuals, opinion and policy makers) to reach out to the American masses, media, intelligentsia and the government at a level of mutual understanding, respect and cooperation such that instead of clash of civilizations the western intelligentsia would look forward to cooperation, partnership and understanding with the Muslim civilization and even the long standing divisive issues would have a much more conducive environment for a peaceful and mutually beneficial conflict resolution.





Epilogue

While this book was in the press the U.S. Congressional mid-term elections²⁷⁶ turned the power structure around in Washington, D.C. Power changed hands as the Democratic Party gained majority in both the Houses (i.e. the Senate and the House) after a 12 year dominance of the Congress by the Republicans. Republicans had made the 2004 election a referendum on Iraq war. Despite the Republican's attempt to shift focus away from Iraq to other issues, the Democrats succeeded in keeping the nation's focus on Iraq, and the 2006 mid-term election indeed turned out to be a referendum on Iraq war. The results were stunning as the Democrats gained majority in both the House and the Senate.

The discussion and analysis of this election is in itself an independent topic and deserves to be treated separately due to the nature of issues involved.

If the Muslim world wants to learn any long term lessons for its own benefit, then the 2006 mid term elections of the U.S. Congress do offer a number of useful lessons, some of which are as follows:

There is no doubt that the U.S. is a super power with an enormous economy and great military might. But we should remember that even great powers are capable of making

276 The elections were held on Tuesday, November 7, 2006.



serious mistakes that can hurt them severely, as was the case of the former Soviet Union which had attacked Afghanistan in the late 1970s and that aggression continued almost for a decade. That attack was a serious mistake. The result was that the prolonged Afghan war coupled with other unchecked mistakes of the leadership finally led to the collapse of Soviet Union itself. In the case of the United States the Democratic system and its guarantees of freedom of speech and press resulted in the critical evaluation of the situation and finally the public opinion was educated to oppose the administration.

The lack of democracy in Muslim countries does not allow any such process of correction once the leadership has made serious mistakes. Neither there are free and fair elections nor is the press free. Hence the mistakes are accumulated and they snow ball, finally destroying the whole society and even the civilization. The damage done to the Islamic civilization by Saddam Hussein through his war on Iran and then with Kuwait not only destroyed Iraq but hurt the entire Muslim world. Due to the lack of democracy there was no way for Iraqis to correct Saddam or replace his government with another better one. During the 2006 mid-term election campaign the U.S. media, opposition parties and journalists were free to analyze and comment on any policy of the U.S. government. So much so that just a few weeks before the election, highly respected journalist Bob Woodward published his book *State of Denial*²⁷⁷ which is an indictment of the Bush administration on its Iraq policy. In many Muslim countries publication of such a piece of work criticizing the ruling government very close to election time would not be tolerated and chances are that, more often than not, the author would be jailed instantly and not be heard

277 Bob Woodward, *State of Denial: Bush at War*, Part III, (USA: Simon and Schuster, 2006).



again. Mr. Woodward, on the contrary, was invited on the media talk shows and earned accolades for his insights and research. The crushing defeat of Republican Party and the emergence of the democrats as the leaders of the Congress mean that the people have rejected Bush's strategy in Iraq and now is the moment for Mr. Bush to reflect and realize his mistakes and correct them for the sake of the country. This had not happened in the former USSR that's why it collapsed and it does not happen in a vast majority of Muslim countries, that's why the post colonial Muslim world is paralyzed and is an easy pray for terrorists from within and powerful nations from without.

Another cause of the voter rejection of the Republican Party is the corruption and scandals by the party leaders. From abuse of power and office to sex related immoral crimes, the Republican Party leaders in the Congress had done it all. "Among the Republican seats lost were those of Rep. Mark Foley of Florida, who resigned after being caught making inappropriate e-mail advances to teenaged pages; Rep. Curt Weldon of Pennsylvania, whose family members and a friend were the subject of a recent FBI raid; Rep. Robert Ney of Ohio, who pleaded guilty in the Jack Abramoff Scandal; and Rep. Tom Delay of Texas, who resigned under indictment."²⁷⁸

In a vast majority of Muslim countries which fake democracy through cosmetic elections the corrupt leaders of the ruling party would run for re-election with great fan-fare and will be declared winners with huge majorities.

Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld had been invariably criticized for the failed Iraq strategy but each

278 "Why Republicans Lost," in *New York Sun*, November 9, 2006.
<http://www.nysun.com/article/43226>



time President Bush had shown his full confidence in him. On November 1, 2006, defending the secretary, the President publicly said:

“I have asked him to fight two fronts in the war on terror in Afghanistan and Iraq as well as transform our military I’m pleased with the progress we’re making I do see him staying until the end of the president’s term.”²⁷⁹

And merely a few hours after the nation had expressed its disapproval of the Iraq policy through the ballot box, Rumsfeld resigned. Accepting the resignation President Bush said:

“[A]fter a series of thoughtful conversations, Secretary Rumsfeld and I agreed that the timing is right for new leadership at Pentagon I had been talking with Don Rumsfeld over a period of time about fresh perspective. He likes to call it ‘fresh eyes’. He, himself, understands that Iraq is not working well enough, fast enough.”²⁸⁰

Many in the Muslim world may look at Rumsfeld’s resignation and Bush’s shift of position as Bush’s defeat, and they are right but if we, as Muslims, are confined to this understanding of the issue only then we have failed in two major ways:

i. We have not understood the real secret of America’s enormous strength, power and greatness – and so when dealing with the U.S. we are bound to mishandle it, and hence meet another failure due to our own ignorance of the decisive role of American public opinion.

279 “Bush’s shifting speech,” in *Washington Post*, November 9, 2006, A25. http://washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/200608/11//AR2006110802508___...112006/11/

280 *Ibid.*



ii. Second failure is the failure to appreciate the ability of a truly democratic system to correct the mistakes made by leadership whether intentionally or unintentionally. If we fail to appreciate this self correcting power of a truly democratic system, then we will never be able to establish liberation democracy in the Muslim world and consequently our civilization will remain weak. We will continue to be the victims of our own dictators and outside forces.

On the other hand if we keep focus on the dynamics of the American democracy then we learn that it was the change of American public opinion (translated into votes) which has tamed a powerful and determined leader and his aggressive political party, and now he is willing to listen to those whom he had rejected consistently over the past six years (2000–2006). The moral of this story for the Muslim world is to practice liberation democracy at home as it would enable our leaders to learn the art of peacefully and constructively mobilizing public opinion in favor of the desired causes – once they can learn to do it at home in a truly democratic system they will be able to deal with the U.S. also on mutually respectable terms by reaching out to the American public opinion in a persuasive way that appeals to the American people at large – and once the American people are convinced, their leaders and policy makers would respond accordingly too, as that's the norm of the democratic societies.



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