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# **The Christian Right and US Foreign Policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

By:

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Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy at Durham University

The School of Government and International Affairs  
University of Durham, United Kingdom

**March 2011**

## Abstract

The thesis discusses the role of the Christian Right in the US foreign policy decision making process. The research revealed that the Christian Right has long been fascinated with some international issues in general and US foreign policy in particular. The Christian Right's interest in international issues increased markedly during years of the George W. Bush presidency. It successfully widened its activities from domestic social conservative issues to foreign policy issues by participating in, articulating and lobbying for its religious version of American foreign policy. In assessing the role of the Christian Right in US foreign policy making, this dissertation examines three aspects of US foreign policy, namely Israel, international religious freedom and global humanitarianism. Based on these aspects, the Christian Right is seen as skilled in framing and defining issues. The Christian Right seems effective in selecting and prioritizing international issues that have a reasonable chance of being selected by foreign policy decision makers, especially in Congress. Moreover, the Christian Right has shown its maturity in seeking engagement and cooperation with other organizations, secular and religious, in order to advance its international goals. Finally, in pursuing and conveying its international agenda, the Christian Right has adopted a more moderate and less overtly religious approach. Instead of using its traditional religious rhetoric, the Christian Right has successfully projected its foreign policy preferences into the conventional realist discourse of American foreign policy that is largely based on the objective of national interest and national security. Nevertheless, this study does not, in any way, conclude that the Christian Right was able to influence or determine the direction of US foreign policy and its outcomes; however, it does suggest that the Christian Right did contribute and have an impact on the formulation of some US foreign policy. As such, the research contends that the role of the Christian Right is similar to other interest group lobbies and that its perceived influence on US foreign policy should not be exaggerated. Finally, the research suggests that the emergence of the Christian Right as an actor in asserting its global agenda through US foreign policy can possibly provide an example of how religious beliefs and values can become a potential source of "soft power". Together with the "climate of opinion" of the American public during the Bush administration, the "soft power" at domestic level could serve as a valuable new explanatory variable in understanding how the US foreign policy was formulated in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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## Declaration

None of the material contained in this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree in the University of Durham or any other university. None of the material contained in this thesis is based on joint research. The content of this thesis consists of the author's original individual contribution with appropriate recognition of any references being indicated throughout.

## **Statement of Copyright**

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

## **Dedication**

To those who taught me the meaning of love, patience and sacrifice:

My late father; Salleh Othman, my mother; Kelsom Jusoh

My beloved wife; Ayu Mazlan, my children; Anis Afifah, Anis Athirah, Adam and Adib  
and all my teachers and friends throughout this journey of knowledge

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## List of Abbreviations

ACPC	American Christian Palestine Committee
AIPAC	American Israel Public Affairs Committee
APC	American Palestine Committee
CAIR	Council on American-Islamic Relations
CBN	Christian Broadcast Network
CCP	Christian Council on Palestine
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CFIC	Christian Friends for Israeli Communities
CIPAC	Christians' Israel Public Action Campaign
CPC	Countries of Particular Concern
CREW	Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington
CUFI	Christians United for Israel
CWA	Concerned Women for America
ELCA	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
ELCCIC	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
EPPC	Ethics and Public Policy Center
ERA	Equal Rights Amendment
FBO	Faith Based Organization
FOF	Focus on Family
FRC	Family Research Council

GOP	Grand Old Party
HIPCs	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
ICEJ	International Christian Embassy Jerusalem
ICL	International Christian Leadership
IFCJ	International Fellowship of Christians and Jews
IGE	Institute for Global Engagement
IRD	Institute on Religion and Democracy
IRFA	International Religious Freedom Act
IRS	Internal Revenue Service
ISNA	Islamic Society of North America
KKK	Ku Klux Klan
MPAC	Muslim Public Affairs Council
NAACP	The Advancement of Colored People
NAE	National Association of Evangelicals
NAW	National Association of Women
NCLCI	National Christian Leadership Council for Israel
NRB	National Religious Broadcasters
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PPAF	Program to Protect America's Freedom
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
UN	The United Nations
USCIRF	The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Background of the Research

#### 1.0.1 Religion in International Relations

This thesis is about the Christian Right, a conservative Christian movement in the US, and its role in the formation of US foreign policy and decision making during the George W. Bush administration (2000–2009). My interest in this subject started when the issue of the resurgence of religion in international relations began to be widely discussed academically in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Huntington, a prominent international relations expert predicted in 1996 that religion was becoming more important to world politics. He stated that: “In the modern world, religion is central, perhaps the central force, that motivates and mobilizes people.”<sup>1</sup> In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, discourse on the role of religion in foreign policy decision making has been growing and many scholars recognize that religion is one of the forces that could contribute to decision making. Historically, the role of religion in lobbying activities making has been ignored or found less analytically important. Benson and Williams in their study on the role of religion in the decision making at congressional level in 1980s concluded that: “We do not know what accounts for this inhibition. It reflects in part, a general tendency in social sciences to ignore religion, to pretend that it is something too ephemeral or inconsequential to consider as a force capable of shaping or forming human behaviour.”<sup>2</sup>

The discussions around the resurgence of religion in international relations mostly contend that the role of religion is becoming more salient and should become part of the analytical focus in understanding international relations in general or a state’s foreign policy in

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<sup>1</sup> Samuel.P Huntington, *The Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of the World Order* (New York, 1996), p. 27

<sup>2</sup> Peter Benson and Dorothy Williams, *Religion on Capitol Hill* (New York, 1982), p. 5

particular. Their proponents believe that religion has been, and perhaps still is, a central element of international relations. But, it has been overlooked for centuries as a substantial element in understanding world politics. Thus, many academic writings from contemporary international political scientists, such as Fox<sup>3</sup>, Scott<sup>4</sup>, Haynes<sup>5</sup>, Kubalkova<sup>6</sup>, Goldewijk<sup>7</sup>, Petito and Hatzopoulos<sup>8</sup> and Juergensmeyer,<sup>9</sup> have acknowledged that the 21st century has witnessed the resurgence of religion, not only at a national level but also as a global phenomenon. In addition, most commentators agree that religion plays an important role in state relations, diplomacy and foreign policy decision making. The emergence of religion in international politics has also been acknowledged by former Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, who argues that: "The 1990s had been a decade of globalization and spectacular technological gains; the information revolution altered our lifestyle, transformed the workplace, and fostered the development of a whole new vocabulary. There was however, another force at work. Almost everywhere, religious movements are thriving."<sup>10</sup>

In the context of American politics, the role of religion is undeniable. Walter Russell Mead, in his article in *Foreign Affairs* argues that:

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<sup>3</sup> Jonathan Fox, "Religion As an Overlooked Element of International Studies," *International Studies Review* 3 (2001), Jonathan Fox, "Religion and State Failure : An Examination of the Extent and Magnitude of Religious Conflict from 1950 to 1996," *International Political Science Review* 25 (2004), Jonathan Fox and Samuel Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations* (New York 2004)

<sup>4</sup> Scott R Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred : Religion, Violence and Reconciliation* (Lanham, 2000), Scott R Appleby, *Religious Fundamentalisms and Global Conflict* (New York, 1994)

<sup>5</sup> Jeffrey Haynes, "Religion and International Relations after 9/11," *Democratization* 12 (June, 2005), Jeff Haynes, "Religion and International Relations : What are the Issues?," in *International Politics* (2004)., Jeff Haynes, *Religion in Global Politics* (London, 1998)., Jeffrey Haynes, "Religion and Foreign Policy Making in the USA, India and Iran: Towards a Research Agenda," *Third World Quarterly* 29 (2008)

<sup>6</sup> Vendulka Kubalkova, "Toward an International Political Theology," in *Religion in International Relations : The Return From Exile*, ed. Petito Fabio and Hatzopoulos Pavlos (New York, 2003)

<sup>7</sup> Berma Klein Goldewijk, *Religion and International Relations : Global Justice, Rights and Intercultural Agreements on Dignity - But Don't Ask Why*, Society for International Development (SID) (The Hague, 2005)

<sup>8</sup> Fabio Petito and Pavlos Hatzopoulos, eds., *Religion in International Relations: The Return from Exile* (New York, 2003)

<sup>9</sup> M. Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God : The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Los Angeles, 2003)

<sup>10</sup> Madeline Albright, *The Mighty and the Almighty : Reflections on America, God and World Affairs* (New York, 2006), p. 10

Religion has always been a major force in U.S. politics, policy, identity, and culture. Religion shapes the nation's character, helps form Americans' ideas about the world, and influences the ways Americans respond to events beyond their borders. Religion explains both Americans' sense of themselves as a chosen people and their belief that they have a duty to spread their values throughout the world. Of course, not all Americans believe such things – and those who do often bitterly disagree over exactly what they mean. But enough believe them that the ideas exercise profound influence over the country's behaviour abroad and at home.<sup>11</sup>

## 1.0.2 The Christian Right and Its Foreign Policy Interest

Historically, the traditional goal of the Christian Right movement was to transform the American public policy to become more socially and culturally conservative, based on Judeo-Christian traditional values. Thus, the movement centred its activism on social conservative issues such as pro-family, abortion, gay marriage, feminism, prayer at school and home schooling. As a result, the active role of the Christian Right, in contributing to the decision making process, especially in influencing and shaping number of social issues policies in the US, is highly recognized since the 1980s.<sup>12</sup> However, in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century we have witnessed the Christian Right widening its focus of activism from social conservative issues to foreign policy issues of the United States. Moreover, the Christian Right movement has widened its activism by articulating its religious vision for American foreign policy.<sup>13</sup> Recent developments, particularly during the two terms of the George W. Bush administration, show that the Christian Right movement has given considerable attention to some pertinent international issues. Andrew Heywood suggests:

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<sup>11</sup> Mead, Walter Russell, (2006) God's Country?, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 85 Issue 5, p. 24

<sup>12</sup> See for example John C. Green, Mark J. Rozel, and Clyde Wilcox, *The Christian Right in American Politics* (Washington D.C., 2003), James L. Guth et al., "Onward Christian Soldiers: Religious Activist Groups in American Politics," in *Interest Group Politics*, ed. Allan J. Cigler and Burdett A. Loomis (Washington, D.C., 1995), Matthew C. Moen, "Status Politics and the Political Agenda of the Christian Right," *The Sociological Quarterly* 29 (1988), Matthew C. Moen, *The Christian Right and Congress* (Tuscaloosa, 1989), Clyde Wilcox, "Evangelicals and the Moral Majority," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 28 (1989), Clyde Wilcox, *God's Warrior: The Christian Right in Twentieth-Century America* (Baltimore, 1992), Clyde Wilcox and Leopoldo Gomez, "The Christian Right and the Pro-Life Movement : An Analysis of the Sources of Political Support," *Review of Religious Research* 31 (1990)

<sup>13</sup> William Martin, "The Christian Right and American Foreign Policy," *Foreign Policy* Spring (1999)

Fundamentalist [the Christian Right] influence on the Bush administration has been clearest in relation to foreign policy, particularly in the aftermath of the September 11 terrorists attack. This was evident in two ways. First, it was reflected in greater emphasis being placed on humanitarianism and human rights policies, especially an increase in foreign aid to Africa. Second, it deepened US support for Israel and effected how the Bush administration set out to fight the “war on terror”... In this light, bolstering the position of Israel in the Middle East became a prime focus of US foreign policy.<sup>14</sup>

Likewise, Susan Page, a reporter for USA TODAY newspaper gave her comments on the present role of the Christian Right: “in recent years, without much notice, conservative Christians also have helped force the State Department to place a higher priority on battling religious persecution, set the stage for cease-fire in Sudan, enact legislation aimed at reducing prison rape in the USA and push for more funds to fight AIDS in Africa.”<sup>15</sup>

### **1.0.3 The Christian Right and the George W. Bush Administration**

The importance of evangelical grass roots in general and the Christian Right in particular as the hardcore supporters that provide a strong political base to George W. Bush, was widely discussed in American politics and its role in the Bush administration cannot be denied.<sup>16</sup> The rise of the Christian Right in American politics can be derived from the facts of two presidential elections. In the 2000 election, George W. Bush received 68 per cent of white evangelicals’ votes and in 2004, it increased by 10 per cent. The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life reported: “The 2004 exit poll showed that a whopping 78 percent of white evangelicals voted for President Bush and that they comprised 23 percent of the overall electorate, making them by far the single most potent voting bloc in the electorate.”<sup>17</sup> Due

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<sup>14</sup> Andrew Heywood, *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*, 4th ed. (New York, 2007), p. 303-304

<sup>15</sup> Susan Page, "Christian Right's Alliances Bend Political Spectrum," *USA TODAY*, 14 June 2005.

<sup>16</sup> See for example, John C. Green, "The American Religious Landscape and Political Attitudes: The Baseline for 2004," (2005)

<sup>17</sup> A Faith-Based Partisan Divide, Trends 2005 (Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, Pew Research Center, 2005 [cited 24th April 2008]); available from <http://pewforum.org/>

to the results, Russell Mead argues that the Christian Right was able to increase its presentation in both houses of Congress. In addition, he suggests that more than 25 per cent of representatives in both houses either claimed to be evangelicals or associated with the evangelicals.<sup>18</sup>

As a result, Bush was seen to develop a closer relationship with the Christian Right and his administration was considered as one of the fertile grounds for the Christian Right movement. For the Christian Right, Bush was its man in the White House. The following remark from Pat Robertson in 2001 could possibly show the truth behind that assumption. Robertson, a former head of the Christian Coalition, said: “For the first time since religious conservatives became a modern political movement, the president of the United States has become the movement’s de facto leader.”<sup>19</sup> In addition, Bush and his “God talk and rhetoric” made some observers more inclined to believe the Christian Right’s claims. In his Inaugural Address in January 2001, Bush articulated his personal religious belief when he related his foreign policy objectives to a divine calling to lead the world in a struggle between the forces of good and evil. In addition, he publicly declared that his mission was to shape the world after the American values of liberty, democracy and the free market. In a speech to religious broadcasters, he claimed that the United States had a God-given mission to bring the divine gift of freedom “to every human being in the world”.<sup>20</sup> Even before winning the White House, Bush already related his commitment to politics to his religious conviction. He confessed that he believed he had been divinely called to serve his country. He said: “I feel like God wants me to run for president. I can’t explain it, but I sense my country is going to need me. Something is going to happen. And at that time my country will need me.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Quoted in Lee Marsden, *For God's Sake: The Christian Right and U.S. Foreign Policy* (London 2008), p. 34

<sup>19</sup> D. Milbank, "Religious Right Finds its Center in Oval Office: Bush Emerges as Movement's Leader after Robertson Leaves Christian Coalition," *Washington Post*, 24 December 2001

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Amy E. Black, "With God on Our Side: Religion in George W. Bush's Foreign Policy Speeches," in *The Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association* (Illinois, 2004)

<sup>21</sup> Stephen Mansfield, *The Faith of George W. Bush* (2004)

Historically, it is normal for American presidents to include religious themes in their speeches. However, the religious rhetoric of Bush, especially on his foreign policy, was exclusive and excessive. Some argue that George W. Bush's religious rhetoric was designed to appeal to his central political supporters, who were predominantly conservative Christians, and the reality shows that there was nothing to contradict that perception. Lindsay argues that the former president was surrounded by more evangelicals than any other president in the last five decades. He contends that the number of evangelicals that were working inside the Bush administration was huge, and they became one of the influential forces that may have contributed to actual policy decisions. He also argues that the Bush administration sought opinions and consultations from evangelical leaders more often than other presidents.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, Kaplan concludes that the religious right exerted an "unprecedented level of influence" in Bush's administration<sup>23</sup> and that there were a significant number of Christian Right activists inside the Bush administration.<sup>24</sup> Kaplan, the author of *With God on Their Side: George W. Bush and the Christian Right*, claims that the access of the Christian Right leaders to the White House and to George W. Bush was "understated" by the media and the public. She justifies her claims by arguing that the opportunity to access the White House and the president was wide open, as the former vice-president of the Family Research Council, Kay Cole James, was the White House director of personnel and she was considered the "gate-keeper" for any arrangement to visit the White House or to meet the president.<sup>25</sup>

According to Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW), a watchdog group based in Washington DC, some influential Christian Right leaders were amongst the most regular visitors to the White House during the Bush tenure. In a press release in September 2009, CREW reveals that James Dobson of Focus on the Family visited the White House 24 times from April 2001 to June 2006, and ten of those visits were to meet

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<sup>22</sup> Michael Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power: How Evangelicals Joined the American Elite* (New York, 2007), p. 26-27

<sup>23</sup> Esther Kaplan, *With God on their Side: George W. Bush and the Christian Right* (New York, 2005)

<sup>24</sup> "With God on Their Side, How Christian Fundamentalists Are Controlling the Bush White House and Interfering with Americans' Lives: A Conversation with Author Esther Kaplan," *Church and State*, January 2006

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. Available at <http://www.au.org/media/church-and-state/archives/2006/01/with-god-on-thei.html>

the president. The executive director of the Traditional Values Coalition, Andrea Sheldon Lafferty, visited 50 times from February 2001 to March 2008 and six of those visits were with President Bush. Meanwhile, between May 2001 and August 2006, Wendy Wright, president of Concerned Women for America, visited the White House 43 times and four of the visits were to President Bush. Jerry Falwell, a renowned Christian Right leader visited White House eight times from May 2001 and September 2004 and, of those visits, he met Bush three times. Tony Perkins, the president of the Family Research Council, made 14 visits to the White House from February 2001 to September 2006 and met President Bush twice. Paul Weyrich, one of the founders of the Christian Right movement, visited the White House 17 times, including six visits to President Bush, between May 2001 and July 2005. Based on these records, CREW concludes that “leading conservative Christian leaders may have led a significant voice in President Bush’s administration, and many seem to have had the ear of the president himself.”<sup>26</sup>

#### **1.0.4 The Christian Right and George W. Bush’s Foreign Policy**

Many American foreign policy analysts and researchers contend that the Christian Right also had some influence in Bush’s foreign policy making.<sup>27</sup> Lee Marsden, in his book *For God’s Sake: The Christian Right and U.S. Foreign Policy* (2008) suggests that the Christian Right was able to exert its influence on Bush’s foreign policy in various aspects, such as the administration’s policies towards Israel, human rights, humanitarian assistance and environmental issues.<sup>28</sup> A growing number of foreign policy analysts have connected the emerging “Bush Doctrine” in American foreign policy to the influence of Christian Right. Berlet and Nikhail argue that the US invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan was influenced by

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<sup>26</sup> Quoted in Religious Right Had Run of Bush White House (Americans United for Separation of Church and State, 2009 [cited 20 February 2010]); available from <http://www.au.org/media/church-and-state/archives/2009/10/religious-right-had-run-of.html>

<sup>27</sup> See for instance Martin Durham, "Evangelical Protestantism and Foreign Policy in the United States after September 11," *Patterns of Prejudice* 38 (2004), William Martin, "The Christian Right and American Foreign Policy," *Foreign Policy* Spring (1999), Duanne M. Oldfield, "The Evangelical Roots of American Unilateralism: The Christian Right's Influence and How to Counter it," *Foreign Policy in Focus* (15 July 2004) available from <http://www.fpif.org>, Paul S. Boyer, "Biblical Prophecy and Foreign Policy," in *Quoting God*, ed. Claire H. Badaraco (Waco, 2005)

<sup>28</sup> Lee Marsden, *For God’s Sake: The Christian Right and U.S. Foreign Policy* (London 2008)

the Christian Right's apocalyptic thinking and interpretations drawn from the Book of Revelation in the Bible.<sup>29</sup> M. Arif, in his book entitled *The Cross and the Crescent: The Rise of American Evangelicalism and the Future of Muslims*, tries to prove that Bush's policy particularly in the Middle East was largely shaped by the American Christian Right.<sup>30</sup> A similar work by Kevin Phillips argues that the relationship between Bush and the rise of the Christian Right is very strong and believes this fundamentalist group held a paramount position in the Bush administration and policy making.<sup>31</sup> In addition, Madeleine Albright notes that George W. Bush and American foreign policy were deemed to have been influenced by the religious messianic beliefs of the Christian Right. According to her: "Within the United States, there are those who see the president [George W. Bush] as a radical presiding over a foreign policy that is, in the words of one commentator, 'more than pre-emptive, it is theologically presumptuous; not only unilateral, but dangerously messianic; not just arrogant, but rather bordering on the idolatrous and blasphemous'."<sup>32</sup> Another researcher, Duane Oldfield, believes that the administration of George W. Bush was very much in line with the Christian Right's international agenda. He states that:

The administration of George W. Bush is pursuing a unilateralist foreign policy on issues ranging from the Iraq War to global warming to the International Criminal Court is obvious to observers at home and abroad. Also clear is the fact that the Bush policy, at least in its broad outline, is very much in keeping with the preferences of the Christian Right ... the President, himself a born-again Christian, does not hesitate to use a moralistic, implicitly religious language in defense [of] policies.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Chip Berlet and Nikhail Aziz, *Culture, Religion, Apocalypse and the Middle East Foreign Policy* (Interhemispheric Resource Centre, 2003 [cited 15 March 2006]); available from <http://www/irc-online.org>

<sup>30</sup> Muhammad Arif Zakaullah, *The Cross and the Crescent: The Rise of American Evangelicalism and the Future of Muslims* (Kuala Lumpur, 2004)

<sup>31</sup> Kevin Phillips, *American Theocracy : The Peril and Politics of Radical Religion, Oil, and Borrowed Money in the 21st Century* (New York, 2005)

<sup>32</sup> Madeline Albright, *The Mighty and the Almighty : Reflections on America, God and World Affairs* (New York, 2006), p. 4-5

<sup>33</sup> Duane M. Oldfield, "The Evangelical Roots of American Unilateralism: The Christian Right's Influence and How to Counter it," *Foreign Policy in Focus* (15 July 2004), p. 20



## **1.1 Research Objectives and Scope of the Research**

As stated before, the emergence of the Christian Right in American politics during Bush's era has attracted much studies of the role and impact of the movement in American politics. However, not much research attempts to study the role of the Christian Right on the US foreign policy making process. Thus, my research seeks to examine the role, engagement, and contributions of the Christian Right to US foreign policy making during the Bush administration, especially that which took place at the congressional level. Three particular aspects of the relationship between the Christian Right and Bush's foreign policy will be studied. They are: US policy towards Israel, international religious freedom, and global humanitarianism. The questions that will be raised in this study are: did the Christian Right participate significantly in US foreign policy making process around those three particular issues? Was the Christian Right able to influence the foreign policy making process? If so, in what ways was the Christian Right able to exert influence?<sup>34</sup> And if it did, what was its role, and to what extent did it affects the process or the implementation of US foreign policy? By answering those questions, the research will be able to show the level of involvement, challenges, techniques and tactics employed by the Christian Right in harbouring its influence on US foreign policy making.

It is worth noting that to give a comprehensive definition of the term "influence" is quite a formidable task. The concept of influence in politics generally concerns the nature and scope of the imposed limits, and the degree to which "influence" is recognized by other influential entities. The concept of influence also normally refers to the active cooperation of political elites, influential organizations and other influential forces. However, the complex nature of "influence" makes it rather subjective and difficult to be measured in specific terms. Therefore, in this context, the extent of "influence" enjoyed by the Christian Right in American Congress, among interest groups, public opinion and media, either perceived or real, generally cannot be measured in quantitative terms. On the other hand, it can be only measured qualitatively against the relative success that the Christian Right has achieved in furthering the cause of its international agendas. In addition, the degree of

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influence wielded by a group can be determined by the success that the group achieves in its lobbying endeavours, especially in the Congress. This could be in the form of the number of bills passed, deemed to fit their agenda, or issues that are initially brought forward by the group and picked up, prioritised and discussed at any stage in the policy making process. In addition, the number of law makers “recruited” by, “sympathetic” to or “allied” with the Christian Right, could be relied upon to support the cause of its interest. Nevertheless, not all claims of influence made about the Christian Right are true. Some of these claims occur where the actual influence is small or perhaps absent.

Though this research tries to examine the role and impact of the Christian Right on the US foreign policy making process in the most detailed manner, it still has its constraints and shortcomings. First and foremost, the scope and focus of the study are major limitations as they prevent the research from exceeding what has been outlined. Therefore, this study only examines three selected US foreign policies, namely Israel, global religious freedom and international humanitarianism during the Bush administration from 2000 to 2009. These foreign policies will be assessed to examine the role, engagement and contributions of the Christian Right during the foreign policy making process as well as the implementation of those policies. There are several reasons these three areas of foreign policy were chosen. Firstly, US foreign policies towards Israel, global religious freedom and international humanitarianism are the most relevant and contemporary issues within the Christian Right international interest. Thus, without focusing on these three issues, it is most likely the research would not achieve its objective. Secondly, data and materials for the research, both primary and secondary, are reasonably available for these three areas; thus they will be able to contribute to the reliability of the research.

The Christian Right movement consists of various organizations; therefore, it is impossible for this research to cover and examine all of them. Therefore, only five Christian Right organizations will be examined in this research. The main reason these organizations were selected was due to fact that they are regarded as the most influential and well known organizations within the Christian Right spectrum. Furthermore, these organizations are the main forces behind the Christian Right movement; hence, their perceptions, activities and statements can be regarded as representative of the Christian Right movement.

The duration and location of the research can be also considered shortcomings. As this research was conducted from May 2007 to August 2010, any data beyond this duration of time will be not included. In addition, the research is mostly being conducted in the United Kingdom, despite the topic of research being about the American Christian Right and US foreign policy. Truly, the most appropriate place to conduct this research would be in the United States. However, this shortcoming is not a major obstacle to producing reliable and sound academic research as most of the primary and secondary data and material can be obtained from various online sources. Nevertheless, the researcher has successfully undergone three months' fieldwork research in Washington DC. The three-month period has been fully utilized in order to gain sufficient empirical data. A series of face-to-face interviews with relevant respondents were carried out by the researcher. In addition, during that period, the researcher regularly visited the Library of Congress to search primary reference materials.

## **1.2 Significance of the Study and its Contribution**

The study of this subject is largely motivated by the contemporary discourse of the resurgence of religion in international relations and my interest in the subject is heightened upon learning that many discussions claim that the Christian Right, a movement that is fundamentally shaped by its religious beliefs and values, was an influential force in shaping US foreign policy during the George W. Bush administration. This phenomenon needs to be studied academically in order to understand the dynamism of the movement as well as the possibility of any impact caused by the movement to international relations in general or to American foreign policy in particular. As noted earlier, the emergence of the Christian Right in American politics during the Bush administration has attracted many to study the role of the movement in exerting its influence on Bush's foreign policy. However, as far as this research is concerned, there have not been many attempts to study the role of the Christian Right on US foreign policy. Likewise, there is little attempt to examine to what extent the movement influenced Bush's foreign policy. The recent book by Marsden, *For God's Sake: The Christian Right and US Foreign Policy*, is perhaps the closest to this

study. However, in contrast to Marsden, who examines the role of the movement in Bush's foreign policy in general, this research tends to be more specific in selecting certain US foreign policy issues, namely Israel, international religious freedom and global humanitarianism where Jubilee 2000 and Sudan as case studies. Thus, the research provides more specific, details and contemporary discussion to evaluate the role of the Christian Right in US foreign policy.

The study seeks to contribute to the understanding of the Christian Right as a religious movement that attempts to influence foreign policy. Hence, the thesis enriches the discussion of the role of religion in the field of contemporary international relations. Specifically, it contributes to the study of the role and contributions of the Christian Right movement to US foreign policy making during George W. Bush's administration. In contrast to discussions that examine the making of US foreign policy within the boundary of in the White House or the State Department, the study offers a new academic analysis of US foreign policy making outside those two places. In this regards, the study highlights the role of the Christian Right as a religious advocacy or lobbies at congressional level and its engagement with some influential members and officials of subcommittees in the Congress. In the same way, this research provides a link between the often separated or ignored, the role of a religious movement that can potentially contribute to or integrate with other secular forces and have a certain level of impact on US foreign policy making. In addition, this thesis attempts to show that the Christian Right's religious beliefs and values, and its dynamic activism can be an alternative way to analyse US foreign policy making.

The research has no intention to challenge the present consensus understanding that agreed US foreign policy is largely based on overarching conventional factors such as national interest, geo-political interest, or economic interest and the US position in international politics. Neither does this endeavour claim that the Christian Right's role in US foreign policy can be regarded as one of the main sources that influence on the foreign policy making, but rather it is seen as complementary to the main factors in foreign policy decision making process. In other words, the research contends that the Christian Right was neither a leading force nor a monolithic factor in determining the direction of US foreign policy during the Bush administration. Nevertheless, the study shows that role of the

Christian Right was quite apparent in some areas of foreign policy that are considered as “non-crisis oriented”. Finally, the study illustrates that the Christian Right’s foreign policy, though mostly derived from its theological beliefs and religious values, may have worked together with Bush’s foreign policy in a way that was largely based on *realpolitik* justifications.

### **1.3 Research Methodology**

In any academic research, the selection of appropriate methods, particularly on how data is obtained by researchers, is crucially important as it ensures the validity of the study as well represents the ability of the researchers to understand and analyse their subject correctly. As such, this thesis employs a qualitative method in examining the role of the Christian Right in US foreign policy. According to Alexander George: “qualitative analysis of a limited number of crucial communications may often yield better clues to the particular intentions of a particular speaker at one moment in time than more standardized quantitative methods.”<sup>35</sup> The selection of a qualitative method in the study is mainly due to the fact that this research deals with the quality of entities and processes, and not with the measurement of quantity, intensity or frequency. In this study, a range of data collection techniques and data sources is used to examine the role and contributions of the Christian Right to the US foreign policy making process. The data collected for the research is derived from two sources. The first source is the empirical data that was gathered from interviews of selected respondents during fieldwork study in Washington DC and the second source is printed documents. The first group of printed documents, considered as “primary data”, was collected from government documents such as American congressional hearings and reports to the American Congress, websites and newspapers. The data gathered from the interviews and printed documents from prime sources provides useful, reliable details and contemporary information for the study. The second group of printed documents, which are considered as “secondary data” was gathered from academic

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<sup>35</sup> Alexander I. George, "Quantitative and Qualitative Approach to Contents Analysis," in *Trends in Content Analysis*, ed. I.S. Poll (Urbana, IL, 1995), p. 7

literature such as journals, books and magazines. The choice of the literature from the “secondary data” was selected carefully to complement the empirical investigation.

As a main element of the qualitative method involves generating conversations with people on a specific topic or range of topics, empirical data for this research was obtained from a series of semi-structured and open-ended interviews with selected respondents. Thus, this study involves interview sessions with 16 respondents<sup>36</sup> who are related to the study. The interview sessions were conducted during fieldwork research in Washington DC from March to May 2009. Among the respondents, ten of them were the representatives of what the researcher considered “Faith Based Organizations” (FBOs). Five of the respondents of the FBOs were representatives of the Christian Right advocacy or interest groups and five respondents were from other FBOs that are considered relevant to the general theme of the research. The five organizations of the Christian Right are: Concerned Women for America (CWA), the Family Research Council (FRC), Eagle Forum, and Focus on the Family (FOF). Other organizations are: National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), Institute for Global Engagement (IGE), Jews on First, Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC) and the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA).

The other six respondents were individuals who are related directly to the scope of study. They are: Nina Shea (Senior Fellow, Center Hudson Institute), Alan F.H. Wisdom (Vice President, Institute on Religion & Democracy), Thomas F. Farr (Former American Diplomat and the first director of the State Department’s Office of International Religious Freedom), Rick Santorum (Former American Senator 1995-2007 and Senior Fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center), Allen D. Hertzke (Visiting Senior Fellow at the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life), and Suhail Khan (Senior Fellow at the Institute for Global Engagement).

The interviews were carried out during the fieldwork research in Washington DC from March to May 2009. Prior to the interviews, respondents were contacted by email and telephone. The date, time and venue for the interviews were chosen at the respondents’

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<sup>36</sup> See Appendix A for the full list of names and organizations of the respondents

convenience. The interview sessions involving a verbal exchange between researcher and respondents were conducted mostly face to face. However, three interviews were conducted via telephone. Of these, two respondents, Tim Goeglin of Focus on the Family and Salam al-Marayati of MPAC, were not available to be interviewed face to face, because of their tight schedule and Luoay M. Safi of ISNA lives quite far from Washington DC as he works at the ISNA headquarters in Indiana. The interviews used semi-structured and open-ended questions.<sup>37</sup> The semi-structured questions were constructed by examining some particular variables that contribute to the research objectives. Semi-structured and open-ended interviews are considered more appropriate for this study as they provided flexibility according to the orientation of the respondents and researcher. The interview process began with the researcher self-introducing and explaining the objective of the research and the topic of the research, followed by more purposive questions as listed in the questionnaire. At times additional questions were asked depending upon the individual's expertise. Additional questions such as prompted questions or in-depth questions were asked in response to certain topics in order to increase clarity and understanding of more complex issues or answers. These involved a combination of personal understanding and intellectual judgement of the researcher. In this regard, there was flexibility in terms of creating new questions and some questions were skipped or not asked according to the order in which the questions had been prepared. With the consent of the respondents, all interviews sessions were recorded on digital audio recorder and were manually transcribed. During the interview sessions, the researcher remained attentive and observant and struck a balance between listening and talking. In addition, notes and key points were taken during the interviews to ensure data was not lost or misinterpreted.

#### **1.4 Theoretical Framework**

As discussed in the earlier sections, the study of the role and contribution of the Christian Right to US foreign policy making involves two important aspects, namely the role of

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<sup>37</sup> See Appendix B for list of the questions.

religion in international relations in general and the role of religious organizations in the foreign policy making process. Each aspect attracts a different kind of theoretical framework. While the theoretical discussion of the role of religion in international relations is largely dominated by the social constructivist approach, the explanation of the role and impact of religious organizations in foreign policy making has mostly been discussed from the interest group theoretical perspective. Hence, in this section, I divide the discussion into two parts. In part one, the discussion briefly illustrates the social constructivist theoretical perspective as a useful approach to understand the role of religion in international relations in general and US foreign policy during the Bush administration in particular. In part two, the discussion focuses on the interest group theoretical paradigm as an approach to study the role of religious groups or religious lobbies in foreign policy decision making. I am not developing a new theoretical model, but rather seek to offer alternative explanations of the role of religion and religious groups in the US foreign policy decision making process. My rationale for discussing those two theoretical perspectives is that both can be competing factors and possibly contribute theoretically towards understanding the role of the Christian Right in US foreign policy making in particular and in international politics in general. Thus, this section suggests that, in order to understand US foreign policy during the Bush administration, we must consider the contribution of social factors, such as faith, ideas and values, as well as domestic actors such as religious lobbies, as other important sources in formulating foreign policy. However, it should be noted here that the discussion of social constructivism is not the focus of this study as that theoretical approach is mostly applicable to the general theory of international relations. In other words, this study mostly focuses on exploring the role of the Christian Right as an interest group in US foreign policy making.

#### **1.4.1 Social Constructivism**

Theoretically, religion affects people, societies and states. It creates a worldview that contains some kind of order and meaning for existence. Christiano et al. stress the importance of meaning and order when it comes to religion. They argue: “Religious culture [...] is a type that for believers is primary, for it comes close to defining identity and



purpose for them in this existence.”<sup>38</sup> The revival of religion is certainly part of a global search for identity and belonging for community, social structure, institutions and new sets of orientations that provide meaning and purpose. Of relevance in this context is the fact that religion both contributes to the content of the identity of global religious movements and at the same time it continues to be rooted in local faith communities with their own religious values and traditions.<sup>39</sup>

Conventional international relations (IR) scholars who come from a realist school of thought generally dismiss religion as part of their analysis in providing understanding as to how and why certain foreign policies came into existence. According to the realist perspective, foreign policy rests solely on material or rational justifications, such as on national or economic interest. The proponents of realism generally adopt an approach which presumes that religion ought to be separated in the study of international relations as it has no important role to play in society and states.<sup>40</sup> Renowned IR scholar, Hans Morgenthau, argues that it is impossible for a good politician to be a good Christian at the same time. He states: “It is a priori impossible for a political man to be at the same time a good politician – complying with the rules of political conduct – and to be a good Christian – complying with the demands of Christian ethics. In the measure that he tries to be one, he must choose not to be the other.”<sup>41</sup>

The realist approach that had great influence on the dominant theories of international relations is often described as state-centric, which means that analysis is focused largely within the secular state-system, ignoring social activity dimensions, such as religion, which has its own impact on international relations.<sup>42</sup> The proponents of realism, under the assumption that the states are in the anarchic system, focus on material resources as the

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<sup>38</sup> Kevin J. Christiano, William H. Jr. Swatos, and Peter Kivisto, *Sociology of Religion: Contemporary Developments* (Walnut Creek, 2002), p. 273

<sup>39</sup> Scott M. Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Relations: The Search for the Soul of the Twenty-First Century* (New York, 2005)

<sup>40</sup> Jonathan Fox and Samuel Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations* (New York 2004)

<sup>41</sup> Hans Morgenthau, "The Demand of Prudence," *World View* 3 (June, 1960), p. 6

<sup>42</sup> Vendulka Kubalkova, "Toward an International Political Theology," in *Religion in International Relations: The Return From Exile*, ed. Petito Fabio and Hatzopoulos Pavlos (New York, 2003)

main way of accumulating power, which is the primary goal for every state in order to obtain their national interest of survival; thus religion is commonly excluded from the analysis.<sup>43</sup> Michael Walzer, a political theorist, argues that mixing religious values with foreign policy decision making is dangerous. He says: “I suggest that we need to worry about faith – for when it turns to dogma and certainty, as it frequently does, it tends to override morality ... a faith-based foreign policy is a bad idea.”<sup>44</sup>

However, some international relations scholars question the rational actor model that the realist approach relies upon heavily. In this regards, most of the critics come from the tradition of social constructivism, especially the writings of Alexander Wendt.<sup>45</sup> In general, social constructivists argue that the rational actor model ignores the perceptions or identities of the agents involved. In addition, they argue that approaches employed by realists ignore the importance of religion in the era of globalization. They believe that a religion that constitutes elements such as ideas, identity, norms, values and culture also has its own dynamic entity, force and shape, and influences actors in international relations. Therefore, the emergence of social constructivism in international relations theory could illuminate the significance of religion in the study of international relations. In addition, social constructivists contend that international relations is a product of social reality rather than material variables. As such, proponents of social constructivism suggest that the way Americans perceive themselves and others may contribute to decision making about certain foreign policies. Thus, social constructivists are of the opinion that ideational, normative and cultural factors should be considered as important as material ones, since these unobservable matters also affect states’ or agents’ identities, which in turn are considered to have large effect on their behaviour. Finnemore and Sikkink argue that social constructivism is: “an approach to social analysis that asserts the following: (a) human interaction is shaped primarily by ideational factors, not simply material ones; (b) the most important ideational factors are widely shared or ‘intersubjective beliefs’, which are not

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<sup>43</sup> Jonathan Fox and Samuel Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations* (New York 2004)

<sup>44</sup> In Ernest Lefever, *Ethics and World Politics* (Baltimore, 1972), p. 28

<sup>45</sup> See Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of it : The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organisation* 46 (1992), Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge, 1999)

reducible to individuals; and (c) these shared beliefs construct the interests and identities of purposive actors.”<sup>46</sup>

This means that a social constructivist framework entertains more than simply notions of state-centrism. To constructivists, the fluidity and interests, rather than rigidity of structures and institutions, is what is also of paramount importance in analysing phenomena in international relations, such as the role of religions in constructing states’ foreign policies. In this regard, the Christian Right’s activism and agenda could provide some ideational, normative and cultural factors to the officials in the process of foreign policy making. The discussion in this thesis shows the possibility and suitability of the above theoretical arguments in understanding the role of religion and its contribution to the process of US foreign policy making in some particular areas.

Assertions of the incompatibility of constructivism and realism in theorizing international relations are increasingly visible. Nevertheless, there are some writings that attempts to “harmonize” between the two schools of thought. Barkin for instance argues that these two theories are compatible with each other due to the fact that both of them accept the centrality of state and power in politics. Wendt, a well known constructivist, for instance, explicitly accepts that power matters in international relations, thus, the basic realist premise is being accepted here. Based on this, Barkin contends that constructivism is actually rooted in realism as “power” is traditionally the core and distinct concept of realism. He furthermore argues that the classical realists actually accepted that moral ideals are an integral and necessary part of the practice of international politics and that political realism in the absence of morality, in the absence of a vision of utopia, is both sterile and pointless. Carr for example argues that morality can be used as a tool of power. In this regard, Barkin argues that power can be used to promote a certain preferred political morality, or to promote a state’s interests. On this basis, he introduced the term “Realist

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<sup>46</sup> Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, "Taking Stock: The Constructivist Research Program in International Relations and Comparative Politics," *Annual Review of Political Science* 4 (2001), p. 392–393

Constructivism” This combination of realism and constructivism is appropriate to the present analysis.<sup>47</sup>

#### **1.4.2 Interest Group Theory**

There are two theoretical frameworks that are commonly used to study the Christian Right: the first is the social movement theory and the second is interest group theory. This study prefers to use the interest group theoretical framework to explain the Christian Right’s attempts to influence US foreign policy decision making. In addition, the study considers the Christian Right as a religious lobby group that generates lobbying activities within the broad definition of the term “interest group” lobbies. My argument is largely based on previous studies by Hertzke<sup>48</sup> and Hofrenning.<sup>49</sup> They suggested that lobbying activities by religiously-affiliated organizations can be referred to as religious lobbies. However, Yamane and Oldmixon prefer to use the term “religious advocacy” instead of “religious lobbies” to describe religious group lobbies in the United States.<sup>50</sup> Thus, in this research, the term “religious lobbies” and “religious advocacy” are employed interchangeably to describe the Christian Right’s activism in asserting its influence on US foreign policy decision making. Snow and Brown suggest that interest groups are organized groups of people who share similar interests and attempt to influence public policy in line with their preferences. In doing so, the interest groups normally formulate common beliefs and concerns of individuals into a manageable set of interests that they can represent and relate to the policy makers through lobbying, information and political pressure. Snow and Brown also argue that, besides the role of governmental actors in foreign policy decision making, there are also non-governmental actors, such as interest groups, think tanks and the general public’s perception, which provide information and political pressure during the

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<sup>47</sup> Samuel Barkin, "Realist Constructivism," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 31 (2003)

<sup>48</sup> Allen D. Hertzke, *Representing God in Washington: The Role of Religious Lobbies in American Polity* (Knoxville, TN, 1988)

<sup>49</sup> James B. Hofrenning, *In Washington but Not of it: The Prophetic Politics of Religious Lobbyists* (Philadelphia, PA, 1995)

<sup>50</sup> David Yamane and Elizabeth A. Oldmixon, "Religion in the Legislative Arena: Affiliation, Salience, Advocacy, and Public Policymaking," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 31 (2006)

formation of preferences for foreign policies.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, Milner suggests that the preferences of interest groups and the dynamics of party systems are among the most important factors that determine American foreign policy. In this respect, interest groups play a substantial role in defining “national interests”, preferences and priority during the foreign policy decision making process.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, by using the above description, I contend that the role of Christian Right is similar to other interest group lobbies that are mostly involved in the political process to seek its particular interests and benefits. In addition, it has many similar characteristics, approaches, patterns, techniques and strategies to other interest group lobbies.

Interest group theorists generally attempt to explain various groups that have mobilized their efforts to influence policy or decision making around issues related to their interests. Proponents of the theory suggest that interest groups play an important role in aggregating ideas and interests of individuals and articulating them into a group agenda.<sup>53</sup> Thus, interest group theorists, especially those working in the tradition of interest group pluralism suggest that public policy is the product of negotiation and compromise between various competing interest groups.<sup>54</sup>

One of the earliest scholars who attempted to establish interest group theory was David Truman. In his research in the 1950s he contended that the emergence of interest groups in a democratic system is healthy and should be recognized as part of social forces. Based on the pluralist model, Truman suggested that interest groups provide a natural function of a pluralistic society; one interest group would naturally react to counterbalance the influence of the other interest group in what he called a “mutual adjustment” approach. In response to the “counterbalance” created by interest groups, the government would be more democratic and accountable to society in introducing any new policy. He contended that, because of

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<sup>51</sup> Donald M. Snow and Eugene Brown, *Beyond the Water's Edge* (New York, 1997)

<sup>52</sup> Helen Milner, "International Theories of Cooperation: Strengths and Weakness," *World Politics* 44 (1992), p. 494

<sup>53</sup> Robert H. Salisbury, "The Paradox of Interest Groups in Washington : More Groups, Less Clout," in *The New American Political System*, ed. Anthony King (Washington, D.C, 1990)

<sup>54</sup> Allen D. Hertzke, *Representing God in Washington: The Role of Religious Lobbies in American Polity* (Knoxville, TN, 1988)

interest groups' activism, the interests of society will be represented and protected, and eventually social peace and stability will emerge.<sup>55</sup> However, scholars like Almond and Wilson consider interest groups to only represent the interests of a small quantity of individuals or "intense minority" and articulate those interests to become the group's agenda that potentially sideline the interests of the majority.<sup>56</sup>

Another proponent of interest group theory is Allen D. Hertzke. He is among the pioneers in explaining religious groups lobbies at Capitol Hill by using the interest group theoretical framework. He found that not many studies conducted by researchers in interest group theory examined religious groups and their impact on the policy making process in the US. He says: "Interest group scholars have not paid much attention to religious interests, while scholars or religion and politics have largely ignored the lobbies – concerning themselves with either philosophical or constitutional questions or mass attitudes and voting behaviour."<sup>57</sup> He furthermore suggests that the religious environment in the United States is highly pluralistic and involves various religious groups and organizations. Thus, he contends that the pluralistic model or group theory is most suitable for examining religious lobbies. In addition, he argues that the role of religious lobby groups has become more salient in American politics in recent years. He found that religious lobbies were mostly targeting Congress as an avenue to exert their influence on the formulation of public policy. In addition, his research reveals that the religious values and world views of congressmen or elected officials at the subcommittee level are important factors to determine whether the lobbies can gain access to Congress or not. In addition, he found that congressmen were more sympathetic and receptive to the values espoused by a particular group if those values are in line with theirs.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> David B. Truman, *The Governmental Process* (New York, 1971)

<sup>56</sup> Gabriel A. Almond, "Comparative Study of Interest Groups," *The American Political Science Review* 53 (1958), Graham K. Wilson, *Interest Groups* (Cambridge, 1990)

<sup>57</sup> Allen D. Hertzke, "Representing God in Washington: The Role of Religious Lobbies in the American Polity" Ph. D Thesis (University of Wisconsin - Madison, 1986), p. 7

<sup>58</sup> Allen D. Hertzke, *Representing God in Washington: The Role of Religious Lobbies in American Polity* (Knoxville, TN, 1988)

Hofrenning is another scholar who studies religious lobbies within the interest group theoretical framework. His study on religious lobbies in the United States, relates these religious lobbies to Biblical prophets. His suggestion is due to the fact that the religious lobbies are able to convey and highlight Biblical messages, as well as criticize and challenge American policy that contradicts Judeo-Christian values.<sup>59</sup> Both scholars, Hertzke and Hofrenning, suggest that the development of religious lobbies in the United States is not a new phenomenon, but part of the history of religion in America. Moreover, they believe the emergence of the Christian Right in American politics contributes significantly to the political science discipline, especially the study of religious interest group activities and theory. In fact, many previous studies conclude that the Christian Right phenomenon and its role as a religious lobby has proven that the existence of religion in politics manifest the “uniqueness” of the United States’ social and political system as compared to other modern secular western states.<sup>60</sup>

### **1.4.3 Interest Group Lobbies and US Foreign Policy**

Spanier and Uslander suggest that decision making in foreign policy is divided into two conditions; firstly, situations that involve crises and national security and, secondly, ongoing foreign policy that does not relate to crises or threats to the national interest. They suggest that for foreign policy that involves crises or security, decision making will rely heavily on the thinking of the president and a small group of experts. But, for non-crisis foreign policy, bureaucratic or negotiating actors such as interest groups or lobbies can also be involved in guiding the formulation and decision making.<sup>61</sup> In this regard, Hermann offers a definition of crisis foreign policy. He argues that crisis foreign policy involves a

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<sup>59</sup> James B. Hofrenning, *In Washington but Not of it: The Prophetic Politics of Religious Lobbyists* (Philadelphia, PA, 1995)

<sup>60</sup> L. E. Ebersole, *Church Lobbying in the Nation's Capital* (New York, 1951), Allen D. Hertzke, *Representing God in Washington: The Role of Religious Lobbies in American Polity* (Knoxville, TN, 1988), James B. Hofrenning, *In Washington but Not of it: The Prophetic Politics of Religious Lobbyists* (Philadelphia, PA, 1995), James B. Hofrenning, "Religious Lobbying and American Politics: Religious Faith Meets the Real World of Politics," in *In God We Trust? Religion and American Political Life*, ed. C.E. Smidt (Grand Rapids, MI, 2001)

<sup>61</sup> John Spanier and Eric M. Uslander, *American Foreign Policy Making and the Democratic Dilemmas*, 4th ed. (New York, 1985)

“situation that (1) threatened high priority goals of the decisional unit, (2) restricted the amount of time in which a response could be made, and (3) was expected or unanticipated by the members of the decision making unit.”<sup>62</sup>

In contrast to domestic policy making that largely emphasizes representation, formulation of foreign policy basically depends on expertise. Furthermore, foreign policy and decision making during conflict or crisis is generally more centralized and only involves the top level decision makers such as the president and White House officials. Scholars such as Spanier and Uslander contend that, for foreign policy making during the crisis or any policy that related to national security, the use of rational decision making, expert opinion, and the president’s and elite’s group decisions are most important. However, for non-crisis foreign policy making, the role of bureaucrats and congressman also has a significant contribution to the decision making.<sup>63</sup>

The rapid growth of various interest group lobbies in the United States since the 1980s has contributed to the changes in the foreign policy decision making process.<sup>64</sup> Interestingly, the growth of the interest group lobbies has also showed that they did not restrict their focus only to domestic policy but also targeted foreign policy. This development has resulted in changes in the agenda of interest group lobbies as well as the process of their lobbies. However, the growth of interest group lobbies on Capitol Hill was also due to the institutional changes and reforms in the Congress in the 1970s and 1980s. Crabb and Holt suggest that the institutional reform of the Congress has ended the era of congressional passivity in foreign policy decision making.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Quoted in Philip W. Dyer, “Foreign Policy Decision Making Analysis: Crisis as a Variable”, *Polity*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (1974) p. 583

<sup>63</sup> John Spanier and Eric M. Uslander, *American Foreign Policy Making and the Democratic Dilemmas*, 4th ed. (New York, 1985)

<sup>64</sup> Mark P. Petracca, “The Rediscovery of Interest Group Politics,” in *The Politics of Interests: Interest Groups Transformed*, ed. Mark P. Petracca (Boulder, 1992), p. 13

<sup>65</sup> Cecil V. Crabb and Pat M. Holt, *Invitation to Struggle: Congress, the President and Foreign Policy*, 2nd ed. (Washington, D.C., 1984), p. 60-61. See also Leroy N. Rieselbach, *Congressional Reform in the Seventies* (New Jersey, 1977)



The institutional changes of the Congress in the 1970s and 1980s that reformed the Congress are important episode that contributed significantly to changes in foreign policy decision making.<sup>66</sup> The “sunshine” laws in 1970s<sup>67</sup> allowed American citizens and organizations greater access to government documents and hearings, giving the public an opportunity to pressure foreign policy decision makers. The changes to the decision making system that require executive policy makers to get a basic consensus at congressional level gave greater room for congressmen to practice foreign affairs activism.<sup>68</sup> Consequently, it triggered transformation in the foreign policy decision making system. Thus, the institutional reforms within Congress, such as the increased number of committees on foreign affairs and open floor debates, allowed rank and file members of Congress to participate directly in foreign policy issues. Moreover, this era also witnessed the decentralisation of the House and Senate. It increased the power and resources of individual senators and representative through the creation of several subcommittees, thus allowed subcommittees to be more focused on particular international issues. In addition, the subcommittees became more influential and to some extent were able to determine foreign policy preferences as they could control the kind of legislation that was going to be tabled before the Congress.

The new electoral environment that emphasized the need for members of Congress to respond to the demands of their constituents was another important development that changed the overall foreign policy decision making process in Congress. Congressmen, in order to avoid a risk of defeat in next election, give more attention to their grassroots and constituency pressure that largely shaped by domestic considerations and demands. The rise of so called “intermestic” agenda created a new climate in the Congress as congressmen are more inclined to respond to the “environment of constant campaigning and increasing localism.”<sup>69</sup> As a result, member of Congress are free to take independent

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<sup>66</sup> See details of the discussions in Eric Schickler, Eric McGhee, and John Sides, "Remaking the House and Senate: Personal Power, Ideology, and the 1970s Reforms," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 28 (2003)

<sup>67</sup> See the Legislative Reorganization Act (1970)

<sup>68</sup> James M. Lindsay, *Congress and the Politics of U.S. Foreign Policy* (Baltimore, 1994)

<sup>69</sup> John Dumbrell, *The Making of US Foreign Policy* (Manchester 1990), p. 120

position on any international issues regardless of their political parties' affiliation.<sup>70</sup> Bailey suggested that this development has "...switched [Congress] from legislative-orientated to constituency-orientated activities."<sup>71</sup>

Ultimately, these changes have benefited interest groups directly or indirectly in that they allow them to play a more active role in influencing foreign policy formulation. At this point, interest groups have another avenue – subcommittees at Congress – and thus are able to approach and easily access decision makers, organize lobbying activities at Congress, freely raise international issues of their interests, and potentially have more opportunity to challenge executive branch policy choices; thus, they could possibly influence foreign policy formulation at one of the most strategic points of the decision making process.<sup>72</sup> After the Vietnam War, changes took place in the foreign policy decision making process as the war taught lessons to policy makers about the importance of maintaining public support and public opinion for long-term foreign policies. Therefore, except in a crisis situation, American foreign policy nowadays follows a less elitist and more pluralist model, in which the participation of non-governmental agencies, such as interest groups, and public opinion can play their role in asserting their influence on the decision making process. As suggested by Dumbrell: "Coalition of business interest, single industries lobbies, foreign governmental pressure, labour and 'citizens' interest and domestic ethnic lobbies have all had important influence on Congressional foreign policy since Vietnam."<sup>73</sup> Thus, instead of foreign policy being solely formulated based on traditional factors such as national security, geo-politics and economic interest, those developments showed that foreign policy formulation and decision making may also consider other factors, such as interest group lobbies, election results and changes in political imperatives.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Christopher J. Bailey, *The US Congress* (Oxford, 1989)

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 163

<sup>72</sup> John W. Dietrich, "Interest Groups and Foreign Policy: Clinton and the China MFN Debates," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 29 (1999), p. 281-282

<sup>73</sup> John Dumbrell, *The Making of US Foreign Policy* (Manchester 1990), p. 119

<sup>74</sup> I. M. Destler, Leslie H. Gelb, and Anthony Lake, "Breakdown: The Impact of Domestic Politics on American Foreign Policy," in *The Domestic Sources of American Foreign Policy*, ed. Charles W. Kegley Jr. and Eugene R. Wittkopf (New York, 1988), p. 23-28

The increasing roles of the US in world affairs after the cold war era and in the present international environment in the globalization era are another two important factors that increase the role of interest groups in the foreign policy decision making process. According to Dietrich, the end of the cold war has allowed the US to be more flexible in formulating its foreign policy. As the only global superpower, the US foreign policy calculation is no longer restricted to the issue of “global superpower rivalry”. Moreover, Dietrich argues that the demise of the Soviet Union meant the US lacked its traditional unifying and strategic vision of foreign policy.<sup>75</sup>

In sum, the above historical facts gave opportunities to interest group lobbies as they created new avenues for them to participate with, engage in, frame, debate and create new concepts and priorities for US foreign policy. In this context, the Christian Right as an interest group enjoys this opportunity and exploits it to protect and pursue its international interests by participating in the foreign policy decision making process at a domestic level.

However, there are some studies that suggest interest groups are not only far from being a key player in the foreign policy decision making process, but are also weak and rarely able to determine the success of their lobbies.<sup>76</sup> Milbrath, in his study on the role of interest groups in US foreign policy making, argues that, although interest groups are capable of having some impact on foreign policy proposals, their role is rather weak or, at best, “indirect and diffuse” in determining whether the proposed foreign policy is successful or not.<sup>77</sup> Nevertheless, recently the critical role of interest group lobbies in the United States in putting pressure on some areas of foreign policy decision making, particularly in non-crisis foreign policy, cannot be denied. For instance, the role of ethnic lobbies has been increasingly recognized by foreign policy analysts as an important and legitimate force that potentially influences foreign policy making, especially at the congressional level.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> John W. Dietrich, "Interest Groups and Foreign Policy: Clinton and the China MFN Debates," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 29 (1999), p. 282

<sup>76</sup> See for example discussion in Lester Milbrath, "Interest Group and Foreign Policy," in *Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy*, ed. James N. Rosenau (New York, 1967)

<sup>77</sup> Lester Milbrath, *Ibid.*, p. 251

<sup>78</sup> John Dumbrell, *The Making of US Foreign Policy* (Manchester 1997), p. 155

## **1.5 Overview of the Chapters**

Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 examines the broad meaning of the Christian Right movement. It illustrates various discussions that attempt to define the term “Christian Right” as well as important aspects of its historical background. The chapter highlights that the Christian Right is a dynamic movement and that it has evolved over time from various events in American history. In addition, it discusses the general perspective of the Christian Right’s theological doctrines, world view and its interest in American foreign policy. In Chapter 3, the study explores six influential interest groups of the Christian Right, namely: Concerned Women for American (CWA), Family Research Council (FRC), Focus on the Family (FOF), Eagle Forum and Christians United for Israel (CUFI). These organizations have been chosen because of their considered status as the most influential Christian Right advocacy groups. The discussion focuses on the organizations’ historical backgrounds, agendas, issues and forms of international engagement which relate to American foreign policy. This chapter contends that the Christian Right is not a monolithic movement in terms of its focus, objectives or activism. Despite the diversity of the various groups and lack of a specific foreign policy concentration, various actions of these advocacy groups have however, strengthened the role of the Christian Right as a whole in exerting its influence on US foreign policy. Finally, I contend that, although the motives of the Christian Right advocacy groups’ activism are strongly based on the Bible and Judeo-Christian values, the arguments and ideas behind their struggle are presented in a very nationalistic, secular and pragmatic manner. Chapter 4 examines the issue of the “special relationship” between the US and Israel and its relation to the Christian Right. The discussion argues that the support that was extended by conservative Christians in general and the Christian Right in particular, to Israel and Jewish people is a continuation of a long tradition in conservative Christian religion. In this regard, the chapter highlights the Christians United for Israel (CUFI) as a case study that shows the level of support offered by the Christian Right to Israel. Moreover, the chapter examines the similarities between the Christian Right and Christian Zionism in presenting their congruent interest in supporting the establishment and survival of the State of Israel. This chapter contends that,

in order to better understand the US-Israel “special relationship”, it is worth considering the role of conservative Christians as another contributing factor that influences US foreign policy towards Israel. Chapter 5 is a continuation of the discussion of the Christian Right and its support to Israel. This chapter explores the critical response of the Christian Right towards the issue of the Israel–Palestine conflict by examining two events, the 2002 Road Map Peace Plan and the Annapolis Conference. The chapter contends that the Christian Right has consistently demonstrated its earnest concern about American foreign policy towards Israel, particularly regarding the present attempts at Israel–Palestine conflict resolution. Moreover, the chapter discusses the Christian Right’s perspective on Islam and War on Terror. The chapter seeks to establish that, after the 9/11 attacks, the Christian Right extended its support for Israel beyond its traditional theological beliefs and that such support was offered under a banner of American national security and the War on Terror. I argue that American evangelicals are divided in their opinions and stances on the issue of the Christian Right’s unequivocal support for Israel. Similarly, Chapter 5 highlights that the evangelicals have different views on Islam and the War on Terror compared to the Christian Right. Chapter 6 examines the role of the Christian Right in advancing international religious freedom as part of its global human rights agenda. The chapter examines the efforts and contribution of the Christian Right in highlighting international religious persecution issues to the US administration. In addition, it discusses the role of the Christian Right before and after IRFA was passed by Congress. It seeks to show to what extent the Christian Right has been able to influence US foreign policy as well as its limitations. Towards the end of the chapter, the chapter suggests that, despite the Christian Right contributing significantly in advancing international religious freedom issue; it has little influence in the process of implementation of US foreign policy. In contrast to Chapter 6 that examines the Christian Right’s interest on international human right issue, Chapter 7 studies the contributions of the Christian Right to the global humanitarian issues. The focus will be given to the efforts and contribution of the Christian Right in highlighting some particular international humanitarian issues to the US administration. In this regards, the discussion in this chapter discusses two case studies. Firstly, it highlights briefly Jubilee 2000 - an international campaign to write off the external debts of the world’s poorest countries, and secondly, the Christian Right’s humanitarian involvement in

Sudan. While the case study on Jubilee 2000 discusses briefly the contribution of the Christian Right in framing the issue of debt relief in the United States, the Sudan case study illustrates generously the interest of the movement towards humanitarian crises in African countries. Nevertheless, both case studies seek to show the role and contribution of the Christian Right to the US foreign policy decision making in the area of humanitarian rights as part of its foreign policy priority. Finally, Chapter 6 is the conclusion of the thesis. The chapter sum up the discussion of the role of the Christian Right in the US foreign policy making process. Towards the end of the chapter, it highlights some suggestions for a further research on the issue of the Christian Right and US foreign policy.

## **CHAPTER 2: THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT: DEFINITIONS, HISTORICAL BACKGROUND, WORLD VIEW AND ITS INVOLVEMENT IN AMERICAN POLITICS**

### **2.0 Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to examine the broad meaning of the Christian Right movement. I illustrate various discussions that attempt to define the term “Christian Right” as well as some important aspects of its historical background. The chapter highlights that the Christian Right is a dynamic movement and that it has evolved over time from various events in American history. In order to better understand the term, it is important to overview the general perspective and context of the Christian Right itself including its historical background, theological doctrines as well as its world view and political interests. The final part of the chapter will provide a general historical background of the Christian Right’s interest in American foreign policy.

### **2.1 The Christian Right: A Broad Definition**

There are considerable difficulties in describing and defining the term “Christian Right”, as many scholars have tried to define the terminology within their own understanding and perspective. In other words, no single definition has yet been achieved to describe the Christian Right. Durham highlights that most researchers of the Christian Right have often defined it as a movement which is “seeking to impose its religious convictions on America and to replace a secular state with an evangelical authoritarianism.”<sup>79</sup> Some researchers have given the Christian Right a negative connotation and description. Tarrow, for example, regards the Christian Right as an “ugly movement along with Islamic

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<sup>79</sup> Martin Durham, *The Christian Right, the Far Right and the Boundaries of American Conservatism* (Manchester, 2000), p. 105

fundamentalism and skinhead groups.” Simons describes the Christian Rightists as religious fundamentalists who are “explicitly hostile to deliberation” and Jason Bivins suggests the Christian Right is “anti-liberalism, anti-democratic and has intolerant tendencies.”<sup>80</sup> Likewise, Hedges categorizes the Christian Right as a “cult” movement which politicizes faith to gain support. He called them “American fascists” who present an imminent threat to a pluralistic society as well as to human rights in the United States.<sup>81</sup> In addition, there is also a claim that the Christian Right is primarily concerned with implementing its zealous literal interpretation of the Bible, and has an agenda of establishing a theocratic government in the United States.<sup>82</sup>

There are some other definitions which are mostly developed within the context of either social or political conservatism. For instance, Shields defines the Christian Right as a movement of theologically orthodox Christian evangelicals that has been mobilized around conservative social causes.<sup>83</sup> Green et al. suggest a similar view by describing the Christian Right as a “social movement dedicated to restoring ‘traditional values’ in public policy” which has focused its efforts on mobilizing religious conservatives, especially sectarian groups among evangelical Protestants.<sup>84</sup> Butler suggested that the term “Christian Right” “refers to the organizations and leaders that mobilize key constituencies to a social conservative social agenda motivated by religious values.”<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Cited in Jon A Shields, "Between Passion and Deliberation: The Christian Right and Democratic Ideals," *Political Science Quarterly* 122 (2007), p. 91

<sup>81</sup> Chris Hedges, *American Fascists: the Christian Right and the War on America* (New York, 2006) See also R. Boston, *The Most Dangerous Man in America? : Pat Robertson and the Rise of the Christian Coalition* (Amherst, New York, 1996), F. Clarkson, *Eternal Hostility: The Struggle Between Theocracy and Democracy* (Monroe, LA, 1997) and D. Cantor, *The Religious Right: The Assault on Tolerance and Pluralism in America* (New York, 1994) In Martin Durham, *The Christian Right, the Far Right and the Boundaries of American Conservatism* (Manchester, 2000), p. 105.

<sup>82</sup> Cited in Martin Durham, *The Christian Right, the Far Right and the Boundaries of American Conservatism* (Manchester, 2000), Kevin Philips, *American Theocracy : The Peril and Politics of Radical Religion, Oil, and Borrowed Money in the 21st Century* (New York, 2005)

<sup>83</sup> Jon A Shields, "Between Passion and Deliberation: The Christian Right and Democratic Ideals," *Political Science Quarterly* 122 (2007)

<sup>84</sup> John C. Green et al., *Religion and the Culture Wars* (Lanham, MD, 1996), p. 1-2

<sup>85</sup> Jennifer S. Butler, *Born Again: The Christian Right Globalized* (London, 2006), p. 12



## 2.2 The Christian Right and its Various Terms

Lienesch argues that the Christian Right is a movement of Christian conservatism in the United States which has been called interchangeably the “New Christian Right”, the “New Religious Right”, the “New Religious Political Right”, or the “Religious Right”.<sup>86</sup> Balmer also argues that the term “Christian Right” is similar to the “Religious Right” and believes it is “a movement of politically conservative evangelicals who, since the late 1970s, have sought to exert their influence in political, cultural, and legal matters.”<sup>87</sup> Haynes, however, suggests that the term “Christian Right”, which was first used in the late 1970s, relates to the surge in political activity among Protestant fundamentalists and evangelicals in the United States. Since then, the term “Christian Right”, according to Haynes, has been used in a very flexible way either as a social religious movement or a political movement.<sup>88</sup> Similarly, Moen believes that the Christian Right was initially a social movement, but eventually was transformed into a political movement. He furthermore argues that the movement has been placed by some political scientists within the context of “status politics”, due to the fact that Christian Rightists have successfully turned religious and moral issues into political campaign agendas.<sup>89</sup> Likewise, Diamond asserts that the shift of the Christian Right movement’s focus from social to political was mainly motivated by the feeling of “being victimized” by the new American culture as well as American politics. Thus, the Christian Right’s leaders saw that the best way to overcome this problem was by participating in politics.<sup>90</sup> Similarly, Green et al. define the Christian Right as “a social movement located principally among evangelicals, dedicated to restoring traditional values in public policy.”<sup>91</sup> They furthermore claim that the Christian Right has evolved steadily from a social movement to a political movement and describe it not only as maturing but

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<sup>86</sup> Michael Lienesch, *Redeeming America: Piety and Politics in the New Christian Right* (Chapel Hill, 1993), p. 1

<sup>87</sup> Randall Balmer, *Thy Kingdom Come: How the Religious Right Distorts the Faith and Threatens America: An Evangelical Lament* (2006), p. XXVI

<sup>88</sup> Jeffrey Haynes, "Religion and International Relations after 9/11," *Democratization* 12 (June, 2005)

<sup>89</sup> Moen, "Status Politics and the Political Agenda of the Christian Right," *The Sociological Quarterly* 29 (1988)

<sup>90</sup> Sara Diamond, *Not by Politics Alone: the Enduring Influence of the Christian Right* (New York, 1998)

<sup>91</sup> John C. Green et al., *Religion and the Culture Wars* (Lanham, MD, 1996), p. 2

also as continuing “to struggle with its identity and place in American politics.”<sup>92</sup> This evolution was probably due to its inclination to promote and maintain every aspect of American culture in line with its divinely derived beliefs, values, and structures.<sup>93</sup>

Nonetheless, there is an argument that the Christian Right does not primarily advance an offensive agenda of imposing its beliefs on American society, but rather is designed to protect traditional Christian values and culture from being eroded by the secular and liberal forces which are seen to dominate the American system. It can be argued that the term “Christian Right” was never heard of until the Supreme Court’s decisions in the 1960s and 1970s, which were interpreted as fierce attacks on traditional Christian values. Major proponents of this argument were Glazer and Weyrich. Among others, they argued that the Supreme Court’s decision in 1962 to ban compulsory prayer in public schools and the decision in 1973 which granted the right for women to obtain abortions have forced the conservative Christian to react openly against these restrictions.<sup>94</sup> In addition, Zunes describes the Christian Right as having developed a political force from a right-wing Protestant fundamentalist movement, with their followers constituting nearly one out of seven American voters.<sup>95</sup> Butler extends Zunes’ argument by asserting that the term Christian Right “refers to the organizations and leaders that mobilize key constituencies to a conservative social agenda motivated by religious values.”<sup>96</sup>

Finally, there is a definition which describes the Christian Right beyond the usual range of the definition and which is normally confined within the geographical boundary of the United States. Buss and Herman use the term Christian Right to refer to “a broad range of American organizations that have tended to form coalitions, both domestic and

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<sup>92</sup> John C. Green, Mark J. Rozel, and Clyde Wilcox, *The Christian Right in American Politics* (Washington D.C, 2003), p. 16

<sup>93</sup> Cited in Jon A Shields, "Between Passion and Deliberation: The Christian Right and Democratic Ideals," *Political Science Quarterly* 122 (2007), p. 9

<sup>94</sup> Martin Durham, *The Christian Right, the Far Right and the Boundaries of American Conservatism* (Manchester, 2000), p. 105

<sup>95</sup> Stephan Zunes, "US Christian Right's Grip on Middle East Policy," *Asian Times*, 14 July 2004

<sup>96</sup> Jennifer S. Butler, *Born Again: The Christian Right Globalized* (London, 2006), p. 12

international, around an orthodox Christian vision and a defense of the traditional nuclear family formation, referred by the CR as the ‘natural family’.”<sup>97</sup>

## 2.3 Who is the Christian Right?

Many studies are inclined to conclude that the majority of the Christian Rightists are evangelicals and Protestants.<sup>98</sup> Based on the interviews conducted for this research in 2009, all respondents who belong to the Christian Right’s advocacy groups indicated that they are evangelicals.<sup>99</sup> Since that is the case, defining and identifying American evangelicals is very important in order to understand the general perspectives of the Christian Right. Scholars like Guth et al. and Harding suggest that the term “evangelical” refers to a Christian who holds at least three religious beliefs. These are: experience of being “born again”; profession of the “inerrancy of the Bible”; and acceptance of the importance of “winning souls for Christ”.<sup>100</sup> However, Smith defines “evangelical” more broadly. According to him, evangelicals generally have five distinguished characteristics. These are: (1) “a sense of possessing the ultimate truth”, that through the Bible God has revealed an unchanging and universal truth; (2) “a sense of practical moral superiority”, that their way of life, values and morality are superior to others; (3) “a sense of lifestyle and value distinctiveness”, that they should practice a set of Christian values and lifestyles and these should be distinguishable from other secular American values; (4) “a sense of displaced heritage”, a belief that the US was founded as a Christian nation but secular Americans have eroded their Judeo-Christian roots and traditions; (5) “a sense of second-class citizenship”, a feeling that Christian views are being taken away and they are not being

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<sup>97</sup> Doris Buss and Didi Herman, *Globalizing Family Values: The Christian Right in International Politics* (Minneapolis, 2003), p. xviii

<sup>98</sup> For example Princeton Religion Research Report in 2000 that claims the Christian Right is mostly 'evangelical' or 'born again' Christian. See Stuart Croft, "'Thy Will Be Done': The New Foreign Policy of America's Christian Right," *International Politics*, Vol. 44, No. 6 (2007), p. 692-693

<sup>99</sup> The respondents were Alan F.H. Wisdom, Vice President for Research and Programs, Institute on Religion and Democracy; Bill Saunders, Senior Fellow, Family Research Council; Colleen Holmes, Executive Director, Eagle Forum; Dr Janice S. Crouse, Director, The Beverly LaHaye Institute, Concerned Women for America. Interview with author in May 2009, Washington, D.C.

<sup>100</sup> James L. Guth et al., *The Bully Pulpit: The Politics of Protestant Clergy* (Lawrence, Kansas, 1997), Susan Harding, *The Book of Jerry Falwell: Fundamentalist Language and Politics* (New Jersey, 2000)

given an equal hearing compared to other racial, ethnic, religious, political and ideological perspectives.<sup>101</sup> However, Moyer prefers to use the term “evangelical nationalist” to describe the Christian Right activist. While the term “evangelical” is being used because the Christian Right itself accepted that identity within the widely divergent Christian spectrum, Moyer includes the term “nationalist” to describe the Christian Right’s patriotic activity in its political movement.<sup>102</sup>

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that many self-identifying as “evangelical” do not share the Christian Right’s agenda and beliefs. A study by Smith in 2000 suggests that 70 percent of evangelicals do not identify themselves as being part of the Christian Right.<sup>103</sup> For instance, one of the most prominent evangelicals, Jim Wallis, the founder of *Sojourner*, openly opposes the Christian Right. He claims that the movement is not propagating a true teaching of Christianity.<sup>104</sup> Furthermore, in an interview in May 2009, Heather H. Gonzales, the association director of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) rejected a generalization that all evangelicals are part of the Christian Right. She did agree to some extent, however, that some evangelical organizations may be part of the Christian Right movement.<sup>105</sup>

Croft has initiated a new term – “Conservative Protestants” – in describing the community of those in the Christian Right. He does, however, agree with the finding of Woodberry and Smith who note a difficulty in defining conservative Protestants, since they belong to a wide range of denominations and movements as well as subscribing to different sets of

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<sup>101</sup> Christian Smith, *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving* (Chicago and London, 1998)

<sup>102</sup> William Andrew Moyer, "Battle for the City on the Hill: Evangelical Interpretations of American History (1960-1996)" (The George Washington University, 1998)

<sup>103</sup> Quoted in Michael Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power: How Evangelicals Joined the American Elite* (New York, 2007), p. 28

<sup>104</sup> See Jim Wallis, *God's Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It* (New York, 2006) In 2004, National Public Radio aired a forum between Jerry Falwell and Jim Wallis on the use of the term ‘values’ in the 2004 presidential campaign. During the discussion both of them tried to define the meaning of being ‘evangelical’. Interestingly, both of them gave different interpretations of the term. See Jim Wallis, *As Evangelicals as an Oak Tree* (2004 [cited October 2009]); available from <http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=sojmail>

<sup>105</sup> Heather H. Gonzales, interview with author, 14 May 2009, Washington D.C.

beliefs.<sup>106</sup> A discussion by Haynes argues that the “Christian Right” may refer to a broad community of religious conservatives and a small subset of institutionalized organizations pursuing goals of cultural and economic conservatism. He also states that the Christian Right comprises several strands of conservatism, predominantly Protestant. They may be further divided into fundamentalist, evangelical and Pentecostal strands.<sup>107</sup> It is also suggested that the Christian Right includes individuals from a wide variety of Christian theological backgrounds, ranging from secularists to moderately traditional movements within Mormonism, Lutheranism and Catholicism to theologically more conservative movements such as evangelicalism, Pentecostalism and fundamentalist Christianity.<sup>108</sup> In addition, a study by Buss and Herman shows that some conservative Catholics are also activists in the Christian Right movement. Though their study relates mainly to the Christian Right movement within the United Nations, it still gives a new scope of definition of the Christian Right that is not only within the scope of evangelicalism and Protestantism.<sup>109</sup> That illustration is convergence with a recent study by Nathan R. Myer that suggests the Christian is “A coalition of conservative Protestant Christians (usually fundamentalist, evangelical or Pentecostal) and Catholics who use the language of faith and quasi-religious organizations to affect the political process.”<sup>110</sup> Nevertheless, the Christian Right also draws support from non-Christian believers especially Jews.<sup>111</sup> In fact, Himmelstein argues that the Christian Right owes its existence to three conservative activists who are not Protestant but were responsible for the initial organizational planning

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<sup>106</sup> Stuart Croft, "'Thy Will Be Done': The New Foreign Policy of America's Christian Right," *International Politics*, Vol. 44, No. 6 (2007)

<sup>107</sup> Jeffrey Haynes, "Religion and International Relations after 9/11," *Democratization* 12 (June, 2005), p. 9-10

<sup>108</sup> The Christian Right ([cited 3 Jan 2009]); available from [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com)

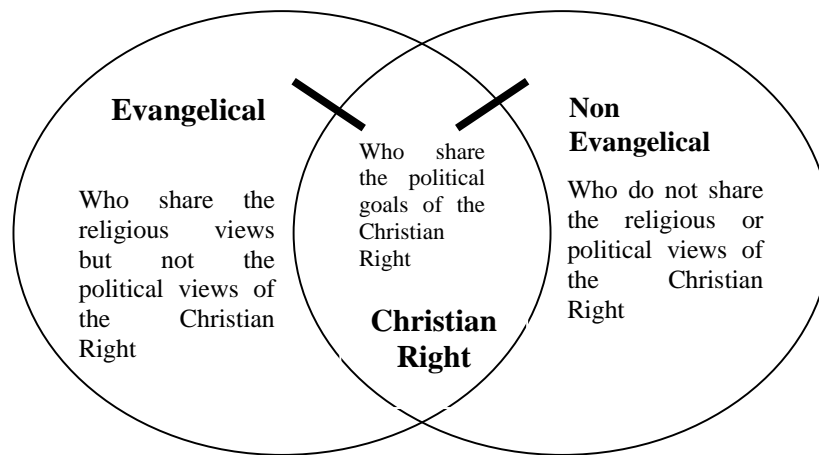
<sup>109</sup> Doris Buss and Didi Herman, *Globalizing Family Values: The Christian Right in International Politics* (Minneapolis, 2003)

<sup>110</sup> Nathan R. Myers, "God at the Grassroots: A Political Analysis of State-Level Christian Right and Pro-Family Organizations in American Public Schooling," *Political Theology* 11 (2010), p. 272

<sup>111</sup> Grant Wacker, *The Christian Right* (National Humanities Center, 2006 [cited 13 April 2007]); available from [http://www.nhc.rtp.us:8080/tserve/tkeyinfo/chr\\_right.htm](http://www.nhc.rtp.us:8080/tserve/tkeyinfo/chr_right.htm) and Jennifer S. Butler, *Born Again: The Christian Right Globalized* (London, 2006)

and fundraising. They are Richard Viguerie and Paul Weyrich, who are Catholics, and Howard Phillips, who is an American Jew.<sup>112</sup>

Notwithstanding this, Wacker argues that the Christian Right is not necessarily dominated by religious activists. Although he believes that the Christian Right comprises a majority of evangelical Protestants, there are also secularists and non-Christians who are not in agreement with its religious conviction but in line with the Christian Right's political agenda. He illustrates this phenomenon in the diagram reproduced below.<sup>113</sup>



There were studies that emphasized that the Christian Right is not necessarily evangelical and belonging to the Protestant denomination but can be beyond theological strands. Lienesch, for instance, suggests that the movement of the Christian Right is an alliance of political conservatism and religious conservatism. He asserts that the Christian Right is "best understood as an association of conservative preachers and politicians, along with

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<sup>112</sup> Cited in Steve Bruce, "Zealots Politics and Democracy: The Case of the New Christian Right," *Political Studies* 48 (2000)

<sup>113</sup> Grant Wacker, *The Christian Right* (National Humanities Center, 2006 [cited 13 April 2007]); available from [http://www.nhc.rtp.us:8080/tserve/tkeyinfo/chr\\_right.htm](http://www.nhc.rtp.us:8080/tserve/tkeyinfo/chr_right.htm)

their grassroots followers.”<sup>114</sup> A recent study on the Christian Right by Marsden is possibly more able to describe the general spectrum of the term “Christian Right”. Marsden suggests that the Christian Right consists of:

(1) conservative evangelicals and right-wing Catholics within the Republican Party whose religious persuasion determines their attitudes to political questions; (2) organizations, politicians, activists and supporters who are generally Protestant evangelicals, but also includes right-wing Catholics supportive of conservative moral and fiscal values on issues such as abortion, sexuality and free markets; and (3) politically active conservatives, united in their opposition to abortion, euthanasia, stem-cell research, homosexuality, same-sex marriage, promiscuity, secularism and big government.<sup>115</sup>

In sum, the Christian Right is a series of groups that is composed of both a social and political movement. I agree with the view of Buss and Herman who believe that there is no “correct” way to define the Christian Right as the usage of the term is sometimes very complex and carries many different meanings.<sup>116</sup> Thus, realizing that it is impossible to include all definitions and scope of the Christian Right in this study, the discussion in the thesis mostly focuses on the Christian Right within conservative Protestantism.<sup>117</sup> The next section explores the Christian Right’s world view.

## **2.4 The Christian Right’s World View**

Lienesch describes the Christian Right as not only a social and political movement but also as an intellectual and moral movement. He explores in detail the world view of the leaders and thinkers of Christian Right. Lienesch tries to illuminate the overall outline of the

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<sup>114</sup> Michael Lienesch, *Redeeming America: Piety and Politics in the New Christian Right* (Chapel Hill, 1993), p. 8

<sup>115</sup> Lee Marsden, *For God’s Sake: The Christian Right and U.S. Foreign Policy* (London 2008), p. 3-4

<sup>116</sup> Doris Buss and Didi Herman, *Globalizing Family Values: The Christian Right in International Politics* (Minneapolis, 2003)

<sup>117</sup> Throughout the thesis, I will use the term “Christian Right” “conservative evangelical” and “conservative protestant” interchangeably.

fundamental beliefs and ideas of the Christian Right, beginning with its perceptions of the self, the family, the economy, polity and the world outside the United States. He believes that these five dimensions have become a world view which provides the movement with systematic strategies for acting and making choices in its activism.<sup>118</sup>

According to Lienesch, the Christian Right sees the “self” as a very important factor for any individual who is “converting” to Christianity; developing and constructing not only their personality but also a sense of purpose in constructing and striving to correct social and political order according to true Christian values. The term “conversion”, often called a “born again” feeling, refers to “the act of faith and forgiveness through which sinners are brought from sin into a state of everlasting salvation.”<sup>119</sup> This indeed plays an important part in shaping the thinking of this movement.

The second core value promoted by the Christian Right is the belief in family as the most important social institution and the fortress of the Christian values against “unnatural” values and cultures such as abortion and homosexuality. It also stresses the role of husband as the “patriarch” of the family, the submission of the wife and the obedience of children in a true traditional Christian family.<sup>120</sup>

The third essential element of the Christian Right is the assumption of the possibility of justice in economic activities, which is likely to have been adapted from Calvinist economic theory and is in line with secular capitalism. As Lienesch notes, the major concern of the movement is the idea of justice, which relies on the laissez-faire system and objects to the interference of government in the market place. It also recognizes the element of hard work, accumulating more wealth and a positive correlation between salvation and economics or financial success which is considered as a “blessing of God”.<sup>121</sup> On the other hand, they tend to interpret poverty as a punishment and reject any idea of

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<sup>118</sup> Michael Lienesch, *Redeeming America: Piety and Politics in the New Christian Right* (Chapel Hill, 1993)

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52-53

<sup>121</sup> See also Sarah Posner, *God's Profits : Faith, Fraud, and the Republican Crusade for Values Voters* (Washington, DC, 2008) In this book, she extensively discusses how some of the Christian Right's leaders manipulated religion for the purpose of gaining and accumulating wealth.



redistributing wealth to reward the lazy. One prevailing idea in this respect is the attitude of the movement towards the environment. For them “the earth was made for man, not man for the earth” and they believe “man was created to rule over the earth, not to be its slave”; thus any economic system that promotes nature above the necessity of man is therefore not in line with the teaching of the Bible. This concept has resulted in a tendency of the movement to protest against any ideas proposed by environmentalist movements.<sup>122</sup>

The fourth aspect of Lienesch’s study of the Christian Right’s essential world view is its attitude towards politics or the polity as a whole. Lienesch believes that the Christian Right perceives America as “God’s New Israel – a chosen nation, singled out by the Creator as part of a providential plan.” For them, the chronological events of America’s discovery, the Puritan Pilgrims, the settlement and the founding of the American Republic were part of the providential phenomenon in the so called “Promised Land”. However, the Christian Right argues that secularists and humanists have conspired and distorted the plan by taking over political power and controlling public affairs according to their secular ideologies. Hence, the movement attempts to reconstruct the plan, restoring the spirit of the “Promised Land” and is committed to reclaiming mainstream values by participating in the political process in order to overthrow the present system.<sup>123</sup>

Finally, the movement has also developed a view of the world outside the US. The Christian Right believes that America has a God-given mission to “save the world” and “free other nations” from religious backwardness and political corruption as well as a responsibility to bring its values to those lands.<sup>124</sup> This aspect has shaped its own perception and attitude towards American foreign policy through the lens of its apocalyptic “timeline” which is mostly based on the doctrine of Christian Eschatology.<sup>125</sup>

As matter of fact, the latter two world views are probably the most important aspects which motivate the Christian Rightists to become involved in shaping international politics in

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<sup>122</sup> Michael Lienesch, *Redeeming America: Piety and Politics in the New Christian Right* (Chapel Hill, 1993), p. 94-98

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141

<sup>124</sup> The Fundamentalists are an exception to this as they are predominantly isolationist.

<sup>125</sup> Michael Lienesch, *Redeeming America: Piety and Politics in the New Christian Right* (Chapel Hill, 1993), p. 195-196

accordance with their theological beliefs.<sup>126</sup> For that reason, Lienesch believes that the Christian Right's world view has influenced the Christian Right understanding particularly about America's role of interventionism in international affairs.<sup>127</sup> In order to provide further understanding of the impact of those world views on the movement, especially on the Christian Right's political involvement, understanding the Christian Right's theological beliefs is crucially important. The next section discusses the Christian Right's political theology that has had a significant impact on the movement's activism and its involvement in politics.

## 2.5 The Political Theology of the Christian Right

Apart from examining the Christian Right's world view, it is equally important to explore its political theology as one of the major factors in understanding the general motives and objectives of the movement in politics. Diamond argues that "as we assess the Christian Right's future prospects, the movement's political theology is one big piece of the puzzle."<sup>128</sup> Similarly, according to Marsden, the Christian Right's theological streams shape and direct its involvement in politics. Marsden believes that the Christian Right emphasizes the importance of its theological streams more than its literal interpretation of the Bible, baptism in the Holy Spirit and proselytizing.<sup>129</sup> Boyer argues that the Christian Right's political activism is largely shaped by its end time theological beliefs and notes that the theology "influence[s] the worldview of those who embrace it."<sup>130</sup> The next sub-section discusses two political theologies that have a foundation in "Dispensationalism" and "Reconstructionism" or "Dominionism", and their associations with the Christian Right's political theology.

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<sup>126</sup> A comprehensive discussion on this aspect can be found in Michael Northcott, *An Angel Directs the Storm: Apocalyptic Religion and American Empire* (New York, 2004)

<sup>127</sup> Michael Lienesch, *Redeeming America: Piety and Politics in the New Christian Right* (Chapel Hill, 1993), p. 196.

<sup>128</sup> Sara Diamond, *Dominion Theology: The Truth About the Christian Right's Bid for Power* (2002 [cited 15 January 2009]); available from <http://www.sullivan-country.com/nf0/fundinazis/diamond.htm> Accessed on 15 Jan. 2008

<sup>129</sup> Lee Marsden, *For God's Sake: The Christian Right and U.S. Foreign Policy* (London 2008), p. 6

<sup>130</sup> Paul. Boyer, *When Time Shall be No More : Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture* (New York, 1992), p. xi

### 2.5.1 Dispensationalism

One of the Christian Right's political theologies is based on dispensationalism. This theological doctrine is an apocalyptic belief and is rooted in the conservative Christian theological doctrine of eschatology, in the idea of the "end times".<sup>131</sup> Arguably, the doctrine has become an enormous feature in shaping the political and ideological views of the movement and casting its imagination towards future world events as well as interpretation of the world's history.<sup>132</sup> According to Sizer, dispensationalism is seen literally as a chronological map that provides conservative Protestants with a guide to the end of the world.<sup>133</sup> He believes that dispensationalist theology:

. . . is the most influential theological system within the universal church today. Largely unrecognized and subliminal, it has increasingly shaped the presuppositions of fundamentalists, evangelicals, Pentecostals and charismatic thinking concerning Israel and Palestine over the past one hundred and fifty years.<sup>134</sup>

Sizer furthermore believes that the dispensationalist theology has a devastating impact, as its followers tend to seek the fulfilment of the dispensational apocalyptic vision of the future by becoming actively involved and influential in politics.<sup>135</sup> However, it is worth noting that not all researchers on dispensationalism agree that it is a purely theological doctrine. Heading, for instance, argues that dispensationalism is not a theological doctrine;

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<sup>131</sup> Eschatology is a part of Christian theology concerning the prophecy of final events taking place before the end of the world. Most of the Christian's apocalyptic beliefs are based on the writing of John of Patmos, an early Christian Prophet. His writing, sometimes called 'the Apocalypse of John' formed the book of Revelation – the last chapter in the Bible. In this book, God tells John of Patmos that one sign of the 'end times' is a series of 'tribulations' including wars, disease, famine, greed, and widespread sinful immorality.

<sup>132</sup> Michael Lienesch, *Redeeming America: Piety and Politics in the New Christian Right* (Chapel Hill, 1993)

<sup>133</sup> Stephen R. Sizer, "Dispensational Approaches to the Land," in *The Land of Promised: Biblical, Theological and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Philip Johnston and Peter Walker (Leicester, 2000), p. 144

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147

instead, it is only a “narrative” in the history and culture of conservative Protestantism. She notes that dispensationalism is:

. . . not always political in the sense of advocating specific actions that count as political in American culture, but it is always political. It is political insofar as it constitutes not only current events for many born-again believers, but also their understanding of and place in history.<sup>136</sup>

The theology of dispensationalism was first introduced by the English preacher John Nelson Darby who migrated to the United States in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. His teaching was principally based on a literal interpretation of the Bible, especially on the prophecies in the Book of Revelation. From this book, Darby argued that God created seven “dispensations” in human history. The first dispensation was the paradise of the Garden of Eden, and the final dispensation will be a millennial kingdom as Jesus will come again to the world, known as “the Second Coming”, and establish his reign on earth for 1,000 years of peace before the end of the world takes place.<sup>137</sup> Darby claimed that he had successfully decoded the timeline by which God preordained specific historical epochs or dispensations, including the final dispensation in which the end time will occur. In this timeline, devout Christians are “raptured” up into heavenly protection before the tribulations begin. Then the sinful are punished, and Christ returns to this world to rule his loyal forces for 1,000 years – a millennium full of peace and prosperity.

Darby believed that a central feature of the dispensational system was the place of the Jews in the divine plan for the end of history; the Jews had rejected Christ and so God had set his originally chosen people aside and the Christian Church superseded the nation of Israel. But before the rapture, the Jews play a crucial role in fulfilling Biblical end time prophecy by returning to Palestine, resettling the biblical lands, and rebuilding Jerusalem, in particular the Third Temple on the site currently occupied by the Dome of Rock and the al-Aqsa Mosque. The Israeli state will experience resistance from a group representing of

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<sup>136</sup> Susan Harding, "Imagining the Last Days: the Politics of Apocalyptic Language," in *Accounting for Fundamentalism: The Dynamic Character of Movements*, ed. Martin E. Marty and R Scott Appleby (Chicago, 1994), p. 57

<sup>137</sup> This prophecy is based on the Book of Revelation (20 : 1-7)

“Anti-Christ” and be subjected to dreadful wars. However, the remnant of people who come through these wars will ultimately recognize Christ as the true Messiah and so greet him at his Second Coming to establish the so called Kingdom of God in this world in the land of Israel.<sup>138</sup> According to Darby, God promised the land of Jerusalem to the Jews and this covenant that took place between God and Abraham was binding forever but has as yet been unfulfilled. For that reason, he predicted:

The first thing, then, which the lord will do be purify His land (the land which belongs to the Jews) of the Tyrians, the Philistines, the Sidonians; of Edom and Moab, and Ammon of all the wicked, in short from the Nile to the Eupharates. It will be done by the power of Christ in favour of His people re-established by His goodness. The people are put into security in the land, and then those of them who remain till that time among the nations will be gathered together.<sup>139</sup>

Eventually, this dispensationalist theology became more popular and widely accepted among conservative Protestants, especially after the publishing of *The Scofield Reference Bible* in 1909 by Cyrus Ingerson Scofield. It is believed that Scofield relied heavily on Darby’s writing. Gerstner for example, who studied Darby and Scofield’s apocalyptic thought, argues that the resemblance between both theologians is “deep and systematic”.<sup>140</sup> Similar to Darby, Scofield also believed that God’s purpose in the second coming is to bring the Jewish people back to Palestine and rebuild the ancient temple of Solomon. However, he argued that before all this would take place, the world would experience series of cataclysmic events. He wrote:

The final restoration is shown to be accomplished after a period of unexampled tribulation (Jer. 30:3-10), and in connection with the manifestation of David’s righteous Branch (v.5), who is also Jehovah-tsidkenu (v.6). The restoration here foretold is not to be confounded with the return of a feeble remnant of Judah under Ezra, Nehemiah, and

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<sup>138</sup> Duanne M. Oldfield, "The Evangelical Roots of American Unilateralism: The Christian Right's Influence and How to Counter it," *Foreign Policy in Focus* (15 July 2004)

<sup>139</sup> Quoted in Stephen R. Sizer, "Dispensational Approaches to the Land," in *The Land of Promised: Biblical, Theological and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Philip Johnston and Peter Walker (Leicester, 2000), p. 150

<sup>140</sup> Cited in *ibid.*, p. 151

Zerubbabel at the end of the 70 years (Jer. 29:10). At His first advent Christ, David's righteous Branch (Luke 1:31-33), did not "execute justice and judgment in the earth" but was crowned with thorns and crucified. Neither was Israel the nation restored, nor did the Jewish people say, "The Lord our righteousness" cf. Rom. 10:3. The prophecy is yet to be fulfilled (Acts 15:14-17).<sup>141</sup>

Another prominent figure in dispensationalist theology is Hal Lindsey. He was considered as the "Father of Apocalyptic Dispensational Zionism" by Sizer, "The Jeremiah for this Generation" by Time magazine and was "the best-selling author of the decade" according to the *New York Times*.<sup>142</sup> He has published more than twenty books and over 80 million have been sold in different languages; his most famous book *The Late Great Planet* has alone sold over 40 million copies.<sup>143</sup> Like Darby and Scofield, he confidently argues that his interpretation of the Bible on the future world events will happen according to the dispensationalist apocalyptic prophecies. Undoubtedly his writings have influenced some of the conservative Protestants who believe in the dispensationalist theology. In one of his books, he asserts that the biblical prophecy of dispensationalist theology is being fulfilled. He writes:

We are the generation the prophets were talking about. We have witnessed biblical prophecies come true. The birth of Israel. The decline in America's power and morality. The rise of Russian and Chinese might. The threat of war in the Middle East. The increase of earthquakes, volcanoes, famine and drought. The Bible foretells the signs that precede Armageddon . . . We are the generation that will see the end times . . . and the return of Jesus.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Quoted in Dan Cohn-Sherbok, *The Politics of Apocalypse: The History and Influence of Christian Zionism* (Oxford, 2006), p. 102

<sup>142</sup> Stephen R. Sizer, "Dispensational Approaches to the Land," in *The Land of Promised: Biblical, Theological and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Philip Johnston and Peter Walker (Leicester, 2000), p. 156

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., p. 156, see also Michael Northcott, *An Angel Directs the Storm: Apocalyptic Religion and American Empire* (New York, 2004), p. 66

<sup>144</sup> Quoted in Stephen R. Sizer, "Dispensational Approaches to the Land," in *The Land of Promised: Biblical, Theological and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Philip Johnston and Peter Walker (Leicester, 2000), p. 158-159

As discussed above, one of the most important aspects of the dispensationalist theological beliefs is “millennialism”. Lahr argues that millennial belief provides conservative Christians with a foundation for formulating their political and cultural identities.<sup>145</sup> In addition, the millennial theology does not only have a strong bond with the religious beliefs and political identities of the Christian Right, but it also creates political roles for the movement. Barkun, for instance, argues that millennialism theology creates a ground for the Christian Right to relate its involvement in politics with its religious beliefs. He asserts that “as politics becomes ‘millennialized’ by ultimate expectations, so the millennium becomes politicized. Its coming means a political reckoning, not merely a spiritual one.”<sup>146</sup>

Lienesch, in his specific discussion on the relationship between dispensationalism and millennialism, explains that world history according to dispensationalists has been a series of dispensations, or theologically distinctive periods, and the final stage is to be the millennium, or a thousand years of peace on earth. However, before the final period of peace takes place, the world will be surrounded with catastrophic events, such as earthquakes, revolutions and wars, and which will culminate in the Battle of Armageddon. These dreadful events, also known as the “tribulations” in Christian tradition, serve as a kind of catalyst to the Second Coming of Christ (also known as “Parousia”), who will return to reign on earth at the beginning of the millennium.<sup>147</sup> There are three categories of “millennialism”: “premillennialism”, “amillennialism” and “postmillennialism”. Each of

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<sup>145</sup> Angela M. Lahr, "Millennial Dreams and Apocalyptic Nightmares: Evangelicals and Secular Identity in the Early Cold War" (Northern Illinois University, 2005), p. 322

<sup>146</sup> Michael Barkun, "Politics and Apocalypticism," in *The Encyclopaedia of Apocalypticism: Apocalypticism in the Modern Period and the Contemporary Age*, ed. Stephen J. Stein (New York, 1998), p. 459

<sup>147</sup> A series of cataclysmic events have been prophesied mostly in Daniel:9, Matthew:24 and Revelation: 4-19. Besides the catastrophic, the other most important event is the ‘Rapture’- a miraculous event in which all faithful ‘born again’ Christians will be ascended suddenly into the sky to meet Jesus and the rest will be left behind on the earth. There are various beliefs about the timing of the Rapture. The Pre-Tribulationists believe the Rapture happens just before the Tribulation period. In contrast, the Post-Tribulationists argue that the faithful ‘born again’ Christian also experience the full cataclysmic events as the Rapture takes place at the end of a 7 year series of disastrous events. See Eschatology, End Times, and Millennialism: Competing Theories ([cited 20 Jan 2008]); available from <http://www.religioustolerance.org/millenni.htm>

them propagates different views on the events in the future.<sup>148</sup> However, the most widely accepted among conservative Protestants are the premillennialism and postmillennialism doctrines.

According to the premillennialists, the world is like a sinking ship<sup>149</sup> thus they concentrate on the mission of world evangelization before the advent of Jesus in his “Second Coming”.<sup>150</sup> In contrast to that view, the postmillennialists are more interested in shaping the world before the coming of Jesus to the world, and perceive this task as a responsibility in the process of establishing a foundation for God’s Kingdom on the earth. In this regards, Lienesch argues that the postmillennialists propagate an idea of “ethical reform, calling on Christians to build the kingdom from within the world, accepting responsibility and taking power through a process of conquest and dominion.”<sup>151</sup> The next sub-section discusses “reconstructionism” or “dominionism” as the second important part of the Christian Right’s political theology

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<sup>148</sup> According to Lienesch, the doctrine of dispensational millennialism has been reinterpreted and divided into three categories namely premillennialist, postmillennialist and amillennialist. He illustrates them as below:

“‘Premillennialists’ (most of whom are commonly called ‘dispensational premillennialists’) believe that history can be seen as a series of dispensations, or 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, usually called ‘the end times’, which will be characterized by earthquakes, revolutions, and wars, and which culminate in the battle of Armageddon, a worldwide 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 the beginning (hence premillennialism) of the millennium. By contrast, ‘postmillennialists’ maintain that history is essentially a continuous revelation of Christ’s reign. In effect, these thinkers believe that the millennium has already begun, having been set into motion by events that took place at the time of the early church. As to the literal Second Coming, they predict that it will take place not at the beginning of this thousand-year period, but at the end (hence postmillennialism). ‘Amillennialists’, a tiny minority among religious conservatives, 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 the earthly realm will not be brought to an end through a literal Second Coming and thousand-year reign (hence amillennialism).” Michael Lienesch, *Redeeming America: Piety and Politics in the New Christian Right* (Chapel Hill, 1993), p. 224-225

<sup>149</sup> The current metaphor of the world being like a sinking ship was adopted from Dwight L. Moody, a dispensationalist preacher. He says, “I looked on this world as a wrecked vessel. God has given me a life-boat, and said to me, “Moody, save all you can.” God will come in judgment and burn up this world, but the children of God don’t belong to this world; they are in it, but not of it, like a ship in the water. This world is getting darker and darker; its ruin is coming nearer and nearer. If you have any friends on this wreck unsaved, you had better lose no time in getting them off.” Cited in Michael Northcott, *An Angel Directs the Storm : Apocalyptic Religion and American Empire* (London, 2004), p. 59

<sup>150</sup> The instruction to preach the gospel and evangelize the world is based on the verse in Matthew that says “*In all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come*” (24:14).

<sup>151</sup> Michael Lienesch, *Redeeming America: Piety and Politics in the New Christian Right* (Chapel Hill, 1993), p. 227. It is worth noting that, in reality, the theology of premillennialism and postmillennialism are mixed at grassroots level.



## 2.5.2 Reconstructionism/Dominionism

The term “reconstructionism” is used interchangeably with the term “dominionism” and both of them carry a similar meaning. Generally, dominion theology is founded on the verse from the first chapter of Genesis that states:

And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.<sup>152</sup>

Generally, the main mission of reconstructionists is to establish the Kingdom of God on earth and implement Biblical law. They believe that, in order to attain the objective of their mission, involvement in politics is a must. Besides that, they assert their theological beliefs through scores of books, publications and education in their schools and colleges. Reconstructionist ideas arguably provide the philosophical foundation of the Christian Right’s political activism.

According to Reconstructionist theology, the Bible mandates Christians to take control over the world. They believe that the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to the world will be delayed until a group of Christians rebuild the Kingdom of God on the earth. Reconstructionist theologian, David Chilton, describes their goal as “world dominion under Christ’s lordship, a world ‘take over’ if you will.”<sup>153</sup> Diamond argues that the idea of reconstructionism influenced the Christian Right’s political objectives as its followers

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<sup>152</sup> (Genesis 1: 26-28)

<sup>153</sup> David Chilton, *Paradise Restored* (Texas, 1994), p. 214

perceive that the Bible mandates them to occupy all secular institutions and implement biblical laws until Christ returns.<sup>154</sup> Marsden argues that most reconstructionists advocate a belief that Christians ought to “subdue” and “exercise dominion” over the earth and evil.<sup>155</sup> Moreover, Hedges describes the Christian Rightists as traditional evangelicals who subscribed to Christian dominion theology.<sup>156</sup>

Historically, reconstructionism was an idea initiated by Rousas John (R.J.) Rushdoony, a Christian theologian born in 1916. In the mid 1960s, he founded the Chalcedon Foundation in California and started disseminating his ideas about the importance of the implications of God’s law in the sphere of everyday life. He contended that the idea of a need to establish a theocratic form of government where the Old Testament law should be restored in American society. The dominion theology was started by evangelical philosopher Francis Schaeffer. In his book, *A Christian Manifesto*, which was published in 1980 and sold over 290,000 copies in its first year, he propagated the idea of taking dominion over secular humanistic society that has gradually dominated American culture. In addition, Schaeffer argues that humanists have pushed American society in an “ungodly” direction by controlling politics. Consequently, they have been able to shape many American public policies which contradict Biblical principles. Thus, Schaeffer calls for Christians to take action to restore Biblical principles of morality in American society by joining politics, civil societies and movements.<sup>157</sup>

The dominion theology with its political rhetoric has arguably influenced some of the Christian Right’s leaders. Pat Robertson, for instance, wrote in *The Secret Kingdom*: “It is clear that God is saying, ‘I gave man dominion over the earth, but he lost it. Now I desire mature sons and daughters who will in my name exercise dominion over the earth and will subdue Satan, the unruly, and the rebellious. Take back My world from those who would

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<sup>154</sup> Sara Diamond, *Dominion Theology: The Truth About the Christian Right's Bid for Power* (2002 [cited 15 January 2009]); available from <http://www.sullivan-country.com/nf0/fundinazis/diamond.htm>, p. 2-3

<sup>155</sup> Lee Marsden, *For God's Sake: The Christian Right and U.S. Foreign Policy* (London 2008), p. 7

<sup>156</sup> Chris Hedges, *American Fascists: the Christian Right and the War on America* (New York, 2006)

<sup>157</sup> Sara Diamond, *Dominion Theology: The Truth About the Christian Right's Bid for Power* (2002 [cited 15 January 2009]); available from <http://www.sullivan-country.com/nf0/fundinazis/diamond.htm>

loot it and abuse it. Rule as I would rule’.”<sup>158</sup> In one of his *700 Club* television shows, Robertson said: “God’s plan is for His people, ladies and gentleman, to take dominion...What is dominion? Well, dominion is Lordship. He wants His people to reign and rule with Him...but He’s waiting for us to...extend His dominion...and the Lord says, ‘I’m going to let you redeem society’. There’ll be a reformation...We are not going to stand for those coercive utopians in the Supreme Court and in Washington ruling over us anymore. We’re not gonna stand for it. We are going to say, ‘we want freedom in this country, and we want power’...”<sup>159</sup> Boston, in his study on the role of the reconstructionism, concludes that:

Although reconstructionism may seem so far out as to be easily dismissed, the philosophy has in fact provided the intellectual basis for much of the Religious Right’s thinking and political activism. Stripped of its more extreme features, watered-down versions of Reconstructionism are the driving force behind groups like the Christian Coalition, whose leaders, during the group’s early years, talked openly of the need for far-right Christians to take control of government from local school boards all the way to the White House.<sup>160</sup>

## **2.6 History of the Christian Right**

### **2.6.1 Protestantism in America – 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> Century**

In order to understand the emergence of the Christian Right, one has to trace back the history of early Christianity in the United States and relate it to the Christian Reformation in Europe. The conflicts between the Catholic Church and the Protestant Reformation movements in Europe in the 16<sup>th</sup> century created a series of wars between them. The crisis involved their struggle for political power and resulted in the killing and persecution of Protestant followers. This led to their mass migration to America which subsequently

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<sup>158</sup> Pat Robertson, *The Secret Kingdom* (London, 1993), p. 201

<sup>159</sup> Katherine Yurica, On Defining "Dominionism" and "the Cultural Mandate": Is it a Ne Anti-Christian Religion? (Yurica Report: News Intelligence Analysis, 2009 [cited 7 May 2009]); available from <http://www.yuricareport.com/Dominionism/DefinitionOfDominionism.html>

<sup>160</sup> Rob Boston, "Operation Potomac," *Church and State*, October 2001, p. 52

developed a significant Protestant society and had a profound impact on American culture and values. The Puritan settlers who imagined themselves as “a chosen people” sought to establish “a City upon a Hill”, “a New Israel”, “a New Canaan” and “a Redeemer Nation”; narratives that borrowed from the Old Testament. In the words of Herman Melville (1819-1891):

We Americans are the peculiar chosen people – the Israel of our time; we bear the ark of liberties of the world. God has predestined, mankind expects, great things from our race; great things we feel in our souls. The rest of the nations must soon be in our rear. We are pioneers of the world; the advance guard sent on through the wilderness of untried things, to break a path into the New World that is ours.<sup>161</sup>

Some strands of Puritanism perceived America’s “manifest destiny” to have a divine connection. They perceived that nationalism can be linked with faith. Through this imaginary paradigm, they propagated the pure teachings of Christianity that combined with nationalism in their new settlement. Marshall and Manuel, two Protestant theologians who studied early Protestantism in America, argue that the Puritans always considered themselves as “a chosen people” and America as “a City on a Hill”. They assert that:

The Pilgrims and Puritans had believed that God had intended America for their age, a land where He had called a newly chosen people to settle and provide a living example of the life to which He had called all men. America was to be a “city set on a hill”, they said, and a light to the rest of the world. Their children carried this idea of God’s call even further: America was to be an asylum for the oppressed and a spiritual generator that would power the spread of Christianity and democracy all over the globe.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Anatol Lieven, *America Right or Wrong: The Anatomy of American Nationalism* (London, 2004), p. 33

<sup>162</sup> Peter Marshall and David Manuel, *From Sea to Shining Sea* (Old Tappan, New Jersey, 1986), p. 368

In this regards, Puritans arguably had a spiritual commitment that to defend America was to defend Christianity. It was only later that it developed to become religious nationalism within conservative Protestantism. This historical point is where the Christian Right began. As Martin argues: “Understanding that movement [the Christian Right] requires some sense of what it inherited from its predecessors, and any discussion of foundational religious influences inevitably leads Americans all the way back to the Puritans.”<sup>163</sup> The spirit of the Puritans’ religious nationalism has been the predominant influence over the present Christian Right’s values and way of thinking. Moreover, it shaped the direction of the contemporary Christian Right in modern America. For the Christian Right, America remains a “City on a Hill”, rooted deeply in moral and religious values. In fact, to some extent, the Christian Right perceives that America was and is a “Christian nation”. This view is obviously relevant since most of the Christian Right disagreed with President Obama’s statement delivered at a press conference in Turkey in April 2009 that America is not a Christian nation. Obama said: “We do not consider ourselves a Christian nation or Jewish nation or a Muslim nation. We consider ourselves a nation of citizens who are bound by ideals and a set of values.”<sup>164</sup>

Janice Crouse of Concerned Women for America, when asked about the statement, rejected Obama’s claims and commented that America is a Christian nation. She suggests that the foundation of American nation is the Christian values and believes that the US became the greatest nation because of those values.<sup>165</sup>

## **2.6.2 The 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries and Modernism in America**

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, modernization which led to industrialization resulted in a rapid growth of economic opportunity and prosperity in America. However, industrialization and urbanization at the same time brought serious social problems and a general tendency to

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<sup>163</sup> William Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America* (New York, 1996), p. 1

<sup>164</sup> Toby Harnden, "Barack Obama in Turkey: US 'Will Never be at War with Islam'," *Telegraph*, 6 April 2009. Available from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/barackobama/5115044>

<sup>165</sup> Janice Shaw Crouse, interview with author, 15 May 2009, Washington, D.C.

exalt materialist culture which seemed to be a weakening of Protestantism's social values. Moreover, the industrialization process attracted vast immigration and urbanization which inevitably transformed the social landscape in America. It was estimated that from 1890 to 1920, around 17.6 million immigrants entered the US and the majority of them were European Catholics and Jews.<sup>166</sup> Some Protestants viewed the new settlement of Catholics and religious pluralism in the US as a threat to American social norms that for decades had mostly been shaped by Protestantism. Responding to those challenges, Protestants in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century fought to preserve the predominance of their religion and enforce the moral norms associated with it. The re-emergence of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) in 1915, which was dominated by Protestants, was an example of this reaction. Oldfield notes that "the KKK represented the period's most prominent attempt to reassert a linkage between Protestantism and Americanism."<sup>167</sup>

That era also witnessed the scientific discoveries and technological advancements that resulted in the emergence of new ideas and philosophies based on science and rationality. This so called "scientific thinking" (such as Darwin's theory of human and social evolution) penetrated and influenced American society. These challenges posed a serious threat to the traditional Protestant beliefs and values and inevitably forced them to respond from their own perspectives.<sup>168</sup> Reacting to the intellectual challenge posed by the scientific and rational thinking movement, a group of Protestants responded by introducing a new theological doctrine which resulted in the establishment of two religious movements – the Social Gospel and Cooperative Christianity. Contrary to the earlier doctrine of personal revival in conservative Protestantism, the Social Gospel movement advocated social reform by improving the social reality and structural conditions that, according to them, were the actual cause of the social problems. In contrast, Cooperative Christianity was more interested in uniting the Protestant Churches whose division seemed to them to be the major cause of the problems.

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<sup>166</sup> James S. Olson, *The Ethnic Dimension in American History* (New York, 1979), p. 206

<sup>167</sup> Duane M. Oldfield, *The Right and the Righteous: The Christian Right Confronts the Republican Party* (New York, 1996), p. 18

<sup>168</sup> *Nation of Nations: A Narrative History of the American Republic*, ed. James West Davidson (Boston, 1998), p. 76-105

Meanwhile, traditional conservative Protestants responded negatively to the scientific thinking as well as to the social problems issue. According to them, priority should be given to defending traditional Christian doctrines and teachings, such as the inerrant and infallible authority of the Bible. They strongly believed that their approach in preserving the traditional teachings was adequate to dismiss all the new challenges and improve society. This crisis ultimately split the conservative Protestants. In contrast to the Social Gospel, which gained more support, the reputation of conservative Protestantism was shrinking. There was a serious decline in their membership as the majority of their followers changed their stance and sided with the New Gospel doctrine.<sup>169</sup> Hunter explains this phenomenon: “By the 1910s, the majority of Protestant ministers and theologians had abandoned the conservative positions as indefensible.”<sup>170</sup> Despite their position, with the objective of defending their traditional theological beliefs and regaining their support, the conservative Protestants published a book entitled *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth*, widely known as *The Fundamentals*, in 1917. This book discusses the fundamental faith and argues that deviation cannot be tolerated at all. Among others, the fundamental belief listed in *The Fundamentals* includes the inerrancy of the Bible, the deity of Jesus Christ, and the resurrection and imminent return of Jesus Christ to the world, also known as the Second Coming. Martin describes their views:

The key stone was and is the inerrancy of the scripture, meaning not only that the Bible is the sole and infallible rule of the faith and practice, but also that it is scientifically and historically reliable. Thus, evolution could not be true, miracles 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 root of the Christian faith and must be resisted with every fibre of one's being.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> James Davidson Hunter, *American Evangelicalism: Conservative Religion and the Quandary of Modernity* (New Brunswick, 1983), p. 27-29

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32

<sup>171</sup> William Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America*, (New York, 1996), p. 11

The publication of *The Fundamentals* exacerbated the situation, arguably making partition among the conservative Protestants inevitable. Christians who followed the theological doctrines listed in *The Fundamentals* strongly believed that they were the defenders of the true teachings of Christianity. They later claimed themselves as “fundamentalists” – Christians who uphold the fundamental principles given in the Bible. At the same time, they argued that those who were in disagreement with them have deviated from true Christianity. As a result, they declared the followers of the Social Gospel as heretics and false innovators of the Christian faith and labelled them as “Liberal Christians” or “Modernists”. As Mead notes:

For much of the 1800s, most Protestants believed that science confirmed biblical teaching. When Darwinian biology and scholarly “higher criticism” began to cast increasing doubt on traditional views of the Bible’s authorship and veracity, however, the American Protestant movement broke apart. Modernists argued that the best way to defend Christianity in an enlightened age was to incorporate the new scholarship into theology, and mainline Protestant denominations followed logic. The Fundamentalists believed that churches should remain loyal to the “fundamentals” of Protestant faith, such as the literal truth of the Bible.<sup>172</sup>

Another important event that contributes to the discussion of the Christian Right’s development is the impact of the famous “Scopes Trial” in 1925. After the publication of *The Fundamentals*, the fundamentalists made rigorous efforts not only to propagate their beliefs within society, but also to strengthen it through state legislature. It was under their pressure and influence that a number of states passed laws that prohibited the teaching of evolutionary theory or any theory that denied the story of the divine creation of man as taught in the Bible in any university or public school.<sup>173</sup> In 1925, John T. Scopes committed a violation against the Tennessee law of anti-evolution and was convicted by the court. The trial, however, exposed the debate of dogmatic religion versus dynamic rationalism and turned into a public discussion which was sensationalized by the media.

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<sup>172</sup> Walter Russell Mead, “God’s Country?,” *Foreign Affairs* 85 (2006), p. 2

<sup>173</sup> Alan Brinkley and Ellen Fitzpatrick, *America in the Modern Times* (New York, 1997), p. 226



Adverse publicity from the mass media on the issue discredited not only the fundamentalism but conservative Protestantism as a whole. Though the anti-evolutionists won the case, the reputation of conservative Protestantism was badly damaged. It was ridiculed not only by the national media, but also by the international press, especially with regards to its advocacy of orthodox religious beliefs that lack intellectual substance. As Martin explains: “At the end of the decade of the twenties, 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.”<sup>174</sup>

The trauma of being defeated and humiliated forced many fundamentalists to withdraw from the public scene. Thus, from the 1930s to the 1950s, fundamentalists were mostly isolated from the public. Creating their own communities, independent churches and schools, the fundamentalists were able to protect themselves from liberalism and the modernist way of life. At the same time, however, they developed and strengthened their organizations. This period witnessed a shift of emphasis within the movement. The leaders of conservative Protestantism were focused on two particular aspects: establishing academic or intellectual institutions that combined religious and modern education, and cultivation of reading and writing.<sup>175</sup> The intellectual challenges from secular humanism and liberal thought were primarily based on modern intellectual and scientific ways of thinking and this made conservative Protestantism more aware of the importance of intellectual development. Thus, it introduced a new strategy that emphasized education and intellectual advancement. Moreover, the demands for modern and scientific knowledge among its activists triggered the movement to provide more comprehensive educational institutions and systems. As a result, conservative Protestantism established more schools, bible institutes and colleges.

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<sup>174</sup> Martin William, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America* (New York, 1996), p. 6

<sup>175</sup> Muhammad Arif Zakauallah, *The Cross and the Crescent: The Rise of American Evangelicalism and the Future of Muslims* (Kuala Lumpur, 2004), p. 71-72

Many conservative Protestant colleges prospered in the 1930s. Substantial numbers of Bible schools, colleges and private institutions were either newly established or restructured to attract students. A survey in 1948 revealed that the total enrolment in conservative Protestant higher education doubled between 1929 and 1940.<sup>176</sup> By 1930, the conservative Protestant weekly magazine, *Sunday School Times*, endorsed over fifty Bible schools, most of which were located in major cities.<sup>177</sup> In addition, many colleges owned by conservative Protestants offered an arts and science education, two disciplines that had not been previously offered in any religious educational system. Wheaton College in Chicago, Bob Jones College in Cleveland, the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, Gordon College of Mission and Theology in Boston, North Park College, Trinity Seminary and Emmaus Bible Institute are a few examples of these colleges. Intriguingly, these colleges, particularly Wheaton College, experienced a rapid demand from Christians because of their academic standing and achievement. In 1941, 1,100 students enrolled to Wheaton College<sup>178</sup> as compared to 400 students in 1926.<sup>179</sup> Consequently, the era of the 1930s witnessed a new development of conservative Protestantism whereby the Bible-based educational institutions became the major coordinating agencies of the movement. Moody Bible Institute, for example, was able to organize weekend Bible conferences in nearly 500 churches in the 1930s and, by 1940, nearly 40,000 people subscribed to its monthly magazine, the *Moody Monthly*.<sup>180</sup>

Conservative Protestant leaders put priority on conveying their teachings and values through publications which resulted in various newspapers, magazines and books that were published and disseminated at grassroots level as well as to the masses. Eck argues that this

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<sup>176</sup> Quoted in Joel. A. Carpenter, "Fundamentalist Institutions and the Rise of Evangelical Protestantism, 1929-1942," *Church History* 49 (1980), p. 68

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66

<sup>178</sup> Wheaton College is considered the best evangelical college in the US. It is regarded by many as the "*Harvard of American evangelicalism*"

<sup>179</sup> Joel. A. Carpenter, "Fundamentalist Institutions and the Rise of Evangelical Protestantism, 1929-1942," *Church History* 49 (1980), p. 68. It is worth noting that two important evangelical leaders, Carl F.H. Henry and Billy Graham, were the products of Wheaton College in 1930s. See details in "Wheaton College, Harvard of the Bible Belt," *Change*, March 1974

<sup>180</sup> Joel. A. Carpenter, "Fundamentalist Institutions and the Rise of Evangelical Protestantism, 1929-1942," *Church History* 49 (1980), p. 67

remarkable step encouraged conservative Protestants to focus on reading and writing publications. She notes that “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-sellers lists.”<sup>181</sup> The conservative Protestants’ academic institutions subsequently played an important role in this regard, particularly in publishing and distributing books and magazines. In addition to the Moody Bible Institute’s *Moody Monthly*, the Bible Institute of Los Angeles published *The King’s Business*, Denver Bible Institute had a monthly magazine, *Grace and Truth*, and Northwestern (Minneapolis) Bible and Missionary Training School published *The Pilot*.<sup>182</sup> Moreover, many of them ventured into publication enterprises and became publishing houses. Publication companies such as Fleming H. Revell, Loizeoux Brothers and Moody Press were owned by conservative Protestant organizations.<sup>183</sup>

Another significant step taken by this movement was the acquisition of radio stations which were utilized as an effective medium to preach its religious beliefs, project its image and regain its reputation and support from the public.<sup>184</sup> Again, academic institutions played an important part in this regard. BIOLA, MBI, Providence Bible Institute, Columbia Bible College in South Carolina and Denver Bible Institute were immensely successful in utilizing their radio stations for that purpose.<sup>185</sup> Many new radio programmes that related to the Bible were introduced by those stations. In 1932, *Sunday School Times* magazine listed eighty conservative Protestant radio stations that had broadcast over 400 religious programmes nationwide.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Quoted in Muhammad Arif Zakaullah, *The Cross and the Crescent: The Rise of American Evangelicalism and the Future of Muslims* (Kuala Lumpur, 2004), p. 71-72

<sup>182</sup> Joel. A. Carpenter, "Fundamentalist Institutions and the Rise of Evangelical Protestantism, 1929-1942," *Church History* 49 (1980), p. 67

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73

<sup>184</sup> William Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America* (New York, 1996), p. 17-18

<sup>185</sup> Joel. A. Carpenter, "Fundamentalist Institutions and the Rise of Evangelical Protestantism, 1929-1942," *Church History* 49 (1980), p. 67- 68

<sup>186</sup> Herman S. Hettinger, "Broadcasting in the United States," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 177 (1935) and Spencer J. Miller, "Radio and Religion," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 177 (1935) Quoted in Joel. A. Carpenter, "Fundamentalist Institutions and the Rise of Evangelical Protestantism, 1929-1942," *Church History* 49 (1980), p. 70.

These strategic approaches consequently successfully penetrated and delivered the message of conservative Protestantism to American society without confronting liberalism or rationalism. The moral and intellectual defeat to secular humanism in the 1920s forced conservative Protestants to become more aggressive in defending their values, while at the same time disseminating those values creatively. Various concerted efforts, education, publications, conferences and radio programmes not only strengthened its movement and made its structure more visible and popular, but also saved the conservative Protestantism movement from major decline during that decade.

### **2.6.3 The Legal Battles of the 1960s and 1970s**

There were other momentous events which contributed to the development of the Christian Right involving the legal battles in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1962, the US Supreme Court in *Engel v. Vitale* ruled that school prayer and Bible reading in public school violated the constitutional separation of the Church and state. A year later, the Supreme Court in *Abington v. Schempp* decided that Bible reading in public schools was against the First Amendment. In 1972, Congress proposed and approved the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution which prohibited sexual discrimination by the state and the federal government. In 1973, the Supreme Court in *Roe v. Wade* ruled that any state laws that prohibited abortion were unconstitutional and therefore granted women the right to receive abortions. These decisions were felt by many to have “attacked” traditional Christian values and disturbed not only the fundamentalist Christians but also other conservative Christian groups as they felt their values were under siege.<sup>187</sup> In addition, in 1977, a referendum on a gay-rights ordinance passed by Dade County, Florida motivated conservative Protestants to react accordingly. To express their dissatisfaction and disagreement over these developments, they initiated movements that led to a series of “crusades” – campaigns to defend their traditional Christian values and institutions.<sup>188</sup> For

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<sup>187</sup> James A. Reichley, "The Evangelical and Fundamentalist Revolt," in *Piety and Politics: Evangelicals and Fundamentalists Confront the World*, ed. Richard J. Neuhaus and Michael Gromartie (Washington, DC, 1976), p. 77

<sup>188</sup> Kenneth D. Wald, *Religion and Politics in the United States* (Oxford, 2003), p. 205-206

them, all these social disorders were the manifestation of the decadence of the moral foundations of American society.

#### **2.6.4 The Cold War**

The Cold War was another prominent historical event that contributed to the development of the present Christian Right. Researchers like Lahr argue that the Cold War provided conservative Protestantism with a new momentum to get deeply involved in politics in the late 1970s and 1980s.<sup>189</sup> As the danger and pervasiveness of “godless communism” presented an imminent threat to the conservative Protestants’ values and beliefs,<sup>190</sup> the Cold War gave conservative Protestants a new opportunity to show their nationalistic sentiments that blended theological rhetoric with the secular American national interest. As such, Lahr argues that conservative Protestantism contributed to a new paradigm of “American nationalism”. It initiated a feeling that America could fight the “godless” communists with a new concept of nationalism that was characterized by capitalism and religion.<sup>191</sup>

In addition, Biblical prophecy provided the conservative Protestants with a religious justification to fight communism. In her thesis, Lahr states that:

The Cold War provided justification for interpreting prophecy in this specific way. It made sense in a political culture that defined the Soviet Union as an evil enemy for it to take on the role of God’s adversary. Furthermore, if “God himself” was going to defeat communism, the United States, as a foe of the Soviet Union, was on God’s side. Quite directly, then, prophecy vindicated U.S. actions in world affairs. The United States had become God’s warrior – Cold War crusaders on the side of right.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Angela M. Lahr, "Millennial Dreams and Apocalyptic Nightmares: Evangelicals and Secular Identity in the Early Cold War" (Northern Illinois University, 2005), p. 313

<sup>190</sup> Robert A. Schoenberger, ed., *The American Right Wing: Readings in Political Behavior* (New York, 1969), p. 10-11

<sup>191</sup> Angela M. Lahr, "Millennial Dreams and Apocalyptic Nightmares: Evangelicals and Secular Identity in the Early Cold War" (Northern Illinois University, 2005)

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120

Thus, anti-communism rhetoric, which mixed religion and American nationalism, became a regular feature of conservative Protestant preaching. Billy Graham, in one of his speeches, declared that “Unless the Christian religion rescues these nations [communist countries] from the clutches of the unbelieving, America will stand alone and isolated in the world.”<sup>193</sup>

The dispensationalist theology that was popular among conservative Protestantism made it easier for its adherents to align themselves with the priority of US foreign policy at that time, namely anti-communism. Dispensationalists saw the Cold War as a big sign of the end time prophecy. For example, their interpretation of the potential destruction of the atomic bomb was linked to the description of the day of the Lord in Peter 3: 10: “The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.” The most obvious event that linked the Cold War with the end time prophecy was the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. On October 1962, Billy Graham delivered a speech in Argentina which was aired on the radio programme *Hour of Decision*. He said:

Many think this may be the prelude to the greatest crisis in the history of mankind. Never before have weapons of such magnitude been poised at great segments of the human race. The Caribbean crisis came to a head and the American people closed ranks behind the President. Whether the strong action of the American government has come in time remains to be seen. For many years the policy has been to compromise, talk, retreat, and appease. Many of our leaders in both parties have looked at the world through rose-colored glasses and now we are paying for it. The chickens are coming home to roost . . . Now thousands of Americans may have to die because of the tragic mistakes that have been made in the past . . . Men are becoming desperate. Fear of the future is in everyone’s hearts.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> William Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America* (New York, 1996), p. 29.

<sup>194</sup> Quoted in Angela M. Lahr, "Millennial Dreams and Apocalyptic Nightmares: Evangelicals and Secular Identity in the Early Cold War" (Northern Illinois University, 2005), p. 282

Conservative Protestantism emphasized the use of missionary activities as a means to destroy communism. Evangelical groups such as the International Christian Leadership (ICL) believed that missionary works could be an important weapon to demolish communism in the Cold War ideological battle. In 1947, ICL published its opinion that stated: “We feel that our nation’s greatest need today is to send technically qualified Christian men and women to the foreign lands as representatives of Jesus Christ and of America...In this way alone can we effectively combat communism and help the backward peoples of the world to help themselves.”<sup>195</sup> At the same time, conservative Protestants encouraged evangelical activity around the world, particularly in the Soviet Union and Soviet-dominated countries. In 1947, *Moody Monthly* published an article entitled “Take up Your Trumpet”. It cited the verse in Matthew 24:14, “and this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come”, and encouraged the readers to do more missionary works around the world. It also stated: “Our assignment is given, not by government, but by our Lord’s great commission unto the evangelization of the world! Watchmen He appoints us, to proclaim the grace of God and to warn of danger.”<sup>196</sup>

The conservative Protestants’ strategy of making religion synonymous with American nationalism finally became attractive to the US administration. For US officials, defeating communism was the ultimate agenda. They saw that conservative Protestantism’s anticommunism rhetoric could be utilized to undermine the spread of communism. In addition, the State Department saw that the evangelical missionaries had sophisticated global networking connections and knowledge about people and states around the world which could be utilized to enhance American foreign relations.

Consequently, the US started to see the evangelical missionary movement as part of its anti-communist foreign policy. The State Department not only encouraged missionary works, but also funded evangelical missionary activities internationally. For evangelicals, the missionary work was pursued not only for religion, but also for the country’s national

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<sup>195</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p.280

<sup>196</sup> Kenneth L. Pike, "World Watchmen," *Moody Monthly*, March 1947

interest. Thus, American evangelicals mostly blended their religious message with their conservative culture and superiority of American values and expected a convert to adopt not only a Christian identity but also America's cultural identity, such as democratic values. An editorial in *Biblical Missions* magazine stated that:

We were not sent into the world to seek the rebirth of cultures, but the new birth of men. Saved men will establish cultures in other lands that agree with the Word of God, which had so much to do with the shaping of our own culture in the early days of American colonization. In the second place, Christ will not leaven a culture which has a heathen religion as its crystallizing nucleus.<sup>197</sup>

Lahr, in describing the roles of American missionaries during the Cold War, states:

Missionaries were more than symbolic, religious weapons. They were also unofficial diplomatic envoys. Serving as representatives of both the United States and the Christian community to a world caught in the Cold War quagmire, individual missionaries literally embodied the meshing of evangelical and secular identities in the United States. They took this new amalgamation abroad and served as diplomats for the United States and for Christianity both indirectly and directly. First, they brought knowledge of different parts of the globe to American evangelicals at home, who in turn used the information to inform their political choices. Second, there were some instances when the U.S. State Department used missionaries and their contacts to build better relations with countries around the world. In both cases, the blending of religious and secular identities made possible by Cold War and premillennial conceptions allowed for evangelical participation in foreign relations.<sup>198</sup>

The involvement of evangelicals in US foreign policy during the Cold War opened a new episode in conservative Protestantism historiography. The conservative Protestants' anti-

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<sup>197</sup> J. Philip Clark, "The Conflict Cultures," *Biblical Missions* 1962, p. 11

<sup>198</sup> Angela M. Lahr, *Millennial Dream and Apocalyptic Nightmares: The Cold War Origins of Political Evangelicalism* (New York, 2007), p. 91



communism overwhelmed many American politicians, as well as the mainstream media. Their reputation, which had faded for decades, was now coming back. But conservative Protestants were no longer seen as they had been during the 1920s and 1930s. The media started to highlight the movement's activities abroad and wrote much coverage of their stories. In 1946, *Time* magazine published a story about the patriotism of Youth for Christ, a conservative Protestant organization led by Billy Graham, including a comment by President Truman: "This is what I hoped would happen in America."<sup>199</sup>

There is another example of how the evangelicals played an important role in US foreign policy during the Cold War. In 1953, evangelicals condemned the treaty between the Columbian government and the Vatican that gave Roman Catholic Church an exclusive right to spread Christianity in a designated "Mission Territory". This treaty meant that the Protestants' missionary activities in that region were banned and many churches were consequently closed down. The NAE took a leading role in the campaign to influence the US government in condemning the Columbian policy that restricted freedom of religion. It was reported that around 3,000 to 4,000 letters were sent to the State Department asking the authority concerned to take prompt action to resolve the issue. In response, the chairperson of the Subcommittee on South American Affairs, Sen. Wayne Morse, promised to discuss the issue seriously and the State Department also issued a statement that noted: "the Department and the Embassy at Bogota are giving constant attention to the situation in Columbia and will continue to make every effort to obtain full protection and consideration for the rights and property of citizens of the United States."<sup>200</sup>

### **2.6.5 The Emergence of the New Right and Its Alliance with the Christian Right**

The emergence of the New Right, a right-wing and populist conservatism, in the 1960s was another important part of the history of the Christian Right. The New Right's leaders tried to convince the Christian Right's leaders to be involved in American politics by providing

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<sup>199</sup> William Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America* (New York, 1996), p. 27

<sup>200</sup> Quoted in Angela M. Lahr, "Millennial Dreams and Apocalyptic Nightmares: Evangelicals and Secular Identity in the Early Cold War" (Northern Illinois University, 2005), p. 239

an avenue within their political structure.<sup>201</sup> Its leaders, such as Paul Weyrich and Richard Vigurries, had a good network with evangelical leaders and envisaged the grassroots support among the conservative Protestants as an opportunity for their involvement in American politics. In an interview, Paul Weyrich said: "I would say that we need each other. If we don't work together, we will get nothing... We're not a majority. We've got to work together whenever we can to constitute a majority. So yeah, social conservatives need economic conservatives. But by the same token, economic conservatives need social conservatives."<sup>202</sup> In addition, the New Right's leaders saw that both movements had converging interests on both domestic issues and foreign affairs. Both of them were strong advocates for the return of conservative economics and morals in American life and politics. In terms of foreign policy, both were strongly anti-communist, defenders of the Israeli state and supported American unilateralism in world politics.<sup>203</sup>

Guth argues that the Watergate scandal and the Goldwater campaign in 1964 were the early catalysts that inspired the Christian Right to join its politics together with the New Right. Guth argues that the scandal created a grey area between private morality and public action, thus it leaving a vacuum for the emergence of morality based on religion in American political discourse.<sup>204</sup> Moreover, the Christian Right, which had faced legal and social issues in the 1970s with the federal leaders, saw the New Right's invitation as an opportunity for them to engage directly with American society. The passage and ramification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in 1972 was a big legal issue for the conservatives. Many conservative activists, especially among the Christian Right's leaders, saw the ERA as a legal tool of feminism to undermine the traditional American family values and structure. As a result, Phyllis Schlafly, a Christian Right activist, reacted by forming Eagle Forum which launched various campaigns by its grassroots members to

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<sup>201</sup> Duane M. Oldfield, *The Right and the Righteous: The Christian Right Confronts the Republican Party* (New York, 1996)

<sup>202</sup> Richard J. Meagher Jr., "Right Ideas: Discourse, Framing, and the Conservative Coalition" Ph. D Thesis ( The City University of New York, 2008), p. 1

<sup>203</sup> Allan C. Carlson, "Learning for the History of Conservatism: Main Trails and Less-Traveled Paths," *The Howard Center: The Family in America* 23 (November, 2002)

<sup>204</sup> Quoted in Kimberly H. Conger, "Grassroots Activism and Party Politics: The Christian Right in State Republicans Parties" Ph. D Thesis (The Ohio State University, 2003), p. 6

defeat the ERA. Allan C. Carlson of the Howard Center for Family, Religion and Society argues that Phyllis Schlafly's initiative was a historic moment for the emergence of the Christian Right in American politics.<sup>205</sup>

In 1978, the Christian Right faced another critical situation when the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) planned to revoke the tax-exemption of all private schools. This announcement actually followed a previous event especially after a district court ruled in a 1972 case, *Green v. Connally*, that a school that implemented segregation was beyond the definition of a charitable institution, thus it is not eligible for tax-exemption. As discussed earlier, the Christian Right mostly established its own schools for its children and all these institutions were registered under a charitable institution act. The IRS announcement, which was supported by President Jimmy Carter administration, was seen as an attack on the Christian Right's traditional education system as well as a means for the government to inject its liberal and secular values to all American children. In fact, many evangelicals were frustrated with Carter, who seemed not to be sufficiently socially conservative.<sup>206</sup> Martin suggests that the IRS announcement was a catalyst to the emergence of the Christian Right into the political sphere. He quoted a personal remark of Weyrich, who said:

What galvanized the Christian community was not abortion, school prayer, or the ERA. I am a living witness to that because I was trying to get those people interested in those issues and I utterly failed. What changed their mind was Jimmy Carter's intervention against the Christian schools, trying to deny the tax-exempt status on the basis of so-called de facto segregation ... [the IRS threat] enraged the Christian community and they looked upon it as interference from government, and suddenly it dawned on them that they were not going to be able to be left alone to teach their children as they pleased. It was at that moment that conservatives made the linkage between opposition to government interference and the interests of the evangelical movement, which now saw itself on the defensive and under

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<sup>205</sup> Allan C. Carlson, "Learning for the History of Conservatism: Main Trails and Less-Traveller Paths," *The Howard Center: The Family in America* 23 (November, 2002)

<sup>206</sup> Kimberly H. Conger, "Grassroots Activism and Party Politics: The Christian Right in State Republican Parties" (The Ohio State University, 2003)

attack by the government. That was what brought those people into the political process. It was not the other things.<sup>207</sup>

The social and legal issues, notably abortion and the ERA, triggered the Christian Right's leaders to seriously consider the invitation of the New Right to enter mainstream politics. Moreover, conservative Protestants felt that their traditional moral values based on Christian teachings were being attacked and deprived by liberalism and communism. The conservative Protestants concluded that the situation would improve only if traditional moral values could be restored. Since liberalism was being advocated and implemented by political means, conservative Protestants perceived it should itself be involved in American politics by setting its own agenda and mobilizing its forces in the democratic system. The only way to do this was through participation in the political arena. This political mobilization of conservative Protestants marked their return into political action and created a new episode in their movement which is still ongoing. As Wald explains:

These movements represented a sea change in the thinking of evangelical Protestants, a "coming out" almost dramatic as the political awakenings of feminists and homosexuals that had triggered it. Once ridiculed as being "so heavenly minded they were of no earthly good," evangelicals had been theologically unequipped for regular participation in society. Their minister had long warned them to steer clear of "secular" politics and focus their energies on their salvation. But now, in response to the menacing social trends unleashed in the 1960s, they were counselled to reject the division of human affairs into the "secular" and "sacred" and insist, instead, that there is no arena of human activity, including law and politics, which is outside of God's lordship. The task is not to avoid this world, but to declare God's Kingdom in it. Animated by this ideal, evangelicals began to apply to politics the same missionary zeal they had traditionally shown in converting individuals.<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> William Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America* (New York, 1996), p. 173

<sup>208</sup> Cited in Kenneth D. Wald, *Religion and Politics in the United States* (Oxford, 2003), p. 207-208

Eventually, the Christian Right's leaders grasped the New Right's invitation and allied with the New Right under one banner of "conservatism". Durham describes this new phenomenon as "a holy alliance".<sup>209</sup> In 1979, Jerry Falwell founded the Moral Majority, a purely political arm of the Christian Right, to offer support to the Republican Party in the 1980 election. Since then, the Christian Right has been involved directly in American politics. For the Republican Party, the Christian Right's grassroots support became its valuable vote that could contribute to defeating the Democrats' candidates. The Christian Right believes that by participating directly in politics, it can express its conservative moral values in the public sphere. Equipped with extensive evangelical social networks and grassroots supporters, as well as advanced communication technology such as the so called "Electronic Church" that has hundreds of radio and television stations,<sup>210</sup> the Christian Right were optimistic about its potential in American politics.

The involvement of the Christian Right in politics marked an important episode in the development of the Christian Right itself. Firstly, it showed that the Christian Right had evolved from a social movement into political movement. Secondly, the involvement in politics had transformed its character, from being purely religiously motivated into more politically driven. As a result, the movement became more visible in public discourse. It adopted new approaches that were more compromising to ideas of secularism, more politically pragmatic and accommodative, and that mixed religious and nationalistic rhetorical strategies. Furthermore, its involvement in politics motivated the movement to become sophisticated in organizational activities and management.<sup>211</sup>

Since the 1980s, the Christian Right has become one of the most influential forces in the Republican Party (Grand Old Party – GOP). The strength of the Christian Right is attributed to two aspects. The ability of the Christian Right's leaders to forge good

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<sup>209</sup> Martin Durham, *The Christian Right, the Far Right and the Boundaries of American Conservatism* (Manchester, 2000)

<sup>210</sup> In 1979, Christianity Today reported that the evangelical movement owned more than 1,300 television and radio networks and their audiences were over 130 million. In addition, these networks brought profits at anywhere from \$500 million to several billions of dollars. See "The Christianity Today Gallup Poll: an Overview," *Christianity Today*, 21 Dec 1979

<sup>211</sup> Matthew C. Moen, *The Transformation of the Christian Right* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 1992) This issue is further discussed in Chapter 3.

relationships with some American presidents is one of its great strengths. Ronald Reagan had close alliances with two influential Christian Right leaders, Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson. Likewise, George W. Bush was known for his personal relationships with Billy Graham<sup>212</sup> and some other Christian Right leaders. Secondly, the strong support of the Christian Right at a grassroots level could possibly determine the chances of any candidate winning in a presidential election. Arguably, the Christian Right's extensive conservative social networks and grassroots political activity are the most tangible reasons why it is considered influential and has a significant role in the GOP. An empirical study by Conger showed that the Christian Right has "a permanent fixture in the calculations of Republican political" strategists as well as holding "the key to GOP victories at all levels of electoral contests."<sup>213</sup> Likewise Brett Clifton in his thesis found that GOP continues to rely on its coalition with the Christian Right as the movement significantly helps the party to compete with the Democrat party.<sup>214</sup> Marsden argues that two powerful Christian Right organizations, the Moral Majority and the Christian Coalition, were the main contributors to the victories in some presidential elections.<sup>215</sup> We can witness the important role played by the Christian Right during both the Reagan and George W. Bush presidential elections. Both cases showed that the role of the Christian Right should not be underestimated as it has been able to determine the victory of both candidates.

## 2.7 Conclusion

This chapter provides some important aspect of the historical development of the Christian Right in American society and politics. Its evolution from a long historical background and traditions showed us that the Christian Right is inherently complex, and not monolithic. In addition, its reaction to certain social, legal and political issues that deemed jeopardize its

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<sup>212</sup> George W. Bush said that Billy Graham was a "great man" and "planted a mustard seed in my soul" that grew into a full acceptance of Jesus. See Stephen Mansfield, *The Faith of George W. Bush* (2004)

<sup>213</sup> Kimberly H. Conger, "Grassroots Activism and Party Politics: The Christian Right in State Republican Parties" (The Ohio State University, 2003), p. 1-2

<sup>214</sup> Brett Monroe Clifton, "Rousing the Faithful to Seek the Promised Land: Analyzing the Christian Right's Penetration of the Republican Party" (Brown University, 2002), p. 25

<sup>215</sup> Lee Marsden, *For God's Sake: The Christian Right and U.S. Foreign Policy* (London 2008), p. 25

survival and its conservative Christian values motivated the movement to become more resilient, vigorous, rationale, strategic and creative. All those historical elements and religious foundation provided the movement strong social, political and cultural identities thus inspire and motivate the movement to be involved deeply in American political sphere. In addition, the Christian Right's theological beliefs such as millennialism and end-time theology that largely discussed specific world events, though very complex to explain, linked the Christian Right's interests in American foreign policy with world affairs. They are not only provided a framework for the Christian Right's world view but also a narrative of the justification for its involvement in US foreign policy. Dispensationalist theology fuelled the Christian Right to view Israel and Jews as the important subjects in its theological timeline. As they prophesize the world's immorality as a sign of end times, the Christian Right see it as timely to uphold its missionary work together with American foreign policy; the theology thus spurred the need for global evangelical missions and encouraged the Christian Right to undertake humanitarian missionary efforts abroad. In addition, the Christian Right response to the Cold War can be evident to support this argument. Finally, its coalition with the New Right movement that were dominated by secularists and its involvement with Republican Party gave the movement a new opportunity to be involved in mainstream politics.

## **CHAPTER 3**

# **THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT'S MOST INFLUENTIAL ADVOCACY GROUPS**

### **3.0 Introduction**

The Christian Right movement is composed of many separate interest group organizations. Therefore to understand the Christian Right movement, it is important to examine its separate interest groups. In addition, conceptualizing it as being composed of many separate interest group organizations provides readers with a clearer picture through which to look and understand the movement as a whole. In this chapter, I explore six influential interest groups of the Christian Right, namely: Concerned Women for American (CWA), Family Research Council (FRC), Focus on the Family (FOF), Eagle Forum and Christians United for Israel (CUFI). These organizations have been chosen because of their considered status as the most influential Christian Right advocacy groups. In addition, each of these groups has different approaches and objectives, thus showing us the diversity within the Christian Right movement. Focus will be placed on their interests in American foreign policy and global social policy. I examine the organizations' historical backgrounds, and study their agendas, issues and forms of international engagement which relate to American foreign policy. I argue that the Christian Right is not a monolithic movement in term of its focus, objectives or activism. Despite their diversity, various actions of these advocacy groups have strengthened the role of the Christian Right in exerting its influence on US foreign policy. Finally, I contend that, although the Christian Right advocacy groups' motives for activism are strongly based on the Bible and Judeo-Christian values, the arguments and ideas behind their struggle are presented in a very nationalistic, secular and pragmatic vein.



## 3.1 Concerned Women for America (CWA)

### 3.1.1 Historical Background

Concerned Women for America (CWA) is one of the oldest Christian Right interest groups in the United States. It was founded in 1979 by Beverly LaHaye, the wife of Tim LaHaye, co-founder of the Moral Majority<sup>216</sup> and author of the bestselling dispensationalist apocalyptic book series *Left Behind: A Novel of the Earth's Last Days*.<sup>217</sup> Historically, the establishment of CWA was a reaction to the radical feminist groups in America who were, according to Beverly LaHaye, openly expressing wrong views about the rights of women and claiming them to be the views of the majority of women in the US.<sup>218</sup> Steven Gardiner, who studies CWA dynamism, concludes that the politics of Concerned Women for America are the politics of reaction. He believes that the CWA agenda moves beyond anti-feminism, and it is impossible to understand its “special role” in the Christian Right movement without understanding its position as the right-wing foil to feminism as it has developed its own pro-active rhetoric such as pro-life, pro-family, pro-chastity and other conservative values.<sup>219</sup>

Since its establishment, CWA has been considered the largest Christian Right interest group targeted at women.<sup>220</sup> Generally, it describes its organization as “the nation’s largest public policy women’s organization” which has “a rich 25 year history of helping members across the country bring biblical principles into all levels of public policy.”<sup>221</sup> During my

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<sup>216</sup> For a detailed study on this organization refer to Clyde Wilcox, “Evangelicals and the Moral Majority,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 28 (1989)

<sup>217</sup> *Left Behind* is a series of 16 bestselling novels co-authored by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins. Over 11 million copies have been sold in the series. See *Left Behind* official website at *Left Behind Series* (Leftbehind.Com, 2009 [cited 25 November 2009]); available from [http://www.leftbehind.com/01\\_product/browse.asp?section=Books](http://www.leftbehind.com/01_product/browse.asp?section=Books)

<sup>218</sup> Janice Shaw Crouse, interview with author, 15 May 2009, Washington, D.C. Janice Crouse is a Director for the Beverly LaHaye Institute, and a Senior Fellow of CWA. She was a former speech writer for President George H. Bush (Bush senior). She has twice served President George W. Bush as an official delegate to the UN (2002 and 2003).

<sup>219</sup> Stevan Gardiner, *Feminism and Women's Studies: Concerned Women for America: A Case Study* (2008 [cited 20 April 2008]); available from <http://feminism.eserver.org/cw-of-a.txt>

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.* ([cited])

<sup>221</sup> Concerned Women for America : About CWA ([cited 20 April 2008]); available from <http://www.cwfa.org/about.asp>

interview in May 2009, Janice Crouse claimed that CWA was “800 pounds gorilla in Washington DC” because its membership exceeds 600,000 members.<sup>222</sup> Interestingly, the *Right Web*, a website that monitors the development of the Religious Right movement in America, reports that the membership of CWA is not limited to women only as more than 10% or 6,000 of the total members are men.<sup>223</sup> Due to its large membership, Crouse asserted that CWA was the real mainstream representing the women of America as compared to the National Association of Women (NAW), whose total membership is less than 250,000.<sup>224</sup>

CWA is a staunch proponent of the inerrancy of the Bible and it believes that the standard given by God in the Bible is unquestionable. CWA claims that its movement and stands are totally informed and directed by such belief.<sup>225</sup> Hence, the organization concentrates on protecting Christian traditional values in American society, especially regarding support for biblical teaching and the design of the family. It has identified and focuses on six core issues, mainly derived from biblical teachings and a Judeo-Christian worldview. The six core issues are: the sanctity of human life, religious liberty, definition of family, pornography, education and national sovereignty. Accordingly, the movement is pro-family and pro-life, and opposes feminism, gay rights, comprehensive sex education, and drugs and alcohol education in America.<sup>226</sup> In addition, it also believed that politics should be mixed with religion. In 1987, LaHaye expressed this belief in an interview by stating: “Yes, religion and politics do mix. America is a nation based on biblical principles. Christian values dominate our government. The test of those values is the Bible. Politicians who do not use the Bible to guide their public and private lives do not belong in office.”<sup>227</sup> However, it worth noting that, though CWA was founded by, and its activism is based on,

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<sup>222</sup> Janice Shaw Crouse, interview with author, 15 May 2009, Washington, D.C.

<sup>223</sup> Concerned Women for America (Right Web, 2004 [cited 26 April 2008]); available from <http://rightweb.irc-online.org/profile/1459>

<sup>224</sup> Janice Shaw Crouse, interview with author, 15 May 2009, Washington, D.C.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> Right Wing Organizations : Concerned Women for America (People For The American Way, [cited 20 April 2008]); available from <http://www.pfaw.org/general/default.aspx?oid=22376>

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.([cited])

biblical teaching, it denies being involved in any end-time theology or anything to do with what Tim LaHaye's *Left Behind* series propagated. As argued by Janice Crouse:

We are not necessarily theological...we do not deal with that kind of issue at all. We are evangelical, but we do not argue theologically beyond saying some basic principle in the Bible. For example when it comes to public policy, we anchored the public policy position on the scripture. But we do not argue theologically. Dispensationalism, end time are not related to our mission... but Tim LaHaye did.<sup>228</sup>

For the past two decades, CWA has shown an interest in cultivating its conservative moral values at an international level and has indeed already stepped up its involvement in shaping global social policies. The next section highlights CWA's response to, and activism around, American foreign policies and international issues.

### **3.1.2 Pursuing an International Agenda: Priorities and Issues**

CWA believes in the concept of American nationalism. CWA emphasizes American national sovereignty as one of the most important goals of the organization. It defines its role in protecting American national sovereignty by advocating that US should not compromise on its independence, sovereignty and right of self-government, by not being subdued to any foreign authority or abiding by any foreign law, including international laws. CWA also supports any effort to develop and maintain the US status quo as the strongest defence system in order to deter possible aggression posed by foreign powers. In addition, CWA sees illegal immigrants to the US as a threat to American sovereignty. Thus, it advocates the US maintaining strong border control and strict immigration regulations. However, CWA makes an exception for immigrants who fled into the US because of religious repression or other human rights issues. As such, CWA claims it honestly serves the nation by protecting from any attempt to jeopardize American sovereignty by international organizations or any foreign powers.<sup>229</sup> In this regard, CWA

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<sup>228</sup> Janice Shaw Crouse, interview with author, 15 May 2009, Washington, D.C.

<sup>229</sup> Concerned Women for America : About CWA ([cited 20 April 2008]); available from <http://www.cwfa.org/about.asp>

feels that its religious beliefs and values, founded on Judeo-Christian traditions, are congruent with the foundation of American values such as freedom of faith, liberty, democracy and capitalism. CWA believes that the combination of those values is part of “American Exceptionalism”, by which the US was able to become the greatest nation in the world, thus it has a responsibility to promote and defend those values. Janice Crouse argues:

(The) US never tried to force (any) other country to be a Christian nation, but we promote democracy that we believe will allowing people for freedom. That’s why we are in Iraq and Afghanistan, to negate oppression and dictatorship. These are American values. And when you are a superpower, you have to use that for good. So, America needs to be a force for good around the world. (The) US needs to be a force for freedom, (a) force for the little people who do not have anybody else to stand up for them. That’s the driving force of our [CWA’s] involvement in any international issue.<sup>230</sup>

CWA views the United Nations (UN) as an important platform to protect and propagate conservative Christian family values. Moreover, as strongly anti-feminist, CWA sees the expansion of the feminist movement worldwide, especially through their involvement at the UN, as a trend that is dangerous to global traditional values. Beverly LaHaye warned that this phenomenon was more apparent as some pro-feminist organizations have roles at the United Nations and use this platform to spread their agenda globally.<sup>231</sup> In fact, Janice Crouse claims that feminist organizations have dictated some of the UN policies which, according to her, have had a negative impact on global pro-family policies, including American ones to Americans. As a result, CWA sees the only way to curb this trend is by participating at the United Nations. As argued by Janice Crouse: “We worked at the UN because the UN has unprecedented power to coerce nations into following their agenda and

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<sup>230</sup> Janice Shaw Crouse, interview with author, 15 May 2009, Washington, D.C.

<sup>231</sup> Right Wing Organizations : Concerned Women for America (People For The American Way, [cited 20 April 2008]); available from <http://www.pfaw.org/general/default.aspx?oid=22376>

over the last 40 years, their agenda has been a left wing radical agenda; pro abortion, pro-homosexuality, secular agenda and beyond secular to radical left.”<sup>232</sup>

In 2000, Concerned Women for America was granted UN consultative status, together with other Christian Right organizations such as the Family Research Council and Focus on the Family. CWA claims that, through its presence at the UN, it has not only successfully restrained the influence of the feminist agenda but has also been able to provide a leadership to face the radical feminist movement at the UN. Presently, according to Crouse, CWA still works towards and lobbies for a conservative family values agenda at the UN. It consistently disseminates information and facts to UN delegates to make them aware of the anti-feminist agenda. In addition, CWA regularly arranges experts on particular issues related to the conservative agenda to deliver talks to the delegates at seminars or luncheons at the UN.<sup>233</sup>

This progressive women’s right agenda initiated by CWA has sparked the emergence of an international coalition of conservative religious and social organizations in the UN. Together with its status as a credential consultative NGO at the UN, and supported strongly by Bush’s administration, CWA is seen as “a new sheriff in town” that would oppose any feminist movement’s agenda and, at the same time, propagate the Christian Right’s agenda at the United Nations.<sup>234</sup> It is believed, due to this coalition led by CWA, that right-wing conservative organizations have gained influence in shaping the US position at the UN regarding abortion, reproductive rights, the AIDS pandemic and other pro-family agendas.<sup>235</sup> As Buss and Herman suggest,

Some examples of successful CR [CWA] impact include providing significant leadership to the anti-UN movement in the United States; injecting an antiabortion ethos into international population policy and aid; maintaining pressure on the US government to remain a non-signatory to

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<sup>232</sup> Janice Shaw Crouse, interview with author, 15 May 2009, Washington, D.C.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid.

<sup>234</sup> Jennifer Butler, *New Sheriff in Town: The Christian Right Nears Major Victory at the United Nations* (Political Research Associate, 26 April 2008 [cited 2 16]); available from <http://www.irc-online.org/magazine/v16n2/v16n2.pdf>

<sup>235</sup> Jennifer Butler, *For Faith and Family: Christian Right Advocacy at the United Nations* (Public Eye, 2000 [cited 20 April 2008]); available from <http://www.irc.online.org/magazine/v16n2/v16n2.pdf>

international human rights conventions; influencing the content of final drafts of documents, such as the 1995 Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing; monitoring the activities of UN-sponsored bodies such as UNESCO and the World Health Organization; and providing an extensive critique of the perceived “global liberal agenda”.<sup>236</sup>

Another international issue of interest to CWA is the introduction of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1999. Though its establishment has been regarded as a great achievement for women’s rights, especially by feminist movements at the United Nations, it is seen as a threat against traditional family values by CWA. Describing CEDAW as a “radical feminist agenda . . . to destroy the traditional family structure in the United States”<sup>237</sup>, CWA has made the campaign against CEDAW one of its fundamental concerns since 2002. Though the CEDAW treaty was signed by the United States in the 1980s and was approved by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, CWA continuously opposes the American ratification of the treaty on the basis that it will limit American sovereignty, that is the right to govern and define American culture. In other words, CWA believes the CEDAW treaty would only challenge and undermine the laws and culture of the United States.<sup>238</sup> Claiming the CEDAW treaty as a flawed and a “leftist utopian wish list”<sup>239</sup>, CWA has identified various “egregious provisions” of CEDAW which mostly contradict biblical values and could jeopardize American sovereignty. Among others, CWA views CEDAW as nothing more or less than a tool to: undermine the traditional family structure, promote global equal rights, undercut the proper role of parents in child rearing, guarantee a global abortion policy and encourage global prostitution. Moreover, CWA believes that the creation of 23 international experts to

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<sup>236</sup> Doris Buss and Didi Herman, *Globalizing Family Values: The Christian Right in International Politics* (Minneapolis, 2003), p. XV

<sup>237</sup> Laurel Macleod and Catherina Hulburt, *Exposing CEDAW: The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (2000 [cited 6 April 2008]); available from <http://www.cwfa.org>

<sup>238</sup> Thomas L. Jipping and Wendy Wright, *CEDAW Treaty Would Undermine American Sovereignty* (2007 [cited 2 May 2008]); available from <http://www.cufa.org>

<sup>239</sup> Right Wing Organizations : Concerned Women for America (People For The American Way, [cited 20 April 2008]); available from <http://www.pfaw.org/general/default.aspx?oid=22376>

oversee the implementation of the treaty would interfere with and jeopardize American sovereignty in regulating the welfare and wellbeing of American women and families.<sup>240</sup>

CWA is also very active in the international human or sex trafficking issue. Since 1995, together with the Southern Baptist Convention and Salvation Army, CWA has been deeply involved in the legislative process of the US human trafficking law, which it believes is inter-related with the international sex trafficking issue. Besides drafting the legislation, CWA also lobbies on Capitol Hill and conducts seminars for congressmen to let them know about the facts and figures of human trafficking in the world.<sup>241</sup> Janice Crouse claims that the Trafficking Victims Protection Act<sup>242</sup> passed by Congress and signed by the president in 2000, was partly the product of CWA lobbying efforts.<sup>243</sup>

Lastly, CWA is a strong opponent of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and opposes American participation and ratification of the treaty. Its main argument is that UNCLOS could pose a grave threat and could jeopardize the national sovereignty of the United States,<sup>244</sup> and could cause the United States to lose money, national security, private property rights, military intelligence, competitive markets, access to US territory, natural resources, autonomy and arguments against submitting to International Criminal Court.<sup>245</sup> According to Sarah Rode, an officer for the CWA Legislative Action Committee, CWA sees the treaty as a tool for anti-Americans at the United Nations to undermine United States sovereignty. In addition, she argues that any attempts to ratify the treaty are worthwhile since ratification would damage US sovereignty

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<sup>240</sup> Janice Shaw Crouse, Fact Sheet and Talking Points: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (Concerned Women For America, 2007 [cited 2 May 2008]); available from <http://www.cwfa.org/printerfriendly.asp?id=1266&department=bli&categoryid=nation>

<sup>241</sup> Janice Shaw Crouse, interview with author, 15 May 2009, Washington, D.C.

<sup>242</sup> See [http://www.humantrafficking.org/countries/united\\_states\\_of\\_america](http://www.humantrafficking.org/countries/united_states_of_america)

<sup>243</sup> Janice Shaw Crouse, interview with author, 15 May 2009, Washington, D.C.

<sup>244</sup> Lanier Swann, CWA Strongly Opposes U.S. Participation in the Law of the Sea Treaty (Concerned Women for America, 2005 [cited 2 May 2008]); available from <http://www.cwa.org.asp?id=7511&department=cwa&categoryid=nation>

<sup>245</sup> Sarah Rode, Law of the Sea Treaty in a Sea of Anti-American Sentiments (Concerned Women for America Legislative Action Committee, 2007 [cited 2 May 2008]); available from [http://www.cwalac.org/article\\_494.shtml](http://www.cwalac.org/article_494.shtml)

and could also have negative consequences on America's military, businesses and taxpayers.<sup>246</sup>

CWA has developed multiple strategies for lobbying on Capitol Hill, particularly regarding ratification of CEDAW, sex trafficking, UNCLOS and the International Criminal Court. For instance, CWA created the Beverly LaHaye Institute as its think tank organization. The institute, led by Janice Crouse, is an intellectual arm of CWA and takes a leading role in educating and promoting CWA's core issues to its members as well as to the American public. Furthermore, the institute acts as a research and consultancy centre that provides contemporary intellectual input to CWA activists.<sup>247</sup> Meanwhile, CWA is involved in lobbying activities at Capitol Hill by channelling issues through two affiliated organizations: Concerned Women Political Action Committee (CWPAC) and Concerned Women for America Legislative Action Committee (CWALAC). While CWPAC is focused on and responds to any political issues related to the mission of CWA, CWALAC acts as the legislation and advocacy arm of CWA and is committed to reforming any American legislation that is not in line with CWA aspirations. Presently, CWALAC is conducting a programme called "Project 535". According to Janice Crouse, Project 535 was initially called "The 535 Ladies" as it was started by a group that consisted of five hundred and thirty-five women. This lobbyist group targets and conducts lobbying activities on members of the House and Senate.<sup>248</sup> The 535 ladies delegate a task to a small team consisting of 20–30 women who voluntarily come to Capitol Hill, once a month, and lobby on a particular issue or law. The team are normally briefed precisely on the issue or law and equipped with rational arguments. After that, they are asked to wage a campaign on particular senators or congressmen and lobby them with specific arguments. In addition, they will also arrange to meet a sub-committee to deal with any particular bill relevant to their mission that is about to be voted on.<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> Ibid.([cited])

<sup>247</sup> See Beverly LaHaye Institute (Concerned Women For America, 2009 [cited 26 November 2009]); available from <http://www.cwfa.org/bli/>

<sup>248</sup> Janice Shaw Crouse, interview with author, 15 May 2009, Washington, D.C.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid.



Because of the need to expand CWA human resources for lobbying activities, the project name was changed to “Project 535” and no longer limited its members to five hundred and thirty-five. Instead, it offers membership of the project to any CWA member. According to the CWA website, with its present capacity and its ability to reach between 40 and 70 congressional offices in a day, Project 535 could become an influential lobbyist actor in Capitol Hill. Currently, Project 535 has volunteers at state and local level to also advocate their agenda to local constituents. By this modus operandi, it argues that it creates a communication chain that links state and local leaders with their congressmen on Capitol Hill.<sup>250</sup>

## **3.2 Family Research Council (FRC)**

### **3.2.1 Historical Background**

The Family Research Council (FRC) was founded in 1983 by John Dobson as a non-profit organization. Driven by and mostly modelled on Focus on the Family (FOF), the main idea behind its formation was to get involved in politics, that is to represent the interests of families to American legislators and other government agencies.<sup>251</sup> During its early stages, FRC was closely associated with FOF and in 1988 FRC and FOF were formally merged. However, in 1992 FRC became independent and was led by Jerry Regier, a former President Reagan administration official. It was, however, under its second president Gary Bauer, a former advisor to President Reagan, that FRC flourished dramatically. It has been reported that, a decade after Gary Bauer took the leadership, its mailing list membership increased from 3,000 in 1988 to 455,000 in 1998. In addition, its annual operating budget

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<sup>250</sup> What is Project 535 (Concerned Women For America, 2009 [cited 25 November 2009]); available from <http://www.cwalac.org/whatis535.shtml>

<sup>251</sup> Michael Crowley, James Dobson: The Religious Right's New Kingmaker (Slate Assessment, 2004 [cited 17 June 2008]); available from <http://slate.msn.com/toolbar.aspx?action=2109621>

also showed significant growth, from \$200,000 in 1988 to \$14 million in 1998<sup>252</sup> and over \$15 million in 2002.<sup>253</sup>

Described as “a heavily funded lobbying organization”<sup>254</sup> and “the most fundamental of political rights”<sup>255</sup>, FRC has become one of the most influential conservative organizations, advocating Judeo-Christian family values and playing a crucial role in establishing a conservative Christian standard of morality in all American public and foreign policy.<sup>256</sup> FRC was considered one of the “Big Three” Christian Right organizations in Washington, alongside the Christian Coalition and Concerned Women for America<sup>257</sup> and has emerged as a leading conservative movement dedicated to promoting “traditional family values”. However, at the same time, it also works against anything that contradicts traditional values such reproductive freedom, abortion, feminism, sex education, and equal rights for gays and lesbians. One of FRC’s great achievements to advance its agenda was the legislation on Defence of Marriage Act (S.B.1740) which was passed in 1996. This legislation gives a clear definition of marriage to avoid expansion beyond the traditional union of man and woman. As a result, it has confined the agenda of the gay and lesbian movement which seeks legal equal civil rights in their marriages and partnerships.

In its mission statement, FRC emphasizes its role in championing:

. . . marriage and family as the foundation of civilization, the seedbed of virtue, and the wellspring of society. FRC shapes public debate and formulates public policy that values human life and upholds the institutions of marriage and family. Believing that God is the author of

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<sup>252</sup> *TIME*, 19 January 1998

<sup>253</sup> Brett Monroe Clifton, "Rousing the Faithful to Seek the Promised Land: Analyzing the Christian Right's Penetration of the Republican Party" Ph.D Thesis (Brown University, 2002), p. 40

<sup>254</sup> Stuart Croft, "Christian Evangelicals and US Soft Power," (2008)

<sup>255</sup> Family Research Council (Family Research Council, [cited 15 May 2008]); available from <http://www.frc.org>

<sup>256</sup> Family Research Council (People For the American Way, [cited 31 March 2008]); available from <http://www.pfaw.org/pfaw/general/default.aspx?oid=4211>

<sup>257</sup> William Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America* (New York, 1996), p. 342-243

life, liberty, and the family, FRC promotes the Judeo-Christian worldview as the basis for a just, free, and stable society.<sup>258</sup>

As one of the Christian Right's advocates<sup>259</sup>, the main role of FRC is promoting conservative family ideas in political and legal discussion. The objective behind this is to ensure conservative family ideas and values are apparent and being discussed, not only at the public level but also at the policy maker level.<sup>260</sup> Most of FRC policy and priorities are discussed in its "Washington Watch Weekly", FRC's weekly radio broadcast. Hosted by Tony Perkins, the program was aired by 237 radio stations all over the world and attracted millions of listeners.<sup>261</sup>

FRC also shows an interest in politics. Thus, it has been involved in lobbying activities and mobilizing activists and constituents in American politics. Its political arm is FRC Action. Launched in 1992, FRC Action plays a significant role in lobbying and advising legislators, mobilizing the grassroots members, organizing rallies, phone campaigns and producing hard-hitting television shows, radio talk shows and printed political advertisements. In 2008, FRC formed another political force called FRC Political Action Committee (PAC). One example of its political activity was the endorsement of the latest American presidential candidate. In the 2008 presidential election campaign, FRC endorsed Senator McCain over Obama. It is believed that this support was mainly because McCain was more ready than Obama to support the "pro-life" cause and this was in line with FRC's view of point. Immediately after McCain's comments in his "pro-life" speech, the present FRC president, Tony Perkins, stated that McCain "...has a tremendous burden to reclaim the culture for Christ and believes that this revival will begin in the churches across America, reach across dominations and racial and economic lines, and build on shared values of

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<sup>258</sup> FRC Mission Statement (Family Research Council, [cited 6 June 2008]); available from <http://www.frc.org/mission-statement>

<sup>259</sup> William L. Saunders, interview with author, 27 April 2009, Washington D.C. Mr Saunders admits that FRC, as a social conservative advocate, is part of the Christian Right movement.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid.

<sup>261</sup> Heather Mckee Hurwitz, "Worth, Policy, and Networks in the Christian Right: A Case Study of the Family Research Council," in *MPSA Annual National Conference* (Palmer House Hotel, Hilton, Chicago, IL, 2008).

family and freedom.”<sup>262</sup> Prior to that, in 2003, Perkins strongly criticized George W. Bush’s personal statement on his tolerant view of same-sex marriage by saying:

We are encouraged that the President is now saying he will support amending the Constitution to protect marriage. However, I am concerned that the President thinks counterfeit institutions such as same-sex unions are OK and do not threaten to devalue the real thing. This administration has spent millions of dollars to prevent the counterfeiting of our currency which threatens the health of our economy. Counterfeit marriage called “civil unions” pose a serious threat to the health of our culture, and while the President may believe this is an issue to be resolved at the state level, he should use his moral leadership to steer states away from such culture-threatening unions – not encourage them by showing indifference or political tolerance.<sup>263</sup>

It is worth noting that FRC rejects any claims that try to relate it with the millennial movement. Moreover, FRC denies its involvement with any end-time theology and asserts that it never has any conversation or discussion about end time theology as part of its mission and activism.<sup>264</sup> Notwithstanding that, Saunders agrees that the Christian teaching and worldview is important in shaping FRC activism both locally and internationally. However, Saunders emphasizes that FRC does not make its Judeo-Christian beliefs or values a basis of its arguments in its involvement at international level such as at the United Nations. Instead, FRC makes persuasive arguments based on secular ideas such as medical findings, positivist social science points of view, human rights and natural law arguments.<sup>265</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> Excerpt from Stuart Croft, "Christian Evangelicals and US Soft Power," (2008), p. 14. Perkins comments are available at <http://www.frc.org/get.cgm?i=by03h27>

<sup>263</sup> Washington Update, December 17 2003, available at Family Research Council (People For the American Way, [cited 31 March 2008]); available from <http://www.pfaw.org/pfaw/general/default.aspx?oid=4211>

<sup>264</sup> William L. Saunders, interview with author, 27 April 2009, Washington D.C.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid.

### 3.2.2 FRC's Most Influential Leader: Tony Perkins

After Gary Bauer left FRC in 1999 to run in the American presidential election, Attorney Ken Connor took over FRC's leadership. However, he stepped down as FRC's president in 2003 and Tony Perkins, a former two terms Louisiana State Representative, was re-elected to become the new FRC president in September 2003. He is currently still serving as FRC's premier. According to Dan Gilgoff, Tony Perkins is one of the most influential Christian conservative activists in Washington DC.<sup>266</sup> Presently, Perkins host FRC's *Washington Watch Weekly*, a daily radio programme that broadcasts to over 300 stations throughout the United States. FRC's website claims that, under Perkins' leadership and through his initiative in establishing the *Church Ministries Program*, FRC has been able to expand its engagement with Christians in civic affairs as never before.<sup>267</sup>

Tony Perkins' mission and vision can be traced in his book *Personal Faith, Public Policy*, co-authored with Bishop Harry R. Jackson Junior in 2008. According to Stuart Croft, Perkins and Jackson argue that America is at a defining moment that requires immediate reform in seven key issues: the family, religious liberty, life, immigration, poverty and justice, racial reconciliation, and the environment, in order to ensure that God will bestow His blessings on the country for another four hundred years. Croft believes that the seven issues emphasized by Perkins and Jackson are not only concerned with national policy but also international policy. He furthermore argues that the international dimension of Perkins and Jackson's vision in their book is more evident when they call for the need to stand against terrorism; to promote pro-marriage policies; to fight against abortion; and to save the environment by amending America's energy policies.<sup>268</sup>

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<sup>266</sup> Dan Gilgoff, "Exclusive Interview: Conservative Evangelical Leader Tony Perkins Sours on the GOP," *U.S. News and World Report*, 06 February 2009. Available at <http://politics.usnews.com/new/blogs/god-and-country/2009/02/06/exclusive-interview-conservative-evangelical-leader-tony-perkins-sours-on-the-gop.html>

<sup>267</sup> Tony Perkins (Family Research Council, 2010 [cited 18 March 2010]); available from <http://www.frc.org/get.cfm?i=by03h27>

<sup>268</sup> William L. Saunders Jr. is the Senior Fellow and Director of the Family Research Council's Center for Human Life and Bioethics. He is a lawyer by profession and serves as human rights counsel at the FRC.

### 3.2.3 Pursuing International Agenda: Priorities and Issues

Though the focus of FRC is more on conservative American public policy, the organization is also actively involved in promoting conservative policy at an international level. Therefore being able to participate actively in the United Nations is one of the greatest achievements of the Family Research Council at the international level. According to William L. Saunders Jr.,<sup>269</sup> the Family Research Council became active in the United Nations in the late 1990s.<sup>270</sup> It was eventually admitted into the UN with “Consultative Status” in 2002 and since then has actively engaged on various issues, such as human cloning, pro-family and rights for women. It has been reported that from 2002 to 2006, FRC has participated in 13 different UN meetings, issuing reports, conducting lobbies and organizing its own side meetings. Notwithstanding their apparent success in engaging the UN, FRC finds that its dealings with the UN are problematic. This is because the main priority interest of FRC in the UN is to promote religious values and to protect American interests and this contradicts the position of the UN as a liberal organization. Tom Minnery, FRC’s Executive Vice President, remarked at a UN press conference in 2000 that “for a long time now, this venerable institution, the United Nations, has been the playground of fundamentalist left-wingers.”<sup>271</sup> For instance, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) is seen as an organization that promotes liberalism in global family institutions and is against pro-life values. Commenting on this, Perkins argues that UNICEF “used their fund to support programs that promote abortion, liberal sex education, and population control. These organizations don’t help children – they help to abort them!”<sup>272</sup> Based on those circumstances, Perkins suggests that FRC’s involvement in the UN is limited to using its official status as an NGO to promote its pro-family agenda and to prevent bad policies from being imported into the US; FRC’s primary mission is to protect family, faith and freedom in the US.<sup>273</sup> As such, Croft sees that the involvement of FRC in an international

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<sup>269</sup> William L. Saunders, interview with author, 27 April 2009, Washington D.C.

<sup>270</sup> Stuart Croft, “Christian Evangelicals and US Soft Power,” (2008)

<sup>271</sup> Ibid.

<sup>272</sup> Quoted in Croft, Ibid.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid.

institution such as at the UN as indicative of FRC's tactical long-term agenda. He argues that "the Family Research Council is representative of a group of organizations that, while opposed to international institutions on the ground that they are agents of a non-Christian, liberal agenda, are prepared to work within them tactically."<sup>274</sup> However, Saunders believes that the involvement of FRC at the United Nations does not have much impact on policy change, rather it only gives an opportunity for pro-family organizations from various countries and religions to work together to protect and voice their social conservative values.<sup>275</sup>

Apart from pro-family issues, FRC was also a staunch opponent of human cloning. In fact, FRC was the organization that was responsible for preparing and shaping the anti-cloning document at the United Nations.<sup>276</sup> Similarly to CWA, FRC is also anti-CEDAW. It opposes CEDAW on the basis that the treaty undermines the foundations of society such as the natural family and world religious freedom. In addition, FRC proposes that the United States do not sign the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). FRC argues that CRC is similar to CEDAW and could jeopardize natural family values and these international laws will also restrict the sovereignty of the United States. On that argument, FRC strongly recommends the United State not to ratify CEDAW or CRC under any condition, as signatory countries shall be urged to amend their domestic laws and state constitutions to adopt any policy enlisted by the treaties.<sup>277</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> Ibid.

<sup>275</sup> William L. Saunders, interview with author, 27 April 2009, Washington D.C.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid.

<sup>277</sup> Patrick F. Fagan, William L. Saunders, and Michael A. Fragoso, "How U.N. Conventions on Women's Children's Rights Undermine Family, Religion, and Sovereignty," *Insight*, May 2009 Available at <http://downloads.frc.org/EF/EF09E38.pdf>

## 3.3 Christians United for Israel (CUFI)

### 3.3.1 Historical Background

Christians United for Israel (CUFI) came into existence in February 2006. Founded and led by Rev. John Hagee, Pastor of the San Antonio Cornerstone Baptist Church, CUFI is a political organization motivated by the single issue of support for the State of Israel. Other prominent figures in CUFI are David Bauer, a former candidate for the US presidential election and David Brog, a former Staff Director of the Senate Judiciary Committee. CUFI is currently a strong interest group which is dedicated solely to lobbying any issue related to the security of Israel. Historically, the establishment of the organization was a response to several developments in Middle Eastern politics, including Iranian foreign policy towards Israel. In addition, the existence of Iran's proxies, Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Palestine, are perceived as threats and a grave danger to Israel's security.

CUFI was formally established in order to show its commitment to standing with Israel. On that basis, the organization intended to assemble "an American grassroots movement focused on the support of Israel" and its purpose is "to provide a national American association through which every pro-Israel church, parachurch organization, ministry or individual in America can speak and act with one voice in support of Israel in matters related to biblical issues."<sup>278</sup> In this respect, CUFI has demonstrated a theological basis for its movement by quoting two verses from the Bible: "I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you"<sup>279</sup> and "For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem's sake I will not remain quiet, till her righteousness shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch."<sup>280</sup> These quotes are employed as justification for the organization moving forward with its goals and objectives. While its first goal is to educate and build Christian support for Israel throughout America, the second one is to communicate pro-Israeli perspectives to their

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<sup>278</sup> Christian United for Israel (2008 [cited 2 April 2008]); available from <http://www.cufi.org/site/PageServer?pagename=about>AboutCUFI>

<sup>279</sup> Genesis 12:3

<sup>280</sup> Isaiah 62:1



elected officials or politicians. Based on these two goals, this infant organization has instigated various programmes and organized various events since its establishment in 2006; its particular focus is to support the survival of the Israeli state, as well as its interests.<sup>281</sup>

Although the verses of the Bible are adopted to illustrate its goals and objectives, the officials of the organization deny the organization has any theological reference in its statement of purpose, goals and objectives. In other words, CUFI presents itself as a secular organization due to its respect for the separation of religion and politics.<sup>282</sup> On that premise, it is argued that CUFI's leaders talk mostly about alliances, Israeli politics, and Israel's enemies, rather than Christian beliefs or eschatology doctrines such as the end time doctrine or the Second Coming of Jesus.<sup>283</sup> However, Wood suggests a different view. He explains that, though CUFI has officially distinguished between religious belief and its political activism, in practice this idea is not widely accepted. Apart from that, he believes that CUFI followers adhere to dispensationalism.<sup>284</sup> However, because dispensationalist eschatological beliefs are a sensitive issue and could possibly cause unease among Jews, CUFI leaders always avoid talking about them officially or publicly. Nevertheless, most of the CUFI members know the eschatological belief is part of their main reason for supporting Israel. Wood argues,

... the downplaying of traditional held beliefs does not appear to have caught on among the membership, and the difference in approach between the leadership and the base was sometimes noticeable at the conference: On the speakers' platform, the talk was mostly about alliances, Israeli politics, and Israel's enemies, while on the floor (and in conversations

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<sup>281</sup> No personal interview was conducted with the organization's representative. The author tried several times either by emails and phone calls from January 2009 to May 2009 to arrange an interview session in Washington, D.C., but they declined to be met without giving any reason.

<sup>282</sup> Brian Wood, "The Second Annual CUFI Conference, July 2007: The Christian Zionist Coalition Hits Its Stride," *Journal of Palestine Studies* XXXVII (Autumn 2007), p. 80

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81-82

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81

among members), talk was more about Jesus, Scripture, and doing God's work.<sup>285</sup>

Contrary to the statement that CUFI is a secular organization and has nothing to do with religion or religious beliefs, CUFI's founder and present leader, John Hagee, was reported as following the Bible's mandate to protect Israel due to end time theology. His belief is more evident in his famous book *Jerusalem Countdown*, which was published in January 2006. By April 2006, the book had sold over 620,000 copies and became a bestseller within only a few months of its release. It ranked 1<sup>st</sup> on *Publishers Weekly's* religion bestseller list, 21<sup>st</sup> on *USA Today's* overall bestseller list, *Wal-Mart's* inspirational bestseller list, and the Christian Bookseller's Association's (CBA's) bestseller list.<sup>286</sup> *Jerusalem Countdown* mostly discusses biblical prophecies such as "Armageddon", "Rapture", "Tribulation", and "the Second Coming of Jesus" to the world. For example, he writes: "Before us is nuclear countdown with Iran, followed by Ezekiel's war and the final battle – the Battle of Armageddon. The end of the world as we know it is rapidly approaching."<sup>287</sup> The next section examines CUFI's influential leader, John Hagee. It focuses on Hagee's religious conviction as well as his political thought, especially on the issue of Israel.

### 3.3.2 CUFI's Influential Leader: John Hagee

Reverend John Hagee, the head pastor of Cornerstone Church, San Antonio and the founder of CUFI is considered the most influential leader of the organization. In his book, *Jerusalem Countdown* published in 2006, he outlines his views on biblical prophecies and American foreign policy. The book, which sold over 620,000 copies, emphasizes the need to safeguard US and Israeli security and the need to go to war against Iran. Written in 2005, at a time when Iran's nuclear programme was still unreported, he claims that a military confrontation with Iran was an inevitable biblical prophecy that preceded Armageddon and

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<sup>285</sup> Ibid., p. 81-82

<sup>286</sup> Sarah Posner, *God's Profits : Faith, Fraud, and the Republican Crusade for Values Voters* (Washington, DC, 2008), p. 102

<sup>287</sup> Wayne Slater, "Protecting Israel is San Antonio Pastor John Hagee's Mission," *The Dallas Morning News*, 20 October 2007. Available from <http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/dn/religion/stories/102807dntechagee>

the Second Coming of Jesus. To protect the US and Israel from nuclear attack, Iran's nuclear weapon development programme must be stopped. With enriched uranium in its possession, Iran, he asserts, has the capability to produce suitcase bombs that can destroy American cities with one blast. These bombs will also be used against Israel. Comparing the Iranian President, Mahmoud Ahmedinejad, to Hitler who would wage another world war, he emphasizes that the question of a pre-emptive strike against Iran is a not a matter of whether it should be conducted, but rather when it should be executed. Hagee further argues that, in the event of war against Iran, the Arab world will be united under the Russian leadership. He also claims that China and Russia are America's enemies and that Russia has been providing Iran with technological assistance that will help Iran build a long-range missile that could reach New York City.<sup>288</sup>

Hagee's book also highlights the fact Israel has no choice but to strike at Iran's nuclear facilities, with or without US assistance. The strike will provoke Russia, whose main intention is to control Persian Gulf oil and to lead the Arab countries in the war against Israel. They will, however, be eventually wiped out by the forces of God. Hagee went on to quote Ezekiel's prediction of "fire upon those who live in security in the coastlands" as a warning to the US to intervene in the case of invasion of Israel by Russia, as failure by the US to defend Israel will cause it to be surrounded by nuclear warfare on its east and west coasts. To further persuade the US, Hagee cites Genesis 12:3 in which God says: "I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you." The vacuum created as a result of God's decimation of the Russian army, according to Hagee, will be filled by the "demonic" head of the European Union as one who will rule "a one-world government, a one-world currency and a one-world religion" for three and a half years. The EU will be confronted by a false prophet, identified as China at Armageddon in Israel. As the two parties prepare for the final battle, Jesus will return and cast all non-believers into "a lake of fire burning with brimstone", marking the beginning of his millennial reign. Hagee's absolutist arguments and the subsequent discussions by the Christian media outlets reflect his idea of good versus evil, believers against non-believers, Judeo-Christian against

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<sup>288</sup> Sarah Posner, *God's Profits : Faith, Fraud, and the Republican Crusade for Values Voters* (Washington, DC, 2008), p. 104-111

Islamic civilization, and American-Israeli alliance against the rest of the world. Hagee also supports US unilateralist military policy, views diplomacy with contempt, and regards the present UN Security Council as a “joke”.<sup>289</sup>

Two months after the publication of the *Jerusalem Countdown*, Hagee was interviewed by the *Jerusalem Post*. In the interview he expressed his hope that the US would join Israel in a military pre-emptive strike against Iran, in the effort to neutralize Iran’s nuclear capabilities for the salvation of western civilization. This effort, he added, is as important to the US as it is to Israel. Hagee also made clear his aversion to diplomacy, citing that Islamofascist mentality will never respond favourably to diplomacy as its agenda is the destruction of Israel and death to Jews and Christians. Hagee believes that Israel should take part in the pre-emptive strike against Iran even though the US could do it on its own if it decided to do so. In a series of sermons, Hagee argues that World War III has already started and the battle for western civilization is already on the way. Hagee further argues that the 9/11 attack on the US was perpetrated by Islamic fanatics whose intention was the destruction of the US and Israel. He states: “America was attacked on 9/11 by Islamic fanatics who intend to destroy American nation” and “we are at war with Islamic fanatics who intend to destroy the United States and Israel.”<sup>290</sup>

Maintaining his long-standing argument that Israel must be protected and Jerusalem must remain as the undivided capital of the Jewish people, Hagee declared his intention of employing CUFI as the vehicle to unite all pro-Israel individuals and organizations under one umbrella body, to speak up for Israel in the US, and to act as a formal lobby platform to protect Israel. Hagee and CUFI are also engaged in an effort to establish an Evangelical–Jewish alliance to support US foreign policy in the Middle East.<sup>291</sup> The next section highlights CUFI’s agendas and lobbying activities which relate to American foreign policy. It discusses some important activities organized by CUFI in lobbying American foreign policy towards Israel and the conflicts in the Middle East.

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<sup>289</sup> Ibid., p. 104-111

<sup>290</sup> Ibid., p. 110

<sup>291</sup> Wayne Slater, "Protecting Israel is San Antonio Pastor John Hagee's Mission," *The Dallas Morning News*, 20 October 2007.

### **3.3.3 Pursuing International Agendas: Priorities and Issues**

As mentioned earlier, CUFI is considered as a single-issue organization and the state of Israel is its only interest. As a result, CUFI is intentionally involved in lobbying for American foreign policy deemed relevant to Israel. CUFI has listed its three important efforts in pursuing its foreign policy. The first effort is organizing an annual Washington–Israel Summit in Washington DC. The summit is an official event to show its commitment to supporting Israel, and to gather CUFI members and selected American and Israeli officials to discuss Israel’s security.

CUFI’s Second Annual Conference, held in July 2007 and attracting more than 4,000 participants, showed that CUFI’s ultimate priority is Israel. Its lobbying agendas emphasize the urgency for America to provide military aid to Israel and stop Iran’s uranium enrichment programme by applying not only diplomatic and economic pressure, but also military action as an option. Besides that, CUFI also urges American to put pressure on the United Nations under Resolution 1701 to strengthen UN peacekeepers in Lebanon by more actively combating Hezbollah’s arms smuggling.<sup>292</sup> Nevertheless, during that Second Annual Conference, CUFI also discussed the threat to global security posed by Islam as well as the relevance of the United Nations to the world community. Though the conference’s theme was the US–Israel relationship, most of the sub-themes were about the threat of Islam and Muslims. Describing Muslims as “Islamofascists” and supporters of “Islamist totalitarianism”, CUFI continuously claims that Islam creates grave danger not only for Israel and the US, but also for the rest of the world. This was evident when one of the participants at the conference claimed that the ongoing US struggle in its global war against terror is actually a “war on militant Islam”. They also discussed the issue of the growing Muslim domination of the world economy, especially the dependency of the US on Arab/Muslim oil production. Meanwhile, another target subject at the conference was

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<sup>292</sup> Nadia Hijab, *Courting and Countering the Christian Zionists* (2007 [cited 11 March 2008]); available from [http://www.zmag.org/content/print\\_article.cfm?itemID=13535&sectionID=1](http://www.zmag.org/content/print_article.cfm?itemID=13535&sectionID=1)

the United Nations, which was denounced as the de facto enemy of Israel and the United States.<sup>293</sup>

The second effort of CUFI to ensure the Israel state is consistently safe and secure is its mobilization of its members through CUFI's Rapid Alerts system to generate millions of phone calls and emails requesting the American administration and Congress to support Israel unconditionally. Moreover, CUFI also focuses on lobbying state government by mobilizing its members to voice up to their state leaders in order to protect American and Israeli interests. This includes actions such as pressuring leaders of state government to divest state public funds from companies that are involved in any business or investment with Iran or Sudan.<sup>294</sup> In May 2007, led by John Hagee and Rod Parsley, CUFI mobilized its members to call and urge Ohio state representatives to vote for the Iran–Sudan Divestment Bill. The Iran-Sudan Divestment Bill (H.B. 151), introduced in the Ohio House of Representatives by Josh Mandel (R-Lyndhurst) and Shannon Jones (R-Springboro), prohibits the state's public pension funds from investing in any company which has business ties to Iranian's petroleum and natural gas sector or any business ties to the government of Sudan. According to CUFI, this effort at divestment will stop Iran and Sudan from acquiring foreign capital that funds their activities.<sup>295</sup>

CUFI has also shown its response to the Annapolis Summit 2007. According to CUFI, the summit, convened by George W. Bush to work toward a peace agreement between Israel and Palestinian authorities by negotiating a two-state solution, was seen as a "forum to coerce Israel to accept certain conditions."<sup>296</sup> Hagee, for example, wrote on his church's website: "At this point in America's history, we are plainly rejecting the Word of God because, according to Joel 3, we are helping to divide the land of Israel. We, through billions in foreign aid, are pressuring Israel to abandon the covenant land that God has

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<sup>293</sup> Brian Wood, "The Second Annual CUFI Conference, July 2007: The Christian Zionist Coalition Hits Its Stride," *Journal of Palestine Studies* XXXVII (Autumn 2007) pp.84-85

<sup>294</sup> Christian United for Israel (2008 [cited 2 April 2008]); available from [http://www.cufi.org/site/PageServer?pagename=about\\_AboutCUFI](http://www.cufi.org/site/PageServer?pagename=about_AboutCUFI)

<sup>295</sup> Ibid.([cited])

<sup>296</sup> Kristen Scharold, Low Expectations Follow Annapolis Summit (Christianity Today, 2007 [cited 2 April 2008]); available from <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/novemberweb-only/148-52.0.html>

given to the Jewish people forever. America is in the valley of decision, and we are making the wrong decision.”<sup>297</sup>

On the eve of the Annapolis Conference on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2007, a group of leaders of Orthodox Jewish organizations and Christian Right organizations met with senior White House officials, including President Bush’s National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley, to show their great concern over the conference’s initial proposal of dividing Jerusalem which would eventually lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state. Among the Christian Right representatives were David Brog, executive director of CUFI, Gary Bauer, and Jeff Ballabon, the leader of the Southern Baptist Convention.<sup>298</sup> In his blog, Brog reported that in the meeting the representatives not only raised their worries about the credibility and ability of the Palestinian authorities to stop terrorism against Israel and but also argued that the proposal of dividing Jerusalem would increase terrorists attacks on Israeli border.<sup>299</sup> Soon, after the meeting, David Brog declared on behalf of the Christian representatives that “we stressed that we and our membership do not want the [White House] administration to pressure Israel into making territorial concessions at this juncture”<sup>300</sup> and noted that Christians United for Israel would monitor the process of the negotiation closely.<sup>301</sup> In addition, Jan Markell, one of CUFI’s directors, stated that the Annapolis Conference “should be viewed as one more instalment payment in the sell out of Israel and of American interests in the Middle East” and claimed the conference was a “diplomatic lynching” of Israel.<sup>302</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> Ibid.([cited])

<sup>298</sup> Shmuel Rosner, Jewish, Christian Leaders to U.S.: No Compromise on Jerusalem (Haaretz.Com, 27 November 2007 [cited 5 March 2008]); available from <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/928323.html>

<sup>299</sup> CUFI Goes to the White House (3 December 2007 [cited 6 March 2008]); available from [http://www.cufi.convio.net/site/PageServer?pagename=about\\_brog\\_blog](http://www.cufi.convio.net/site/PageServer?pagename=about_brog_blog)

<sup>300</sup> Christian Right Urges No Concessions at Annapolis (JewsOnFirst.org, 11 December 2007 [cited 5 March 2008]); available from [http://www.jewsonfirst.org/christian\\_zionists.php#annapolis](http://www.jewsonfirst.org/christian_zionists.php#annapolis)

<sup>301</sup> CUFI Goes to the White House (3 December 2007 [cited 6 March 2008]); available from [http://www.cufi.convio.net/site/PageServer?pagename=about\\_brog\\_blog](http://www.cufi.convio.net/site/PageServer?pagename=about_brog_blog)

<sup>302</sup> Jan Markell, The Lynching Date is Set (ChristianWorldviewNetwork.com, 13 November 2007 [cited 7 March 2008]); available from [http://www.christianworldviewnetwork.com/article.php/2714/Jan\\_Markell](http://www.christianworldviewnetwork.com/article.php/2714/Jan_Markell)

## 3.4 Eagle Forum

### 3.4.1 Historical Background

Eagle Forum is the oldest Christian Right advocacy group in the United States. The organization was founded by Phyllis Schlafly in 1972. Since then, it has become one of the most important wings of conservative lobbyists and political groups of the Christian Right. Presently, Eagle Forum is a conservative interest group that has been primarily focused on social and political issues. According to Colleen Holmes, the executive director of Eagle Forum, the organization's interest is predominantly in domestic political and social issues such as being against the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and feminism, and in favour of traditional morality. However, it also shows interest in supporting a free enterprise economy system, less intrusive national government, strong national defence and is anti-immigration.<sup>303</sup>

Historically, the creation of Eagle Forum was a reaction to the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) which was deemed to be pro-feminist and against conservative pro-family values. It began when Mrs Schlafly launched the Eagle Trust Fund in 1967 for receiving donations related to the conservative cause movement. Three years later, she established a group called "Stop ERA" and published the "Eagle Forum Newsletter"; their main objective was to defeat the ratification of ERA. After successfully defeating ERA, in 1972 Mrs Schlafly formed a new organization, the "Eagle Forum".<sup>304</sup> Acclaimed as "leading the pro-family movement since 1972", Eagle Forum's central work in America is anti-feminism. Through *The Phyllis Schlafly Report*, Eagle Forum continues to show its staunch efforts in opposing the women's rights movement in America. For instance, in December 2002, the report claims that: "The feminists' goal is to eradicate from our culture everything that is masculine and remake us into a gender-neutral society."<sup>305</sup>

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<sup>303</sup> Colleen Holmes, interview with author, May 2009, Washington D.C.

<sup>304</sup> Sara Diamond, *Roads to Dominion: Right-Wing Movements and Political Power in the United States* (New York, 1995), p. 246

<sup>305</sup> Phyllis Schlafly, "Understanding Feminists and Their Fantasies," *The Phyllis Schlafly Report*, December 2002 Available from <http://www.eagleforum.org/psr/2002/dec02/psrdec02.shtml>



Likewise the report also states that:

Feminist goals are incompatible with the combat readiness we need in times of war, a priority that has taken on a new urgency because of events since 9/11. The brave fire fighters who charged up the towers of the World Trade Center, and our Special Forces who dared to enter the caves in Afghanistan need our help to defend themselves and their work against the feminists who despise macho men.<sup>306</sup>

In an Eagle Forum press release in March 2008, the organization condemns the US administration that endorsed the International Women's Day (IWD). It argues that IWD will serve to advance global radical feminism that is pro-abortion, pro-gay rights and advocates the ratification of ERA. Eagle Forum claims that the feminist movements who are behind the introduction of IWD are the same groups that lobby for ratification of the United Nations Conventions on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). In that press release, Mrs Schlafly argues: "Today's feminists and CEDAW advocates view 'progress' as government-run day care, greater access to abortion, the elimination of 'Mother's Day' because it promotes a 'negative cultural stereotype', decriminalization of prostitution in China, and government-mandated workplace benefits that men do not enjoy, just to name a few...Their goal is not equality, but preferential treatment."<sup>307</sup>

Eagle Forum claims it is not purely a faith-based organization. Though Eagle Forum was established by Phyllis Schlafly, a conservative Catholic, the members of the organization come from various Christian denominations; for instance, the organization's executive director Colleen Holmes is an evangelical. However, she admits that some religious values and convictions, such as anti-feminism, gay rights and abortion, did influence the motives of Eagle Forum's foundation. Therefore, as an organization, Eagle Forum has no particular theological beliefs that formally shape the movement's direction. However, Colleen

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<sup>306</sup> Ibid.

<sup>307</sup> International Women's Day: Code for "Advancing Radical Feminism around the Globe" (Eagle Forum, 2008 [cited 19 June 2010]); available from <http://www.eagleforum.org/topics/Feminism/press-release/03-07-08>

Holmes did acknowledge that some of its members subscribe to some particular theological beliefs such as end-time theology.<sup>308</sup>

Eagle Forum states its organization's objective is "to enable conservative and pro-family men and women to participate in the process of self-government and public policymaking so that America will continue to be land of individual liberty, respect for family integrity, public and private virtue, and free enterprise."<sup>309</sup> On its website, Eagle Forum lists its five core agendas: to protect American sovereignty, to maintain American culture and identity, to defend the American constitution, to argue against feminism and to support traditional education.<sup>310</sup> To date, Eagle Forum membership is around 80,000 and its main office is located in Alton, Illinois. However, in order to be close to federal government and policy makers, Eagle Forum also has an office in Washington DC. It has thirty branch offices all over the US. Presently, it is an umbrella of another two organizations, the Eagle Forum Education and Legal Defense Fund (EFELDF) and the Eagle Forum PAC (EFP). While, EFELDF is a non-profit organization and a tax deductible charity, the EFP serves as a fundraiser, thus it receives donations for political campaign funding and is a source of money for candidate endorsement in an election.

According to Right Wing Watch, domestically, Eagle Forum is mostly active in lobbying lawmakers to enact legislation which is deemed to be in line with its concerns. It has also designed specific programmes to assist its lobbying efforts, such as Eagle Forum's Score Board that encourages the public to become aware of conservative issues. Through the Score Board, Eagle Forum updates and informs its supporters about representatives in Congress either working for or against its conservative agenda. In addition, Eagle Forum also spreads out its interests through the mass media, especially through Mrs Schlafly's weekly radio commentary which is carried on 460 stations in the United States, and

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<sup>308</sup> Colleen Holmes, interview with author, 4 May 2009, Washington D.C.

<sup>309</sup> About Eagle Forum (Eagle Forum, 2010 [cited November 2009]); available from <http://www.eagleforum.org/misc/desript.html>

<sup>310</sup> Ibid. (cited)

through her newspaper column that is published by more than 100 newspapers across the nation.<sup>311</sup>

### **3.4.2 Eagle Forum's Influential Leader: Phyllis Schlafly**

Phyllis Schlafly is the founder of Eagle Forum and has been president since 1972. She gained her reputation after the publication her first book *A Choice Not An Echo* in 1964 and her leadership in bringing the Eagle Forum into the mainstream of conservative movement organizations. She also is the founder and president of the Eagle Forum Education and Legal Defense Fund. Mrs Schlafly, a conservative Catholic, is a lawyer by profession but she is more prominent as a conservative advocate, writer and radio commentator. She has published more than twenty books and was listed as one of the 100 most important women of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by the Ladies' Home Journal. During Reagan's presidency, she became actively involved in politics. She was a member of the Commission on the Bicentennial of the US Constitution from 1985 to 1991. During this period, she testified more than fifty times before Congressional and State Legislative Committees on various subjects such as constitutional law, national defence and family issues.

Phyllis Schlafly laid the groundwork for the anti-feminist movement in the US as early as 1967. Susan Marshall, in her study of the anti-feminist movement in America, concludes that Mrs Schlafly is the most important figure behind the movement and deserves much of the credit for reversing the strong momentum of feminist movements in the 1960s. She suggests that the major factors that led to Mrs Schlafly's success were her charismatic leadership and capability in mobilizing and organizing the grassroots.<sup>312</sup> Marshall concludes that Mrs Schlafly is "an assertive woman who has successfully adopted some of the confrontational tactics of the feminist movement in the service of the pro-family agenda."<sup>313</sup> In 2003, the Conservative Political Action Conference honoured her as the

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<sup>311</sup> Eagle Forum (People for the American Way, [cited 17 June 2008]); available from <http://www.pfaw.org/pfaw/general/default.aspx?oid=3152>

<sup>312</sup> Susan E. Marshall, "Who Speaks for American Women? The Future of Antifeminism," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 515 (May, 1991), p. 57

<sup>313</sup> Ibid., p.57

“conservative movement’s founding mother”. Judith Warner, in her review of Mrs Schlafly’s biography *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Woman’s Crusade*, describes her as:

A one-woman right communications empire. Through her speeches, books, radio addresses and monthly newsletter, “The Phyllis Schlafly Report,” she has supported the nuclear arms race, Barry Goldwater, the Strategic Defense Initiative and phonics, and has bashed whole language learning, Communism at home and abroad, strategic arms limitation treaties, Nixon’s diplomatic overtures to China, Nelson Rockefeller, Henry Kissinger, Roe v. Wade.<sup>314</sup>

According to Critchlow, Mrs Schlafly is very competent in linking intellectuals to the grassroots activists. Moreover, she has the ability to make it easy for the grassroots members to understand her sophisticated ideas.<sup>315</sup> Critchlow suggests that Mrs Schlafly has uniquely influenced American politics. This is largely because of her genius selection of social, military and foreign policy issues that have been able to activate the conservative grassroots movement to pull its strength to influence national, state and local policymakers.<sup>316</sup> It is believed that Mrs Schlafly is amongst the important people who helped Barry Goldwater win the presidential nomination and were responsible for helping Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan before and after they became presidents. She remains a central figure in shaping the ideas and direction of Eagle Forum. “The Phyllis Schlafly Report” has been her main monthly platform to deliver her social and political ideas and thoughts for the last twenty years. This newsletter covers all her ideas and comments on all aspects, including international and foreign policy issues such as illegal immigrants, and American security and sovereignty.

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<sup>314</sup> Quoted in Bill Berkowitz, *Phyllis Schlafly's 50-Year Crusade* (Working Assets, 2006 [cited February 2010]); available from <http://web.archive.org/web/20061201062526/www.workingforchange>

<sup>315</sup> Marie Shear, "Review: The Right Woman: Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Woman's Crusade by Donald T. Critchlow," *The Women's Review of Books* 23 (May-June, 2006), p. 29

<sup>316</sup> Barry D. Friedman, "Book Review: Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Women's Crusade by Donald T. Critchlow," *International Social Science Review* 81 (2005), p. 77-78

### 3.4.3 Pursuing an International Agenda: Priorities and Issues

Despite Eagle Forum's main agendas generally being domestic issues, it does show some interest in international issues, especially those related to American sovereignty and freedom.<sup>317</sup> In Eagle Forum's mission statements, it specifically highlights its international interest under the banners of "Support American Sovereignty" and "Support American Identity". The organization is strongly against most global laws and international regimes. It opposes the involvement of the US in international treaties that possibly jeopardize the sovereignty of the US. As such, in matters of foreign policy, it opposes participation of the US in the United Nations, the Law of the Sea, and signing other international treaties such as environmental treaties, CEDAW, Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), North American Union and so on. In addition, it believes any kind of economic integration would undermine American sovereignty.

Mrs Schlafly frequently calls the United Nations one of the "globalists", together with the International Criminal Court and other international organizations; she accuses the UN of advocating a New World Order that is anti-American interest and sovereignty. She argues that "the globalists are constantly devising plans to lock the United States into a world government that erases national borders and diminishes national sovereignty. War, "peacekeeping" escapades, and treaties are the means of incrementally achieving that goal."<sup>318</sup> Eagle Forum believes that any economic integration agreements, such as NAFTA, Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA)<sup>319</sup> and the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA)<sup>320</sup>, would not only restrict American sovereignty, but would also bring

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<sup>317</sup> Colleen Holmes, interview with author, 4 May 2009, Washington D.C.

<sup>318</sup> Phyllis Schlafly, "The International Criminal Court," *The Phyllis Schlafly Report*, June 2002 Available from <http://www.eagleforum.org/psr/2002/june02/psrjune02.shtml>

<sup>319</sup> The House of Representatives approved the Central America-Dominican Republic-United States Free Trade Agreement, CAFTA on 27th July 2005. CAFTA is based on the model of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The agreement will expand corporate rights over some of the poorest countries in the region, including Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Honduras and the Dominican Republic.

<sup>320</sup> The Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) is an attempt to expand the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to every country in Central America, South America and the Caribbean, except Cuba. Negotiations began right after the completion of NAFTA in 1994 and were supposed to have been completed by 1st January 2005.

down America's economy. Moreover, they would also have a significant impact on US borders policy and security, drain US taxpayers' money in subsidizing foreign aid to partner countries of the agreements, and force the US to comply with international regulations.<sup>321</sup>

Eagle Forum is a staunch opponent of international environmental treaties such as the Kyoto Protocol. This treaty set limits on its signatories for carbon dioxide emissions and other greenhouse gases that are harmful to the atmosphere and was ratified by most developed nations including the US. However, to date, the treaty has still not been ratified by the Senate. Eagle Forum strongly advocates that the US Senate should not ratify the treaty as it views the treaty as a threat to US sovereignty and its economy. As such, the organization supported President Bush's withdrawal from further negotiations on the treaty in 2001. The organization opposed the treaty on two grounds. Firstly, it claims that global warming and the greenhouse effect are myths as there is no scientific evidence that supports the theory of carbon emissions being the main cause of global warming. Mrs Schlafly believes the protocol was brought by a "cult of radical environmentalists...a new religion of worshipping Mother Earth."<sup>322</sup> Secondly, Mrs Schlafly believes that the treaty is unfair to the US as it restricts US economic growth and social development. She argues the treaty is "an anti-American interest" as it sets a different environmental standard between developing countries and developed countries that will bring the American standard of living to a substandard. Mrs Schlafly notes:

The Kyoto Protocol would require the United States to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions to 7% below our 1990 level, a tremendous reduction in our energy consumption (our use of electricity, gas, oil, and gasoline) and therefore in our standard of living. However, Kyoto would impose no limitation on 130 developing nations, including China (the world's second largest emitter of greenhouse gases), India, Mexico and

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<sup>321</sup> Action (Eagle Forum of California, 2002 [cited 16 Mac 2010]); available from <http://www.eagleforumofcalifornia.com/UnitedNations.htm>

<sup>322</sup> Phyllis Schlafly, "Kyoto's Goal = Kick the U.S.," *The Phyllis Schlafly Report*, July 2001 Available from <http://www.eagleforum.org/psr/2001/july01/psrjuly01.shtml>

Brazil, and would allow Europeans to evade reductions by averaging among the European Union (EU) countries.<sup>323</sup>

Moreover, she claims the treaty is part of a UN-sponsored conspiracy to redistribute American wealth to “Third World dictatorships”. Mrs Schlafly asserts: “The foreign dictators in the United Nations who look upon the UN as a forum where they can demand that the United States redistribute our wealth to them. Our foreign aid never gets to the poor people who need it; it is gobbled up by the ruling tyrants.”<sup>324</sup>

Eagle Forum is in favour of developing strong American military capability such as deployment of an anti-ballistic missile defence system and building a Strategic Defense Initiative. Eagle Forum believes that a strong military capability is a necessity as this would protect not only US but also its citizens. This is in line with the mainstream Republican Party, which strongly advocated a national missile defence system in the 1990s.<sup>325</sup> Mrs Schlafly claims that the reason the United States cannot develop those military capabilities is due to the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and blamed President Richard Nixon who signed that treaty in 1972. She states:

The United States has no system capable of shooting down ballistic missiles, whether they are from Russia or some rogue nation. That’s an appalling default of leadership, since the U.S. government’s number-one constitutional duty is to “provide for the common defence”...The reason we have no defences against incoming ballistic missiles is our slavish adherence to the ABM (Anti-Ballistic Missile) Treaty. Written by Henry Kissinger and signed by Richard Nixon in 1972, it was today highly dangerous to U.S. security. It should have been unconstitutional when it was signed because it pledged the United States government not to defend

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<sup>323</sup> Ibid.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid.

<sup>325</sup> Jason Ralph, "To Usher in a New Paradigm? President Bush's Foreign Policy Legacy," in *Assessing the George W. Bush Presidency: A Tale of Two Terms*, ed. Andrew Wroe and Jon Herbert (Edinburgh, 2009), p. 79

Americans against nuclear attack, despite the fact that national defence is the prime duty of our government.<sup>326</sup>

Eagle Forum also supports stricter US border regulations in order to stop illegal immigrants, drugs and terrorists. Since the attacks of 9/11, the organization has become more critical of immigrants. Mrs Schlafly calls immigrants “aliens” and continuously criticizes American policy towards immigrants. She claims a loophole in American immigration policy caused the 9/11 attacks to happen. She says: “The terrorists are foreigners, most or all of whom should not have been allowed to live in our country...It should be repeated over and over again: The terrorism threat is from illegal aliens who are allowed to live in our midst – and this a failure of our immigration laws and our immigration officials.”<sup>327</sup> On October 2001, Eagle Forum also sent a letter to American Congress and put blame on US immigration law as a major factor contributing to the attacks. It states: “All the criminals who participated in the terrible acts of terrorism on September 11 were aliens who should not have been allowed in the United States. We should enforce our immigration laws already in the law books instead of cracking down on the freedom of law-abiding citizens. Terrorism is not a domestic problem if we have border security.”<sup>328</sup> The letter also gave some constructive comments to enhance the draft Anti-Terrorism legislation proposal which eventually became a basis of the Patriot Act 2001.

In 2007, Eagle Forum initiated a “Stand Up for America” programme. It promotes three key issues, namely the Rule of Law, American sovereignty and the defence of US jobs. The first initiative, “Standing Up for the Rule of Law” calls the US president and Congress to use Article IV of the American Constitution that states one of the main duties of American government is to “Protect against invasion”. Mrs Schlafly in her writing argues that “invasion” is taking place in the US whereby foreign people are rampantly crossing

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<sup>326</sup> Phyllis Schlafly, "Why No Defense Against Missiles?," *The Phyllis Schlafly Report*, November 1996 Available from <http://www.eagleforum.org/psr/1996/nov96/psrnov96.html>

<sup>327</sup> Phyllis Schlafly, "The Threat of Terrorism is From Illegal Aliens," *The Phyllis Schlafly Report*, October 2001 Available from <http://www.eagleforum.org/psr/2001/oct01/psroct01.shtml>

<sup>328</sup> Eagle Forum, Eagle Forum Letter to Congress (Advisory Committee on Congressional Internet Caucus, 2001 [cited 6 March 2010]); available from [http://www.netcaucus.org/books/surveillance2001/docs/Eagle\\_Forum\\_Letr.pdf](http://www.netcaucus.org/books/surveillance2001/docs/Eagle_Forum_Letr.pdf)



American borders illegally. She proposes that the administration curb this problem by building fences at every border and closing the US southern borders. In addition, she advocates the passage of comprehensive and strict immigration laws.<sup>329</sup>

The second initiative, “Standing Up for American Sovereignty”, calls American leaders to defend American sovereignty from foreign or international control. One of main agendas within this issue is opposing any economic integration between America and other countries. In this respect, Eagle Forum denounced a 2001 Declaration of Quebec which demands economic integration between the US, Canada and Mexico and argued against a Security and Prosperity Partnership that would lead to North Economic Integration by 2010. According to Eagle Forum, these economic partnership agreements, which gained endorsement by President Bush at Waco in 2005 and at Cancun in 2006, will jeopardize American sovereignty in the near future. Eagle Forum is also against the Commerce Department’s initiative that intends to harmonize American trade regulations with Mexico and Canada. Eagle Forum opposes dual nationality. As such, in Eagle Forum’s second agenda under the issue of standing up for American sovereignty, its demands that immigrants who have obtained American nationality give up their previous nationality. It also demands that English becomes official national language for the US.<sup>330</sup>

In its third initiative under the programme “Standing Up for America”, Eagle Forum demands US administration protects American workers and their jobs against international or other nation’s trade policies. The organization argues that the American government has failed to protect American workers and job opportunities in the US from being allocated to foreigners. It argues that foreign nations, particularly China and some other developing countries, have bribed US companies to relocate their industries overseas, then cheated American tax-policies and robbed American technology and intellectual property to aid their countries’ development. As a result, Eagle Forum proposes the US government take serious action against foreign countries that bribe US companies or steal intellectual

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<sup>329</sup> Phyllis Schlafly, "Time to Stand Up for America," *The Phyllis Schlafly Report*, June 2007 Available at <http://www.eagleforum.org/psr/2007/june07/psrjune07.html>

<sup>330</sup> Ibid.

property, patents or copyright owned by Americans. Finally, Eagle Forum views foreign trade tribunals such as the World Trade Organization and NAFTA as anti-American. As such, Eagle Forum proposes that the US government does not abide to regulations or decisions made by those international tribunals.<sup>331</sup>

In 2008, Eagle Forum listed its lobby's priorities for the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress. Among the important aspects of its priorities that related to US foreign policy were its stance towards the UN, pro-life appropriation riders, and immigrant and border policies. It calls for the US government to reject all UN treaties and not to implement any unratified UN treaties. In addition, it demands that the US stop its contributions to the United Nations Fund for Population Assistance (UNFPA). Concerning pro-life policy, Eagle Forum supports the Mexico City Policy and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) funding. On immigrant and border policy, it calls for the US government to deny visas to foreigners from countries listed on the State Department's list of "State Sponsors of Terrorism".<sup>332</sup>

## **3.5 Focus on the Family**

### **3.5.1. Historical Background**

Focus on the Family (FOF) is possibly one of the most prominent Christian Right political and cultural influences in the United States today.<sup>333</sup> It was founded by James Dobson in 1977 and is based in Colorado Springs, Colorado. According to its website, FOF's mission is to nurture and defend the traditional family institution, which it believes is a "God-ordained institution", and promote biblical truths worldwide. It also reveals its "evangelical" vision to be a Christian organization that redeems families, communities and

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<sup>331</sup> Ibid.

<sup>332</sup> Eagle Forum Priorities for the 110th Congress (Indiana Eagle Forum, 2008 [cited 8 March 2010]); available from [http://www.indianaeagleforum.org/images/Quarter\\_1\\_2008.pdf](http://www.indianaeagleforum.org/images/Quarter_1_2008.pdf)

<sup>333</sup> Jennifer S. Butler, *Born Again: The Christian Right Globalized* (London, 2006), p. 110

societies, not only in the United States, but also throughout the world.<sup>334</sup> In over thirty years of existence, FOF has expanded into a huge ministry, has its own zip code and has become the largest international religious right organization in the United States, with more than 74 different ministries worldwide and 1,300 employees. Some of its core activities are daily radio broadcasts, free family counselling and resources, magazines, videos and audio recordings. It claims its daily broadcast reaches 5 million Americans and over 200 million people worldwide from over 6,000 facilities in 180 countries.<sup>335</sup> In addition, it also reveals that its virtual magazines have been subscribed to by 2.3 million people.<sup>336</sup>

Though FOF originated as a social welfare organization, it has not refrained from taking part in politics. For instance, FOF's core magazine, the *Citizen*, exclusively discusses American and world politics. In terms of its budget, Focus on the Family showed an increase in 2006 compared to the previous year when it took in \$142.2 million compared to \$137.8 in 2005.<sup>337</sup> The FOF has an affiliated group, Focus on the Family Action (FOFA), which is devoted to moral, social and political issues. According to the founder of FOFA, James Dobson, FOFA was established to act as a political and lobbyist organization in American politics, a platform which FOF cannot get involved in due to a restriction in IRS regulations.<sup>338</sup> However, though the organization is legally separate from FOF, both organizations shared a similar vision when James Dobson was also the chairman for FOFA. As such, Dan Gilgoff suggests that this strategic institutional structure has allowed FOF to remain a powerful force in American politics.<sup>339</sup> Traditionally, FOF and FOFA are

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<sup>334</sup> About Focus on the Family (2008 [cited 6 June 2008]); available from [http://www.focusonthefamily.com.about\\_us.aspx](http://www.focusonthefamily.com.about_us.aspx)

<sup>335</sup> Tim Goeglin, interview with author, 7 May 2009, Washington D.C.

<sup>336</sup> Rob Boston, Religious Right Power Brokers: The Top Ten (Americans United for Separation of Church and State, 2006 [cited 6 June 2008]); available from [http://www.au.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=8253&abbr=cs\\_](http://www.au.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=8253&abbr=cs_) However in Wikipedia, it states there are 7,000 stations worldwide. See Focus on the Family (Wikipedia, [cited 6 June 2008]); available from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Focus\\_on\\_the\\_Family](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Focus_on_the_Family)

<sup>337</sup> Religious Right Funding Increase, AU Research Show Religious Right May Be More Powerful Than Ever in 2008 (American United for Separation of Church and State, 2007 [cited 6 June 2008]); available from <http://www.au.org/site/News2?abbr=pr&page=NewsArticle&id=94>

<sup>338</sup> Dr Dobson answers some important questions about Focus on the Family Action (Focus on the Family Action, [cited 6 June 2008]); available from <http://www.citizenlink.org/focusaction/A000006808.cfm>

<sup>339</sup> Dan Gilgoff, *Jesus Machine: How James Dobson, Focus on the Family and Evangelical America are Winning the Culture War* (New York, 2007)

involved in what they call a “culture war” to defend traditional Christian values in America. As James Dobson says: “We’re involved in what is known as a culture war that is aimed right straight at the institution of the family”.<sup>340</sup> However, recent developments show that these institutions are trying to extend their “cultural wars” beyond American boundaries, particularly in influencing American foreign policy and lobbying at the United Nations.

### **3.5.2 FOF’s Influential Leader: James Dobson**

The founder of Focus on the Family, James Dobson, is a licensed child psychologist, but he is best known as an influential televangelist who promotes traditional Christian values. He became famous after publishing his first book *Dare to Discipline* in 1970, a bestselling book which criticized permissive child-rearing in America during the post-war era.<sup>341</sup> In addition, Steve Rabey, a religion journalist, describes the book as a “blend of biblical principles, Christian psychology, common sense, nostalgia for the 1950s, and a conservative reaction to trends like the sexual revolution, youth rebellion, psychedelic experimentation, and the women’s movement.”<sup>342</sup> Like others Christian Right leaders, Dobson is motivated by his personal religious conviction that inspired him to be active in social conservative cause. He declares: “I really do feel that the prophetic role is part of what God gave me to do”.<sup>343</sup>

Dobson’s involvement in the political arena started during Reagan presidency as he had strong connections with President Reagan’s inner circle. He was appointed an advisor to the National Advisory Commission to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission in 1982. In Reagan’s second term, his involvement and influence in American politics became more apparent as he was given access to the White House and

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<sup>340</sup> David Van Biema et al., “The 25 Most Influential Evangelicals in America,” *TIME* 2005

<sup>341</sup> See Michael Lienesch, *Redeeming America: Piety and Politics in the New Christian Right* (Chapel Hill, 1993), p. 85-87

<sup>342</sup> William Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America* (New York, 1996), p. 341

<sup>343</sup> Randall Balmer, *Encyclopaedia of Evangelicalism* (Waco, 2004), p. 214

was frequently consulted on policy matters.<sup>344</sup> His strong character in championing “culture wars”<sup>345</sup>, whereby he views issues such as abortion, pornography, and gay and lesbian rights to be incompatible with true conservative American values, and his connections to influential politicians, have propelled him to become one of the most prominent and recognizable figures in the Christian Right movement.

Dobson sees debates on moral values or “culture wars” in American politics as a war of worldviews and ideas which is largely defined by religious beliefs. In 1994 he stated:

Nothing short of a great Civil War of Values rages today throughout North America. Two sides with vastly differing and incompatible worldviews are locked in a bitter conflict that permeates every level of society...It is a war over ideas. And someday soon, I believe, a winner will emerge and the loser will fade from memory. For now, the outcome is very much in doubt. On one side of this Continental Divide are the traditionalists whose values begin with the basic assumption that “God is”... [the other has] the basic assumption that “God isn’t”.<sup>346</sup>

In 2005, TIME magazine described Dobson as “The Culture Warrior” and he was listed among the 25 most influential evangelicals in America.<sup>347</sup> In his book, Dan Gilgoff described Dobson as “the most powerful political leader that the American evangelical movement has ever known.”<sup>348</sup> However, Michael Lindsay suggests that Dobson’s influence in American politics during George W. Bush’s presidency was not as profound as it was during Reagan’s era. Lindsay found, from series of interviews with 20 senior officials in the White House, that none of them believed Dobson as one of the most influential Christian Right leaders who they were attracted to listen to. In contrast, these

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<sup>344</sup> Michael Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power: How Evangelicals Joined the American Elite* (New York, 2007), p. 20

<sup>345</sup> In 1994, he wrote “*Nothing short of a great Civil War of values rages today*”. See Randall Balmer, *Encyclopaedia of Evangelicalism* (Waco, 2004), p. 213

<sup>346</sup> Quoted in John H. Evans, ““Culture Wars” or Status Group Ideology as the Basis of US Moral Politics,” *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 16 (1996)

<sup>347</sup> David Van Biema et al., “The 25 Most Influential Evangelicals in America,” *TIME* 2005

<sup>348</sup> Dan Gilgoff, *Jesus Machine: How James Dobson, Focus on the Family and Evangelical America are Winning the Culture War* (New York, 2007)

officials cynically referred to him as a man with a “lack of political finesse”, an “ineptitude in politics”, and an “inability to focus on the family because he’s always focusing on someone else’s business”.<sup>349</sup> Nevertheless, Lindsay stated that, because the Bush White House needed to maintain good relations with him and his constituents, and knowing that Dobson has the capacity to be a formidable political force, no one was willing to speak in that negative tone publicly.<sup>350</sup>

In February 2009, Dobson resigned as the chairman of FOF. In his farewell speech, Dobson admitted that the evangelical association with George W. Bush had disrupted and contributed to the failure of the Christian Right’s 30 year struggle to achieve its social conservative objectives.<sup>351</sup> He said: “We are awash in evil and the battle is still to be waged. We are right now in the most discouraging period of that long conflict. Humanly speaking, we can say we have lost all those battles.”<sup>352</sup> He considers that the failure was due to the religious right’s identification with George W. Bush and believes that relationships “betray promises of pursuing the conservative agenda once in office.”<sup>353</sup> In addition, he believes the conservatives’ obsession with political process, resulting in them abandoning the gospel, as another factor in the failure. However, Dobson’s resignation attracted comments on his strategic role in the social conservative movement. Barry W. Lynn, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, asserts that Dobson’s resignation as the premier of FOF will not stopping him from influencing FOF and remaining an important figure in the religious right movement. He states:

James Dobson’s decision to resign as chairman of Focus on the Family is unlikely to make much of a difference in the day-to-day operations of that organization. Dobson intends to continue his daily radio program and monthly mailings. He has also said he will keep handing out political

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<sup>349</sup> Michael Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power: How Evangelicals Joined the American Elite* (New York, 2007), p. 57-58

<sup>350</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58

<sup>351</sup> Alex Spillius, "U.S. Religious Right Concedes Defeat," *Telegraph.co.uk*, 10 April 2009. Available from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/barackobama/5136050/US-religious-Right-concedes-defeat.html>

<sup>352</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>353</sup> *Ibid.*

endorsements. Many who listen to Dobson's daily radio broadcast may not even be aware of this change.<sup>354</sup>

### 3.5.3 Pursuing an International Agenda: Priorities and Issues

Though Tim Goeglein claims FOF runs very large international projects all over the world, it does not really have a foreign policy concentration.<sup>355</sup> In other words, he believes that FOF has neither any interest in American foreign policy, nor any role in American foreign policies except pro-family issues at the United Nations.<sup>356</sup> However, it is worth noting that, at the outset of FOF, the organization had no interest in being involved in the United Nations. As FOF's UN representative, Thomas Jacobson, states: "This [the involvement of the FOF in the UN] was never something Focus [FOF] envisioned we would be doing when we started 27 years ago."<sup>357</sup> However, after attending the UN Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, and seeing the feminist's strong commitment in promoting their agendas, which were considered by FOF as "anti-family" and "anti-life", FOF decided to get involved in the UN. Therefore, it started its new battlefield of cultural war alongside other conservative Christian organizations such as Concerned Women for America and Family Research Council at the UN.

In 2001, FOF was selected by Bush's administration to work full time at the UN and its representatives were expected to address and voice up policy issues that are related to traditional conservative family values such as "pro-life" and "pro-family". Later on, the organization obtained consultative status at the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) under the category of a non-governmental organization. This development has changed FOF's perception of the UN and it sees its involvement on the UN platform as a

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<sup>354</sup> Americans United Issues Statement on Resignation of James Dobson as Focus on the Family Chairman (Americans United for Separation of Church and State, 2009 [cited 12 December 2009]); available from <http://www.au.org/media/press-releases/archives/2009/02/au-issues-statement-on.html>

<sup>355</sup> Tim Goeglein, interview with author, May 2009, Washington D.C.

<sup>356</sup> Ibid.

<sup>357</sup> Jennifer S. Butler, *Born Again: The Christian Right Globalized* (London, 2006), p. 110

golden opportunity to address its “cultural war” at the high level with the governments of most countries. Thomas Jacobson asserts: “I believe having an institution, a world institution, is inevitable in our day and age. Once you had international communications and travel, then from that point forward you have people either talking or fighting. I think it’s much better to have them talking to one another.”<sup>358</sup> Marsden comments that the involvement of the Christian Right groups, including Focus on the Family, at the United Nations not only benefits the movement for its conservative advocacy globally, but also provides some advantages for their “cultural war” in the US. He notes:

The Christian Right tentatively began attending UN meetings in the mid-1990s in order to challenge what they perceived as a liberal bias that sought to introduce legislation into America via the circuitous route of the UN in New York. In acquiring UN delegate and observer status the Christian Right could extend their influence internationally, prevent activist judges from applying international law in US courtrooms, and greatly enhance their kudos with supporters and politicians alike by promoting moral majoritarian values abroad.<sup>359</sup>

### **3.6 Conclusion**

This chapter suggests that the Christian Right advocacy groups are not a monolithic in terms of historical background of the organizations, mission, vision and activities. While CWA and Eagle Forum were established mainly because of their reactions to the growth of feminist movements in the US, the existence of FRC and FOF are to defend conservative Christian family values from the attacks of humanists and secularists. Thus, the study shows that, each group has its own focus and emphasizes. This illustrates that the Christian Right movement is a diverse and rich movement. Except for CUFI which is primarily concerned with US foreign policy towards Israel, most of the Christian Right organizations do not really have a foreign policy interest. This shows that the priority of the Christian Right’s advocacy organizations is mainly on domestic social conservative issues and not on

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<sup>358</sup> Ibid., p. 112

<sup>359</sup> Lee Marsden, *For God's Sake: The Christian Right and U.S. Foreign Policy* (London 2008), p. 137



international issues. The study also illustrates that leaders of these organizations play very important role in framing and selecting issues that became the focus of organizations' activities. Beside diverse in their objectives and focus, the Christian Right's interest groups are basically share a similar fundamental conservative Christians' values and their agenda are mostly under the aegis of "Biblical values", "Christian values", "Judeo-Christianity Values", "conservative values" or "traditional values". These common beliefs and values provide their members with a strong sense of direction and policy stances not only to the issues in the US, but also to the international issues. Thus, we can witness these organizations are also interested to some international issues and have dedicated their activism to achieve their objective through lobbying activities.

## **CHAPTER 4**

# **THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT AND ISRAEL**

### **4.0 Introduction**

Over the centuries, the US has established a unique alliance with Israel which is commonly identified by many as “the US–Israel special relationship”. There are many studies which have tried to examine and explore the reasons behind this “special relationship”. Some have explained this relationship based on the realist approach which emphasizes the geopolitical strategic importance of Israel in the Middle East, as well as US economic interest in the region. On the other hand, there are also studies which attempt to explain the relationship based on “soft factors”, such as the influence of pro-Israel lobby groups, the Jewish community’s influence in the socio-economic landscape of the US and public opinion in the United States. However, very little attention has been devoted to explaining the role and influence of religious organizations such as the Christian Right and how they have attempted to exert influence on US foreign policy towards Israel. Similarly, not many initiatives have been made to understand or integrate the profound factor of the American Christian Right’s religious beliefs and its dynamic political activism in influencing US foreign policy towards Israel. In this chapter I examine the issue of the “special relationship” between the US and Israel and the discussion explores the historical perspectives and theoretical debates behind that “special relationship”. The discussion argues that the supports that were extended by conservative Christians in general and the Christian Right in particular, to Israel and Jewish people is a continuity of a long tradition in conservative Christian religious traditions. In this regard, I highlight how religious beliefs based on the doctrine of “millennial dispensationalism” that have been adopted by conservative Christians played an important role in its continued support to the return of Jews to Palestine and the creation of the State of Israel. However, the support for Israel and Jewish people was not limited to the Christian dispensationalists, but also can be found among liberal Christians. The discussion also examines the similarities between the

Christian Right and Christian Zionism in presenting their congruent interest in supporting the establishment and survival of the State of Israel. I argue that Christian Zionism is a part of the Christian Right and vice versa. In addition, through Christian Zionist organizations, the Christian Right has contributed significant support to Israel, theologically, politically, morally and financially.

#### **4.1 The United States and the Israeli “Special Relationship”**

Historically, the involvement of the US in the Middle East developed and evolved because of three key factors: economic reasons, geo-strategic reasons and the commitment to the State of Israel. These factors fit in with the standard realist paradigm of international relations, which argues that states develop their foreign policies based strictly on rational analysis of their strategic national interests. Economically, the existence of lucrative oil and gas reserves in the region is a big attraction for the US to be involved, in order to control and dominate those resources. This led to the establishment of ARAMCO – the Arab-American Oil Company – in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, in the era of the Cold War, the region proved to be very strategic for the security and national interest of the US. In addition, the rise of Islamic militants and radical nationalism in the Middle East, which came into existence largely because of their reactions to the creation of the State of Israel and the US hegemony in the predominantly Muslim countries, created a security concern for the American interests in the region. Moreover, it also harboured a new threat to American alliance with Israel, which could possibly jeopardize the balance of power between the US and the Soviet Union in the region. Ever since, the dynamism of American foreign policy towards the Middle East has become more visible. Moreover, it has drawn the United States to be deeply involved in the region in order to maintain its economic and strategic interests as well as the stability and security of Israel. Brands suggests that Israel has “propelled the United States into the affairs of the Middle East to an extent most Americans of the pre-1945 era could hardly have imagined.”<sup>360</sup> In addition, Smith argues

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<sup>360</sup> H.W. Brands, Jr. *Into the Labyrinth: The United States and the Middle East. 1945-1993* (New York, 1994), p. xiii

that “While the dynamics of American involvement and policies in the Middle East have changed with differing circumstances, one element that has remained constant is the special relationship the United States has had with Israel since its inception in 1948.”<sup>361</sup>

In addition, the Arab–Israeli wars of 1967 and 1973 contributed significantly to US–Israel foreign relations. Bickerton, in his recent writing, suggests that the wars triggered a “major shift” in the American perception of the role of Israel in the Middle East.<sup>362</sup> Consequently, the US started to view Israel as an important ally and part of its grand strategy to balance the power of the Soviet Union and to curb the spread of communism in the Middle East. In addition, Israel is seen as the only country in the region that shared America’s democratic values. The assumption was that Israel, being a strategic asset to the United States, is a positive and constructive phenomenon for the advancement of democracy and the promotion of peace in the Middle East. Ever since, the relationship between the two countries has developed steadily and Israel was seen to be more than a usual ally to the US. During the Cold War, the US helped developed Israel’s military capability and it became more advanced than the pro-Soviet Arab states. This is evident from the fact that the US military assistance to Israel increased dramatically from \$12.9 million in 1965 to \$90 million in 1966.<sup>363</sup> Since then, even after the end of the Cold War, the US has handed significant assistance to Israel. In 1976, Israel became the largest annual recipient of US military and economic assistance and this status remains until today. Based on a report on *U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel* published by the Congressional Research Service notes, since 1985, the annual United States direct foreign assistance to Israel accumulated around \$3 billion per year. It also suggests that the total cumulative US military and economic assistance to Israel from 1949 to 2009 is approximately \$106.1647 billion. Meanwhile, the

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<sup>361</sup> Kyle Smith, "A Congruence of Interests: Christian Zionism and U.S. Foreign Policy Toward Israel. 1977-1998" (Bowling Green State University, 2006), p. 1

<sup>362</sup> Ian J. Bickerton, "America's Israel/Israel's America," in *America's 'Special Relationships'*, ed. John Dumbrell and Axel R. Schafer (Oxon, 2009), p. 179

<sup>363</sup> Camille Mansour, *Beyond Alliance*, James A. Cohen trans. (New York, 1994), p. 190

Washington Report of November 2008 estimates that the total direct US aid to Israel from 1949 to 2009 exceeds \$114 billion.<sup>364</sup>

In the aftermath of 9/11, the perceived common threat of global terrorism and Islamic militants created a stronger bond between the US and Israel. In addition, in that situation, the Bush administration seemed to focus more on eradicating the threat from any regimes hostile to the US interest in the Middle East, as well as eliminating the capacity of terrorist organizations and their influence in regional politics. The 9/11 attacks made the US realize that the threat of Islamic extremism was real and an attack could possibly happen again. Thus, the “war on terror” suddenly emerged as a US priority in its strategic framework on national security.

The 9/11 attacks reinforced the alliance between the Bush administration and Israel. Israel, which has a long history of containing Islamic militants, was now perceived as a reliable and strategic ally in the “war on terror” and the threat of Islamic militants. In addition, with strong Israeli lobbies and support from the neo-conservatives in the Bush administration, the US pursued a new national security strategy that emphasized the importance of military might over the use of diplomacy in its struggle in the war on terror. Mearsheimer and Walt, in their discussion on congruence interests between the US and Israel on the war on terror, suggest that: “Other special interest groups have managed to skew U.S. foreign policy in directions they favored, but no lobby has managed to divert U.S. foreign policy as far from what the American national interest would otherwise suggest, while simultaneously convincing Americans that U.S. and Israeli interests are essentially identical.”<sup>365</sup> In this regard, the US believes its hegemony in the Middle Eastern region is essential and Israel is the natural partner that can be trusted in that process. As Jason Vest argues, “there is no difference between the U.S. and Israel national security interests, and that the only way to assure continued safety and prosperity for both countries is through hegemony in the Middle East,”<sup>366</sup> so much so that the Israeli national interest is almost indistinguishable

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<sup>364</sup> Shirli McArthur, "A Conservative Estimate of Total Direct U.S. Aid to Israel," *Washington Report*, November 2008. Quoted from <http://www.ifamericansknew.org/usaid.html>

<sup>365</sup> John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (London, 2007), p. 1

<sup>366</sup> Jason Vest, "The Men from JINSA and CSP," *The Nation*, 2 September 2002.

from the US national interest. This is evident from the recent US military aid for Israel; a recent report shows that, in early February 2009 alone, US military aid to Israel amounted at least \$2.55 billion. This figure is likely to increase and exceed more than \$3 billion, as contended by the Middle Eastern affairs specialist, Jeremy M. Sharp, who estimates that by the fiscal year 2013, Israel will be receiving around \$3.15 billion a year.<sup>367</sup> In addition, the new arms deal between the US and Israel in 2007 states that the US will provide \$30 billion aid for Israel's military purposes over a period of ten years.<sup>368</sup> The table below outlines this development.

**Table 1: US Assistance to Israel FY2005 – FY2010**

*(Regular and supplemental appropriations; current year \$ in millions)*

Account	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009 Estimate	FY2010 Estimate
ESF	357.120	237.6	120.0	-	-	-
PMF	2,202.240	2,257.2	2,340.0	2,380.560 <sup>a</sup>	2,550.0	2,775.0 <sup>b</sup>
Humanitarian migrants to Israel	50	40	40	39.676	30	25
Total	2,609.360	2,534.8	2,500.0	2,420.236	2,580.0	2,800.0

Source: US State Department. Quoted from Jeremy M. Sharp (2009) "U.S. Foreign Assistance to the Middle East: Historical Background, Recent Trends, Congressional Research Service."

<sup>367</sup> Jeremy M. Sharp, *U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel*, CRS Report for Congress (2009)

<sup>368</sup> "US and Israel in \$30bn Arms Deal," *BBC News*, 16 August 2007.

- a. Congress provided FY2009 FMF funds to Israel in two separate bills. Lawmakers appropriated \$170 million in FMF to Israel in P.L. 110-252, the FY2008 Supplemental Appropriations Act. Another \$2.38 billion was provided in P.L. 11-8, the FY2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act.
- b. Congress provided \$555 million to Israel's total FY2010 FMF appropriation in P.L. 111-32, the FY2009 Supplemental Appropriations Act.

The strong support for Israel can also be seen from the conduct of United States diplomacy at the international level. The US was the first country to recognize the creation of the Israeli state in 1948 and has consistently shown its undivided support of Israel, both morally and militarily. For instance, from 1972 to 2006, the US vetoed 42 UN Security Council Resolutions which were critical for Israel.<sup>369</sup> The latest US veto was in December 2008 when the UN passed a resolution calling for an end to Israel's attack on Gaza.<sup>370</sup>

There are arguments that suggest that Israeli and Jewish lobbies in Washington DC are other important contributing factors behind the US–Israel special relationship. Paul Findley, former Illinois congressman, contends that “It is no overstatement to say that [the pro-Israel lobby] has effectively gained control of virtually all of Capitol Hill’s action on Middle East policy ... [and] lobby groups function as an informal extension of the Israeli government.”<sup>371</sup> Cheryl Rubenberg suggests two domestic factors that have strengthened the US–Israel special relationship. She argues that, besides the assumptions of American foreign policy making elite that perceive Israel as a strategic asset to US interests that serves as an extension of American supremacy in the Middle East, the power of pro-Israeli lobby in American politics is another important determining factor.<sup>372</sup> According to her:

The unique success of the pro-Israel lobby on the American political landscape was also related to other factors: 1. The congruence of the lobby’s objectives with the elite perceptions; 2. The ability of the lobby to

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<sup>369</sup> John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (London, 2007), p.40. See also Donald Neff, "U.S. Vetoes of U.N. Resolutions on Behalf of Israel," *Washington Report*, September/October 1993 Available at [http://www.ifamericansknew.org/us\\_ints/p-neff-veto.html](http://www.ifamericansknew.org/us_ints/p-neff-veto.html)

<sup>370</sup> Edith M. Lederer, "U.S. Blocks UN Security Council Action on Gaza," *The Huffington Post*, 13 January 2009. Available at <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/huff-wires/20090103/un-un-israel-palestinians/> Accessed on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2009

<sup>371</sup> Paul Findley, *They Dare to Speak: People and Institutions Confront Israel's Lobby* (Westport, CT, 1985), p. 25-26

<sup>372</sup> Cheryl A. Rubenberg, *Israel and the American National Interest: A Critical Examination* (Chicago, 1986), p. 25

tie Israel into the Cold War anti-Communist consensus ...; 3. The evolving role of Congress on the Middle East issues and the ability of the lobby to influence Congress; 4. The strength of pro-Israeli sentiment in public opinion ...; 5. The growth of Christian Zionism as part of the increasing Christian fundamentalist movement in the United States; and 6. The success of Jewish groups and individuals in the social process known as interfacing, which led to coalition building non-Jewish groups.<sup>373</sup>

Recently, two “realist” scholars, Mearsheimer and Walt, argue in their controversial book that the US’s consistent and overwhelming support for Israel and its policies is the result of ‘the unmatched power of the Israel lobby’, particularly the American–Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), which, according to them, not only is the most highly effective pro-Israel lobby in the United States but is also an influential actor in shaping the US foreign policy towards Israel and the Middle East.<sup>374</sup> Mearsheimer and Walt suggest that one of the factors that contributed to the US’s consistent support was the ability of the Israel lobby to provide realistic reasons for the US to consider that its “strategic alliance” with Israel strengthened American security and national interests.<sup>375</sup>

However, some critics claim that Mearsheimer and Walt exaggerate the strength and impact of the Israeli lobbies.<sup>376</sup> According to Dershowitz, US foreign policy in the Middle East was formulated solely based on national interest and he dismisses the argument that tries to link this with the influence of the Israel lobby. As such, he contends that US foreign policy in the Middle East would remain as it now, even without Israel. Dershowitz condemned Mearsheimer and Walt’s allegations and accused them of being anti-Semitic; he particular dismissed their methodology that, according to him, relied too much on citations from secondary sources. He states: “This study is so filled with distortions, so empty of originality or new evidence, so tendentious in its tone, so lacking in nuance and

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<sup>373</sup> Ibid. p.15

<sup>374</sup> John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (London, 2007)

<sup>375</sup> Ibid., p. 5

<sup>376</sup> Ian J. Bickerton, "America's Israel/Israel's America," in *America's 'Special Relationships'*, ed. John Dumbrell and Axel R. Schafer (Oxon, 2009), p. 183



balance, so unscholarly in its approach, so riddled with obvious factual errors that could easily have been checked (but obviously were not), and so dependent on biased, extremist, and anti-American sources.”<sup>377</sup> He also argues the conclusion suggested by Mearsheimer and Walt “presents a conspiratorial view of history. This type of paranoid worldview, in which Jews manipulate and control the media and government, is not the sort of argument one would expect from prominent academicians.”<sup>378</sup> Nevertheless, though it is difficult to prove the extent of the influence of the Israel lobby in US foreign policy making, I believe its role should not be neglected or overlooked in studies of US–Israel special relations.

Another tangible factor that strengthens the US–Israel relationship is the support from the American public at large. A 2006 study by the Pew Research Center (PRC) revealed that for 40 years after the Six Day War of 1967, the American public has shown consistent support to Israel. Through its opinion surveys; 52% supported Israel compared to only 11% who supported the Palestinians. In a similar survey conducted by PRC immediately after the Gaza War in 2009, the findings remain the same with 49% of Americans supporting Israel. The two tables below illustrate the findings.

**Table 2: Strong General Support for Israel**

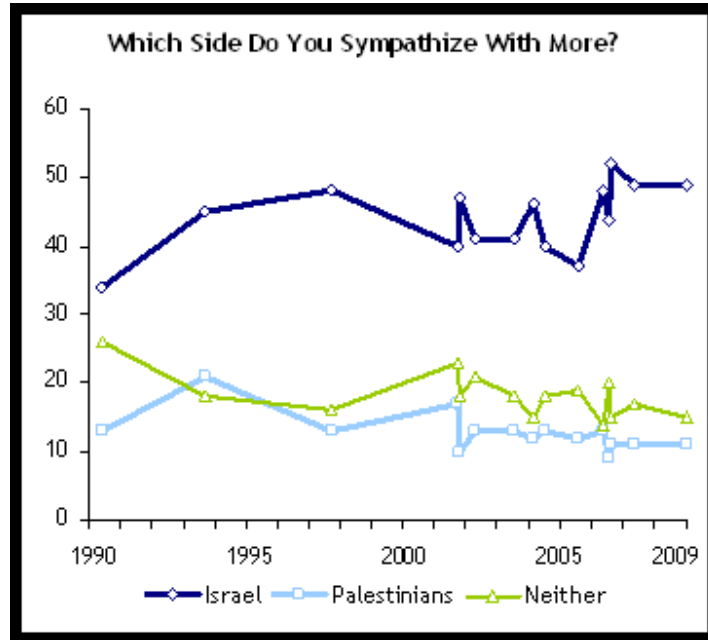
Who do you sympathize with more?	August 2006 %	January 2009 %
Israel	52	49
Palestine	11	11
Both (Vol)	5	5
Neither (Vol)	15	15
Don't Know	17	17

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<sup>377</sup> Alan Dershowitz, *Debunking the Newest - and the Oldest - Jewish Conspiracy: A Reply to the Mearsheimer-Walt "Working Paper"* (Harvard Kennedy School, April 2006 [cited March 16 2010]); available from <http://www.comw.org/warreport/fulltext/0604dershowitz.pdf>, p. 6

<sup>378</sup> *Ibid.* (cited), p. 32

**Table 3: Which Side Do Sympathize with More?**



Source: Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, conducted from 7-11<sup>th</sup> January 2009. Available at <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1076/> Accessed on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2009

It is useful to turn to a description of the alliance between the US and Israel written just before the end of the Cold War. This description, however, is argued to remain valid today, in order to explain the term “special relationship”. Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov writes:

The special relationship thesis generally maintains that the United States and Israel have a unique and unparalleled partnership, with high levels of friendship, amity, trust, and political and military cooperation. Each side occupies a special position in the other’s domestic and foreign policies. The relationship is not limited to decision makers but also involves the two societies, which ensures its endurance in times of conflict ... the U.S.-Israeli relationship became “special”, different from what is common between two states, especially a superpower and a small state in a patron-client relationship. It became, in other words, a special patron-client relationship, characterized by common political, ideological, security, and strategic interests, that is, a community of strategic interests; common values and ideals, that is, a community of values; an informal political and military alliance; and reciprocal relations, that is routine exchanges of

tangible and intangible goods and services and shared perceptions of what was mutually beneficial.<sup>379</sup>

The next section will be centred on the role of conservative Protestants in the development of Christian Zionism and its support for Israel in America. I also examine the so-called “divine factor”, namely the restoration of the Jews to Palestine as a congruence interest that motivates them to work together to achieve their similar objective.

## **4.2 The Congruent Interest: The Roles of Conservative Protestants in the Development of Christian Zionism in America – From Puritanism to the Christian Right**

As discussed previously in Chapter 2, millennial biblical belief, the restoration of the Jews to their “forefather” land in Palestine and the establishment of the state of Israel was very much emphasized by the conservative American Protestants in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Russell Mead in a *Symposium on Evangelicals and US Foreign Policy 2007* argues that the idea of bringing back the scattered Jews from around the globe to their ancient homeland in Palestine, and subsequently establishing the Israel state for them, was initiated and advocated by the early American Puritans centuries before Theodor Herzl wrote *The Jewish State* in 1896.<sup>380</sup> This support was actually linked directly to the development of Christian theology in Britain. The history demonstrates that all ideas, preaching and activities of the Christian Zionist movement mainly developed in England as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>381</sup> One of the earliest academic books that studied the development of the millennialism beliefs from England to the United States was *The Roots of Fundamentalism*,

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<sup>379</sup> Yaacov Bar Simon Tov, "The United States and Israel since 1948: A "Special Relationship"?", *Diplomatic History* 22 (1988), p. 231-232

<sup>380</sup> See William Martin, Walter Russell Mead, and Leo R. Ribuffo, *Symposium on Evangelicals and US Foreign Policy* [Rush Transcript] (Council on Foreign Relations, 30 September 2007 [cited 23 May 2009]); available from [http://www.cfr.org/publication/1491/symposium\\_on\\_evangelicals\\_and\\_us\\_foreign\\_policy\\_session](http://www.cfr.org/publication/1491/symposium_on_evangelicals_and_us_foreign_policy_session)

<sup>381</sup> See Dan Cohn-Sherbok, *The Politics of Apocalypse: The History and Influence of Christian Zionism* (Oxford, 2006) also Yona Malachy, *American Fundamentalism and Israel: The Relation of Fundamentalist Churches to Zionism and the State of Israel* (Jerusalem, 1978)

written in 1970 by Ernest Sandeen. The book emphasizes how millennialism theology was exported to the US and gained significant acceptance among conservative Protestants.<sup>382</sup> A recent study on a similar subject is a book by Dan Cohn Sherbok that shows the concern and support from the Christians for the formation of the State of Israel can be traced back to 16<sup>th</sup> century England. Indeed, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, there were many writings that anticipated and promoted the return of Jews to their ancestral land in Palestine. For example, in 1585 Thomas Brightman, an English theologian, prophesied it in his book entitled *Apocalypsis Apocalypseos*. In 1608 another theologian, Thomas Draxe, published a treatise on the plan of God for the Jewish people who he believed would return to Palestine. Similarly, in 1615, Sir Henry Finch, a jurist and member of the English Parliament, published a few books which encouraged the Jews to claim back their promised land in Palestine.<sup>383</sup> In 1649, a year after most of European states ratified the Treaty of Westphalia, English Puritans sent their petition to Oliver Cromwell's Parliament which encouraged their government to send the Jews in England to Palestine. Their petition stated:

With and amongst some of the Izraelle race called Jews, and growing sensible of their heavey out-cryes and clamours against the intolerable cruelty of this our English Nation, exercised against them by that ... inhumane ... massacre ... and their banishment ever since ... that by discourse with them, and serious perusal of the prophets, both they and we find, that the time of her call draweth nigh ... and that this Nation of England, with the inhabitants of the Nether-lands, shall be the first and readiest to transport Izraelle sons and daughters in their ships to the land promised to their fore-fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, for an everlasting inheritance.<sup>384</sup>

In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the emphasis on the establishment of a state for Jews in their ancient homeland not only came from the writings of English theologians, academicians

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<sup>382</sup> Ernest R. Sandeen, *Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1930* (Chicago, 1970)

<sup>383</sup> Dan Cohn-Sherbok, *The Politics of Apocalypse: The History and Influence of Christian Zionism* (Oxford, 2006), p. 2-3

<sup>384</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 3

and political leaders, but also from many organized Christian societies and movements which strived in the light of such conviction. Indeed, these organizations contributed a significant impact to the growth of the Christian Zionism movement. For instance, in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, the British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Amongst the Jews and the Anglican London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews worked closely with the Church of Scotland in organizing and supporting a mission to send the Jews in the United Kingdom to Palestine. Likewise, a series of meetings and conferences was organized to discuss the biblical prophecies, the Second Coming of Jesus, the role of the Jews in God's providential plan and the return of Jews to their ancestral land. For instance, the Powerscourt Conferences, which organized a series of conferences on the above mentioned subjects, were considered a most successful event when more than 400 Christian theologians attended their series of conferences.<sup>385</sup>

Parallel with such developments, the British Puritans who migrated and settled in America in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century brought the same biblical beliefs about the rights of the Jews over their ancestral land. In 1830 an English Christian theologian, John Thomas, migrated to America and founded "The Christadelphians", an organization located in New York that promoted the restoration of the Jewish nation in Palestine and aimed to provide support to international Jews who intend to migrate to Palestine.<sup>386</sup> In the same year, William Miller (1782–1849) successfully formed a movement in America that propagated the idea of the restoration of the Jews.<sup>387</sup> In his religio-theological essay, *Compendium of Faith*, he notes: "I also found that the promises respecting Israel's restoration are applied by the Apostle to all who are Christ's – the putting on of Christ constituting them Abraham's seed and heirs, according to the promise."<sup>388</sup>

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<sup>385</sup> Ibid., p. 9-11

<sup>386</sup> Ibid., p. 3-8

<sup>387</sup> Yona Malachy, *American Fundamentalism and Israel: The Relation of Fundamentalist Churches to Zionism and the State of Israel* (Jerusalem, 1978), p. 10-11

<sup>388</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 23

Malachy argues that the wide growth of dispensationalist theology contributed significantly to the growth of Christian Zionism in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in America.<sup>389</sup> The early 19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the rise of Darby's dispensationalist theology about how "a failing church and revived Israel came to have a profound and increasing influence upon American evangelicalism."<sup>390</sup> During this period, Darby toured America disseminating his interpretation of biblical prophecy, including the biblical belief in the duty of restoring the Jews to Palestine before the advent of Jesus Christ in his second coming. These beliefs and ideas eventually became a major end time belief of conservative Protestants, particularly evangelicals.<sup>391</sup> Consequently, Darby's dispensationalist theology grew strong and became a mass movement which influenced millions of conservative Protestants.<sup>392</sup> According to Sizer, beside Darby's dispensationalist theology, there were two other important factors which contributed to the development of the idea of the restoration of Jews to Palestine in America in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Firstly, there was an increasing interest among the conservative Christians in the Holy Land in Palestine. As a result, from 1800 to 1875, more than 2,000 American authors, mainly conservative Protestants, wrote about the significance of the Holy Land in Christianity.<sup>393</sup> Merkley, for example argues that, from the 1840s onwards, "most Americans found it is impossible to think of the Holy Land without also thinking of the Jews and their undoubted future possession of it."<sup>394</sup> Likewise, Vogel believes that the influence of Protestantism on American culture in the 19<sup>th</sup> century has also significantly contributed to the emergence of interest in the Holy Land among Americans.

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<sup>389</sup> Ibid. Generally, the term 'Zionism' is defined as "*the national movement for the return of the Jewish people to their homeland and the assumption of Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel,*" which has advocated, "*from its inception, tangible as well as spiritual aims.*" Whereas the term 'Christian Zionism' refers to "*a movement within Protestant fundamentalism that understands the modern state of the country-region Israel as the fulfilment of Biblical prophecy and thus deserving of political, financial, and religious support.*" There is a distinctive difference between Christian Zionism and Zionism movement. The former is a movement which emerged in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and was been established by the secular intellectual Jews in Europe out of the ferment of nationalist idea; whereas the latter came into existence due to the dispensationalists' apocalyptic biblical beliefs. See Donald Wagner, *Defining Christian Zionism* (2007 [cited 28th Feb 2008]); available from <http://www.christianzionism.org/Article/Wagner02.asp>

<sup>390</sup> Stephan Sizer, *Christian Zionism: A Road to Armageddon?* (London, 2004), p. 66

<sup>391</sup> Don Wagner, "For Zion's Sake," *Middle East Report* (Summer 2002), p. 54

<sup>392</sup> Yaakov Ariel, *On behalf of Israel: American Fundamentalist Attitudes towards Jews, Judaism, and Zionism, 1865-1945* (Brooklyn, N.Y., 1991), p. 25

<sup>393</sup> Stephan Sizer, *Christian Zionism: A Road to Armageddon?* (London, 2004), p. 32-33

<sup>394</sup> Paul Merkley, *Politics of Christian Zionism 1891-1948* (London, 1998), p. 57

He argues that “the idea of a Holy Land assumed dimensions of a geographic myth that ... played an important role in influencing and directing much of the practical American experience with regard to the actual real place.”<sup>395</sup> Secondly, there was a remarkable increase in the Bible prophecy conferences and movements sponsored by various Bible institutes which mainly propagated Darby’s theology. Rausch, who examined the proceedings of these conferences, notes that “one finds abundant support for the restoration of the Jews to the land of Palestine and a basic belief that only the Jewish people has a right to Palestine.”<sup>396</sup> In addition, Weber, who studied the development of Darby’s dispensationalist theology, also notes that “[a]lmost without exception the scores of Bible institutes that were founded between 1880–1940 taught dispensationalism.”<sup>397</sup>

William E. Blackstone (1841–1935) was another major figure who contributed to the development of the idea of the restoration of the Jews to Palestine. He is, in fact, considered to be the first Christian Zionist lobbyist.<sup>398</sup> He was an evangelical preacher for the Methodist Episcopal Church and became famous for his book entitled *Jesus is Coming*, published in 1878. In his book, he tries to “rejuvenate” Darby’s dispensationalist theology by linking the present world events to biblical prophecy. Eventually, through his involvement in the Bible Institute movement and participation in various Bible prophecy conferences, his writings and preaching successfully reached many important conservative Protestant leaders.<sup>399</sup> In addition, he tried to disseminate his ideas through lobbying activities. One of his most significant efforts was to initiate a petition in response to the oppression of the Jews in Russia in 1891. This petition, later known as the “Blackstone Memorial” was sent to President Benjamin in 1891, but it did not successfully convince the

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<sup>395</sup> Lester Irvin Vorgel, *To See A Promised Land: Americans and the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century* (Penn, 1993), p. xv

<sup>396</sup> David Rausch, *Zionism within the Early American Fundamentalism, 1878-1918: A Convergence of Two Institutions* (New York, 1979), p. 193-194

<sup>397</sup> Timothy P. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon: How Evangelicals Became Israel's Best Friend* (Michigan, 2004), p. 35

<sup>398</sup> Don Wagner, "For Zion's Sake," *Middle East Report* (Summer 2002), p. 54

<sup>399</sup> Stephan Sizer, *Christian Zionism: A Road to Armageddon?* (London, 2004), p. 71

president to bring the issue to the international level.<sup>400</sup> However, in Blackstone's biography, he argued that: "Although this effort regarding Palestine was not immediately successful, it had great influence in strengthening the kindly attitude of the United States toward such preposition."<sup>401</sup> Similarly, Weber also highlighted the importance of the petition by arguing it was the first formal lobby effort to bring the Jews to Palestine in the American history. He states it came "one year before the first Love of Zion societies were formed in the United States, five years before the publication of Herzl's *Der Judenstaat* (1896), and six years before the first Zionist Congress was convened in Basel."<sup>402</sup>

In 1916, Blackstone once again submitted a similar petition to President Woodrow Wilson. This effort was made to save the Jews from persecution in Russia and to relocate them in Palestine. Malachy argues this second petition was more effective than the first, as in 1917 President Woodrow Wilson gave his support to the Balfour Declaration.<sup>403</sup> The second memorial also gave significant encouragement to various Protestant denominations and groups in the United States. For example, the Los Angeles Baptist Minister Conference, the Methodist Episcopal Church of Southern California, and the Presbyterian Ministerial Association of Los Angeles were among the groups which adopted Blackstone's petition and supported the proposal of the restoration of the Jews to Palestine. They proclaimed:

The adoption of the Memorial to the Honourable Woodrow Wilson, President of the U.S., commending the Memorial aforesaid and the objects therein prayed and such measures as may be deemed wise and best for the relief of the Jews and their objects and claims to Palestine as their home.<sup>404</sup>

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<sup>400</sup> Lawrence J. Epstein, *Zion's Call: Christian Contributions to the Origins and Development of Israel* (Lanham, 1984), p. 110

<sup>401</sup> Quoted in Yona Malachy, *American Fundamentalism and Israel: The Relation of Fundamentalist Churches to Zionism and the State of Israel* (Jerusalem, 1978), p. 138

<sup>402</sup> Timothy P. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon: How Evangelicals Became Israel's Best Friend* (Michigan, 2004), p. 104

<sup>403</sup> Yona Malachy, *American Fundamentalism and Israel: The Relation of Fundamentalist Churches to Zionism and the State of Israel* (Jerusalem, 1978), p. 139

<sup>404</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 139



As discussed in Chapter 2, the 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed massive changes in conservative Protestantism due to various factors, such as the rise of higher criticism on the inerrancy of the Bible. Furthermore, the emergence of modernism and the massive influx of non-Protestant immigrants into America resulted in a split among American conservative Protestants.<sup>405</sup> However, the crisis, as argued by Weber, did not break the dispensationalist belief, especially among conservative Protestants.<sup>406</sup> In contrast, Boyer argued that, as fundamentalism became marginalized in America, dispensationalist theology and biblical prophecy also waned greatly among the American conservative Protestants.<sup>407</sup> Nevertheless, between the 1930s and 1940s, the idea and commitment to restore the Jews to Palestine by dispensationalist Christians such as William Blackstone was still active. During that period, as anti-Semitism was growing in and around the Western world, it also jeopardized the activities of American conservative Protestants to support the restoration of Jews to the Holy Land.<sup>408</sup> The next section illustrates the ambivalent stance of conservative Christians towards the anti-Semitism issue.

### **4.3 Conservative Christians and Anti-Semitism**

The Christian Right is ambivalent on its view of Jews. On the one hand, Jews are considered as God's chosen people and they have a special biblical status and role. On the other hand, the Christian Right is allegedly anti-Semitic, as it views Jews as a condemned nation for their rejection of Christ as the Messiah and therefore they are unsaved and need to be converted to Christianity. Interestingly, both views, love and hatred towards Jews, are based on the biblical teachings and grounded in conservative Protestant theology; their paradoxical views on Jews are not a new phenomenon among conservative Christians.

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<sup>405</sup> See Walter Russell Mead, "God's Country?," *Foreign Affairs* 85 (2006)

<sup>406</sup> Timothy P. Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming: American Premillennialism* (Chicago, 1987), p. 177

<sup>407</sup> Paul. Boyer, *When Time Shall be No More : Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture* (New York, 1992), p. 104

<sup>408</sup> Stephan Sizer, *Christian Zionism: A Road to Armageddon?* (London, 2004), p. 81

Many studies have shown that conservative Christians' beliefs are causally related to anti-Semitism and have found that conservative adherents are more likely to hold anti-Semitic beliefs compared to liberal Christians. The studies argue that millennial dispensationalists were originally divided on their view towards Jews. Some of them believed that because Jews rejected Jesus Christ as their Messiah they were cursed and punished by God. Therefore, the persecution of Jews or any act of injustice against Jews in history were part of God's punishment and part of God's plan for the end time. This belief was later developed as a basis for anti-Semitism. Some studies of the Nazi's anti-Semitism during Hitler's reign argue that anti-Semitism was a permanent feature of Christian civilization. They suggest that the Jews' persecution in Nazi Germany was a "reproduction" of traditional Christian anti-Semitism and it was a natural element in the history of Christian tradition. Therefore, the studies contend that, although conservative Christians condemn anti-Semitism, at the same time they believe that all the hatred and violence towards Jews is part of a biblical prophecy and God's plan for the Second Coming of Jesus. In addition, while they perceive the State of Israel to be protected by God, the future destiny of the Jews is uncertain. They expect only a small group of Jews who have converted to Christianity will be saved as the majority of them who join the anti-Christ force will be exterminated during the battle of Armageddon.<sup>409</sup> As a result, conservative Christians perceive that anti-Semitism and acts of violence towards Jews are part of the signs of end time. They claim that the persecution of the Jews was a form of God's punishment upon the Jews for their apostasy and for rejecting Jesus as the Messiah. This idea developed a belief that the unjust acts towards the Jews were an ordained wrath of God.<sup>410</sup>

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<sup>409</sup> See John Cager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes Towards Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (New York, 1985), Helen Fein, ed., *The Persisting Question: Sociological Perspectives and Social Context of Modern Anti-Semitism* (Berlin, 1987), David A. Gerber, ed., *Anti-Semitism in American History* (Urbana, 1986), Charles Y. Glock and Rodney Stark, *Christian Beliefs and Anti-Semitism* (New York, 1966), Charles Y. Glock and Rodney Stark, "Do Christian Beliefs Cause Anti-Semitism - A Comment," *American Sociological Review* 38 (1973)

<sup>410</sup> See Helen Fein, ed., *The Persisting Question: Sociological Perspectives and Social Context of Modern Anti-Semitism* (Berlin, 1987), David A. Gerber, ed., *Anti-Semitism in American History* (Urbana, 1986), Charles Y. Glock and Rodney Stark, *Christian Beliefs and Anti-Semitism* (New York, 1966), Charles Y. Glock and Rodney Stark, "Do Christian Beliefs Cause Anti-Semitism - A Comment," *American Sociological Review* 38 (1973)

Smith argues that, in the 1930s, many of the anti-Semitic supporters in the United States were led by conservative Christian leaders.<sup>411</sup> One prominent American conservative Christian evangelist leader who supported the anti-Semitic movement, especially the German Nazis, was Gerald B. Winrod (died 1957). He was a dispensationalist theologian who co-founded *The Defender*, a monthly magazine that was started in 1925 and reached approximately 110,000 subscribers.<sup>412</sup> Winrod also was an important figure for the World Christian Fundamentalist Association. As a dispensationalist, Winrod viewed the persecution of the Jews by the Nazis as a part of the dispensational process and “a great incentive” for Jews to return to Palestine. He also believed that the Jews were living in a “delusion” due to their sin of being the “Christ-killer”. Winrod accused the Jews of being the conspirators and culprits behind the collapse of world economics, the decline of moral standards, the corruption in politics, and the growth of atheism. Furthermore, he blamed them for causing World War I, the Bolshevik Revolution and the Great Depression in the United States. He stated that: “behind the scenes there is a hidden hand; a small group of super-intelligent Jews who control the gold of the world and pull wires for the deliberate purpose of tearing down the Gentile peoples.”<sup>413</sup>

In response to the anti-Semitism during Hitler’s reign, some early American dispensationalist periodicals discussed the persecution of Germany’s Jews in the context of the fulfilment of the biblical prophecies. Among others, the periodicals consistently referred to the Jews as still being “God’s Chosen People”, but the persecution was God’s plan that would consequently force Jews to return to Palestine. One of the key figures who represented this idea was Louis Sylvester Bauman (1875–1950). He wrote two books, *Light on Bible Prophecy* (1940) and *Russian Events in the Light of Prophecy* (1942). Though Bauman believed that the persecution of Jews in Germany was the key event to fulfil the Bible’s prophecy of the Second Coming, as described in the *Scofield Reference Bible*, he

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<sup>411</sup> Tom W. Smith, "The Religious Right and Anti-Semitism," *Review of Religious Research* 40 (1999), p. 244

<sup>412</sup> Leo R. Rebuffo, *The Old Christian Right: The Protestant Far Right from the Great Depression to the Cold War* (Philadelphia, 1983), p. 121

<sup>413</sup> Gerald B. Winrod, *The Hidden Hand: The Protocol and the Coming Superman* (Wichita, 1933), in James A. Saddington, "Prophecy and Politics: A History of Christian Zionism in the Anglo-American Experience, 1800-1948" (Bowling Green State University, 1996), p. 312

blamed the “apostate” Jews for bringing about anti-Semitism. He believed that anti-Semitism was not merely anti-Jewish; it was anti-Christ at its core. Furthermore, Bauman gave great attention to what was happening to the Jews in Germany and believed that the persecution of the Jews, anti-Semitic activities, and the return of the Jews to Palestine were “signs” of the end of the age heralding the Second Coming of Christ.<sup>414</sup>

#### **4.4 Liberal Christians and Their Support for the Creation of an Israeli State**

It is important to note that the interest to protect the rights of Jews to migrate to Palestine also largely came from the liberal or humanitarian Christians. In May 1939, fifty religious leaders from various denominations of liberal Christians, together with the Federal Council of Churches, the American Friends Service Committee and the Pro-Palestine Federation, presented a petition to Congress urging the president and congressmen to adopt legislation that supported the migration of German Jews to Jerusalem. Two congressmen, Sen. Robert F. Wagner (D- N.Y.) and Rep. Edith Rogers (R- Mass) took the initiative to sponsor a bill known as the Wagner–Rogers Bill that would authorize the admission of 20,000 children from Germany or German-controlled areas over a two-year period. However, the proposal found lukewarm support from the Roosevelt administration and Congress rejected the bill. Despite that, Christian humanitarian churches continued to support Jewish refugees. Due to this effort, it is estimated that between 1933 and 1945, the churches sponsored and aided more than 250,000 Jews to seek refuge in the US.<sup>415</sup>

In 1942, the Christian Council on Palestine (CCP) was established to help the suffering Jews and advocate the right of the Jews to establish their own state. The CCP consisted entirely of liberal Christians with its members numbering around 2,400 in 1944; it took the

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<sup>414</sup> Louis S. Bauman, "Why I Believe the Second Coming is Imminent," *The Brethren Evangelist*, 25 April 1936, in James A. Saddington, "Prophecy and Politics: A History of Christian Zionism in the Anglo-American Experience, 1800-1948" Ph.D Thesis (Bowling Green State University, 1996), p. 294

<sup>415</sup> Henry L. Feingold, *Bearing Witness: How America and Its Jews Responded to the Holocaust* (New York, 1995), p. 231-232

position that Christians had a responsibility to help the suffering Jews from being racially discriminated against and religiously persecuted. In other words, they believed that solving the problems of the Jews were a matter of concern to the conscience of Christianity.<sup>416</sup> One of the famous CCP advocates was Reinhold Niebuhr, who served on the executive committee. Niebuhr, who was known as a liberal Protestant theologian, was among the leading advocates for the settlement of Jews in Jerusalem and the establishment of a Jewish state. He wrote: "I belong to a Christian group in this country who believe that the Jews have a right to a homeland. They are a nation, scattered among the nations of the world. They have no place where they are not exposed to the perils of minority status."<sup>417</sup> Niebuhr, who advocated a "Christian realism", supported the right of the Jews to return to Palestine; this view was not based on biblical prophecy, but on the idea that the establishment of a Jewish state was a justice for the Jewish people. However, he also cautioned Zionists not to harbour any unjust thoughts towards the Arab population.<sup>418</sup> In April 1944, Niebuhr wrote: "The homeless Jews must find a home; and Christians owe their Jewish brethren something more than verbal sympathy as they face the most tragic plight which has ever faced a people."<sup>419</sup> In 1946, in order to maximize effectiveness, the American Palestine Committee (APC) and the Christian Council on Palestine (CCP) merged to form the American Christian Palestine Committee (ACPC). With strong support from numbers of prominent public figures, politicians and a membership of over 15,000 Christians, ACPC, a new liberal Christian front, continued the effort to arouse general public support and the political support of statesmen for the Zionist cause and to help Jews immigrate to Palestine.<sup>420</sup> By utilizing various means, such as radio, press, magazines, lectures, sermons and conferences, ACPC successfully exploited the sentiments of anti-Semites as a tool to gain sympathy and support from American politicians and the general

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<sup>416</sup> Caitlin Carenen, "The American Christian Palestine Committee, the Holocaust, and Mainstream Protestant Zionism (1938-1948)," *Holocaust Genocide Studies* 24 (2010)

<sup>417</sup> Shalom Goldman, *The Christian Roots of Zionism* (Religion Dispatches, 2010 [cited 20 January 2010]); available from [http://www.religiondispatches.org/archieve/rdbook/2171.excerpt:\\_the\\_christian\\_roots\\_of\\_zionism](http://www.religiondispatches.org/archieve/rdbook/2171.excerpt:_the_christian_roots_of_zionism)

<sup>418</sup> Egal Feldman, "Reinhold Niebuhr and the Jews," *Jewish Social Studies* 46 (1984), p. 293-302

<sup>419</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, "Editorial Notes," *Christianity and Crisis* (3 April 1944)

<sup>420</sup> Carl Vos, *The American Christian Palestine Committee: Essays in American Zionism 1917-1948* (New York, 1978), p. 486. See also Caitlin Carenen, "The American Christian Palestine Committee, the Holocaust, and Mainstream Protestant Zionism (1938-1948)," *Holocaust Genocide Studies* 24 (2010)

public. The ACPC conducted a series of lobbies at Congress. Through Sen. Robert F. Wagner and Sen. Robert A. Taft, many resolutions that urged the US government to facilitate the migration of Jews into Palestine, as well as to pave the way for a democratic Jewish commonwealth, were passed throughout 1945 to 1947. For instance, in July 1945, the ACPC sent a letter to the White House urging the president to convince the British government to “open forthwith the doors of Palestine to unrestricted Jewish immigration and colonization.” The letter was signed by 54 senators and 251 representatives of the House.<sup>421</sup>

The ACPC also published a monthly magazine, *Land Reborn*, which focused on communicating the justice for the Jewish people and ran updates on the new developments concerning the establishment of the Jewish state. In addition, the ACPC provided speakers to churches, synagogues, schools and civic groups that informed about the justice of Zionist movement and the persecution of the Jews in Europe. Frequent rallies and conferences were held to attract public support and as well as to strengthen sympathy among the Christian community.<sup>422</sup>

It is worth noting that there were studies which show that the quick *de facto* recognition by the United States of the declaration of the State of Israel in May 1948 was partly because of the good relationship between President Henry Truman and the Zionist leaders as well as his Protestant upbringing. Merkley notes that, after Israel was declared and had the support of the United States, Truman claimed “I am Cyrus”.<sup>423</sup> Recent studies by scholars of diplomatic and Middle Eastern history have shown that Truman’s Protestant heritage was influential.<sup>424</sup> Anderson also notes in his study that “[t]he Zionist lobby and Truman’s advisor won out over States and Defense, but it appears that Truman’s biblical background

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<sup>421</sup> James A. Saddington, "Prophecy and Politics: A History of Christian Zionism in the Anglo-American Experience, 1800-1948" Ph. D Thesis (Bowling Green State University, 1996), p. 383

<sup>422</sup> Ibid., p. 381-382

<sup>423</sup> Paul Merkley, *American Presidents, Religion, and Israel: The Heirs of Cyrus* (Westport, Conn., 2004), p. 21-22. Cyrus was a Persian Emperor who supported the return of the Jews to Israel after they had been in captivity in Persia in the Old Testament, Biblical prophecy had declared that a Gentile leader would act as a “Cyrus” in the restoration of the Jews to Israel.

<sup>424</sup> Peter L. Hahn, *Crisis and Crossfire: The United States and the Middle East Since 1945* (Washington D.C., 2005), p. 23

at least predisposed him to favor prompt recognitions.”<sup>425</sup> However, Benson argues that Clark Clifford, Truman’s domestic advisor, claims that Truman’s decision was based on various factors, such as the strategic, moral, ethical, humanitarian and domestic politics of the US.<sup>426</sup> Interestingly, Clifford also included Truman’s religious conviction as part of his reasoning. He states that from Truman’s “reading of the Old Testament he felt the Jews derived a legitimate historical right to Palestine.”<sup>427</sup> Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that Truman’s prompt decision to recognize Israel was mainly because of a very objective reason.<sup>428</sup> It was the best way to minimize the Soviet Union’s influence in Middle Eastern politics and to contain the rise of Arab nationalism. These factors superseded other factors, such as the lobby of the powerful allies of Zionists and Christians in America.<sup>429</sup> In addition, consideration for gaining Jewish votes for Truman’s 1948 presidential election was another major reason. Pogue notes: “At times, because of the necessity emphasized by the White House advisors of winning the fall election, the White House became in effect the foreign office of the State of Israel.”<sup>430</sup>

However, it is also important to note that Truman was not the only American president who supported the Jews and the State of Israel. Based on the historical facts, most of the support for the restoration of the Jews to Palestine was not motivated by biblical beliefs but was

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<sup>425</sup> Irvine H. Anderson, *Biblical Interpretation and Middle East Policy: The Promised Land, America, and Israel, 1917-2002* (Gainesville, 2005), p. 75

<sup>426</sup> Michael T. Benson, *Harry S. Truman and the Founding of Israel* (Praeger, 1997)

<sup>427</sup> Clark Clifford, *Counsel to the President: A Memoir* (New York, 1991), p. 8

<sup>428</sup> George Marshall, the Secretary of State during the Truman administration, was reportedly opposed to Truman’s decision to recognize Israel as he believed it would jeopardize US strategic and economic interest in the Middle East. See details in John Snetsinger, *Truman, The Jewish Vote, and the Creation of Israel* (Stanford, CA, 1974 )

<sup>429</sup> See Leo Ribuffo, "Religion and American Foreign Policy : The Story of a Complex Relationship," *National Interest* (Summer 1998)

<sup>430</sup> John Snetsinger, *Truman, The Jewish Vote, and the Creation of Israel* (Stanford, CA, 1974 ), p. 374-375. There were numerous records of extensive Zionist lobbying prior to Truman’s recognition of Israel. However, the level of effectiveness of that lobby is not clear. For instance, there was a report that Truman was very annoyed with the lobby and was said to have shouted in one meeting in 1946: “*The [the Zionist Lobby] somehow expect me to fulfil all the prophecies of the prophets. I tell them sometimes that I can no more fulfil all the prophecies of Ezekiel than I can that other great Jew, Karl Marx.*” See details in Michael T. Benson, *Harry S. Truman and the Founding of Israel* (Praeger, 1997), p. 91

due to political, humanitarian and juridical considerations.<sup>431</sup> This was evident from the support of President John Adams to the idea of the restoration of the Jews in Palestine. In 1818 President John Adams declared his conviction of the right of the Jews to return to the Holy Land was not based on any religious beliefs but merely a secular point of view. He said:

I really wish the Jews again in Judea, an independent Nation, for, as I believe, the most enlightened men of it have participated in the amelioration of the philosophy of the age; once restored to an independent government, and no longer persecuted, they would soon wear away some of its asperities and peculiarities of their character. I wish your nation may be admitted to all the privileges of citizens in every part of the world. This country [the United States] has done much; I wish it may do more, and annul very narrow idea in religion, government and commerce.<sup>432</sup>

In sum, the support of conservative Christians for Jewish people and creation of the Israeli state was not a recent phenomenon. The support was not limited to the Christian dispensationalists, but was also found among liberal Christians. In contrast to the dispensationalists who were motivated by theological convictions, liberal Christians' support was based on humanitarian and political motivations. In other words, the support of Christians of the establishment of the State of Israel went beyond "theological support". In fact, the humanitarian considerations, particularly from the liberal Christian and secular organizations, were significant to the establishment of that Jewish state. The following section specifically discusses the support offered and organized by the Christian Right for Israel.

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<sup>431</sup> See Yona Malachy, *American Fundamentalism and Israel: The Relation of Fundamentalist Churches to Zionism and the State of Israel* (Jerusalem, 1978)

<sup>432</sup> in Peter Johnson, "Mainline Churches and United States Middle East Policy," in *American Church Politics and the Middle East*, ed. Basheer K. Nijim (Belmont, MA, 1982), p. 68



## **4.5 The Creation of the State of Israel and the Christian Right's Response**

As discussed, Israel always matters to the conservative Christians. They are among the strongest supporters of the State of Israel. Furthermore, their unequivocal support for Israel never declined and remains strong even now. In her book, Kaplan argues that conservative Christians in the United States are largely the strongest supporters of Israel. She suggests that their support could pose an even greater influence over US policy towards Israel than the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) or other Jewish lobby groups.<sup>433</sup> Similarly, a study by Mayer suggests that the conservative Christians in the United States have been the strongest supporters of Israel for a very long time and oppose any American policies which seem to be hostile towards Israel. He also argues that, because of their literal interpretation of the Bible, the support has become more prominent as the leaders of the Christian Right have increasingly advocated the support of Israel to their followers.<sup>434</sup> Furthermore, its policies towards Israel are considered consistently uncritical; thus they always stand for American foreign policies that are pro-Israel. As Durham argues, the Christian Right “first anticipated, then welcomed, the creation of the state of Israel, and subsequently launched an array of initiatives to defend it.”<sup>435</sup>

### **4.5.1 Theological Belief as a Basis for the Christian Right's Support for Israel**

According to Lienesch, the conservative Christians believe that to stand against the Jews is to stand against God. Thus, they should forever show and provide firm support for Israel, as well as defend it from any potential enemy through American foreign policy. As a matter of belief, conservative Protestants characterized the establishment of the State of Israel as “one of the most striking fulfilments of Biblical prophecy the world has ever

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<sup>433</sup> Esther Kaplan, *With God on their Side: George W. Bush and the Christian Right* (New York, 2005), p. 24

<sup>434</sup> Jeremy D. Mayer, "Christian Fundamentalists and Public Opinion Towards the Middle East: Israel's New Best Friends?," *Social Science Quarterly* 85 (September, 2004), p. 696

<sup>435</sup> Martin Durham, "Evangelical Protestantism and Foreign Policy in the United States after September 11," *Patterns of Prejudice* 38 (2004), p. 150

seen.”<sup>436</sup> As Rev. Malcolm Hedding, Director of International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ) says: “We stand for the right that all land that God gave under the Abrahamic covenant 4,000 years ago to Israel’s ... and He will regulate the affairs of how Israel comes into the allotment which is hers forever.”<sup>437</sup> They celebrated the rebirth and the restoration of the Jews in Israel as evidence and justification for their dispensationalist theology and as part of the divine plan for further developments in the apocalyptic process, which will lead to the second coming of Jesus Christ. With one of the main prophecies now in place, dispensationalists perceived that they had the “reference point they had been waiting for”, and had proof that God kept his promises.<sup>438</sup>

One of the most important events after the establishment of the State of Israel was the victory of Israel in the Six Day War in 1967. The capture of Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza by Israel has become more conclusive evidence of the dispensationalist predictions of the creation of a “Greater Israel” as part of the end-time events. In addition, the continuous conflicts in the Middle East have strengthened their beliefs as what La Haye perceived as part of “God’s fulfilling His plan” prior to the imminent coming of Jesus to the world for the second time.<sup>439</sup> As a result, those in the Christian Right that prescribed dispensationalist theology became staunch supporters for Israel.<sup>440</sup> This argument is supported by Mayer’s research in 2004 that shows Christian fundamentalists are the most distinctive among Americans in showing their support and sympathy for Israel.<sup>441</sup> Likewise, a 2007 survey shows that 69% of white American evangelicals still believe that “God gave Israel to the Jewish people”, and 59% of them also believe that “Israel is the fulfilment of biblical

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<sup>436</sup> Yona Malachy, *American Fundamentalism and Israel: The Relation of Fundamentalist Churches to Zionism and the State of Israel* (Jerusalem, 1978), p. 43

<sup>437</sup> Jane Lampman, *Mixing Prophecy and Politics* (The Christian Science Monitor, 2004 [cited 9 April 2006]); available from <http://www.csmonitor.com/2004/0707/p15s01-lire.html>

<sup>438</sup> Timothy P. Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming: American Premillennialism* (Chicago, 1987), p. 204

<sup>439</sup> In Michael Lienesch, *Redeeming America: Piety and Politics in the New Christian Right* (Chapel Hill, 1993), p. 230

<sup>440</sup> See for example Hassan S. Haddad, "Christian Zionism in America: The Religious Factor in American Middle East Policy," in *American Church Politics and The Middle East*, ed. Basheer K. Nijim (Belmont, MA, 1982) and Jon Krosnick and Shibley Telhami, "Public Attitudes Toward Israel: A Study of the Attentive and Issue Publics," *International Studies Quarterly* 39 (1995)

<sup>441</sup> Jeremy D. Mayer, "Christian Fundamentalists and Public Opinion Towards the Middle East: Israel's New Best Friends?," *Social Science Quarterly* 85 (September, 2004)

prophecy”.<sup>442</sup> Besides consistently becoming the strongest supporters of Israel, the Christian Right also opposes any American policies which seem to pressure Israel.<sup>443</sup>

Intriguingly, the Christian Right has offered undivided support for Israel and shown its uncompromised commitment throughout the history of Israel. Martin argues that “[m]ost importantly, and consistently, virtually all segments of the contemporary Christian Right have been staunch supporters of Israel.”<sup>444</sup> This commitment mainly derives from the Old Testament which says: “To stand against the Jews is to stand against God”<sup>445</sup> and God’s message in the Book of Genesis that states: “I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curses thee.”<sup>446</sup> In the AIPAC Policy Conference in March 2007, John Hagee, the founder of Christians United for Israel (CUFI) articulates his organization’s commitment to the cause of Israel. He states that CUFI and the other like-minded evangelicals have “a deep-seated faith-based belief to love Israel, to speak up for Israel, to stand up for Israel, to pray for Israel, and to financially support Israel.”<sup>447</sup>

Another Christian conservative organization that supports Israel is the Christians’ Israel Public Action Campaign (CIPAC). The organization is a registered Christian lobby in support of Israel and US–Israel relations. Founded in 1989, CIPAC is actively involved in lobbying efforts in Congress on behalf of Israel’s and Jewish interests. According to its official website, CIPAC was founded based on a biblical belief that God gave Israel to the Jewish people and it is the fulfilment of biblical prophecy.<sup>448</sup> In addition, the Christian Right believes that firm support for Israel should be an absolute requirement for American foreign policy, and that America should provide all means necessary for protecting the

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<sup>442</sup> Robert Ruby, *A Six-Day War: Its Aftermath in American Public Opinion* (15 Jan 2008 2007 [cited 30 May]); available from <http://pewforum.org/docs/?DocID=218>

<sup>443</sup> Jeremy D. Mayer, “Christian Fundamentalists and Public Opinion Towards the Middle East: Israel’s New Best Friends?,” *Social Science Quarterly* 85 (September, 2004)

<sup>444</sup> William Martin, “The Christian Right and American Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Policy* Spring (1999), p. 66

<sup>445</sup> Michael Lienesch, *Redeeming America: Piety and Politics in the New Christian Right* (Chapel Hill, 1993), p. 231

<sup>446</sup> Genesis 12:3

<sup>447</sup> John Hagee, Speech to AIPAC Policy 2007 (AIPAC, March 11, 2007 [cited 14 October 2009]); available from <http://www.aipac.org/publications/speechesByPolicymaker/Hagee-PC-2007.pdf>

<sup>448</sup> Welcome to CIPAC: The Complete Pro-Israel Lobby (Christians’ Israel Public Action Campaign (CIPAC), 2009 [cited 9 November 2009]); available from <http://www.cipaonline.org>

survival of Israel so that it will be able to serve as the Kingdom of God in the Second Coming of Jesus.<sup>449</sup>

It is important to note that most organizations associated with Christian Zionism are led by Christian Right leaders and therefore it is not surprising when some scholars suggest that the Christian Zionist organizations are also part of Christian Right advocate groups or forces within the Christian Right movement. Sizer notes that, “[w]ith the high profile support of Fundamentalist leaders like Falwell and Robertson ... Christian Zionism [became] synonymous with American Evangelicalism.”<sup>450</sup> Likewise, Durham believes many Christian Right organizations such as the Moral Majority, Christian Friends for Israeli Communities, the American Alliance of Jews and Christians, the Christian Coalition and the Religious Roundtable are also Christian Zionist organizations.<sup>451</sup> Croft also suggests that many conservative Protestant organizations have not only supported but also defended Israel’s interests and become its “valuable friends”.<sup>452</sup> Gary Bauer, an influential leader of the Christian Right notes that he feels “deeply that America has an obligation to stand by Israel,” based “on reading of the Scripture, where evangelicals believe God has promised that Land to the Jewish people.”<sup>453</sup>

Furthermore, a prominent Christian Right leader, Jerry Falwell, has repeatedly declared that his support for Israel is his religious duty and he believes that to stand against Israel is to stand against God. According to Ralph Reed, former head of the Christian Coalition and co-founder of Stand for Israel, “Christians have the potential to be the most effective constituency influencing a foreign policy since the end of the Cold War ... They are shifting

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<sup>449</sup> Michael Lienesch, *Redeeming America: Piety and Politics in the New Christian Right* (Chapel Hill, 1993), p. 230-231

<sup>450</sup> Stephan Sizer, *Christian Zionism: A Road to Armageddon?* (London, 2004), p. 93

<sup>451</sup> Martin Durham, "Evangelical Protestantism and Foreign Policy in the United States after September 11," *Patterns of Prejudice* 38 (2004), p. 150-152

<sup>452</sup> Stuart Croft, "'Thy Will Be Done': The New Foreign Policy of America's Christian Right," *International Politics* (2007), p. 705

<sup>453</sup> Quoted in Fred Strickert, "The Christian Right and Support for Israel," *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* 21 (2002), p. 82

the center of gravity in the pro-Israel community to become more conservative.”<sup>454</sup> A prominent scholar of American history and religion, George Marsden, notes that, “Although impossible to measure, perhaps evangelicalism’s greatest political impact on American policy during the past fifty years has been its role in broadening the popular base for an almost unreserved support for the state of Israel.”<sup>455</sup> Meanwhile, Jean Hardisty, the founder of the Political Research Associates, states that:

Throughout U.S. history, conservative Christians who were evangelical or fundamentalist and have taken the word literally, have believed that the creation of Israel was a necessity for the fulfilment of Christian prophecy... So it’s in the interest of Christians focused on the ultimate accomplishment of the Second Coming of Christ that the Jews go back to Israel, and this creates a natural affinity with Jews around the issue of Israel.<sup>456</sup>

#### **4.5.2 The Christian Right’s Political Support for Israel**

Various activities have been sponsored and organized by the Christian Right to show its support, solidarity and commitment towards Israel. One of these supports is through political pressure, such as the lobby efforts on behalf of Zionist and Israeli interests.<sup>457</sup> In the 1980s the Moral Majority leader, Jerry Falwell, announced that his organization was committed to supporting Israel. He reinforced his statement by incorporating it in the charter of the Moral Majority which reads: “[s]upport for Israel is one of the essential commitments of the Moral Majority.”<sup>458</sup> This step eventually united many Christian Right organizations in supporting a favourable policy towards Israel. In fact, it is argued that the

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<sup>454</sup> Allan C. Brownfeld, *Strange Bedfellows: The Jewish Establishment and The Christian Right* (2002) Quoted in Jeremy D. Mayer, "Christian Fundamentalists and Public Opinion Towards the Middle East: Israel's New Best Friends?," *Social Science Quarterly* 85 (September, 2004), p. 695

<sup>455</sup> George Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, ed. (Michigan, 1991), p. 77

<sup>456</sup> Cited in Esther Kaplan, *With God on their Side: George W. Bush and the Christian Right* (New York, 2005), p. 27

<sup>457</sup> Chip Berlet and Nikhail Aziz, *Culture, Religion, Apocalypse and the Middle East Foreign Policy* (Interhemispheric Resource Centre, 2003 [cited 15 March 2006]); available from <http://www/irc-online.org> See also Stuart Croft, "'Thy Will Be Done': The New Foreign Policy of America's Christian Right," *International Politics* (2007)

<sup>458</sup> In Richard J. Neuhaus and Michael Gromartie, eds., *Piety and Politics: Evangelicals and Fundamentalists Confront the World* (Washington, DC, 1976), p. 113-116

Moral Majority had the effect of adding “political backing for the already established U.S. policy of massive support for Israel”.<sup>459</sup> In that decade, Falwell was considered one of the most important figures in promoting and appealing to Christians to support Israel and its cause. He was among the earliest Christian Right leaders who signed a letter in support of Israel’s invasion of Lebanon in 1982.<sup>460</sup>

Another example of a similar kind of support was from the National Christian Leadership Council for Israel (NCLCI), formerly known as “Christians Concerned for Israel”. In 1981, NCLCI lobbied Congress to oppose the sale of airborne warning and control aircraft (AWACS) to Saudi Arabia that were perceived as a threat to Israel’s security. Although the attempt failed, it marked for the very first time a Christian organization’s involvement in a lobby effort for the cause of Israel.<sup>461</sup> In 1995, the Christian Right sponsored the establishment of Christian Friends for Israeli Communities (CFIC), which is a network between evangelical and Jewish settlements in Israel. The existence of the CFIC undoubtedly strengthened their relationship and provided a new platform for them to cooperate in various activities for the cause of Israel.

It is argued that, after the 9/11 attack, the relationship between conservative Christians and Israel became much closer. This is evident from various events organized by the Christian Right, either to show their moral support or to help in fundraising for the Israelis. In 2002, an organization of the Christian Right named the Christian Coalition successfully organized a conference called “The 2002 Road to Victory”. It was regarded as a major conference that illustrated the commitment and support of the Christian Right for Israel. Ehud Olmert, the then Mayor of Jerusalem, was invited as keynote speaker to address the Solidarity with Israel rally. The former Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, was also invited. In the conference, Pat Robertson proclaimed to the Solidarity with Israel rally that: “We should not asked (Israel) to withdraw (from the occupied territories) ... (and) we

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<sup>459</sup> George Marsden, *Religion and American Culture*, (Texas, 2000), p. 283

<sup>460</sup> Martin Durham, "Evangelical Protestantism and Foreign Policy in the United States after September 11," *Patterns of Prejudice* 38 (2004), p. 151

<sup>461</sup> Grace Halsell, *Prophecy and Politics: The Secret Alliance between Israel and the US Christian Right*, (Chicago, 1989), p. 178-179

should stand with them and fight.”<sup>462</sup> According to the Religion News Service, the Solidarity with Israel rally was one part of a campaign programme called “Praying for Jerusalem”. This campaign sought to recruit one million Christians from various evangelical churches in America for a mass prayer for Israel as well as promoting Christian tourism to Israel and the purchase of Israeli products.<sup>463</sup> Gary Bauer, a prominent Christian Right leader, who revealed that his commitment to support Israel is derived from his understanding of the Bible,<sup>464</sup> collaborated with Daniel Lapin, a Jewish conservative leader, to form a new organization called the “American Alliance of Jews”. They later claimed that the organization represented a “unique synthesis of Jewish authenticity and Christian grassroots muscle”.<sup>465</sup>

Support for Israel from conservative Christian politicians is also argued to have been influenced by their biblical belief in the right of the Jews to return to Palestine. In a speech to the US Senate in March 2002, a Republican senator and a member of the Armed Services Committee, James Inhofe (Oklahoma), who identified himself as a “born-again” Christian, defended the right of Israel to possess the Holy Land be included in the Palestinian territories. His argument was based on several reasons, such as humanitarian concern for the Jewish survivors of the Holocaust, archaeological and historical facts of the land belonging to the Jews 2,000 years ago, and Israel’s strategic alliance with the US, especially in combating Islamic terrorism. Nevertheless, his focal point was that the Jews deserved the land because it was mandated by God in the Bible; this can be linked directly to the apocalyptic belief of the Christian Right. He argued:

This is the most important reason; because God said so. As I said a minute ago, look it up in the book of Genesis. It is right up there on the desk ... The Bible says that Abram removed his tent and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is Hebron, and built an altar there before the Lord.

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<sup>462</sup> Chip Berlet and Nikhail Aziz, *Culture, Religion, Apocalypse and the Middle East Foreign Policy* (Interhemispheric Resource Centre, 2003 [cited 15 March 2006]); available from <http://www/irc-online.org>

<sup>463</sup> Ibid.([cited])

<sup>464</sup> Fred Strickert, "The Christian Right and Support for Israel," *Washington Report on the Middle East* 2002

<sup>465</sup> Martin Durham, "Evangelical Protestantism and Foreign Policy in the United States after September 11," *Patterns of Prejudice* 38 (2004), p. 151

Hebron is the West Bank. It is as this place where God appeared to Abram and said “I am giving you this land” – the West Bank. This is not a political battle at all. It is a contest over whether the word of God is true.<sup>466</sup>

Another staunch supporter of Israel is Mike Pence, an evangelical and Indiana’s Republican congressman. He is one of the architects of the Patriot Act and the Department of Homeland Security. On his website he declared: “In the year 2000 when I was first selected to Congress, Israel was already my priority to me ... I am concerned with the defense and the promotion of the interests of the state and the people of Israel.” In May 2009, during the AIPAC Policy Conference, Pence once again stated his reason for supporting Israel, mainly because “My Christian faith compels me to support Israel.”<sup>467</sup> Since then, he has consistently provided and extended his moral and political support for Israel. He believes the United States should continue its policy of supporting and developing Israel’s economic and military strength, even if foreign aid to other countries shrinks. He justified that by stating: “The financial support we give to Israel is a bargain for the promotion of the interests of a people so cherished by millions of Americans, leaving aside entirely that Israel remains the only democratic nation in this strategically significant region in the world.”<sup>468</sup> He also showed his support for the 1995 Jerusalem Embassy Act, which suggests the US move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.<sup>469</sup> In February 2004, during the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress, he sponsored a bill, the H. Con. Res. 371, which called for support of Israel’s construction of a security fence and condemned the United Nations General Assembly for requesting the International Court of Justice to render a legal opinion on the consequences of the fence. At the same time, he proposed that Congress should cut

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<sup>466</sup> James M. Inhofe, *Peace in the Middle East*, Senate Floor Statement (2002) Available at [http://inhofe.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?Fuseaction=Pressroom.Speeches&ContentRecord\\_id=73a](http://inhofe.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?Fuseaction=Pressroom.Speeches&ContentRecord_id=73a)

<sup>467</sup> AIPAC Policy Conference 2009 (2009 [cited 9 November 2009]); available from <http://www.aipac.org/publications/speechesByPolicyMakers/RepMikePenceMarshallCooper.pdf>

<sup>468</sup> Mike Pence, *Israel Will Prevail Again* (Mike Pence Official Website, [cited 29 October 2009]); available from <http://mikepence.house.gov/index.php?view=article&catid=51>

<sup>469</sup> *Ibid.* ([cited])



off American funding to any organizations that support Palestinian organizations.<sup>470</sup> In an interview with Barbara Victor in 2003, he revealed that his support for Israel is not only due to the special relations that exist between the US and Israel and his sympathy for survivors of the Holocaust, but can also be attributed to his religious belief. He stated that: "I ultimately believe that Israel was forged equally out of the hearts of American Jews for the horror of the Holocaust, as much as it is the dream of American Christians for the promises of God to reappear on Earth as the Messiah and King."<sup>471</sup> Amid Israel's attacks on Gaza in early 2009, Pence, as the chairman of the House Republican Conference in his address from the floor of the US House of Representative, called for the support of H. Res. 34 bill, a bipartisan measure which recognizes Israel's right to defend itself against the attacks from Hamas. In his speech, he suggested the American government remain steadfast in its defence of Israel. He said:

In these dire circumstances, we must stand with Israel as she defends herself, we must show the resolve of our relationship as peaceful democracies, and we must show the resolve of a relationship born of the intimate and deepest held values of both of our people, for the history of Israel is a history of struggle ... We and all the freedom-loving nations of the world must stand with Israel and condemn the violence that's been perpetrated against her people. We cannot stand idly by while a gathering menace grows in the region, and a menace perpetrates such acts of evil against our cherished allies.<sup>472</sup>

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<sup>470</sup> The legislation obtained 164 co-sponsors from other Congressmen. See Mike Pence, "Supporting the Construction by Israel of a Security Fence," (2004). Available online in Thomas, The Library of Congress at <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/D?d108.16:./temp/~bdRMsh>. See also Mike Pence Official Website Mike Pence, Israel Will Prevail Again (Mike Pence Official Website, [cited 29 October 2009]); available from <http://mikepence.house.gov/index.php?view=article&catid=51>

<sup>471</sup> Barbara Victor, *The Last Crusade: Religion and the Politics of Misdirection* (London, 2005), p. 207-208

<sup>472</sup> The Wings of Eagles program was started in 1990. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Wings of Eagles took the initiative to transport Soviet Jews to Israel. The IFCJ website states that, since 1990, Wings of Eagles has funded hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jews to migrate to Israel. However, presently Wings of Eagles has expanded its programme to fund not only the Soviet Jews, but also Jews around the world. See details in Wings of Eagles (International Fellowship of Christian and Jews, [cited 6 November 2009]); available from [http://www.ifcj.org/site/PageNavigator/eng/programs/on\\_wings\\_of\\_eagles/about\\_on\\_wings\\_eagles/](http://www.ifcj.org/site/PageNavigator/eng/programs/on_wings_of_eagles/about_on_wings_eagles/)

### 4.5.3 The Christian Right's Financial and Moral Support for Israel

The Christian Right's financial support for Israel has become more visible in recent years. Though it is not significant in comparison to US aid, it is still significant and provides an important source of revenue for Israel. Furthermore, this financial contribution could compensate the revenues which Israel found declining from the Jewish Diaspora. The revenue mostly comes from fundraising campaigns, donations from individuals and churches, and the selling of Israel's crafts and merchandise. According to Kaplan, the Christian Right is able to attract millions of dollars of funds for Israel annually. She argues that these funds come from hundreds of thousands of Christian donors and supporters who are mobilized by the Christian Right's networks of as many as 25,000 churches and also from various formal organizations such as Americans for a Safe Israel, Christians' Israel Public Action Campaign, Stand for Israel, the Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, Christian Friends of Israel, Christians United for Israel, and the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews (IFCJ).<sup>473</sup>

According to Barbara Victor, the Wings of Eagles, a programme under IFCJ, used \$100 million of its budget to fund Russian Jews' migration to Israel.<sup>474</sup> According to IFCJ's president, Yechiel Eckstein, about half of the money collected by the organization was allocated to help the Diaspora's Jews relocate to Israel, and the rest was for food, medical care and other assistance for Jews in Israel.<sup>475</sup> There was also a report that, from 1994 to 2002, the Jerusalem Friendship Fund and Christian Coalition have been able to collect around \$60 million in donations from the evangelical community to help fund the Jewish immigration to Israel.<sup>476</sup> Similarly, a study by Croft has identified a few Christian Right organizations, such as Maranatha Chapel in San Diego which raises funds to arrange for

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<sup>473</sup> Esther Kaplan, *With God on their Side: George W. Bush and the Christian Right* (New York, 2005), p. 24-26

<sup>474</sup> Barbara Victor, *The Last Crusade: Religion and the Politics of Misdirection* (London, 2005), p. 123

<sup>475</sup> Bill Broadway, "The Evangelical-Israeli Connection: Scripture Inspires Many Christians to Support Zionism Politically, Financially," *Washington Post*, 27 March 2004.

<sup>476</sup> Danielle Haas, "U.S. Christian find cause to aid Israel: Evangelicals financing immigrants, settlements," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 10 July 2002.

the Jewish migration to Israel.<sup>477</sup> Likewise, the International Christian Jewish Fellowship was reported to have initiated a fundraising campaign and successfully collected \$20 million in 2002<sup>478</sup> and \$47 million in 2004 to be donated to Israel.<sup>479</sup> John Hagee's ministry, the Cornerstone Church in Texas, has been active in organizing fundraising campaigns for Israel since the 1980s and was able to raise a significant amount of donations for Israel. It was reported by the *Jerusalem Post* that, in the year of 2007 alone, the ministries contributed \$8.5 million<sup>480</sup> while in April 2008, *The New York Times* reported that Hagee, through his CUFI organization, raised another \$6 million<sup>481</sup> followed by another \$9.5 million in October 2008, as claimed by the JTA, a website that dedicated for the global news service of the Jewish People.<sup>482</sup>

Another source of indirect financial support from the Christian Right to Israel is from its promotion of religious tourism. The director of the Pilgrim Promoting Division of the Israeli Ministry of Trade and Tourism estimated that around 250,000 Americans visited Israel in 1980 and the majority of them were Christian evangelicals who visited Judea and Samaria, biblical sites located in the West Bank.<sup>483</sup> Mearsheimer and Walt note that Christian tourism to Israel, in the form of religious pilgrimage and holiday celebrations in Jerusalem, attracts revenue of around \$1 billion annually to Israel.<sup>484</sup> As evangelical tourists are an important source of revenue for the development of Israel's economy, a series of official visits from the Israel Ministry of Tourism to the United States took place to enhance Israel's tourism promotion initiatives. It was reported that Israel's tourism

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<sup>477</sup> See Stuart Croft, "'Thy Will Be Done': The New Foreign Policy of America's Christian Right," *International Politics* (2007), p. 705-706

<sup>478</sup> Esther Kaplan, *With God on their Side: George W. Bush and the Christian Right* (New York, 2005), p. 25

<sup>479</sup> Jonathan S. Tobin, "A Pro-Israel Group Teaches Us a Lesson about Evangelical and ourselves," *Israeli Insider*, November 2004 Available at <http://web.israelinsider.com/views/4486.htm> Accessed date 14th October 2009

<sup>480</sup> Saul Elbein, "Evangelicals Raise \$8.5 M. for Jewish State," *The Jerusalem Post*, 17 October 2007. Available at <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1192380584199=JPost>

<sup>481</sup> In Berth Marlowe, U.S. Evangelist Gives \$6 Million to Israel (Boston.Com, 2008 [cited 16 November 2009]); available from [http://www.boston.com/news/world/middleeast/article/2008/04/06/us\\_evangelist\\_give\\_6\\_million](http://www.boston.com/news/world/middleeast/article/2008/04/06/us_evangelist_give_6_million)

<sup>482</sup> Eric Fingerhut, Hagee to Give \$9.5 Million in Israel (JTA: The Global News Services of the Jewish People, 2008 [cited 10 November 2009]); available from <http://jta.org/news/article/2008/10/24/110868/hageeisrael>

<sup>483</sup> Barbara Victor, *The Last Crusade: Religion and the Politics of Misdirection* (London, 2005), p. 107-108

<sup>484</sup> John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (London, 2007), p. 138

minister visited the United States on numerous occasions in 2003 to show the significance of conservative Christian tourists' money to Israel's economy. *The Washington Times* stated that: "Israeli tourism minister Benjamin Elon has embarked on a "Bible Belt tour" to exploit evangelical Christian enthusiasm for Israel, to lure Christian tourists back to Israel and to derail President Bush's "road map" to Middle East peace."<sup>485</sup> "The Bible Belt is a very important target for Israel" said Benjamin Elon, adding that Israel was raising its annual tourism budget for North America from \$1.1 million to \$3 million. On one occasion he expressed his gratitude on behalf of Israel for the efforts organized by the Christian Right in promoting Israel's tourism. He was quoted as saying: "We wish to thank those who have not abandoned us ... In the past three years, those who have come were Jews – out of solidarity – and evangelical Christians."<sup>486</sup> He estimated that around 400,000 evangelicals visited Israel in 2003 alone. In February 2004, Benjamin Elon honoured Pat Robertson at the National Association of Broadcasters Convention for his leadership in promoting the pilgrimages to Israel, despite the US government's travel warning for Americans after the 9/11 attacks. Benjamin Elon praised Robertson and regarded him as having "saved Israel's tourism from bankruptcy".<sup>487</sup>

CUFI has also been actively involved in promoting tourism to Israel among its members as well as to other evangelicals. Since its existence, CUFI has organized a series of visits to Jerusalem, which were participated in by thousands of its members. In 2008, CUFI announced two new yearly programmes – Jerusalem Summit and Unity Walk Israel. The main objective of these fortnight long programmes was to bring the Christians to tour Israel and to demonstrate their solidarity with Israel. According to the CUFI official website, the programme was the "first time in CUFI history that the organization will be bringing

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<sup>485</sup> Bill Broadway, "The Evangelical-Israeli Connection: Scripture Inspires Many Christians to Support Zionism Politically, Financially," *Washington Post*, 27 March 2004.

<sup>486</sup> Julia Duin, "Israeli Pits U.S. Politics Against Road Map," *Washington Times*, 18 August 2003.

<sup>487</sup> Bill Broadway, "The Evangelical-Israeli Connection: Scripture Inspires Many Christians to Support Zionism Politically, Financially," *Washington Post*, 27 March 2004.

members on a mission to Israel to show their support”. During its first event in April 2008, John Hagee led the tour and over one thousand people participated.<sup>488</sup>

The Christian Right also launched a moral support campaign for Israel by presenting public statements and advertisements on behalf of Israeli interests. A campaign such as “Christians Call for a United Jerusalem” was carried out in full page coverage in major US newspapers and Christian journals. In addition, the advertisement’s pro-Zionist/Israel themes such as “Jerusalem has been the spiritual and political capital of only the Jewish people for 3,000 years” and “Israel’s biblical claim to the land was eternal covenant from God” were continuously promoted in the local newspapers.<sup>489</sup> One of the main Christian Right organizations that have consistently showed its moral support to Israel is CUFI. Through its main event – “The Nights to Honor Israel” – CUFI was able to attract a large number of attendees among evangelical Christians, to pay tribute to the Jewish people around the world and to the State of Israel. Another regular event is a signature campaign called the “Israel Pledge” that intends to support the right of the Jewish people to live in their ancestral land and Israel’s right to defend itself against terrorism. Since 2006, over 95 similar events have taken place all over the US and CUFI claims a participation of a total of 1,100 churches from all states in the US.<sup>490</sup>

CUFI also shows its moral support for Israel through its annual conference. At the CUFI 2009 Annual Conference, John Hagee, in a video conference with Netanyahu live from Israel, claimed that over 50 million Christians would remain steadfast in their undivided support to Israel on the issue of “Israel’s sovereign right to grow and develop the settlements ... and not yield to the pressure of the United States government.” In response, Netanyahu expressed his appreciation for the Christians’ unwavering support for Israel; he told the audience that “today millions of Christians stand with Israel because they stand for

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<sup>488</sup> Christian United for Israel Schedules Historic 10 Day Trip to Israel (Christian United for Israel, 2009 [cited 10 November 2009]); available from [http://www.cufi.org/site/PageServer?pagename=media\\_press\\_release#trip](http://www.cufi.org/site/PageServer?pagename=media_press_release#trip)

<sup>489</sup> Donald Wagner, The Evangelical-Jewish Alliance ([cited 3 March 2008]); available from <http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=2717>

<sup>490</sup> Christians Honor Israel at Sunday Services (JTA: The Global News Services of the Jewish People, 2009 [cited 10 November 2009]); available from <http://jta.org/new/article/2009/05/19/1005256/christians-honor-israel-at-sunday-services>

freedom, millions of Christians stand with Israel because they stand for truth, millions of Christians stand for Israel because they want to see genuine peace in the Holy Land.”<sup>491</sup>

#### **4.5.4 The Christian Right’s Support for Israel: From Theological Belief to the American–Israel Strategic Interest**

The Christian Right is not only committed in their unwavering support for Israel, but they also emphasize that their lobbying efforts extend to secure Israel from any potential security threats. This scenario is undoubtedly still ongoing, as we can witness various recent Christian Right activities in reaction to America’s foreign policies towards Israel. For example, in April 2002, under increased international pressure, George W. Bush openly appealed to Israel to withdraw their military operation from the West Bank. As a result, the White House received more than 100,000 emails from Christian Right activists condemning President Bush’s appeal and insisting the president did not act against Israel. Wagner argues: “The Pro-Israel lobby, in coordination with the Christian Right, mobilized over 100,000 email messages, calls and visits urging the president to avoid restraining Israel. The tactics worked. The president uttered not another word of criticism or caution, and Sharon continued the offensive.”<sup>492</sup> Partly because of this reason, George W. Bush arguably stopped his criticism of Israel immediately. At the same time, Congress adopted resolutions in favour of Israel’s action by putting the blame on Palestinians for Israel’s aggression.<sup>493</sup> In addition, Jerry Falwell on the CBS *60 Minutes* news program openly commented positively on Bush’s incursion, saying “I think now we can count on President Bush to do the right thing for Israel every time.”<sup>494</sup>

Similarly, in June 2003, the Christian Right mobilized their constituents to send emails protesting against and criticizing the Bush administration for his initial condemnation of

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<sup>491</sup> M.J. Rosenberg, "Playing the Jesus Card," *Foreign Policy* (24 July, 2009) Available at [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/07/04/playing\\_the\\_jesus\\_card/](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/07/04/playing_the_jesus_card/)

<sup>492</sup> Donald Wagner, "Marching to Zion: The Evangelical-Jewish Alliance," *Christian Century*, 28 June 2003

<sup>493</sup> Stephan Zunes, "US Christian Right's Grip on Middle East Policy," *Asian Times*, 14 July 2004

<sup>494</sup> Donald Wagner, The Evangelical-Jewish Alliance ([cited 3 March 2008]); available from <http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=2717>

Israel's attempted assassination of the Hamas leader, Abdel Aziz Rantisi. Even after the assassination of two Palestinian leaders, Abdel Aziz Rantisi and Sheikh Ahmed Yassin in 2004,<sup>495</sup> the Christian Right continued to put pressure on the White House to avoid any condemnation of Israel. For instance, they threatened not to turn up for the 2008 presidential election if the government continued to pressure Israel. As expected, the US government sided with the Israelis on those issues.<sup>496</sup> In March 2009, against overwhelming condemnation of Israel's attacks on Gaza, CUFI organized a petition in support of the right of Israel to defend itself and to show solidarity with the Jewish people in Israel. It managed to get 100,000 signatures from American Christians and was presented to members of Congress.<sup>497</sup>

#### **4.6 The Christian Right and Israel's Security: CUFI and Iran as a Threat**

Since its inception in 2006, CUFI considered Iranian military capabilities, especially its potential to acquire nuclear technology, could pose a great threat to Israel's security. In its efforts, CUFI has continuously tried to lobby the US administration to deter Iran, not only through diplomatic and economic sanctions, but also to consider military action against Iran in order to stop Iran from pursuing its nuclear programme. For CUFI, the urgency for the US to stop Iran's nuclear project is as important as providing military and economic aid to Israel. For example, John Hagee led a campaign to pressure leaders of the Ohio State Administration to divert state funds from companies considered to be involved in any business or investment dealings with Iran. In May 2007, CUFI took the effort to mobilize its members to call and urge the Ohio State Representatives to vote for the Iran-Sudan Divestment Bill. The bill was introduced in the Ohio House of Representatives by Josh

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<sup>495</sup> An online survey conducted by the Israeli newspaper *Maariv* on the perceptions of American evangelicals on the killing of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin found that 89% of the 1,630 respondents supported the killing as compared to only 61% of Israelis who supported the attack. See Bill Broadway, "The Evangelical-Israeli Connection: Scripture Inspires Many Christians to Support Zionism Politically, Financially," *Washington Post*, 27 March 2004.

<sup>496</sup> Stephan Zunes, *The Influence of the Christian Right on U.S. Middle East Policy* (2004), p. 2

<sup>497</sup> Jennifer Riley, "Over 100,000 U.S. Christians Express Solidarity with Israel," *The Christian Post*, 26 March 2009.

Mindel (R-Lyndhurst) and Shannon Jones (R-Springboro) and it prohibited the state's public pension funds from being invested in companies which had business ties to Iranian's petroleum and natural gas sector. There were two reasons behind the introduction of this bill. First, the Iranian activity in developing its nuclear programme is considered a defiance of UN Security Council Resolutions and would pose a threat to the security of the United States, Israel and their allies. Second, it is believed that the genocide in Darfur was organized by the Sudanese government and its allies. According to CUFI, this effort of divestment would deny Iran and Sudan foreign capital that helps fund their activities.<sup>498</sup>

At the 2008 CUFI Annual Conference, the organization listed the threat of the Iranian nuclear project to the security of Israel as one of its main agendas. The summit was also intended to lobby elected representatives in Congress for their commitment to pressure the Iranian government by supporting the "Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability and Divestment Act of 2008", which was approved by the Senate Banking Committee. Interestingly, the discussions of the threats of Iran's nuclear project to Israel's security had been coined together with American security. In other words, whenever there is a potential threat to the security of Israel, it also can pose a danger to American security. In CUFI's brochure that was circulated at the conference, it was stated that: "The enemies of Israel are the enemies of America. They are the enemies of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. These enemies have drawn the battle lines. If a line has to be drawn, then draw that line around Christians and Jews."<sup>499</sup> Moreover, Senator Joseph Lieberman (I-CT) also emphasized the same rhetoric in his speech delivered at the summit: "The threat from Iran lies not just in their arming, training and funding terrorists throughout the Middle East and the world, but even more from the nuclear development program they are clearly pursuing. History warns us what can happen when we don't take the threats of such tyrants and terrorists seriously ... You see Israel and America under threat, and so you stand for

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<sup>498</sup> Christian United for Israel (2008 [cited 2 April 2008]); available from [http://www.cufi.org/site/PageServer?pagename=about\\_AboutCUFI](http://www.cufi.org/site/PageServer?pagename=about_AboutCUFI)

<sup>499</sup> Quoted in Amy Frykholm, "Calculated Blessings," *Christian Century*, 7 October 2008, p. 36



both.”<sup>500</sup> In the summit, John Hagee reminded the participants of the danger of Iran’s nuclear development that he believed could result in another holocaust for Israelis. In addition he also compared the Iranian president with Hitler when he said:

There is a new Hitler in the Middle East; he is the President of Iran. He intends to build nuclear weapons and his brazen declarations to kill the Jews have been carried on the front pages of the world’s press. In 1935, the Christians of the world were silent. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Christians are united in their support of Israel. We will not be silent. In our pulpits, on our global media networks, in our school and universities and in the halls of Congress, we will not keep silent. The voice of evil will not go uncontested in our generation. Not on our watch.<sup>501</sup>

Moreover, John Hagee has also consistently suggested that the US government take drastic action, not only by sanctioning the Iranian economy, but also by striking Iran. Interestingly, he also included religious rhetoric in his suggestion to attack Iran. He concluded that the US will be blessed by God by attacking Iran.<sup>502</sup>

During the fourth CUFI Annual Summit held in July 2009, CUFI arranged for its 4,000 participants to visit Capitol Hill and to meet their congressmen. The meeting was to lobby the congressmen to co-sponsor two legislations, the Iran Sanctions Enabling Act and the Iran Refined Petroleum Act, both of which would impose economic sanctions on Iran. According to the CUFI website, because of the visits, the Iran Sanctions Enabling Act<sup>503</sup>

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<sup>500</sup> Fern Sidman, Christian United for Israel Attracts Record Numbers at Conference (Intellectual Conservative Politics and Philosophy, 2008 [cited 18 October 2008]); available from <http://www.intellectualconservative.com/2008/08/11christian-united>

<sup>501</sup> Ibid.([cited)

<sup>502</sup> Amy Frykholm, "Calculated Blessings," *Christian Century*, 7 October 2008, p. 36

<sup>503</sup> The bill H.R. 1327: Iran Sanctions Enabling Act of 2009 is to authorize state and local governments to direct divestiture from, and prevent investment in, companies with investment of \$20,000,000 or more in Iran’s energy sector, and for other purpose. It was introduced in 5 March 2009 and was sponsored by Rep. Barney Frank (d-MA4) and obtained 257 co-sponsors. It was passed in the House in 14 October 2009 with 414 Ayes, 6 Nays and 12 Present/Not Voting. See details in , " Iran Sanctions Enabling Act of 2009," in *H.R.1327* (2009). Available at <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h111-1327>

has received 22 new co-sponsors and the Iran Refined Petroleum Act<sup>504</sup> has obtained 18 new co-sponsors.<sup>505</sup> In addition, CUFI also urged its activists and American citizens to sign a petition calling for the indictment of the Iranian president, Ahmadinejad. The petition accused Ahmadinejad of “incitement to genocide” and suggests that the United Nations bring Ahmadinejad to the International Criminal Court and try him under the Genocide Convention. It states that:

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has a clear record of incitement to genocide as defined under the Genocide Convention and its application to date. He has sought to dehumanize Israelis and demonize Jews. He has repeatedly called for Israel’s destruction in direct and stark terms. He is getting close to acquiring the nuclear arms with which to make good on this genocidal threat. And, through his active support of Hezbollah and Hamas, he has clearly demonstrated that he is prepared to turn his talk of killing Israelis into deadly action.<sup>506</sup>

Soon after the petition appeared on CUFI’s website in September 2009, JTA reported that, within 24 hours, the petition obtained more than 10,000 signatures.<sup>507</sup>

In September 2009, a group who claimed themselves as “Christian Leaders for a Nuclear-Free Iran” which comprised some leaders of evangelical Christian and Roman Catholic groups in the United States, sent a letter to Congress and other key world leaders calling them to take a drastic action to stop the Iranian government from developing its nuclear weapon.<sup>508</sup> However, if we examine the signatories of the letter, it clearly shows that most

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<sup>504</sup> The bill H.R.2194: Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act of 2009 is to amend the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996 to enhance United States diplomatic efforts with respect to Iran by expanding economic sanctions against Iran. It was introduced in 30 April 2009 and was sponsored by Rep. Howard Berman (D.CA28) and obtained 336 co-sponsors. In 28 October 2009, the bill was considered to the committee and was recommended to be considered by the House. As at 17 November 2009, the bill has still not been voted to be passed in the House. See details in , "Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act of 2009," (2009). Available at <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h111-2194>

<sup>505</sup> Overview of the 2009 Summit (Christians United for Israel, 2009 [cited 17 November 2009]); available from [http://www.cufi.org/site/pageServer?pagename=events\\_Summit\\_2009\\_summary#fouth](http://www.cufi.org/site/pageServer?pagename=events_Summit_2009_summary#fouth)

<sup>506</sup> Prosecute Ahmadinejad: Petition the United Nations (Christians United for Israel, 2009 [cited 18 November 2009]); available from [http://www.cufi.org/site/Survey?Survey\\_ID=7500&ACTION\\_REQUIRED=URL\\_ACTION\\_USER\\_REQUESTS](http://www.cufi.org/site/Survey?Survey_ID=7500&ACTION_REQUIRED=URL_ACTION_USER_REQUESTS)

<sup>507</sup> Eric Fingerhut, CUFI: Let's Indict Ahmedinejad (JTA: The Global News Services of the Jewish People, 2009 [cited 18 November 2009]); available from <http://blogs.jta.irg/politics/2009/09/25/1008164/cufi-lets-indict-ahmedinejad>

<sup>508</sup> Among the important leaders who signed the letter were; Pat Robertson, Chairman of Southern Baptist Convention, Johnny Hunt of First Baptist Church of Woodstock, Charles Colson of the Prison Fellowship Ministries, Richard Land of

of them are Christian Right leaders or those who support the conservative movement in the United States. They argued that the capability of Iran to obtain a nuclear weapon will destabilize the Middle East and lead to a new arms race in the region. The letter, which begins with its summary of Iran's undemocratic policies, the intention of the Iranian president to wipe Israel off the world map and its denial of the Holocaust, states: "A nuclear-armed Iran is almost certain to initiate an arms race with other Middle Eastern and Arab nations who have reasons to fear the religious, political and military ambitions of Iran's extremist leaders. As the world's leading state sponsor of international terror, we must assume Iran will sell or give nuclear weapons to extremist groups that are declared and demonstrated enemies to America and her allies." In addition, the letter accuses Iran of being the main funder for Hezbollah and Hamas in Lebanon and Gaza, and urges the United States to impose, among others, a total arms embargo on Iran and apply economic sanctions to any foreign companies that: export refined petroleum products including gasoline from Iran; provide ships or shipping services to transports such products; underwrite those shipments; or finance or broker those shipments; or help maintain Iran's domestic refining capacity.<sup>509</sup>

In short, looking at all these activities, it is not surprising when Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, who has been involved in promoting support for Israel among evangelicals for more than twenty-five years said that: "since 9/11, the Christian community has become more intense. Now, everywhere you go, it's Jews and conservative Christians linked together as a base of support for Israel, and Christians as natural allies."<sup>510</sup>

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the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, Tom Minnery of Focus on the Family, Bill Donohue of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, Dr Michael Youssef of Leading the Way, Dr James Merritt of Cross Pointe Church, Wendy Wright of Concerned Women for America, Gary Bauer of American Values, John Hagee of Christian United for Israel, and Nina Shea of Heritage Foundation.

<sup>509</sup> See the letter in Christian Leaders Call for Urgent Action, Tough Sanctions on Iran (Church Report: CR Newswire, 2009 [cited 18 November 2009]); available from <http://www.thechurchreport.com/index.cfm?objectID=15326>

<sup>510</sup> Esther Kaplan, *With God on their Side: George W. Bush and the Christian Right* (New York, 2005), p. 25

## 4.7 The Christian Right's Support for Israel: The Israeli and Jewish Perceptions

It is argued that the support of the Christian Right for Israel is rooted not so much in love or sympathy for the Jewish people or guilt over anti-Semitism and the Holocaust. Instead, it is more a self-serving belief that there must a state for Jews in Palestine before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.<sup>511</sup> The conservative Protestants believe that the Jews abandoned and rejected Jesus Christ in his first coming; nevertheless, they will be given a final chance to convert to Christianity before the end time. Falwell argues: "The Jews are returning to their land of unbelief. They are spiritually blind and desperately in need of their Messiah and Savior. Yet, they are God's people, and in the world today Bible-Believing Christians in America are the best friends Israel has. We must remain so."<sup>512</sup> Similarly, the president of Americans for Peace Now, a US branch of the Israeli movement Peace Now realizes this strange relationship. He notes: "You have a number of very conservative Christian groups that support Jewish settlements because they see this as a way of strengthening Jewish hold on the land of Israel because in their mind this is important for end-of-time theology and part of hastening the Second Coming and the conversion of Jews that would be entailed in some of the theology."<sup>513</sup>

However, Zionists can hardly be comfortable with that belief and they see it as a kind of exploitative relationship. Gorenberg, who studied this disturbing and paradoxical belief, concludes that:

Having spent years researching the Christian Right's ties to Israel ... listening to leading "Christian Zionists," reading their sermons and examining the links of some to Israeli extremists ... I conclude that this is a strangely exploitative relationship. Accepting the embraces of conservative evangelicals poses problems of principle for Jews and Israel, in return for an illusory short-term payoff. Jews would do better to follow

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<sup>511</sup> Stephan Zunes, "US Christian Right's Grip on Middle East Policy," *Asian Times*, 14 July 2004, p. 4

<sup>512</sup> Quoted in Michael Lienesch, *Redeeming America: Piety and Politics in the New Christian Right* (Chapel Hill, 1993), p. 231

<sup>513</sup> Margot Patterson, "Will Fundamental Christians and Jews Ignite Apocalypse? ," *National Catholic Reporter*, 11 October 2002, p. 3

the Hebrew maxim “Respect him and suspect him”, maintaining a polite distance and publicly delineating their differences from the Christian Right, even while at times supporting the same policy steps.<sup>514</sup>

Furthermore, many American Jews are not comfortable with the close relationships between Jews and those Christian Zionists who support Israel unequivocally. Rabbi David Saperstein, executive director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism criticizes the Christian Right’s dispensationalist interpretation of the Bible. He believes that the literal interpretation that Israel has a divine right over the Palestinian land will lead to their followers to oppose any attempts to resolve the Israeli–Palestinian conflicts by a two-state solution. In addition, he argues that the one-sided support for Israel by the Christian Right caused “discomfort among a significant majority of Jews who believe in a diplomatic solution.”<sup>515</sup> This view is supported by my interview findings, which showed that some American Jews were not entirely happy with the blind support of Christian Zionists for Israel.

“Jews on First” is a Jewish organization that was formed in 2005 to counter the Christian Right’s theocratic agenda. The organization is strongly opposed to the Christian Right’s millennial beliefs that were perceived to be exploiting Jews for the Christian Right’s end-time purpose. In Jews on First’s official website, it states its mission is “Defending the First Amendment against the Christian Right ... because if Jews don’t speak out, they’ll think we don’t mind.”<sup>516</sup> In an interview, Rabbi Haim Beliak, founder of Jews on First, claimed that the Christian Right is anti-Semitic because it is exploiting the Jews to fulfil its theological beliefs. Beliak believes that the Christian Right’s unwavering support for the Israeli state is solely dictated by its messianic theological dispensationalist beliefs. He contends that the establishment of CUFI and its support for Israel was disrespectful to Israel and the Jews as

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<sup>514</sup> In Chip Berlet and Nikhail Aziz, *Culture, Religion, Apocalypse and the Middle East Foreign Policy* (Interhemispheric Resource Centre, 2003 [cited 15 March 2006]); available from <http://www/irc-online.org>

<sup>515</sup> Fred Strickert, "The Christian Right and Support for Israel," *Washington Report on the Middle East* 2002

<sup>516</sup> About JewsOnFirst.org (Jews on First, 2010 [cited 18 January 2010]); available from <http://www.jewsonfirst.org/about.aspx>

this organization saw Jews and Israel as pawns in its end time theology. Furthermore, he considers the Christian Right as only interested in Christianizing Jews. Therefore, Beliak asserts that CUFI's messianic beliefs are misleading its own members and followers. Finally, Beliak suggests that the Christian Right has had and continues to have an impact on US foreign policy in the Middle East.<sup>517</sup>

However, there is evidence that the Christian Right organization has moved its emphasis away from the dispensationalist belief about the fate of the Jews in the event of the Second Coming of Jesus. Rather, the movement articulates its image as a political movement not as a religious movement. CUFI's president, David Brog, in his latest statement argues that the reason why his organization supports Israel is mainly because of their "deep respect for Israeli's democracy".<sup>518</sup> In addition, CUFI's founder, John Hagee continuously denies that his support for Israel is mainly because of his eschatological beliefs, but is rather made up of political and strategic interests that are shared between Israel and the US. These interests include combating the threats of militant Islam, Iran's nuclear project and global terrorism, and the promotion of democratic values. In a conference call with Jewish-American bloggers in early 2007, John Hagee declared that CUFI's undivided support for Israel has nothing to do with the end-time prophecy but is rather because the Bible urges them to support Israel and also because of the Judeo-Christian values they share. In the meeting, Hagee states: "I do not support Israel because of any eschatological concept or prophetic concept, I support them because I have a Bible mandate to do so beginning in the Book of Genesis and never ending."<sup>519</sup> On another occasion, Hagee combined his and CUFI's support for Israel with the security of the United States. In other words, he suggested that

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<sup>517</sup> Rabbi Haim Beliak, interview with author, 7 May 2009, Washington D.C.

<sup>518</sup> David Brog, "The Truth About Christian Zionists: Why Pro-Israel Christians Really Support the Jewish State, Push for Sanctions on Iran and Want the United States to Stop Pressuring Jerusalem," *Foreign Policy*, 18 November 2009 Available at <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/09/16>

<sup>519</sup> Bruce Wilson, McCain-Backer John Hagee Lies, to Jewish Bloggers, On His Motives for Supporting Israel (Talk To Action, 2008 [cited 15 October 2009]); available from <http://www.talk2action.org/story/2008/4/21/114619/878>. However, Wilson argues that Hagee's claim was contradicted with his own preaching at his San Antonio Cornerstone Church and in his writing that encourages his followers to believe that the resettlement of Jews in Israel is a part of the fulfilment of prophecy of end-time theology and is part of God's plan for the Second Coming of Jesus.

any enemy of Israel is an enemy of the United States and any threat to Israel is also a threat to the United States.<sup>520</sup> He furthermore argued that CUFI emphasizes that the support of Israel is not a “divine decree” rooted in dispensationalist doctrine but is rather based on the idea of Christianity being a part of or a branch of Judaism.

Therefore, it is not surprising that CUFI wholeheartedly propagates the Christian Zionist agenda and believes Christians must adopt Jewish theology and practice in their daily life. As Wood argues, this emphasis has “facilitated the active participation of Jews in CUFI’s activities at the grassroots level as well as at the leadership level.”<sup>521</sup> Nevertheless, for whatever reasons, Israelis quickly recognized this support as a political opportunity. They thus carefully cultivated links and networks with the conservative Protestant organizations.<sup>522</sup> In addition, Israeli and Jewish leaders mostly do not seem to mind the theological beliefs of the Christian Right, as long as it brings them benefits and generates political and economic support for Israel. As Ariel Sharon ridiculed the question of the fate of Jews from the perspective of dispensationalist prophecies, he replied: “When the Messiah appears, we can ask him if this is His first time or His second time on earth. Until then, we should be thankful for the support of our Christian friends.”<sup>523</sup> Similarly, Mort Klein, president of the Zionist Organization of America comments: “I want their support now, and I don’t care what their theology says down the line.”<sup>524</sup> In addition, Klein argues that the anti-Jewish sentiment among the Christian Right is over. He claims:

You find hints of anti-Semitism among many non-Jewish groups, and a few evangelicals may have anti-Jewish feeling ... but I have spoken to dozen of Christian Zionist groups and I have never encountered any anti-Semitism ... Instead, I have found a great love of the Jewish people. I’m

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<sup>520</sup> Amy Frykholm, "Calculated Blessings," *Christian Century*, 7 October 2008, p. 36

<sup>521</sup> Brian Wood, "The Second Annual CUFI Conference, July 2007: The Christian Zionist Coalition Hits Its Stride," *Journal of Palestine Studies* XXXVII (Autumn 2007), p. 81

<sup>522</sup> see Larry Ekin, "Christian-Zionist Perspectives on the Middle East," in *American Church Politics and the Middle East*, ed. Basheer K. Nijim (Belmont, MA, 1982), p. 134

<sup>523</sup> Barbara Victor, *The Last Crusade: Religion and the Politics of Misdirection* (London, 2005), p. 188

<sup>524</sup> Quoted in Fred Strickert, "The Christian Right and Support for Israel," *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* 21 (2002), p. 83

thrilled they are helping Israel and I think they are doing a great job. They are more pro-Israel and pro-Zionist than most Jews.<sup>525</sup>

## 4.8 Conclusion

Throughout history, the Christian Right has formed an important bloc of support for the State of Israel as early as its establishment in 1948. This support became more visible after the Six Day War in 1967 as the Christians saw the victory of Israel as evidence that God had fulfilled “his divine plan” for the imminent return of Jesus Christ. This belief shaped the activism of the Christian Right in exerting its religious belief on American foreign policy in the Middle East, particularly relating to Israel, and showing their critical response to any American foreign policies that were negative towards Israel. As a Republican leader commented on the Christian Right pro-Israel policy: “They are very vocal and have shifted the center of gravity toward Israel and against concessions. Its colors the environments in which decisions are being made.”<sup>526</sup> Truly, it is never easy to determine objectively the motivation for the Christian Right’s strong support for Israel. However, the end-time theological beliefs could possibly explain the reason for the conservative Christians’ unequivocal support for Israel. Theologically, to the Christian Right, the State of Israel is a matter of religious conviction that is related to God’s plan and is also part of the imminent prophecy of the Second Coming of Jesus. As Christopher Cardinal Schoborn states, “Hardly anybody will dispute that the foundation of this state [Israel] had something to do with the Biblical prophecy.”<sup>527</sup> However, this chapter has illustrated that the Christian Right has recently shifted its motives for supporting Israel from theological beliefs to America’s national interest justifications. The following chapter discusses the Christian Right’s critical response towards American foreign policies on Israel, particularly in reference to the Israel–Palestine conflict during the George W. Bush presidency.

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<sup>525</sup> Ken Silverstein and Michael Scherer, "Born Again Zionists," *Mother Jones*, September/October 2002, p. 60

<sup>526</sup> In Stephan Zunes, *The Influence of the Christian Right on U.S. Middle East Policy* (2004), p. 2

<sup>527</sup> David Shushon, "Zionism for Christians," *First Things* (2008), p. 21



## CHAPTER 5

# ISRAEL–PALESTINE CONFLICTS, ISLAM AND WAR ON TERROR: THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT’S RESPONSE

### 5.0 Introduction

To the Christian Right, the land of Palestine is the covenant land made by God with the Jews; thus, they consider any attempt to divide or share the land with the Palestinian people as against the covenant.<sup>528</sup> This chapter explores the critical response of the Christian Right towards the issue of the Israel–Palestine conflict by examining two events, the 2002 Road Map Peace Plan and the Annapolis Conference. It seeks to examine the critical role of the Christian Right in American foreign policy during the George W. Bush administration, especially regarding the Israel–Palestine conflict. I argue that the Christian Right has consistently demonstrated its earnest concern about American foreign policy towards Israel, particularly regarding the present Israel–Palestine conflict resolution. Finally, the chapter discusses the Christian Right’s perspective on Islam and how it views Islam and the Muslims, especially after the 9/11 attacks. I seek to establish that, after the 9/11 attacks, the Christian Right extended its support for Israel beyond its traditional theological beliefs and that such support was offered under a banner of American national security and the War on Terror. Lastly, I argue that American evangelicals are divided in their opinions and stances on the issue of the Christian Right’s unequivocal support for Israel. Finally, I show that the evangelicals have different views on Islam and the War on Terror compared to the Christian Right.

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<sup>528</sup> Don Wagner, "For Zion's Sake," *Middle East Report* (Summer 2002), p. 57

## **5.1 Israeli–Palestinian Peace Process and the Christian Right’s Response**

Arguably, the support of the Christian Right for Israel and its lobby on US foreign policy does not include a peace process between Israel and Palestine. Conversely, the Christian Right is a strong advocate of a one-state solution and protest against any chance of the creation of a Palestinian state.<sup>529</sup> The next two sections discuss two case studies that show the response of the Christian Right to the US foreign policy towards the Israeli–Palestinian peace process during the Bush administration.

### **5.1.1 The 2002 Road Map and the Christian Right’s Response**

In 2002, amid international pressure urging major international actors to resolve the Israel–Palestine conflict, the United States and the rest of the “Quartet” – the European Union, Russia and the United Nations – proposed a peace plan called the “Road Map” for peace. In June 2002, President George W. Bush declared his commitment to expedite the peace process by outlining major principles for the Road Map. In his speech, he declared that: “The Roadmap represents a starting point toward achieving the vision of two states, a secure State of Israel and a viable, peaceful, democratic Palestine. It is the framework for progress towards lasting peace and security in the Middle East ... and a viable Palestinian state living side by side in peace and security with Israel.”<sup>530</sup> The Road Map was a two-state solution plan which comprised three goal-driven phases to end the Israel–Palestine conflict by 2005 and involved reciprocal steps by Israel and Palestine in the issues of politics, security, economics, humanitarian and institution-building goals. The proposed solution gained international support and, in November 2003, the United Nations Security Council by Resolutions 1515 endorsed the Road Map.<sup>531</sup> Soon after that, the UN Secretary

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<sup>529</sup> Barbara Victor, *The Last Crusade: Religion and the Politics of Misdirection* (London, 2005), p. 233

<sup>530</sup> *Roadmap for Peace in the Middle East: Israeli/Palestinian Reciprocal Action, Quartet Support*, (2003)

<sup>531</sup> *The UN Security Council Resolution 1515 (2003)*

General Kofi Annan in a UN Press Release gave his official statement that the Road Map “remains the most practical way of achieving the aspirations of both sides.”<sup>532</sup>

Nevertheless, immediately after President George W. Bush’s declaration of the White House’s commitment to and endorsement of the Road Map as a way out of the endless Israeli–Palestinian conflict at a mini-summit in Aqaba, Jordan, a significant number of the Christian Right reacted strongly, opposing such an initiative.<sup>533</sup> The *Financial Times* reported: “Some prominent US pastors are unyielding towards Palestinians’ own yearning for statehood and have joined settlers groups in Israel in campaigning against Sharon’s plan to withdraw from the Gaza Strip.”<sup>534</sup> The president of CUFI, John Hagee, for instance, has been consistently opposed to the plan and claimed that the plan violates the words of God. He wrote in his book *In Defense of Israel*: “Voices are calling for the sacred city of Jerusalem to be shared as part of a ‘road map for peace’. Let it be known to all men far and near that the city of Jerusalem is not up for negotiation with anyone at any time for any reason in future. It has been and shall always be the eternal and undivided capital of the State of Israel.”<sup>535</sup> Likewise, Mike Evans, the founder of the Jerusalem Prayer Team, a coalition of 1,700 churches in the US, opposed the plan and said: “We either have to oppose the road map or oppose the Bible.”<sup>536</sup>

Many other groups and Christian Right organizations joined together to oppose the Road Map. In 2003, the Christian Right officially opposed the proposed Road Map for peace between Israel and Palestine. For example, the Jerusalem Prayer Team, which was supported by Robertson and Falwell, gathered signatures of Christians for a memorandum that urged George W. Bush to abandon the Road Map initiative. Similarly, Ed McAteer,

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<sup>532</sup> Road Map 'Remains Most Practical Way' to Achieve Aspirations of Israelis, Palestinians. (United Nations, 2004 [cited 4 March 2008])

<sup>533</sup> See Rammy M., "The Armageddon Lobby: Dispensationalist Christian Zionism and the Shaping of US Policy Towards Israel-Palestine," *Holy Land Studies: A Multidisciplinary Journal* 5.1 (2006), p. 91-92

<sup>534</sup> In Bill Berkowitz, Christian Right's Piece of the "Promised Land": Israel Offers Evangelicals Christians Land Near the Sea of Galilee in the Hopes of Solidifying their Support and Boosting Tourism (2005 [cited 3 March 2008]); available from <http://www.mediatransparency.org/storyprinterfriendly.php?storyID=79>

<sup>535</sup> John Hagee, *In Defense of Israel* (Florida, 2007), p. 85-86

<sup>536</sup> Bill Broadway, "The Evangelical-Israeli Connection: Scripture Inspires Many Christians to Support Zionism Politically, Financially," *Washington Post*, 27 March 2004.

one of the influential leaders of the Christian Right, launched an advertisement campaign calling Christians to “pray that George W. Bush honours God’s covenant with Israel”. At the same time, some of the Christian Right leaders such as Gary Bauer, Richard Land, Falwell and several others sent a letter to express their grave concerns about Bush’s intention to accept the Road Map. In addition, Gary Bauer warned Bush that evangelicals would turn against him if he endorsed the Road Map.<sup>537</sup>

As a result, the White House received more than 50,000 postcards from Christian Right members that asserted their disagreement over the proposed plan, which, according to them, was a step towards allowing the Palestinians to establish their own state in Israel.<sup>538</sup> In this respect, the Apostolic Congress, a Christian Right organization, had mobilized its constituents to send emails or letters to the White House against the Road Map plan. As Perlstein explains:

[The] Apostolic Congress co-sponsored an effort with the Jewish group Americans for a Safe Israel that placed billboards in 23 cities with a quotation from Genesis, “Unto thy offspring will I give this” and the message, “I pray that President Bush Honors God’s Covenant with Israel. Call the White House with this message”. It then provided with White House phone number and the Apostolic Congress’s Web address. In the interview with the Voice, Pastor Upton claimed personal responsibility for directing 50,000 postcards to the White House opposing the Road Map, which aims to create a Palestinian state. “I’m in total disagreement with any form of Palestinian state” Upton said. Within a two-week period, getting 50,000 postcards saying the exact same thing from places all over the country; that resonated with the White House, that really caused [President Bush] to backpedal on the Road Map.<sup>539</sup>

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<sup>537</sup> Martin Durham, "Evangelical Protestantism and Foreign Policy in the United States after September 11," *Patterns of Prejudice* 38 (2004), p.152

<sup>538</sup> Stephan Zunes, "US Christian Right's Grip on Middle East Policy," *Asian Times*, 14 July 2004

<sup>539</sup> Quoted in Rammy M. Haija, "The Armageddon Lobby: Dispensationalist Christian Zionism and the Shaping of US Policy Towards Israel-Palestine," *Holy Land Studies: A Multidisciplinary Journal* 5.1 (2006), p. 92

Likewise, Victor argues that most of the Christian Right and Christian Zionist leaders had also mobilized their grass roots supporters to protest against the Road Map. She says:

Through American church groups more than one million Christians were organized to e-mail the White House to protest against George W. Bush's Road Map. The consulting group runs newspaper advertisements and commercials on conservative radio talk shows urging Jews and Christians to see past their historical differences and come together at a time the most of crisis for Israel.<sup>540</sup>

In the same year, at the Interfaith Zionist Leadership Summit held in Washington DC, various Christian Right organizations, such as Gary Bauer's American Values, the Apostolic Congress, the Christian Broadcasting Network, the Christian Coalition of America, and the Religious Roundtable, came together to develop a strategy to oppose the 2002 Road Map.<sup>541</sup>

To date, the 2002 Road Map has not been implemented and was considered another failed plan of a series of Israel–Palestine peace initiatives.<sup>542</sup> Besides the various analyses that attempted to figure out the factors behind the failure of the 2002 Road Map, including questions about the mechanism, practicality and contents of the proposed solutions, the commitments of the Israel and Palestine leadership as well as the level of acceptance among their people and the uncertainty of the United States obligations,<sup>543</sup> the role of the Christian Right's activism is yet to be determined. The current research, however,

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<sup>540</sup> Barbara Victor, *The Last Crusade: Religion and the Politics of Misdirection* (London, 2005), p. 241

<sup>541</sup> Bill Berkowitz, Christian Right's Piece of the "Promised Land": Israel Offers Evangelicals Christians Land Near the Sea of Galilee in the Hopes of Solidifying their Support and Boosting Tourism (2005 [cited 3 March 2008]); available from <http://www.mediatransparency.org/storyprinterfriendly.php?storyID=79>

<sup>542</sup> See History of failed peace talks (BBC News, 2007 [cited 4 March 2008]); available from [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/6666393.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/6666393.stm)

<sup>543</sup> See Abdul Hadi Mahdi, "Formulas for Partition, Fragmented Maps, Yet No Solution," *New England Journal of Public Policy* 19 (Winter 2005), Jibril Rajoub, "Security Only Needs a Political Resolution," *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture* 14 (2007), Piere Tristam, Bush's Road Map for Peace: Five Years Later (About.Com: Middle East Issues, 2007 [cited 4 March 2008]); available from <http://midleast.about.com/od/israelandpalestine/p/me070911.htm?p=1>, The "Roadmap": Repeating Oslo's Human Right Mistakes (Human Right Watch, [cited 3 March 2008]); available from <http://www.hrw.org/backgrounder/mena/israelpa050603.htm>, Kofi Annan, "Leadership Can Make a Difference Between Hope and Despair," *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture* 11 (2004)

illustrates clearly that the Christian Right did show their negative response and deep aversion to the 2002 Road Map.

### **5.1.2 The Annapolis Conference 2007**

On 26 November 2007, the United States, with strong backing from the Quartet,<sup>544</sup> once again hosted a conference to attempt to resolve the endless conflict between Israel and Palestine. Held in Annapolis, Maryland, USA, the conference known as “The Annapolis Conference” was expected to involve formal bilateral negotiations toward the establishment of a Palestinian state in Gaza and the West Bank and the agreement on this shall be concluded before the end of 2008. In addition, it was proposed that the implementation of this agreement should be in accordance with the 2003 Road Map proposal, i.e. a two-state solution.<sup>545</sup> In a Joint Understanding read by President George W. Bush in the conference, the conference was to “lay the foundation for the establishment of a new nation – a democratic Palestinian state that will live side by side with Israel in peace and security ... [and] ... bring an end to the violence that has been the true enemy of the aspirations of both the Israelis and Palestinians.”<sup>546</sup>

On the eve of the Annapolis Conference on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2007, some leaders of Orthodox Jewish and Christian Right organizations met with senior White House officials, including President Bush’s National Security Advisor, Stephen Hadley. They expressed their great concern over the initial conference’s proposal of dividing Jerusalem, which would eventually lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state. Among the Christian Right representatives were David Brog, executive director of Christians United for Israel (CUFI),

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<sup>544</sup> Quartet Statement Following 26 November 2007 Meeting (Foreign & Commonwealth Office, 2007 [cited 4 March 2008]); available from <http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1199203398299>

<sup>545</sup> Annapolis Meeting Great Opportunity for Two-State Solution in Middle East, Says General Assembly President, as Debate Begins on Question of Palestine (United Nations General Assembly GA/10663, 29 November 2007 [cited 5 March 2008]); available from <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2007/ga10663.doc.htm>

<sup>546</sup> Joint Understanding Read by President Bush at Annapolis Conference (The White House, 27 November 2007 [cited 5 March 2008]); available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/11/20071127-2.html>

Gary Bauer, and Jeff Ballabon, the leader of Southern Baptist Convention.<sup>547</sup> David Brog wrote in his blog that, during the meeting, the representatives not only raised their concerns about the credibility and ability of the Palestinian authority to stop terrorism against Israel and but also argued the plan would increase the possibility of terrorist attacks against Israel.<sup>548</sup> Soon after the meeting, David Brog declared on behalf of the Christian representatives that: “we stressed that we and our membership do not want the [White House] administration to pressure Israel into making territorial concessions at this juncture”.<sup>549</sup> He stated that CUFI would monitor the process of the negotiation closely.<sup>550</sup> In addition, Jan Markell, one of CUFI’s directors believes that the Annapolis Conference “should be viewed as one more instalment payment in the sell-out of Israel and of American interests in the Middle East” and claims the conference was a “diplomatic lynching” of Israel.<sup>551</sup> CUFI also showed its negative reaction to the Annapolis Summit 2007. According to CUFI, the summit, convened by George W. Bush to work toward a peace agreement between Israeli and Palestinian authorities by negotiating a two-state solution, was seen as a “forum to coerce Israel to accept certain conditions.”<sup>552</sup> John Hagee wrote on his church’s website that:

At this point in America’s history, we are plainly rejecting the Word of God because, according to Joel 3, we are helping to divide the land of Israel. We, through billions in foreign aid, are pressuring Israel to abandon the covenant land that God has given to the Jewish people forever.

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<sup>547</sup> Shmuel Rosner, Jewish, Christian Leaders to U.S.: No Compromise on Jerusalem (Haaretz.Com, 27 November 2007 [cited 5 March 2008]); available from <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/928323.html>

<sup>548</sup> CUFI Goes to the White House (3 December 2007 [cited 6 March 2008]); available from [http://www.cufi.convio.net/site/PageServer?pagename=about\\_brog\\_blog](http://www.cufi.convio.net/site/PageServer?pagename=about_brog_blog)

<sup>549</sup> Christian Right Urges No Concessions at Annapolis (JewsOnFirst.org, 11 December 2007 [cited 5 March 2008]); available from [http://www.jewsonfirst.org/christian\\_zionists.php#annapolis](http://www.jewsonfirst.org/christian_zionists.php#annapolis)

<sup>550</sup> CUFI Goes to the White House (3 December 2007 [cited 6 March 2008]); available from [http://www.cufi.convio.net/site/PageServer?pagename=about\\_brog\\_blog](http://www.cufi.convio.net/site/PageServer?pagename=about_brog_blog)

<sup>551</sup> Jan Markell, The Lynching Date is Set (ChristianWorldviewNetwork.com, 13 November 2007 [cited 7 March 2008]); available from [http://www.christianworldviewnetwork.com/article.php/2714/Jan\\_Markell](http://www.christianworldviewnetwork.com/article.php/2714/Jan_Markell)

<sup>552</sup> Kristen Scharold, Low Expectations Follow Annapolis Summit (Christianity Today, 2007 [cited 2 April 2008]); available from <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/novemberweb-only/148-52.0.html>

America is in the valley of decision and we are making the wrong decision.<sup>553</sup>

However, it is worth noting that the support for Israel among evangelicals is not monolithic. There have been strong critics from evangelicals towards Israel in relation to Israel's aggressive policy towards Palestine, in particular on the occupation of Palestinian land for Jewish settlements. Some segments of evangelicals have openly expressed their support for the right of the Palestinians to have their own land through a two-state solution proposed by the US administration. The next section highlights these matters and discusses their development.

## **5.2 The Evangelicals' Support for a Two-State Solution**

Many church leaders of mainstream Christian denominations, including evangelical leaders, are receptive to a peaceful settlement of the Israel–Palestine conflict. In June 2001, sixteen Bishops and representatives of the Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox churches met Colin Powell to hand over a letter that expressed their concern and discuss the US foreign policy in the Middle East. In the meeting, the group stressed the importance of the peacemaking process between Israel and Palestine and described the conflict as “a cancer that threatens the health of the whole region, U.S. relations with Arab and Muslim countries, and inter-faith relations worldwide”. The group gave a more balanced viewpoint to resolve the issue and argued that the independence of the State of Palestine is as important as the security of Israel. They also criticized the Israelis and claimed that “Israel’s practice of assassination and economic strangulation of the fledging Palestinian state is counterproductive to either security or peace.” In addition, they criticized the US policy, especially the supply of high-tech weapons for Israel in the conflict. They

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<sup>553</sup> Ibid.(cited)



recommended that the Bush administration apply “considerable diplomatic pressure and possibly economic pressure” in order to end the conflict.<sup>554</sup>

On 2 July 2002, another group consisting of forty evangelical leaders sent a letter to President Bush acknowledging the importance of the creation of a legitimate Palestinian state. Among others, the letter clarified that the evangelical community differs on the issue of US policy towards Israel. They argued that “significant numbers of Americans evangelicals reject the way some have distorted biblical passages as their rationale for uncritical support for every policy and action of the Israeli government instead of judging all actions – of both Israelis and Palestinians – on the basis of Biblical standard of justice.” In addition, the letter also urges the president to “employ even-handed policy toward Israel–Palestinian leadership” in order to amicably resolve the Israel–Palestine conflicts. Finally, the group also condemned the unlawful Israeli occupation of the land belonging to the Palestinians that they described as “theft”. In addition, they criticized the continued Israeli military occupation, which they claimed as “the major causes of the strife that has resulted in terrorism.”<sup>555</sup>

In July 2007, thirty-four prominent evangelical leaders published their letter to President George W. Bush in *The New York Times* to show their support to Bush’s two-state solution for the Israel–Palestine conflicts. It states that: “the U.S. must provide robust leadership within the Quartet to reconstitute the Middle East roadmap, whose implementation would guarantee the security of the State of Israel and the viability of a Palestinian State.” The letter was meant to rectify the common misperception that all evangelicals are opposed to a two-state solution and creation of Palestinian state. Although the letter acknowledged that the evangelicals embrace the belief of the biblical promise of the land to Israel and accepted the literal interpretation of the verse “I will bless those who bless you”, they argue that this does not stop them from criticizing Israel and it does not render their support

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<sup>554</sup> Fred Strickert, “Church Leaders Discuss Middle East Peace with Secretary of State Colin Powell,” *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, August/September 2001

<sup>555</sup> Letter to President Bush from 40 Evangelical Christian Leaders Concerned with Peace and Justice in the Holy Land (2002 [cited 4 November 2009]); available from [http://www.alhewar.org/INTIFADAH%20Page/evangelicals\\_letter\\_to\\_president\\_bush.htm](http://www.alhewar.org/INTIFADAH%20Page/evangelicals_letter_to_president_bush.htm)

blindly on any actions that are deemed as promoting violence and injustice to the Palestinian people.<sup>556</sup> However, John Hagee denounced the letter which endorsed the creation of Palestinian state when he argued that: “the authors of this letter do not represent the views of the vast majority of Bible-believing mainstream evangelicals in America.”<sup>557</sup>

Amid the Annapolis Conference in November 2007, another letter entitled “Evangelical Statement on Israel/Palestine”, signed by eighty evangelical leaders was sent to President Bush to show their support for a two-state solution. The letter argued that the conflicts between Israel and Palestine would pose a danger to America’s national security. To them, Muslims globally viewed America as a strong supporter of Israel and of the suppression of the right of Palestinians to have their own state. As a result, it had contributed to a strong anti-American sentiment which could lead to the proliferation of terrorist activities among extremist Muslims.<sup>558</sup>

In December 2008, leaders of evangelical churches, including mainline Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox churches, signed and sent another letter to President-Elect Barack Obama. The letter once again emphasized the importance of a two-state resolution and encouraged Obama’s administration to make further commitment to ensure the successful resolution of the Israel–Palestine conflicts. The letter urged Obama “to provide sustained, high level diplomatic leadership toward the clear goal of a final status agreement.”<sup>559</sup> During the Israel–Gaza war in January 2009, Rev Dr Geoff Tunnicliffe, an international director of the World Evangelical Alliance, the largest evangelical body in the world representing 400 million evangelicals worldwide, released a statement calling for an immediate ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. In his statement he contended that: “The God who is near wants to bless the Jewish people but not at the expense of the Arab people and He wants to bless

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<sup>556</sup> "Letter to President Bush From Evangelical Leaders," *The New York Times*, 29 July 2007.

<sup>557</sup> Bill Berkowitz, US Evangelicals at Odd on Embracing Israel (The OtherNews.Com, 2007 [cited 10 November 2009]); available from <http://www.theothernews.com/article.asp?dept=1&category=137&article=1503>

<sup>558</sup> See the letter in David Neff, "Evangelical Leaders Reiterate Call for Two-State Solution for Israel and Palestine," *Christianity Today*, November 2007

<sup>559</sup> See the letter Christian Call for Holy Land Peace Priority: Sign Letter to President-Elect Obama (Global Ministries of the Christian Church, 2008 [cited 10 November 2009]); available from <http://globalministries.org/news/mee/christians-call-fo-holy-land.html>

the Arab people but not at the expense of the Jewish people.”<sup>560</sup> He, however, avoided blaming either side for the outbreak of the war but urged the international community to continue efforts to end the conflict as soon as possible. In addition, he acknowledged the need for a resolution of the conflict by a two-state solution. He urged the parties concerned to agree to “a permanent peace with justice and a two-state solution” and said “we dare to dream together of a Middle East where Jews and Arabs are able to enjoy life side by side in peace.”<sup>561</sup>

Finally, in January 2009, a group of forty-four bishops representing the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) visited the West Bank and, according to Rev. Mark S. Hanson, ECLA presiding bishop and president of the Lutheran World Federation, the devastating impact of the Israel’s attacks on Gaza were “disturbing” and he personally declared that the war in Gaza failed to meet the Christian “just war” principles. He commented that the Israeli response to Hamas’ rocket attacks was disproportionate and called for an immediate withdrawal of Israeli soldiers from Gaza.<sup>562</sup> In response to the Israeli aggression in Gaza, ECLA contributed \$50,000 in assistance for the provision of food and medical care in Gaza.<sup>563</sup>

### **5.3 The Christian Right’s Perspective on Islam and the War on Terror**

While American public opinion consistently favoured Israel, their view towards Islam is different. A general survey of American attitudes towards Islam jointly conducted by *The Washington Post* and ABC News in 2006 showed that 46% of respondents were unfavourable towards Islam compared to 43% who were favourable. The survey also found

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<sup>560</sup> Quoted Michelle A Vu, "Evangelical Leader Takes No Side on Gaza Conflict," *Christian Today*, 13 January 2009.

<sup>561</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*

<sup>562</sup> Ben McDonald Colvet, ECLA Presiding Bishops Addresses Gaza Situation at Amman News Conference (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2009 [cited 6 October 2009]); available from <http://blogs.ecla.org/09cobacedemy/tag/violence-in-gaza/>

<sup>563</sup> Ben McDonald Colvet, Lutherans Provide Funds to Support Humanitarian Aid in Gaza (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2009 [cited 6 October 2009]); available from <http://blogs.elca.org/09cobacedemy/tag/violence-in-gaza/>

that 58% of respondents believed there were more extremists within Islam compared to other religions.<sup>564</sup> Similarly, in a 2008 Gallup Press publication titled *Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think* suggested that most Americans viewed Islam as fanatical, anti-Semitic, anti-Christianity and opposed to the existence of the State of Israel.<sup>565</sup> A Diversity Survey in 2003 found that 47% of the respondents associated the word “fanatical” with Islam and 40% agreed that the word “violent” could describe the religion. In March 2006, a Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) poll revealed that around 23–27% of Americans consistently believe stereotypes such as “Muslims value life less than other people”, and “the Muslim religion teaches violence and hatred”. In contrast, the survey found only 6% of Americans has a positive first impression of Islam and Muslims. The negative perceptions towards Islam and Muslims are more apparent among the evangelical groups. In a survey conducted by Ethic and Public Policy in 2003, 77% of evangelical leaders had an overall unfavourable view of Islam and 70% of them viewed Islam as “a religion of violence”.

According to Louay M. Safi of the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), the largest Islamic society in the US, the Christian Right took advantage of the 9/11 attacks by demonizing Islam and trying to link the War on Terror with that religion. Although that attempt did not have a big impact on American society as whole, he believed it did contribute to enlarge the negative perceptions among the Christian Right and its supporters towards Islam and Muslims.<sup>566</sup> Moreover, he asserted that the 9/11 attacks and the War on Terror gave the Christian Right a new momentum for its campaign against Islam and Muslims.<sup>567</sup> As a matter of fact, post-9/11, the Islam/Muslim bashing and negative images were more visible in the speeches of the leaders of the Christian Right. Most of them perceived Islam and Muslims largely through the lens of deep prejudices and hostility. As

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<sup>564</sup> Washington Post-ABC News, March 2-5, 2006, American Attitudes Toward Islam (2009 [cited 14 October 2009]); available from <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/US-Israel/poislam.html>

<sup>565</sup> Cited in Judith Mendelson, "What do Muslims Really Think About Israel?," *The Review of Faith and International Affairs* 6 (Winter 2008)

<sup>566</sup> Louay M. Safi, interview with author, 14 May 2009, Washington D.C.

<sup>567</sup> Louay M. Safi, Will the Far Right Succeed? Turning the War on Terror into a War on Islam (Insight, 2005 [cited 23 December 2009]); available from <http://louaysafi.blogspot.com/2005-12-01-archie.html>

argued by Susan Sachs in *The New York Times*, “Open scorn for Islam has become a staple ingredient in the speeches of conservative Christian leaders since the September 11 attacks.”<sup>568</sup> There is evidence to support this argument. Franklin Graham alleged Islam is not a peaceful religion, but as “a very evil and wicked religion”. Jerry Falwell criticized Islam by accusing the Prophet Muhammad, the founder of Islam, of being a “terrorist, violent man, a man of war”. In 2001, he claimed that all this while, the US was not attacking Islam but Islam had attacked the Americans. In 2002, the Muslims found his statement offensive when he stated the Quran “teaches violence. It doesn’t teach peace, it teaches violence”. Likewise, Pat Robertson demonized Islam when he called Prophet Muhammad “an absolute wild-eyed fanatic. He was a robber and a brigand”. His assault on Islam continued and, during his talks over his Christian Broadcasting Network, he described Muslims as “worse than Nazis”. Another prominent Christian Right figure, John Ashcroft, who served as Bush’s Attorney General, continuously associated Islam with the War on Terror. In February 2002, he spoke before the National Religious Broadcasters (NRB), an evangelical association, and expressed his views on the War on Terror in very religious terms. He said:

Our fight against terrorism ... is a defend of our freedom in the most profound sense: It is the defense of our right to make a moral choice – to seek fellowship with God ... It is a conflict between those who believe that God grants us choice and those who seek to impose their choices on us. It is a conflict between inspiration and imposition, the way of peace and the way of destruction and chaos. It is a conflict between good and evil. And, as President Bush reminded us, we know that God is not neutral between the two.<sup>569</sup>

Although in that speech there was no mentioned of the words “Islam” or “Christianity”, his statement was perceived as referring to Islam as promoting terrorism. In addition, he generalized the conflict between the United States and terrorist groups as a conflict

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<sup>568</sup> Susan Sachs, "Baptist Pastor Attacks Islam, Inciting Cries of Intolerance," *New York Times*, 15 June 2002.

<sup>569</sup> John Ashcroft, Freedom: An Endowment from God (National Religious Broadcasters Convention, 2002 [cited 29 November 2009]); available from <http://www.usdoj.gov.ag/speeches/2002/021902religiousbroadcasters.htm>

between Christianity and Islam. His hostile view towards Islam was obvious when he was interviewed by Cal Thomas in a radio interview which took place in November 2001. He commented that: "Islam is a religion in which God requires you to send your son to die for him. Christianity is a faith in which God sends his son to die for you."<sup>570</sup>

Franklin Graham, son of well known influential evangelist Billy Graham, was also in the list of Christian Right leaders who made notorious remarks about Islam. In October 2001, he said: "We're not attacking Islam, but Islam has attacked us ... The God of Islam is not the same God ... It's a different God, and I believe it is a very evil and wicked religion."<sup>571</sup> Another prominent Christian Right leader who consistently displayed his negative sentiments towards Islam and Muslims is John Hagee, the founder of CUFI. In a 2006 interview with the National Public Radio, John Hagee was asked about his perception of Islam in general. Despite his effort to distinguish between Islam and radical Islam, John Hagee made an observation associating violence with Islam at large. The transcript below supports such a contention:

Terry Gross: If you use the Bible as the basis for policy, is there any room for compromise? And if you use the Bible as the basis for policy, should Muslims use the Quran as the basis for their policy, and then again, what possible basis is there for compromise at that point?

John Hagee: There is really no room for compromise between radical Islam

Terry Gross: I'm not talking about radical Islam. I'm just talking about Islam in general.

John Hagee: Well Islam in general, those who live by the Quran have a scriptural mandate to kill Christians and Jews.<sup>572</sup>

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<sup>570</sup> Shanon Jones, US Attorney General Invokes God in "War on Terror" (World Socialist Web Site, 2002 [cited 20 November 2009]); available from <http://www.wsws.org/articles/2002/may2002/ashc-m15.shtml>

<sup>571</sup> Quoted in Dennis R. Hoover, "Is Evangelicalism Itching for a Civilization Fight: A Media Study," *The Brandywine Review of Faith and International Affairs* 2 (2004), p. 1

<sup>572</sup> Quoted in Ali Gharib, Going Undercover at mad Pastor Hagee's Christian United for Israel Summit (Alternet, 2008 [cited 25 October 2009]); available from <http://www.alternet.org/story/92860>

Furthermore, in his book *In Defense of Israel* John Hagee depicts Islam as a “violent religion”. His condemnation of the Muslims’ God is obvious when he says that “The Quran teaches that Allah works with Satan and demons to lead people astray in order to populate the world he created.”<sup>573</sup> In addition, he claims that the Quran “not only condones violence; it commands it.” He further argues that Muhammad, the holy prophet of Islam, encouraged his followers to spread Islam by using swords in their Jihad and accuses him of being a man who “slaughtered thousands of people in establishing and spreading Islam”.<sup>574</sup> According to him, all Muslims who are practicing the teachings of the Quran and Muhammad are radical Muslims and because of that they pose a security threat to the world at large. By using such false arguments, he claims that there are around 300 million radical Muslims around the world, something which he could never substantiate. He even argues that 300 million fanatical Muslims are ready to kill Christians and Jews because of their strict adherence to the Quran and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad.<sup>575</sup> Similarly, in his book *Jerusalem Countdown* he demonizes Islam as a religion of war and violence. He wrote: “If America loses this war with radical Islam – if we allow Iran to get and use nuclear weapons – the law of Sharia, the Islamic law, will rule America and the Western World. Christian churches and synagogues will be burned to the ground. Every Christian who refuses to denounce Jesus Christ to accept Allah will be decapitated.”<sup>576</sup>

Among Christian Right advocates, CUFI is the most hostile towards Islam. According to Rabbi Haim Beliak, CUFI’s prejudices and hatred towards Islam emerged from its theological beliefs that are dominantly influenced by dispensationalists. He argued that, because of their messianic beliefs, CUFI has been harshly critical of Islam and persistently works very hard to stop peace resolutions for the Middle East conflicts.<sup>577</sup> In all of its annual conferences, one of the themes of discussion has always been about the threat posed by Islam to global security. Though the conferences’ theme is always on the US–Israel

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<sup>573</sup> John Hagee, *In Defense of Israel* (Florida, 2007), p. 62

<sup>574</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65

<sup>575</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68-69

<sup>576</sup> John Hagee, *Jerusalem Countdown* (Lake Mary FL, 2007)

<sup>577</sup> Rabbi Haim Beliak, interview with author, 7 May 2009, Washington D.C.

relationship, most of the sub-themes are about the threat posed by Islam and Muslims. At its 2007 conference, CUFI described Muslims as “Islamofascists” and “Islamist totalitarianism” and claimed that Islam poses a grave danger not only to Israel and the US but also to the world at large. This is more evident when considering that one of the participants in the conference claimed that the ongoing US struggle in its global war against terror is the “war on militant Islam”.<sup>578</sup> Interestingly, there was a special discussion on the current political situation in the Middle East called the “Middle East Intelligence Briefing” and this was delivered by James Woolsey, a former CIA director from February 1993 to January 1995. He was said to have been able to convince the audience of the significance of the War on Terror, especially against Islamic fanaticism, in order to safeguard the US–Israel special relationship, as well as promote the national security of the US and the American public.<sup>579</sup>

At the 2008 CUFI annual conference, Islam once again was targeted and viewed as a potential threat to Israel and American security. Islam and Muslims were characterized “as bent on the destruction of the United States and Israel.”<sup>580</sup> During a forum on *Radical Islam: In Their Own Words* hatred terms such as “Islamofacists”, “Islamofascists”, “jihadists”, “extremists” and “death-worshippers” were used to describe Islam and the Muslims. William Kristol, one of the panellists of the forum during the summit argued that: “We can win this war against jihadists who worship war, kill Israelis, and Americans.”<sup>581</sup> In the same forum, Rick Santorum,<sup>582</sup> who was listed by *Time* magazine in 2005 as one of the “25 Most Influential Evangelicals”, argued that radical Muslim ideology is not outside of mainstream Islam. He further claimed that these radical Muslims are not small in

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<sup>578</sup> Brian Wood, "The Second Annual CUFI Conference, July 2007: The Christian Zionist Coalition Hits Its Stride," *Journal of Palestine Studies* XXXVII (Autumn 2007), p. 84-85

<sup>579</sup> Sarah Posner, *God's Profits : Faith, Fraud, and the Republican Crusade for Values Voters* (Washington, DC, 2008), p. 102

<sup>580</sup> John Hagee's Christians United for Israel Conference Mixes End-Times Prophecies with Lobbying (Jews on First, 2008 [cited 10 November 2009]); available from [http://www.jewonfirst.org/08a/cufi\\_dc08.html](http://www.jewonfirst.org/08a/cufi_dc08.html)

<sup>581</sup> Dedrick Muhammad and Farrah Hassen, "Christian United for Israel and Attacking Iran," *Foreign Policy in Focus* (18 August, 2008) Available at <http://www.fpif.org/fpiftxt/5471>

<sup>582</sup> Rick Santorum was a former U.S. Senator from Pennsylvania from 1995 to 2007 and as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1991-1995.



number, but are a sizable group of people.<sup>583</sup> In the summit, the disparagement of Islam was also extended to include the condemnation of the Islamic economic system. Frank Gaffney, the former president Reagan official who was invited to the summit as a panellist openly opposed any effort to bring Shariah Islamic investment products into the banking system in the United States. He called the Shariah “sedition” to the American banking system and claimed its products will threaten the American capitalist system.<sup>584</sup>

The Christian Right has also been trying to persuade the new US administration to work with them in combating what they called the “Islamist terrorists”. In December 2008, Gary Bauer and twelve other Christian Right leaders sent a letter to the president-elect Obama claiming themselves to be representatives of the American conservative Christians seeking cooperation with the new US administration in defeating Islamic radicals. The letter said:

In a heartfelt spirit of cooperation, we are eager to work with you and your administration to identify, advocate, and implement an innovative and robust agenda designed to achieve a lasting victory over the violent Islamists committed to killing Americans on a mass scale ... It is imperative that Democrats and Republicans, liberal and conservative, join together, first, to recognize the threat and, second, to forge a national policy embraced by a broad coalition. We stand ready to work with you to advance a policy agenda designed to challenge radical Islam wherever it jeopardizes the interests of America and her allies.<sup>585</sup>

In an interview, former Senator Rick Santorum in May 2009, once described by *The New York Times Magazine* as the “country’s preeminent faith-based politician”,<sup>586</sup> argued that there is an ongoing war of ideas between Islam and the West. He suggested that the

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<sup>583</sup> Ali Gharib, Going Undercover at mad Pastor Hagee's Christian United for Israel Summit (Alternet, 2008 [cited 25 October 2009]); available from <http://www.alternet.org/story/92860>

<sup>584</sup> John Hagee's Christians United for Israel Conference Mixes End-Times Prophecies with Lobbying (Jews on First, 2008 [cited 10 November 2009]); available from [http://www.jewonfirst.org/08a/cufi\\_dc08.html](http://www.jewonfirst.org/08a/cufi_dc08.html)

<sup>585</sup> In Kyle, When Did Religious Right Leaders Become Experts on Terrorism? (Right Wing Watch, 2008 [cited 22 September 2009]); available from <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/when-did-religious-right-become-experts-on-terrorism>

<sup>586</sup> Michael Sokolove, "The Believer," *The New York Times*, 22 May 2005 Available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/22/magazines/22SANTORUM.html>

“ideas”, such as jihad, are rooted in Islamic theological belief and he asserted that such theological belief is underpinning the present threat to Western civilization. He also claimed Muslims who subscribed to such idea can be categorized as “Islamofascists”. In one of his writings, Santorum claimed that “Every major Islamic Fascist leader has openly identified the United States as their prime target, and repeatedly promises the creation of a new, global, ‘caliphate’ where Islamic fascism will rule mankind. This, now, is the great threat of our generation.”<sup>587</sup> In addition, he argues that the threats from Islamic-fascists are rooted in their interpretation of the faith and are religiously motivated and suggests that Islam should reform its theology, especially on Shariah Law, jihad, religious freedom and blasphemy laws in order to find its relevance to the present modern world. In this regards he claims that Islamic theology and religious views are very restricted, narrow and traditional. He said that:

I think there is recognition that you [Muslims] have a faith which is locked in 7<sup>th</sup> century mentality which failed to conform to modernity. Unlike the Jews and Christianity, which went through the process of modernization in law and traditions, Islam has never been through that process, for example modernization of religion, and to embrace to modernity.<sup>588</sup>

Moreover, he claims that if the Muslims do not transform, or if they resist transforming, it will be very difficult for the US and the Western world to engage with Islam. He said:

From my perspective, either we [Americans] are going to accept Islam is unreformable [religion], as what Osama says it is, in that case, we are at collision with Islam until one side wins or dominates the other. Or we’ll have a peaceful co-existence and it can be very difficult for us and Muslim world if the Muslim world feels and still thinks the key objective of their religion is to bring jihad to the rest of the world. So, it should be some sort of transformation within the Islamic world, in its theological aspect such as in Shariah law, jihad, apostasy, and blasphemy law.<sup>589</sup>

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<sup>587</sup> Rick Santorum (Right Web, 21 February 2007 [cited 20 October 2009])

<sup>588</sup> Rick Santorum, interview with author, 12 May 2009, Washington D.C.

<sup>589</sup> Ibid.

To him, if these changes take place, he believes the present perception of the Western world towards Islam will change. However, he warned that, if Islam resists changing, then the West will view Islam as a religion that could pose a threat to Western civilization. He states: “we in the west either can say, well, if we look at 1400 years of Islamic history, we see no hope in Islam. Islam is what it is, it’s opposed to modernity and cannot accommodate [modernity]. Or we can take [an] opinion that there is Islam [which] is capable of reformation.”<sup>590</sup> Rick Santorum, a conservative Catholic, admits that he works closely with the Christian Right on moral issues and national security. He believes, as a Catholic, he could understand more about Islam compared to other Christian denominations. He states: “I think certainly there is no church which has a longer history with Islam more than the Catholic Church. More than 1400 years, there were dialogues and great long history of fought against them and I think I have a good understanding of the threat that Islam has been historically and could be again.”<sup>591</sup>

Rick Santorum is also known as a staunch supporter of Israel. When he was first elected to the Senate in 1995, his first action was to support the United States Jerusalem Embassy Act<sup>592</sup> that proposed the relocation of the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Since then, he has consistently supported any bills that are deemed to protect Israel, such as the Syria Accountability Act, the Iran Freedom and Support Act and the Iran Nuclear Trade Prohibition Act.<sup>593</sup> He is currently a senior fellow at the Ethic and Public Policy Center (EPPC)<sup>594</sup> and directs EPPC’s Program to Protect America’s Freedom that was formerly known as “America’s Enemies Program”. In an EPPC press release in January 2007, Santorum said:

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<sup>590</sup> Ibid.

<sup>591</sup> Ibid.

<sup>592</sup> The United States Jerusalem Embassy Act was passed by Congress on October 1995. The bill states that “*Jerusalem should be recognized as the capital of the State of Israel*” and the US embassy should be relocated from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem no later than 31 May 1999. However, to date, the U.S administration still does not take any action to move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

<sup>593</sup> See Rick Santorum (Right Web, 21 February 2007 [cited 20 October 2009])

<sup>594</sup> Ethics and Public Policy Center (EPPC) is a neoconservative think tank that focuses on the role of religion and Judeo-Christian moral tradition in domestic and foreign policy issues. See EPPC website at <http://www.eppc.org/>

In these perilous and uncertain times, I believe it is critical that we define the threats that confront America. Without a clear definition and precise understanding of our enemies we cannot fight effectively and our own citizens become divided. It is my hope that the America's Enemies program at EPPC will help the American people, including our leaders, understand and communicate with clarity, honesty, and consistency the enemies we face and the complex and enormous threat that they pose to our lives and the freedoms we all enjoy.<sup>595</sup>

According to Santorum, who confirmed to me that he agrees with Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" paradigm,<sup>596</sup> one of the main objectives of the Program to Protect America's Freedom (PPAF) is to disseminate the truth about the threat of "Islamofacists" to America and argues that the War on Terror has a theological underpinning.<sup>597</sup> He also believes that the United States is a Christian nation and thus should adhere to religious principles in all aspects of policy, domestically and internationally. He argues: "Our foundation is Judeo-Christian belief. It should shape direction and underpinning US foreign policy and underpinning our whole understanding of who are we as a nation. We are a nation that has moral underpinning, justice, liberty, free will, all based on a Judeo-Christian understanding of human beings."<sup>598</sup> When asked if such a statement would create a cultural war with the Muslim world, he replied: "If the Islamic understanding is that human being is different from the Judeo-Christian understanding, sure it is!"<sup>599</sup>

In the PPAF website, Santorum states the mission of the organization as being "to identify, study, and heighten awareness of the threats to America and the West from a growing array of anti-Western forces and states that increasingly cast a shadow over our future and that violate religious liberty around the world." According to Santorum, the objective of the PPAF is to alert the United States that the nature and gravity of the threat that America is

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<sup>595</sup> Rick Santorum (Right Web, 21 February 2007 [cited 20 October 2009])

<sup>596</sup> Rick Santorum, interview with author, 12 May 2009, Washington D.C.

<sup>597</sup> Ibid.

<sup>598</sup> Ibid.

<sup>599</sup> Ibid.

facing now has some theological underpinning. By using this platform, Santorum propagates his ideas about the danger of traditional Islamic ideas and “Islamofascists” in various forums in the US. He explains that:

In this country, we have little understanding of Muslim faith and jihadist belief. So, I go around giving lectures particularly in colleges and universities about what is jihadist, Sunni, Shiah ... why they are threat to us, etc. So, the program is to tell the truth about America’s enemy, what the threats are and, finally, what we can do about it.<sup>600</sup>

Since the interview was conducted just a few months after Barack Obama was elected as the 44<sup>th</sup> US president, Santorum was asked about his personal opinion on Obama’s policy towards Islam and the War on Terror. He replied:

Obama rejects the concept [that] the problem has religious underpinnings. He is sympathetic to Islam. From his action, I think Islam, the Islamic jihadists, will use this as a way of conveying to the rest of Islamic world that the US is weak and this is an opportunity for them to make progress.<sup>601</sup>

This negative view towards Islam and Muslims can be found among other leading Christian Right advocacy organizations, such as Concerned Women for America (CWA). During an interview, its senior fellow, Dr Janice Crouse, who was a presidential speech writer for President G.H.W. Bush, revealed that her perception of Islam and Muslims was “sadness, that the radical element [in Islam] had almost prevailed. It [Muslims are] to be so destructive with their willingness to kill people who disagree with them and their unwillingness to respect other beliefs.”<sup>602</sup> According to Crouse, her prejudiced perceptions towards Islam and Muslims started after the events of 9/11. Since then, she has believed that Islam has become a threat to United States security. Crouse also viewed radicalism in

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<sup>600</sup> Ibid.

<sup>601</sup> Ibid.

<sup>602</sup> Janice Shaw Crouse, interview with author, 15 May 2009, Washington, D.C.

Islam as a threat to American security. When question about whether she thinks Islam is a threat to peace and security, she replied: “Yes, I do. I see radical Islam is very definite threat ... and the fact that they [radical Islamists] want to destroy everybody who disagrees with them.”<sup>603</sup> She, however, still believed that there are moderate Muslims, but they are marginalized because of their concerns about their personal security due to the possible threats posed by the radical Muslims. She said “Very sad to me, the moderate Muslims had not been willing to speak out. I recognize why they haven’t, because it would be very dangerous for them to do that, they may be killed.”<sup>604</sup> In addition, Crouse contended that, as a conservative Christian, she fundamentally disagrees with Muslim beliefs; Muslims, according to her, are worshipping “Muhammadists” and she views religious beliefs and values brought by Muhammad to be different to the teachings of Jesus Christ. She believes, because of this, that it is difficult for Christians to accept Islam as it teaches values that are destructive to people. She said: “I’ve a difficult time accepting faith that is in the public square as a spearhead in a way that is destructive for the people.”<sup>605</sup>

In contrast to other Christian Right leaders that viewed Islam and the Muslims in very negative ways, William L. Saunders of the Family Research Council emphasizes that Christianity does not have any problem with Islam and he did not see Islam as a threat. He also argues that his organization is able to work together with conservative Muslim organizations on family and social conservative issues at the United Nations.<sup>606</sup> In addition, American evangelicals are actually more diverse in their opinions and stands towards Islam and Muslims. In fact, according to Heather Gonzales, association director of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), the hatred and hostility view of the Christian Right leaders and some other evangelical leaders were not truly the opinions of all evangelicals and, most importantly, did not represented the NAE stance on Islam. She argued that, although negative perceptions and statements on Islam are common among the Christian Right, NAE does not have anything to do with those statements. In contrast, she said: “We

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<sup>603</sup> Ibid.

<sup>604</sup> Ibid.

<sup>605</sup> Ibid.

<sup>606</sup> William L. Saunders, interview with author, 27 April 2009, Washington D.C.

[NAE] generally avoid any kind of statement condemning Islam and we don't agree with any evangelical who is bashing Islam."<sup>607</sup> Nonetheless, she agreed that there is a general perception among evangelicals that "Islam" and "terror" are causally linked and the perception was intensified after the 9/11 attacks. In addition, she believes that the emergence of the negative perception of Islam was also due to the usage of the term "Islamic terrorism" which became commonplace in the discussion of the American War on Terror in the public sphere. However, Gonzales contends that NAE as an organization does not subscribe to that perception. She argues that: "Specifically, we [NAE] don't have any specific position on the War on Terror and we don't address any act of terror linked with Islam ... We work together with Muslims, especially on conservative value issues".<sup>608</sup>

Salam al-Marayati, the President of the Muslim Public Action Committee (MPAC) also has a similar view to NAE concerning the issue of general evangelical perceptions of Islam and Muslims. In my interview with him, Salam al-Marayati suggested that people, especially Muslims, should not try to generalize that all evangelicals are "Islamophobic" and hostile towards Islam. He argued that, in the latest development, there are many evangelical organizations have good relationships with Muslims and are keen to promote serious engagements and dialogues with Muslims not only in the US but at an international level too. However, he agreed that there are problematic evangelicals, especially among the Christian Right leaders who are trying to impose their religious beliefs and doctrines on American society.<sup>609</sup> Likewise, Suhail Khan, a senior Fellow for Christian-Muslim understanding at the Institute for Global Engagement (IGE),<sup>610</sup> argues that the Christian Right's general perception towards Islam and Muslim is contradicting with the true understanding of mainstream evangelicals. Khan, the only Muslim official at IGE, suggests that IGE always maintain that Islam is, but a peaceful religion and an unequivocally

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<sup>607</sup> Heather H. Gonzales, interview with author, 14 May 2009, Washington D.C.

<sup>608</sup> Ibid.

<sup>609</sup> Salam Al-Marayati, interview with author, 1 May 2009, Washington D.C.

<sup>610</sup> Institute of Global Engagement (IGE) is an evangelical think tank organization founded by Bon Seiple, the first US Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom (1998-2000) in 2000. IGE aims to promote sustainable environments for religious freedom worldwide. See (Institute for Global Engagement, [cited 2009]); available from <http://www.globalengagement.org>

important dialogue partner. Based on that reason, the organization vehemently promotes substantial engagement between Christian organizations with Muslims for a better mutual recognition, cohesion goal and meaningful relationship.<sup>611</sup>

#### **5.4 George W. Bush and His Administration's Views on Islam**

Louay M. Safi believes Bush and his administration tried to avoid stereotyping and associating the acts of some radical Muslims with the teachings of Islam.<sup>612</sup> As a matter of fact, Bush himself emphasized on many occasions that America's War on Terror was not a war waged against Islam and tried to distinguish between the religion of Islam, moderate Muslims and the actions of Muslim terrorists. In addition, Bush officially refuted the hostile and disparaging remarks of the Christian Right leaders. He said: "Some of the comments that have been uttered about Islam do not reflect the sentiments of my government. Islam is a peaceful religion, a religion that respects others. Ours is a country of tolerance, and we respect the faith and we welcome people of all faiths in America."<sup>613</sup> In his interview with al-Arabiya Broadcasting Network in 2003, Bush once again conveyed his belief that Islam was a peaceful religion. He said: "Well. First of all, I believe in an Almighty God, and I believe that all the world, whether they be Muslim, Christian or any other religion, prays to the same God. That's what I believe. I believe that Islam is a great religion that preaches peace. And I believe people who murder the innocent to achieve political objectives aren't religious people"<sup>614</sup> In fact, in his 2001 Inaugural Speech, Bush mentioned the word "mosque" – the Muslim place for prayer – together with church and synagogue as honoured places that could contribute to a positive development of American society. He said: "and some needs and hurts are so deep they will only respond to a mentor's touch or a pastor's prayer. Church and charity, synagogue and mosque lend our

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<sup>611</sup> Suhail Khan, interview with author, 14 April 2009, Washington, DC.

<sup>612</sup> Louay M. Safi, interview with author, 14 May 2009, Washington D.C.

<sup>613</sup> Chuck Baldwin, Bush V. Christian Right on Islam (Covenant News, 2002 [cited 17 October 2009]); available from <http://www.covenantnews.com/baldwin021119.html>

<sup>614</sup> Bush: All Religions Pray to 'Same God' (World Net Daily, 2007 [cited 10 October 2009]); available from [http://www.mnd.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE\\_ID=58026](http://www.mnd.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=58026)



communities their humanity, and they will have an honoured place in our plans and in our laws.”<sup>615</sup>

Pat Robertson was one of the Christian Right leaders who expressed his disagreement with Bush’s statement on Islam as a religion of peace. In a CNN interview in February 2002, he said: “I have taken issue with our esteemed president in regard to a stand in saying Islam is a peaceful religion. It is just not, and the Qur’an makes it very clear if you see an infidel, you are to kill him ... Islam is not a peaceful religion that wants to coexist. They want to coexist until they can control, dominate, and then if need be destroy.”<sup>616</sup> Colin Powell, the then Secretary of State (2001–2005), was also opposed to the Christian Right’s prejudice and hatred statements about Islam. In response to Pat Robertson comments on his Christian Broadcasting Network that “what Muslims want to do to the Jews is worse than Holocaust”, Powell said: “This kind of hatred must be rejected.”<sup>617</sup> In addition, Saunders of the FRC gave a positive comment, saying that George W. Bush and his administration were “very friendly and open minded to Islam.”<sup>618</sup>

## 5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated how the Christian Right movement extended its support for Israel beyond their theological beliefs and have incorporated the issue of ensuring American and Israeli security as an integral part of their agenda in support of Israel. They not only justified their support as being founded solely on their religious beliefs on the rights of the Jews over Palestinian land, but they have gone a step further in consolidating their support based on the notion of Israeli and American national interests at large. Moreover, the Christian Right not only presented the recent declaration of war on terrorism as a conflict between Judeo-Christianity and Islam, but also from the perspective of

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<sup>615</sup> George W. Bush, 2001 Inaugural Speech (<http://www.state.gov/>, 2001 [cited 10 April 2008])

<sup>616</sup> Dennis R. Hoover, "Is Evangelicalism Itching for a Civilization Fight: A Media Study," *The Brandywine Review of Faith and International Affairs* 2 (2004), p. 11

<sup>617</sup> Oliver Burkeman, "Powell Attacks Christian Right," *The Guardian*, 15 November 2002. Available from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2003/nov/15/iraq.usa1>

<sup>618</sup> William L. Saunders, interview with author, 27 April 2009, Washington D.C.

American national security Islam is portrayed as a threat posed by radical elements of Islam against American and Israeli interests. It has gone to the extent of providing legitimacy to the so-called “clash of civilizations” between Judeo-Christianity and Islam when the actual conflict is very much the conflict over Islamic radicalism and not a conflict between religions. The chapter further contended that the Christian Right has not been able to fully influence the outcome of American foreign policy over the Israeli–Palestinian conflicts and the Bush administration’s decision to promote a two-state solution as a permanent solution to the conflict is contrary to what the Christian Right was hoping for. The US was indeed trying to resolve the Israeli–Palestinian conflict amicably so that both parties could discuss peace in way that does not jeopardize American national interests. The Bush administration was also extremely cautious in their reaction over the crisis in the Middle East and the war on terrorism so as not to offend Muslims at large. While there was a concerted effort by the Christian Right movement to portray Islam as a religion that promotes violence and radicalism, the Bush administration took a moderate stand of distancing itself from such effort. The Bush administration was very constructive over their response towards Islam by stressing that it is not Islam that is at fault but the radical segment of the Muslim community that had brought the religion into disrepute. In fact, George W. Bush himself made great efforts to draw distinctions between the true Muslim believers and the Muslim terrorists. Lastly this chapter has illustrated that there is a division among the evangelicals over the issue of unequivocal support towards Israel and the efforts of a certain segment of the evangelicals to bring disrepute to Islam and the Muslims. A larger segment of the evangelical movement believes that the two-state solutions to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict is a viable solution and should be supported in the interest of a permanent peaceful solution over the conflict in the Middle East. Similarly, the mainstream evangelicals viewed the campaign to discredit Islam and the Muslims as detrimental to the effort to promote the idea of peaceful coexistence between major religions in the world, especially among the followers of Islam, Christianity and Judaism.

## **CHAPTER 6**

# **THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT AND INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM**

### **6.0 Introduction**

Although the Christian Right has shown interest in international issues such as the Israeli state and anti-Communism during the Cold War, its interests and activism regarding other international issues have not been widely discussed. Recent developments show that the movement has also given its attention to some pertinent international issues and one of great concern to the Christian Right is international human rights, particularly international religious freedom. In fact, the Christian Right's concern with global religious freedom is one of the main factors contributing to a development of the movement's interest in foreign affairs. Therefore, in the last decade, we have witnessed a constellation of interests of the Christian Right on the issue of global religious freedom.

This phenomenon needs to be studied academically in order to understand the dynamism of the movement as well as the possibility of any impact caused by them to international relations in general or to American foreign policy in particular. There are arguments contending that the Christian Right played an important role in the international religious freedom movement. It contributed significantly to the existence of the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) in 1998. This chapter examines the role of the Christian Right in advancing international religious freedom from a historical perspective. The discussion attempts to highlight three important issues. Firstly, the role of the Christian Right before and after IRFA was passed by Congress. Secondly, the role of the State Department, as the establishment that is mandated to initiate and implement IRFA through US foreign policy. I examine the efforts and contribution of the Christian Right in highlighting international religious persecution issues to the US administration. Finally, the

chapter seeks to study to what extent the Christian Right has been able to influence US foreign policy. Towards the end of the chapter, I argue that, despite the Christian Right contributing significantly in advancing international religious freedom issue; it has little influence in the process of implementation of US foreign policy.

## **6.1 Conservative Christians and Global Religious Persecution: A Historical Perspective**

### **6.1.1 Conservative Christians and Persecution of Jews**

The Jewish persecution by Nazis during Hitler's reign in Germany was the earliest historical event that triggered the awareness of conservative Christians, especially evangelicals, about the international religious freedom issue. It was reported that, from 1936 to 1938, many conservative Christian periodicals, magazines and newspapers played important roles in disseminating news of what was happening to the Jews in Europe. For example, *Our Hope*, a dispensationalist magazine, gathered news of anti-Semitism and reported the persecution of the Jews in Europe in its "Current Events in the Light of the Bible" section. Arno C. Gaebelein, the editor of the magazine, repeatedly documented the increase and spread of the persecution. In addition, he wrote about Christians' responsibility as he believed no Christian who knew his Bible could hate the Jews the way the Nazis did. He reminded Christians of the compassion that Jesus had for the Jewish multitudes. He wrote: "As Christians we are moved with the same compassion, we pray for them and know the day will come when the Lord will deal with the nations for the cruel treatment of the Jews."<sup>619</sup> The extensive news on the issue gradually triggered the grassroots of evangelicals and dispensationalists to become more sympathetic towards the fate of the Jews. Another magazine, *The Watchmen-Examiner*, focused on the issue of Jewish persecution in Europe and emphasised the need for Christians to take part in saving

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<sup>619</sup> A.C. Gaeblain, "Another Haman Speaks," *Our Hope*, November 1938. Cited in James A Saddington, "Prophecy and Politics: A History of Christian Zionism in the Anglo-American Experience, 1800-1948" (Bowling Green State University, 1996), p.332

the Jews. In 1938 the magazine specifically highlighted the *Kristallnacht* event and publicly condemned the atrocities committed by Nazis against the Jews.<sup>620</sup>

Conservative Christian organizations that were doing missionary activities in Europe were also becoming a source of direct information about the persecution of Jews. They not only spread the news of the persecution to their churches, but also published articles on the issue in their magazines and local newsletters. Moreover, they appealed for funds to assist the relocation of Jews and Jewish converts to Christianity in almost all conservative Christian periodicals and magazines. In early 1939, *Moody Monthly*, an evangelical magazine, published an article written by Joseph Britan that described thoroughly the anti-Semite situation in Europe including the horror of Jewish persecutions. The article stated that more than six million Jews and not less than one million Jewish Christians were in danger of losing their lives and freedoms. He encouraged the American Christians to do something and appealed: "God is calling his people to show forth mercy, sympathy, love and substantial help to the Jews and the Jewish Christians of Central Europe. Under no circumstances would we differentiate between races or religions in an appeal for help. All belong to the great suffering human family."<sup>621</sup>

Sympathy towards the Jews during the time of Hitler and the Nazis also came from liberal Christian groups. Their sympathy mostly derived from humanitarian concerns for the unjust treatment of the Jews by the Nazis. Consequently, in 1936, liberal Christians established the Pro-Palestine Federation and held its first conference that proposed the relocation of European Jews to Palestine as they believed that was the only option to save the Jews from Nazi persecution. In one of the federation periodicals, its editor states that: "If Christian people in these countries [European Countries] are unable to stop these horrors [Jews persecutions]... civilized communities should help the victims of barbarism to reach land where their lives and inalienable rights may be reasonably secure. Their

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<sup>620</sup>"Christian Sympathy for the Jews," *The Watchman-Examiner*, 8 December 1938, p.1295

<sup>621</sup> Joseph T. Britan, "An Appeal for Persecuted Israel," *Moody Monthly*, February 1939. Cited in James A Saddington, "Prophecy and Politics: A History of Christian Zionism in the Anglo-American Experience, 1800-1948" (Bowling Green State University, 1996), p.316

natural place of refuge is Palestine.”<sup>622</sup> Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, the federation remained active in lobbying Congress and disseminating its views to the American public on the idea of relocating European Jews to Palestine

### **6.1.2 Christians’ Persecution in Communist Countries during the Cold War**

During the Cold War, American foreign policy was mainly concerned to curb and confine the spread of communism globally and Christian missionaries were seen as one of the tools of American foreign policy. As a result, most Christian missionaries were supported and funded by the American government.<sup>623</sup> The evangelical missionaries that were enthusiastic about American nationalism were motivated to spread Christianity in communist countries and helped their besieged believers in those “Godless” countries. In contrast, in the Soviet Union, religions and religious activities including Christian missionaries were seen as threats to its communist regime. As a result, most religions and their believers, including Christians, were oppressed, persecuted and denied their right to practice their own religion. The policy eventually made most of the Christian missionaries abandon their projects and go back to their home countries. However, at home they were not silent on the atrocities of the policy, but tried to disseminate the news of the persecuted Christians to others. The concern regarding the issue of Christian persecution in communist countries became one of the main agendas for conservative Protestants in America during the Cold War.

Similar to the approach taken by conservative Protestants during the events of the Jews’ and Christians’ persecutions in Hitler’s era, conservative Christians, mainly evangelicals, gathered and spread the news of Christians’ persecution in communist countries. Their target was not only the US administration, but also the American public. The news of Christians’ persecution eventually triggered many initiatives among conservative Christian

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<sup>622</sup> \_\_The New Palestine, *The Pro-Palestine Federation*, 18 December 1936. Cited in James A. Saddington, "Prophecy and Politics: A History of Christian Zionism in the Anglo-American Experience, 1800-1948" (Bowling Green State University, 1996), p. 281–282

<sup>623</sup> See details in Diane Kirby, ed., *Religion and the Cold War* (Basingstoke, 2003).

organizations to provide help and assistance to their “besieged and persecuted brothers and sisters for their faith behind the Iron Curtain” that surrounded the Soviet-dominated countries. These initiatives finally led to the emergence of global “Christian solidarity” that groomed Christian activists to focus on saving a “suffering church” in the Soviet Union.<sup>624</sup> As a result, some conservative Christian organizations, such as Eagle Forum, attempted to exert their influence on US foreign policy by highlighting the issues of Christian persecution in Communist bloc countries. One of their approaches to pursuing their objective was showing their unlimited support for Reagan’s policy on the arms race and other American foreign policies towards the Soviet Union and other communist regimes.<sup>625</sup> As suggested by Martin Durham:

Anti-Communism has long continued to be central feature in religion’s engagement with US foreign policy. In the 1980s Ronald Reagan’s famous characterization of the Soviet Union as “the evil empire” was delivered at a meeting of the National Association of Evangelicals, and his administration’s campaign against Nicaragua’s Sandinista government enjoyed the support of a number of evangelical political groupings.<sup>626</sup>

## 6.2 Christian Solidarity and International Religious Freedom

Evangelicals generally perceive the world as a “sinking ship” and they feel it is their responsibility to save as many people as possible through proselytizing them into Christianity.<sup>627</sup> This perspective thus encouraged evangelicals to pursue missionary activities to spread Christianity all over the world.<sup>628</sup> According to Newsweek (2001), in 1900 the population of Christians in Africa was around 10–20 million. By 1970, it had

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<sup>624</sup> Allen D. Hertzke, “International Religious Policy: Taking Stock,” *The Review of Faith and International Affairs* 6 (2008), p. 18

<sup>625</sup> Lee Marsden, *For God’s Sake: The Christian Right and U.S. Foreign Policy* (London 2008), p. 31

<sup>626</sup> Martin Durham, “Evangelical Protestantism and Foreign Policy in the United States after September 11,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 38 (2004), p. 146

<sup>627</sup> See Michael Lienesch, *Redeeming America: Piety and Politics in the New Christian Right* (Chapel Hill, 1993).

<sup>628</sup> See details in Paul E. Pierson, “The Rise of Christian Mission and Relief Agencies,” in *The Influence of Faith: Religious Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy*, ed. Elliot Abrams (Lanham, Maryland, 2001).

reached more than 100 million and, within thirty years, the figure grew significantly as the Christian population had increased to almost 325 million.<sup>629</sup>

The end of the Cold War era provided a greater opportunity for new conversion. Soon after the demise of the Soviet Union, evangelicals around the world began to discuss more sophisticated global missionary projects. In 1989, the Second International Conference on World Evangelization was held in Manila, Philippines. The conference was attended by around 4,300 evangelicals from 173 countries. In that conference, an Argentine evangelist, Luis Bush, talked to the conference on the issue of remapping and refocusing evangelical global missionary activities. He introduced a new concept of the “10/40 window” and suggested they focus the missionary work on that area. Moreover, he claimed that “billions of spirituality impoverished souls” inhabit that area and the majority of them are “enslaved” by Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism.<sup>630</sup> The 10/40 window attracted the majority of the audience and the discussions were mainly focused on that topic. In addition, the conference also marked a new development as a concept of “human rights” was introduced; prior to this, the term “human rights” was commonly only used by secular activists. The term “enslaved”, used by Luis Bush, triggered evangelists to view it not merely as a religious issue, but also as a human rights issue.

As a result, in the post-Soviet Union era, the world witnessed global proselytizing activities increase dramatically, particularly those of American evangelicals. A tremendous growth of the Christian population in Asia, Africa and Latin America took place, and resulted in the percentage of Christians in those areas growing to be bigger than in the western world.

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<sup>629</sup> Kenneth L. Woodward, "The Changing Face of the Church: How the Explosion of Christianity in Developing Nations is Transforming the World's Largest Religion," *Newsweek*, 16 April 2001. There are several reasons why the conversion took place rapidly in Africa. Woodward argues: “so Africans are embracing Christianity in face of the massive political, social and economic chaos. Plagued by corrupt regimes, crushing poverty, pandemic AIDS and genocidal wars – as in Rwanda and Sudan – Africans find the Church is the one place they can go to for healing, hope, and material assistance from more fortunate Christians in the West.”<sup>629</sup> In addition, the writer also states that one of the most intriguing facts on the development of Christianity in Africa is the growing numbers of new churches. He argues: “an estimated 1,200 new churches are launched each month – many of them with literature and instructions provided by evangelical organizations in the West.”

<sup>630</sup> Luis Bush, "What is the 10/40 Window?," in *Second International Conference on World Evangelization* (Manila, Philippines, 1989). Available from <http://www.tumi.org/migration/images/stories/pdf/lga/docs/WHATIS10.pdf>



However, many of those newly converted Christians lived amidst conditions of poverty, exploitation, civil war and religious persecution. Those issues particularly that of Christian persecution, became the main agenda for the Christian Solidarity movement again. Their focus was to provide humanitarian assistance and to save their persecuted fellow Christians in those countries. In addition, they created awareness in their grassroots as well as in the public about the issue through their churches and communication networks. Equipped with modern communication technology, added to the strong social and political networks developed by global Christian solidarity movements, the news about the suffering church and globally persecuted Christians was more widely and quickly spread than ever. Eventually, the stories of persecuted Christians and poor treatment of Christians by some governments in some parts of the world, such as Sudan and China, were widely transmitted in the west.<sup>631</sup>

In the US, the news about the persecution of Christians abroad which was mostly published exclusively through evangelical media,<sup>632</sup> created awareness and gained considerable attention from American people, especially from the Christian Right. In addition, the existence of the Christian Right networks, such as schools, colleges, associations, publishing houses, direct email groups, para-church organizations, foreign missionaries and broadcast ministries, played a significant role in disseminating the awareness to the public.<sup>633</sup> For instance, from 1997 to 1998, James Dobson and Charles Colson, two central figures in the Christian Right movement, consistently talked and aired discussions about religious persecution on their cable network and these had mobilized viewers to publicly discuss the issue of global Christian persecution. In addition, it also attracted some members of Congress, especially from the Republican Party, to bring forward the issue in both houses.<sup>634</sup>

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<sup>631</sup> Nina Shea, interview with author, 11 May 2009, Washington D.C.

<sup>632</sup> Nina Shea, "The Origins and Legacy of the Movement to Fight Religious Persecution," *The Review of Faith and International Affairs* 6 (2008), p. 27

<sup>633</sup> Allen D. Hertzke, "International Religious Policy: Taking Stock," *ibid.*, p. 19

<sup>634</sup> Allen D. Hertzke, "The Political Sociology of the Crusade against Religious Persecution," in *The Influence of Faith : Religious Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy*, ed. Elliot Abrams (Lanham, Maryland, 2001), p. 83-84

While the Christian Right movement began to gather evidence of religious persecution from around the world, American media saw the issue as a new subject that could attract public attention. Media in other words played important roles in detailing and disseminating the news of religious persecution around the world.<sup>635</sup> At the same time, most of the Christian Right electronic media and cable networks took this opportunity to publicise and sensationalise the stories by airing the horrific stories of Christian persecution in some countries, particularly in Africa and Middle East. This media propaganda subsequently generated grassroots pressure on policy makers and government to address the issue of religious persecution abroad more seriously. Allen Hertzke notes: “In the last decade, evangelicals have provided the grass-root muscle for the most important human rights movement since the end of the Cold War.”<sup>636</sup>

### **6.3 The Christian Right and the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA)**

Allen D. Hertzke argues that the successful involvement of the Christian Right in human rights issue, particularly global religious freedom, has caused the movement to be perceived as a champion not only for bringing the issue to the public, but also for forcing the government to enact a new bill – the International Religious Freedom Act. As such, they have considered being “a new architecture for human rights in American Foreign Policy.”<sup>637</sup> The movements’ agenda and campaign, which seek for a comprehensive congressional legislation, have attracted a wide coalition of allies backing the move, ranging from influential politicians, neo-conservative organizations and other non-Christian organizations such as those of Judaism and the Bahá’í faith.<sup>638</sup> In fact, the

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<sup>635</sup> See for example J. Goldberg, "Washington Discovers Christian Persecution," *New York Times Magazine*, 21 December 1997

<sup>636</sup> Susan Page, "Christian Right's Alliances Bend Political Spectrum," *USA TODAY*, 14 June 2005.

<sup>637</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>638</sup> The allies consist of influential politicians such as Richard Lugar, Don Nickles, Frank Wolf, Arlen Specter, Chris Smith, Tony Hall, Tom Lantos and Tom DeLay; religious organizations such as the World Evangelical Fellowship, the Episcopal Church (Jere Skipper and Tom Hart), the US Bishops' Conference of

coalition was arguably one of the most important efforts of the Christian Right that contributed to introduction of IRFA. Its ability to establish contacts and alliances with other conservative movements or organizations such as those of neo-conservatives, Jews, Catholics, Muslims and other religions made the international religious freedom issue became a hot topic at US official level.<sup>639</sup> In addition, the historical facts behind the introduction of the International Religious Freedom Act reveal that the coalition of the international religious freedom movement was led by some key Christian Right leaders. They were Charles Colson of the Prison Fellowship, Richard Land of the Southern Baptist Convention, Gary Bauer of the Family Research Council, James Dobson of Focus on the Family, Donald Hodel and Ralph Reed of the Christian Coalition, and many others.<sup>640</sup>

The fact that Congress passed the Act mainly due to pressure from evangelical lobbies has been acknowledged in most studies of the history of IRFA. For instance, J. Bryan Hehir claims in his article that “the impetus behind congressional activism on religious freedom (or responses to religious persecution) has been rooted in Conservative Christian Churches [conservative evangelical Protestants], aided by some powerful voices outside those churches”.<sup>641</sup> Nevertheless, there was a claim that the sources of support for the pledge of international religious freedom came from various religious leaders ranging from evangelical Protestants, Jews, Tibetan Buddhists, Bahá'ís and US Catholics.<sup>642</sup> However,

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the Catholic Church and the National Association of Evangelicals; and NGOs such as the Puebla Institute (led by Nina Shea), the Institute for Religion and Democracy (led by Kent Hill and Diane Knipper), International Christian Concern (led by Steve Snyder), Jubilee Campaign and Just Law International (led by Ann Buwalda), Advocates International (led Sam Ericson), Institute for Religion and Public Policy (led by Joseph Grieboski) and the Hudson Institute (led by Michael Horowitz). See details in Laura Bryant Hanford, "The International Religious Freedom Act: Sources, Policy, Influence," *The Review of Faith and International Affairs* 6 (2008).

<sup>639</sup> Christy McCormick, "Exporting the First Amendment: America's Response to Religious Persecution Abroad," *International Legal Studies* (1998), p. 285

<sup>640</sup> See details in Allen D. Hertzke, "The Political Sociology of the Crusade against Religious Persecution," in *The Influence of Faith : Religious Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy*, ed. Elliot Abrams (Lanham, Maryland, 2001) and Nina Shea, "The Origins and Legacy of the Movement to Fight Religious Persecution," *The Review of Faith and International Affairs* 6 (2008).

<sup>641</sup> J. Bryan Hehir, "Religious Freedom and U.S. Foreign Policy: Categories and Choices," in *The Influence of Faith: Religious Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy*, ed. Elliot Abrams (Lanham, Maryland, 2001), p.49

<sup>642</sup> See also Martin Durham, "Evangelical Protestantism and Foreign Policy in the United States after September 11," *Patterns of Prejudice* 38 (2004), p. 146

Nina Shea claims that the leadership of the movement came from evangelical leaders. She asserts: “The backbone of this movement was foremost defined by those represented by the Summit participations – 100 key evangelical leaders, including Chuck Colson, Richard Cizik, Richard Land, Don Argue, Janet Marshall, Gary Bauer, Ravi Zacharias, and many others”.<sup>643</sup> As such, it was not surprising when Thomas W. Smith called IRFA a “pet project” of American Christian conservatives.<sup>644</sup> This claim is also supported by Lee Marsden when he argues that:

The increased focus on religious persecution and a commitment to taking religious freedom as seriously as other aspects of freedom and democracy by US governments was largely achieved by pressure from the Christian Right. The International Religious Freedom Act and the mandate to record progress on religious freedom throughout the world are notable advances that would not have been achieved without them.<sup>645</sup>

Similarly, the US Department of State has also recognized the role of faith-based organizations, particularly evangelical groups. For instance, it acknowledged that the establishment of the Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad in 1996, which subsequently became a stepping stone in the emergence of IRFA, has a close connection with the faith-based organizations, particularly evangelical groups. It states:

The Committee was influenced by the many faith-based organizations that began lobbying the U.S. Congress to pay greater attention to human rights during the 1980’s and 1990’s. The Committee, consisting of 20 American religious leaders and scholars, produced an interim report in 1998 and a final draft in 1999 that recommended a foreign policy agenda geared toward the promotion of religious freedom worldwide. At the same time, the U.S. Congress, faith-based nongovernmental organizations, and the Department of State began discussing ways to integrate religious freedom

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<sup>643</sup> Nina Shea, "The Origins and Legacy of the Movement to Fight Religious Persecution," *The Review of Faith and International Affairs* 6 (2008), p. 25–26

<sup>644</sup> Thomas W. Smith, "Religious Freedom as Foreign Policy Priority," *International Studies Review* 3 (2000), p. 152

<sup>645</sup> Lee Marsden, *For God's Sake: The Christian Right and U.S. Foreign Policy* (London 2008), p. 146

initiatives into U.S. foreign policy. The product of these debates was the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998.<sup>646</sup>

However, Hertzke argues that, although the Christian Right did provide strong grassroots support for the religious freedom legislation, as the legislation moved to congressional level over time, other groups came on board to form an alliance. Eventually the focus of the legislation moved toward universal human rights and no longer religious rights per se.<sup>647</sup>

The aggressive involvement of Christian Right leaders in advancing the international religion freedom agenda in US foreign policy was also partly related to the political scenario during that time. In the 1994 elections, the Christian Right had more prospects of involvement in American politics when the Republican Party gained majority seats in both houses of Congress. In addition, the existence of a few important conservative leaders in the US administration meant the religious freedom agenda was discussed widely inside Congress. The appointment of Senator Jesse Helms as the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Senator Sam Brownback as a subcommittee chair for Near Eastern and South Asia Affairs, two most influential posts in foreign policy decision making, gave a new avenue for the Christian Right to advance the issue more effectively at Congress.<sup>648</sup> Moreover, the media in providing information about global religious persecution increased awareness and support from the American public.

The success of the Christian Right in advancing the international religious freedom issue was also partly because of the involvement of some individuals who played significant roles in contributing towards the establishment of the International Religious Freedom Act. Michael Horowitz, a neo-conservative American, was among the key persons who were helping to fuel the awareness of international religious freedom in the US. For example, in 1995 Horowitz wrote an article entitled *New Intolerance between the Crescent and the*

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<sup>646</sup> History of the Office of International Religious Freedom (Office of International Religious Freedom, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, 2008 [cited 14 August 2008]); available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/ifr/fs/2298>

<sup>647</sup> Allen D. Hertzke, interview with author, 18 May 2009, Washington D.C.

<sup>648</sup> Lee Marsden, *For God's Sake: The Christian Right and U.S. Foreign Policy* (London 2008), p.116

*Cross* that highlighted the story of Christian persecution in Muslim countries, particularly in Africa and the Middle East, and was published in the *Wall Street Journal*. In this article, his central argument was that Christians had for too long stood by while “in growing number of other countries, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism has effectively criminalized the practice of Christianity.”<sup>649</sup> Horowitz critically suggested to the American administration to respond to this issue by intervening through US foreign policy.<sup>650</sup> Horowitz later on effectively influenced various evangelical missionary groups to emphasize the issue of Christian persecution as part of their main agenda in their lobbying activities and general religious activism.

Another strong advocate who successfully brought the issue of the global Christian persecution into public was Nina Shea. According to Thomas F. Farr, Nina Shea was a major intellectual contributor during the early stages of the IRFA legislative campaign. Although she is not a member of any religious right organization, her ideas and writings to advance the issue more effectively were very much influenced by the Christian Right movement.<sup>651</sup> In 1995, Shea, a director of the Puebla Program at Freedom House, wrote a book called *In the Lion's Den: Persecuted Christians and What the Western Church Can Do about It*. In this book, Shea argues that there are two zones of religious persecution for global concern: Muslim dominant countries and former communist countries.

During the early period of the movement, Horowitz and Shea worked together to create awareness of religious persecution, especially to American leaders. One of the most successful events organized by them for this movement was the Summit on Worldwide Religious Persecution for American religious leaders in January 1996. Around 5,000 churches participated and the conference was attended by a majority of key American evangelical leaders. At this summit, Shea played a crucial role and became a testifying

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<sup>649</sup> Michael Horowitz, "New Intolerance Between Crescent and Cross," *Wall Street Journal*, 5 July 1995.

<sup>650</sup> There was another article that projected a similar issue to American public. In December 1997, Jeffrey Goldberg published his article entitled 'Washington Discovers Christian Persecution' in the *New York Times Magazine*. This article was considered to be 'creative provocative' by J. Bryan Hehir, and erupted a debate on standards of human rights and normal US foreign policy. See details in J. Bryan Hehir, "Religious Freedom and U.S. Foreign Policy: Categories and Choices," in *The Influence of Faith: Religious Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy*, ed. Elliot Abrams (Lanham, Maryland, 2001).

<sup>651</sup> Thomas F. Farr, interview with author, 12 May 2009, Washington D.C.

witness to the issue of religious persecution around the world. Finally, at the summit, the National Association of Evangelicals released a “Statement of Conscience” that declared they would “do what is within our power to the end that the government of the United States will take appropriate action to combat the intolerable religious persecution now victimizing fellow believers and those of other faiths.”<sup>652</sup> That statement, as Shea argues, became a key factor which mobilized most of the faith-based organizations in the US to view the issue of religious freedom as an important subject and triggered the evangelical leaders to initiate lobbying of Congress. In addition, the movement’s agenda and campaign, which sought comprehensive congressional legislation, attracted a wide coalition of allies.<sup>653</sup> The ability of the Christian Right leaders to establish contacts and alliances with other conservative movements and organizations, such as those of neo-conservatives, Jews, Catholics, and other religions, was one of the most important ways it contributed to the introduction of IRFA in 1998.<sup>654</sup>

Meanwhile, the efforts of Horowitz and Shea successfully created a bridge between the evangelical groups, who are dominantly Protestant, and Catholic, Jewish, Tibetan Buddhist and Iranian Bahá’í to form a strong coalition to project the issue into the political arena; this was part of their major contribution. Consequently, this “unlikely alliance”, consisting of religious organizations and secular individuals, concentrated their efforts to lobby the issue to Congress.<sup>655</sup> Throughout the process, Horowitz, Shea and some evangelical leaders became key advocates to lobby individuals in Congress.

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<sup>652</sup> Quoted in Nina Shea, "The Origins and Legacy of the Movement to Fight Religious Persecution," *The Review of Faith and International Affairs* 6 (2008), p. 25

<sup>653</sup> The allies consist of influential politicians such as Richard Lugar, Don Nickles, Frank Wolf, Arlen Specter, Chris Smith, Tony Hall, Tom Lantos and Tom DeLay, religious organizations such as World Evangelical Fellowship, Episcopal Church ( Jere Skipper and Tom Hart), The U.S. Bishops Conference of the Catholic Church and National Association of Evangelicals, and NGOs such as Puebla Institute ( led by Nina Shea), Institute for Religion and Democracy (led by Kent Hill and Diane Knipper), International Christian Concern (led by Steve Snyder), Jubilee Campaign and Just Law International (led by Ann Buwalda), Advocates International (led Sam Ericson), Institute for Religion and Public Policy ( led by Joseph Grieboski) and Hudson Institute (led by Michael Horowitz). See details in Laura Bryant Hanford, "The International Religious Freedom Act: Sources, Policy, Influence," *Ibid.*

<sup>654</sup> Nina Shea, interview with author, 11 May 2009, Washington D.C.

<sup>655</sup> The term ‘unlikely alliance’ was first introduced by Allen D. Hertzke. See Allen D. Hertzke, *Freeing God's Children: The Unlikely Alliance for Global Human Rights* (Lanham, MD, 2004)

Another individual who contributed to the awareness of religious persecution was Paul Marshall. In 1997, while at Freedom House, he published a book *Their Blood Cries Out*. The book was based on his research which reveals that 200 million Christians live in countries where Christians are persecuted, another 400 million live in situations with “non-trivial” limits on their religious freedom. He criticizes American evangelicals for not being sensitive enough on the issue of global religious persecution, for being relative ignorant about the outside world, for excessive nationalism and for over-emphasizing end time prophecy. He claims evangelicals are too concerned with American families, American values and American morality, so much so that they overlook the presence and well-being of worldwide Christians. Similarly to Shea, Marshall also states that Christians in Islamic countries are among the victims of religious persecution. In addition, he includes other countries, such as Russia, India, Burma and other less developed countries, as places of religious persecution and religious intolerance.<sup>656</sup> This writing also triggered the conservative Christians to emphasize global religious freedom, especially the issue of Christians’ persecution. However, Hertzke argues that although the Christian Right did provide strong grassroots support for the religious freedom legislation, over time as the legislation moved to congressional level, other groups came on board. Eventually the focus of the legislation moved toward an emphasis on universal human rights rather than on religious values per se.<sup>657</sup>

#### **6.4 IRFA from a US Perspective**

Contrary to the arguments made by the Christian Right that are mostly based on religious belief as a major factor behind its movement in promoting global religious freedom, the United States’ administration has its own understanding and reasoning behind the

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<sup>656</sup> Paul Marshall, *Their Blood Cries Out: The Untold Story of Persecution Against Christians in the Modern World* (Nashville, TN, 1997)

<sup>657</sup> Allen D. Hertzke, interview with author, 18 May 2009, Washington D.C.



introduction of the IRFA. Firstly, it perceives religion is a cornerstone of the meaning of American liberty.<sup>658</sup> The State Department official website states that:

Grounded in and informed by the American experience, in which religious liberty is “the first freedom” of the Constitution, the law nevertheless does not attempt to impose “the American Way” on other nations. Rather it draws on the internationally accepted belief in the inviolable dignity of the human person and of the universal rights that flow from the belief. These rights are reflected in international covenants, which are, in turn, cited in the Act key standards of religious freedom by which governments – including that of the United States – must be judged.<sup>659</sup>

The historical fact of the religious tradition of the American nation – the idea of a chosen nation or a country chosen by God to promote liberty and democracy not only in America but also everywhere in the world – gives legitimacy for the US government’s promotion of the religious freedom agenda. In addition, for centuries the idea of religious freedom has been regarded as an important factor in sustaining the integration and stability of the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society of the United States. In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Protestants who were persecuted in Europe migrated to America in pursuit of freedom to practice their religious beliefs. Furthermore, the flocks of other immigrants with their own religious values and cultures into America contributed to the belief that religion was a citizen’s right and should be protected by the Constitution. The First Amendment, though the Constitution clearly separates between Church and State, protects religious liberty and gives a clear right to American citizens to practice any religion without legal restriction. Thus, it is argued that the existence of IRFA is consistent with US traditions and in line with the spirit of its Constitution. Hertzke notes: “Diverse faiths in America, consequently, are deeply predisposed to support the protection of religious freedom, both at home and

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<sup>658</sup> Fact Sheet (Office of International Religious Freedom, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, [cited 17 Mach 2009]); available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/irf/fs/2298.htm>s

<sup>659</sup> *Annual Report: International Religious Freedom Act 1999, Report to the House Committee on International Relations and the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, (Washington, D.C., 2000), p. 2

abroad. In other words, no First Amendment, no IRFA.’’<sup>660</sup> This argument can also be seen in the first paragraph of the Act that reads as follows:

The right to freedom of religion undergirds the very origin and existence of the United States. Many of our nation’s founders fled religious persecution abroad, cherishing in their hearts and mind the ideal of religious freedom. They established in law as a fundamental right and as a pillar of our nation the right to freedom of religion. From its birth to this day, the United States has prized this legacy of religious freedom and honored this heritage by standing from religious freedom and offering to those suffering from religious persecution.<sup>661</sup>

The second factor is that the United States federal government views religion freedom as part of human right issues and the introduction of IRFA is a continuation of its traditions and commitments in promoting and protecting universal human rights. The concern and commitment on the issue of religious freedom is actually started in 1976 when the US State Department has produced the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices in which included religious freedom.<sup>662</sup> However, the emergence of IRFA in 1998 enhanced the US commitment on the issue. As religious freedom is seen as part of universal human rights, the US shows its seriousness on this issue through its foreign policy in the light of IRFA. Moreover, the US believes IRFA is reinforcement of the *1981 Universal Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief*, which was signed by most nations of the world.<sup>663</sup> In the event of submitting the 9<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>660</sup> Allen D. Hertzke, "International Religious Policy: Taking Stock," *The Review of Faith and International Affairs* 6 (2008), p. 18

<sup>661</sup> There are debates on the argument that freedom of religion is part of American tradition and heritage. For example, Winnifred F. Sullivan argues that the idea of religious freedom is not part of American tradition. Her argument is based on several facts, such as during 19<sup>th</sup> century the Mormon Church radically changed their theological doctrine after been oppressed and persecuted by a federal government controlled by the Protestant establishment. In addition, native Americans – Red Indians – were systematically forced to convert to Christianity by the US administration and the slaves who were mostly from African countries were also denied their rights to practice their own religion. See details in Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, "Religious Persecution and U.S. Foreign Policy," in *Religious Persecution as a U.S. Policy Issue*, ed. Rosalind I.J. Hackett, Mark Silk, and Dennis Hoover (Hartford, 2000)

<sup>662</sup> *Interim Report to the Secretary of State and to the President of the United States*, Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad (Washington, D.C, 1998). Available at <http://www.usconsulate.org.hk/uscn/hr/1998/0123b.htm>

<sup>663</sup> Allen D. Hertzke, "International Religious Policy: Taking Stock," *The Review of Faith and International Affairs* 6 (2008), p. 18

(2007) Annual Report on International Religious Freedom to the Congress, Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice gives her remarks about the relevance of the idea of religious freedom to American traditions. She notes: “Religious liberty is deeply rooted in our principles and history as a nation, and it is our belief this is a universal human right that leads us into the world to support all who want to secure this right in their lives and in their countries.”<sup>664</sup>

The combination of American tradition, the “Christian Solidarity” movement led by Christian Right activists and their coalitions, the effective role of the media and the strong evangelicals networks as well as the position of some influential leaders in the Republican Party, individuals and politicians had successfully organized lobbying and political pressure on American congress to pass the law on religious freedom. Eventually they successfully persuaded a Virginia congressman, Frank Wolfe, and a Pennsylvania Senator, Arlen Specter, to bring the issue into Congress. Consequently, these two politicians proposed a bill called “The Freedom from Persecution Act” that later on became more commonly known as the Wolfe–Specter bill.<sup>665</sup>

The bill, which recommended the establishment of an Office of Religious Persecution Monitoring, was also proposed to the US government to impose automatic economic sanctions on any countries which engaged in religious persecution. It subsequently provoked intense debates from religious leaders, politicians and businessmen. The debates mostly concerned the bill’s efficacy, flexibility and unilateral action on economic sanctions. Most conservative religious organizations, such as the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), the US Roman Catholic Church, the Christian Coalition and some Jewish groups, supported the bill. However, there were some Christian groups, such as the liberal National Council of Churches, together with human rights groups opposed the bill on the grounds that it was too unilateral, inflexible and could penalize some countries. The bill was also opposed by business interests and trade groups on the grounds that economic

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<sup>664</sup> Condoleezza Rice, Remarks on the U.S. Department of State's Annual Report on International Religious Freedom (U.S. Department of State, 2007 [cited 14 August 2008]); available from <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2007/09/92113.htm>

<sup>665</sup> , "H.R. 1685, Wolf-Specter Bill," in *105th Congress* (1997).

sanctions are a harsh penalty to other nations and would result in a backlash for their business activities. For instance, it would create restrictions on import and export as well as other potential international trading.<sup>666</sup> As a result, two members of Congress, Oklahoma Senator Don Nickles and Connecticut Senator Joseph Lieberman, altered the Wolfe–Specter bill. They introduced a new bill called “The International Religious Freedom Act”, which was seen as being more flexible and moderate in terms of imposing sanctions. Finally, the Wolfe–Specter and Nickles–Lieberman bills were fused into IRFA. The legislation proceeded to implant the theme of religious freedom as an important agenda in US foreign policy. In 27 October 1998, the bill was passed in the Senate and gained a huge majority vote of 98–0 and unanimously passed in both houses of Congress on the last days of the 105<sup>th</sup> Congress.<sup>667</sup>

## 6.5 IRFA and US Foreign Policy

As discussed earlier, religion and religious freedom is always an important issue in US foreign policy. Leo P. Ribuffo argues that religion is part of American history and traditions and because of this, religion and religious issues are constantly being debated in the US foreign policy for the last fifty years.<sup>668</sup> By virtue of the IRFA, US administration shall consider religious freedom issues as part of US interests and shall incorporate the concern into its foreign policy. Theoretically, the purpose of the act is “to condemn violations of religious freedom, and to promote, and to assist other governments in the promotion of, the fundamental right to freedom of religion.”<sup>669</sup> The Act, which specifically mentions its linkage with US foreign policy, justifies its existence as a part of US concerns and its responsibility in promoting the international human rights agenda. The Act states:

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<sup>666</sup> Steven Wales, "Remembering the persecuted: An Analysis of the International Religious Freedom Act," *Houston Journal of International Law* (2002), p. 589

<sup>667</sup> Allen D. Hertzke, "International Religious Policy: Taking Stock," *The Review of Faith and International Affairs* 6 (2008). See also Senate Roll Call Votes H.R. 2431 (Congressional Report, 1998 [cited 21 May 2008]); available from [http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll\\_call\\_lists/roll\\_call\\_vote\\_cfm.cfm/congress=105congress&session=2&vote=00310](http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm/congress=105congress&session=2&vote=00310)

<sup>668</sup> Leo P. Ribuffo, "Religion in the History of U.S. Foreign Policy," in *The Influence of Faith: Religious Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy*, ed. Elliot Abrams (New York, 2001).

<sup>669</sup> (22 U.S.C. §6401(b)(1)).

To express United States foreign policy with respect to, and to strengthen United States advocacy on behalf of, individuals persecuted in foreign countries on account of religion; to authorize United States actions in response to violations of religious freedom in foreign countries; to establish an Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom within the Department of State, a Commission on International Religious Freedom, and a Special Adviser on International Religious Freedom within the National Security Council; and for other purposes.<sup>670</sup>

Historically, the US administration has avoided viewing international relations, or specifically its foreign policy, from a religious point of view. However, the introduction of IRFA in October 1998 altered this perspective dramatically. By virtue of IRFA, the US recognized four principles in promoting and monitoring international religious freedom. Firstly, freedom of religion is a fundamental human right and is a source of stability for all nations. Secondly, the US government and its agencies will assist any newly democratic countries to implement freedom of religion. Thirdly, it will support any religious groups as well as human rights NGOs in their mission to promote religious freedom. Fourthly, the US government and its agencies will identify and take a specific measure to punish any regimes or countries that severely violate freedom of religion and persecute their citizens or others because of their religious beliefs.<sup>671</sup>

In fact, the introduction of the Act with overwhelming majority votes in the House and Senate became a new landmark in the foreign policy making and diplomatic practices of American government. The Act created a new dimension in US foreign relations and its engagement with other nations when it provided an obligation for the President's office and Department of State to consider seriously any claims based on abuse of religious freedom. Moreover, it also created a set of requirements to which the US government can be held accountable by public interest groups with concerns related to the religious rights of specific groups, or in specific countries. In addition, by virtue of the Act, the US started to

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<sup>670</sup> (22 U.S.C. §6401(b)(2).

<sup>671</sup> Religious Freedom (Office of International Religious Freedom, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, 2008 [cited 14 August 2008]); available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/irf>

consider any issues related to international religious freedom as an important concern of its foreign affairs.

The Act has created the Office of International Religious Freedom, a department under the auspices of the State Department that carries the American mission of promoting religious freedom globally. In addition, the office is responsible for monitoring global religious persecution and discrimination and recommends and implements policies that are in line with the objectives of the Act. The Act also established the Commission on International Religious Freedom and authorized it to monitor violations of religious freedom globally.<sup>672</sup> It thus expected to policy make recommendations to the president, the Secretary of State, and to the Congress with regards to the issues that relevant with international religious freedom. In addition, IRFA become part of national security programme as it creates a position “Special Advisor to the President” that shall be included in the National Security Council meeting.

In that process, American government will help and cooperate with religious and human rights NGOs. However, the US government warns that it would identify and take action against any regimes or countries that persecute their citizens or others on the basis of religious beliefs.<sup>673</sup> Hence, IRFA empowers a legal framework for the US government through the institution of the US State Department and the Commission on International Religious Freedom (CIRF) to examine the status of religious persecution of other countries. In addition, it will suggest to the President to take certain actions, such as economic sanctions, for countries that repress religious freedom.<sup>674</sup> The law also gives the State

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<sup>672</sup> IRFA defines the phrase “violations of religious freedom” as “violations of the internationally recognized right to freedom of religion and belief and practice.” The violations include “(A) torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment; (B) prolonged detention without charges; (C) causing the disappearance of persons by abduction or clandestine detention of those persons; or (D) other flagrant denial of the right to life, liberty, or the security of persons.” See §6401 and §6402 of the Act.

<sup>673</sup> Religious Freedom (US Department of State, 2008 [cited 9 March 2008]); available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/irf/>

<sup>674</sup> IRFA obliges the President to take appropriate actions as follows; (1) A private demarche, (2) An official public demarche, (3) A public condemnation, (4) A public condemnation within one or more multilateral for a, (5) The delay or cancellation of one or more scientific exchanges, (6) The delay or cancelation of one or more cultural exchange, (7) The denial of one or more working, official, or state visits, (8) The delay or cancellation of one or more working, official, or state visits, (9) The withdrawal, limitation, or suspension of United States development assistance in accordance with section 2151n of this title, (10) Directing the Export-Import Bank of the United States, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, or the Trade and Development Agency not to approve the issuance of any (or specific number of)

Department an authority to publish an annual report on the current status and development of religious freedom around the world which has been recognized as “the most comprehensive account of religious ever compiled”.<sup>675</sup> In addition, the IRFA report is one of the most widely read documents of American diplomacy, and has become the gold standard of international religious freedom.<sup>676</sup>

However, there are some criticisms levelled against the US government over IRFA, including disagreements on the question of the promotion of religious freedom internationally.<sup>677</sup> Firstly, it inevitably invites a question, why the United States enacted IRFA as if there is a hierarchy of human rights and religious freedom is the most important aspect of human rights. At the same time, the US administration hesitates or fails to support existing international human rights frameworks.<sup>678</sup> Danchin contends that “IRFA, by isolating one right and developing special machinery by which to protect it, has created an irrational hierarchy of human rights in U.S. foreign policy with religious freedom at the apex.”<sup>679</sup> Moreover, criticism is also levelled at the appointment of a Special Ambassador

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guarantees, insurance, extensions of credit, or participations in the extensions of credit with respect to the specific government, agency, instrumentality, or official found or determined by the President to be responsible for violations under section 6441 or 6442 of this title, (11) The withdrawal, limitation, or suspension of United States security assistance in accordance with section 2304 of this title, (12) Consistent with section 262d of this title, directing the United States executive directors of international financial institutions to oppose and vote against loans primarily benefiting the specific foreign government agency, instrumentality, or official found or determined by the President to be responsible for violations under section 6441 or 6442 of this title, (13) Ordering the heads of the appropriate United States agencies not to issue any (or a specified number of) specific licenses, and not to grant any other specific authority (or a specific number of authorities), to export any goods or technology to the specific foreign government, agency, instrumentality, or official found or determined by the President to be responsible for violations under section 6441 or 6442 of this title under –(a) the Export Administration Act of 1979 (b) The Arms Export Control Act; (c) The Atomic Energy Act of 1954; or (d) any other statute that requires the prior review and approval of the United States Government as a condition for the export or re-export of goods and services, (14) Prohibiting any United States financial institution from making loans or providing credits totalling more than \$10,000,000 in any 12 month period to the specific foreign government, agency, instrumentality, or official found or determined by the President to be responsible for violations under section 6441 or 6442 of this title, (15) Prohibiting the United States Government from procuring, or entering into any contract for procurement of, any goods or services from the foreign government, entities, or officials found or determined by the President to be responsible for any violations under section 6441 or 6442 of this title. See § 6445 (a)(1) - (15) of the Act.

<sup>675</sup> Thomas W. Smith, "Religious Freedom as Foreign Policy Priority," *International Studies Review* 3 (2000), p. 152

<sup>676</sup> Allen D. Hertzke, "International Religious Policy: Taking Stock," *The Review of Faith and International Affairs* 6 (2008), p. 21

<sup>677</sup> For a detail assessment on the issues with and criticism on IRFA refer T. Jeremy Gunn, "A Preliminary Response to Criticisms of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998," *Brigham Young University Law Review* (2000)

<sup>678</sup> Matthew L. Fore, "Shall Weigh Your God and You: Assessing the Imperialistic Implications of the International Religious Freedom Act in Muslim Countries," *Duke Law Journal* 52 (2001), p. 426

<sup>679</sup> Peter G. Danchin, "U.S. Unilateralism and the International Protection of Religious Freedom: The Multilateral Alternative," *Columbus Transnational Law Journal* 33 (2002), p. 104

for International Religious Freedom and the creation of the Office of International Religious Freedom which can reflect that there is a hierarchy of human rights, with religious freedom ranked at the top of the hierarchy.<sup>680</sup> The Assistant Secretary to the State Department, John Shattuck, was one of the opponents of the legislation and criticized IRFA on that basis. He argued that the bill would “harm the very people it seeks to help” because the bill would create “a hierarchy of human rights into our laws” that could “severely damage our efforts to ensure that all aspects of basic civil and political rights ... are protected.”<sup>681</sup> Secondly, through the implementation of IRFA legislation, the US has been severely criticized because of its unilateral approach to interfering in other countries’ affairs that infringe on their sovereignty.<sup>682</sup> Moreover, the US is regarded as acting unilaterally as a moral crusader and trying to impose its western standards on the world. Fore argues that IRFA indirectly promotes a religious freedom concept that largely based on America historical experience and traditions that not necessarily conform to the histories, traditions, and, cultures of other societies.<sup>683</sup> China openly voiced its disagreement and condemnation of the Act and claimed the US had attacked its religious policy and freedom.<sup>684</sup> In addition, China for Human Right Studies, an NGO, criticized the Act and claims “The U.S. Government needs to keep an eye on its own human rights problems, mind its own business and stop interfering in the internal affairs of other countries.”<sup>685</sup> Thirdly, the US has been criticized for its hypocrisy as it excluded itself to be examined by the Commission, but at the same time assess other countries’ practice of religious freedom. Furthermore, the US administration is seen double standards in exercising IRFA. Sudan has been severely attacked by the US government because of its

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<sup>680</sup> Jeremy Gunn, "Religious Persecution and US. Foreign Policy " (paper presented at the Religious Persecution as U.S. Policy Issue, Trinity College, Hertford, 26-27 September 2000), p. 49–50

<sup>681</sup> Hon. Christopher H. Smith, *Human Rights Practices and the Promotion of Human Rights in the U.S. Foreign Policy*, The 2006 Country Reports (2006)

<sup>682</sup> Eugenia Relano Pastor, "The Flawed Implementation of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998: A European Perspective," *Brigham Young University Law Review* (2005)

<sup>683</sup> Matthew L. Fore, "Shall Weigh Your God and You: Assessing the Imperialistic Implications of the International Religious Freedom Act in Muslim Countries," *Duke Law Journal* 52 (2001), p. 448

<sup>684</sup> "Chinese Officials Attack Report," *Times Union*, 10 September 2000.

<sup>685</sup> Cited in T. Jeremy Gunn, "A Preliminary Response to Criticisms of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998," *Brigham Young University Law Review* (2000), p. 861



mistreatment of religions other than Islam, but it did not heavily criticize other countries such as Russia, Saudi Arabia and North Korea that have a serious record on religious freedom infringement.<sup>686</sup>

## 6.6 IRFA and Islam

At an early stage, IRFA received opposition from some Muslim leaders and organizations. James J. Zog argues that this feeling was due to “the concern that the bills were not part of a serious effort to provide balanced protection to the rights of religious minorities. Rather, they [Muslims] saw clear signs of ideological bias in the rhetoric of the legislation’s advocate [the Christian Right].”<sup>687</sup> Intriguingly, Laila al-Marayati, the sole Muslim commissioner of the nine-member US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) also criticizes IRFA and claims the legislation is biased against Islam. In 2002, she issued her dissenting view to the report of 2001 USCIRF report that it did not highlight the situation in Israel and the Occupied Territories in Palestine in the light of IRFA provisions. She claims that Israel’s denial of Jerusalem holy sites to Palestinian Muslims and Christians is against the provisions of IRFA. She furthermore argues that Israeli claims that its action was taken under “security concerns” does not justify restriction of religious worship for Palestinians.<sup>688</sup> She made a complaint against Elliot Abrams, the chairman of the commission during that period, who refused to go to Jerusalem as he was of the opinion that there are no problems with religious freedom in Israel that would warrant the attention of the commission. Due to this, Laila al-Marayati, an American Palestinian, argues that Abrams “did not apply a uniform standard by which to judge religious freedom violations of any given country, relying instead on personal perceptions and preferences.”<sup>689</sup>

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<sup>686</sup> Jeremy Gunn, "Religious Persecution and US. Foreign Policy " (paper presented at the Religious Persecution as U.S. Policy Issue, Trinity College, Hertford, 26-27 September 2000), p. 50

<sup>687</sup> James J. Zog, "A Partial View of Religious Rights and Wrongs," *Gulf News*, 7 May 2000.

<sup>688</sup> Pat and Samir Twair, "Muslim Member Clarifies Opinion on USCIRF Letter," *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, March 2001, p. 87

<sup>689</sup> Laila Al-Marayati, The Biases of Elliot Abrams (Counter Punch, 16 December 2002 [cited 25 March 2009]); available from <http://www.counterpunch.org/laila1216.html>

On the other hand, the commission that was led by Elliot Abrams, in his testimony before the House International Relations Committee, acknowledged the dissenting view expressed by Laila al-Marayati. However, the commission reported that the situation in the Occupied Territories was “a complex matter requiring additional work. The Commissioner did not feel they were ready to make a formal report or recommendations [before the House]”<sup>690</sup> Meanwhile, Lawrence J. Goodrich, USCIRF director of communication, when asked by the Washington Report, responded to the issue and said:

The Commission is well aware that Israel has restricted access to religious site off and on for many years. Its statement does not imply an endorsement of current or previous restrictions. Far from seeking to legitimate those restrictions, the Commission called for “restoration of access to religious sites when legitimate security concerns are met.” Given that the Commission’s expertise is in religious freedom rather than security matters, we took no position as to those security concerns ... We believe it important for the Commission to focus on religious-freedom issues and avoid carefully the error inserting itself into the Middle East peace process.<sup>691</sup>

Nina Shea, in her personal remark about Laila’s dissenting view of the 2000 commission report, says that “I think she [Laila] has a political agenda. Her religious belief has been politicized and was motivated by her Palestinian feeling.”<sup>692</sup> However, the issue of religious freedom in Israel and the Occupied Territories has also been highlighted by non-Muslims. In 2006, Chris Smith, chairman of the House Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights and International Operations, presented his testimonial on the situation of Palestinian Christians after the building of a separation wall by the Israeli government. He recommended that the Commission on International Religious Freedom report the negative

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<sup>690</sup> Laila Al-Marayati, David Saperstein, and Nina Shea, *The Annual Report of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom* (2001)

<sup>691</sup> Pat and Samir Twair, "Muslim Member Clarifies Opinion on USCIRF Letter," *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, March 2001, p. 87

<sup>692</sup> Nina Shea, interview with author, 11 May 2009, Washington D.C.

impact of the wall on Palestinians.<sup>693</sup> However, there has been no action to date taken by the Commission on the issue.

Nevertheless, Nina in her interview insisted that IRFA does not distinguished between Muslims, animists, Christians or Jews as the particular concern of the legislation is about religious freedom and it is a matter of human rights. Nina also claims that USCIRF and she personally worked very closely with Uighur Muslims that presently face severe repression and restrictions to practise their religious beliefs and values by Chinese government.<sup>694</sup> The effort of USCIRF to promote religious freedom for Uighur Muslims in China was documented in its official statement on that notes; “Religious freedom restrictions are an ongoing source of resentment for Uighurs. Beijing continues to view peaceful Muslims religious activity with suspicion and as a source of “extremism and separatism.”<sup>695</sup> In dismissing that IRFA is allegedly a proselytizing tool of evangelical organizations upon other believers, Suhail Khan of Institute for Global Engagement (IGE)<sup>696</sup> claims that; “As a Christian Organization, IGE supports IRFA and the global religious freedom agenda. IGE prefers to act based on Christian principles of mercy and justice but we are very careful not to be involved in promoting Christianity. We don’t do sheep stealing.”<sup>697</sup> Khan suggests that IRFA should benefit everyone as the motive behind its introduction is to protect the fundamental right to practice one’s faith or religious beliefs peacefully. Moreover, he believes that, through IRFA and its global promotion of religious freedom, the world moves towards peace direction. Accordingly, under the banner of IRFA, IGE often engages with many non Christian religious minorities all over the world. For instance, IGE works closely with the Uighur Muslims in China who were deprived their rights to practice their

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<sup>693</sup> Lee Marsden, *For God's Sake: The Christian Right and U.S. Foreign Policy* (London 2008), p. 122–123

<sup>694</sup> Nina Shea, interview with author, 11 May 2009, Washington D.C.

<sup>695</sup> Lift All Ramadan Restrictions on Uighur Muslims (U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, 2008 [cited 29 December 2009]); available from [http://www.uscifr.gov/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=2718&Itemid=126](http://www.uscifr.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2718&Itemid=126)

<sup>696</sup> One of the IGE’S main missions is to encourage all nations and their governments to protect religious freedom and IGE works to equip all citizens to exercise religious freedom responsibly. In promoting international religious freedom, IGE established the Council on Faith & International Affairs to institutionalize dialogue and engagement on international religious freedom. One of the council’s major contributions is the publication of quarterly journal, the Review of Faith and International Affairs.

<sup>697</sup> Suhail Khan, interview with author, 14 April 2009, Washington, DC.

beliefs and values by Chinese governments. Khan says; “We [IGE] often work on behalf of religious minorities who are not Christians to address their concerns, to help them practice their religious beliefs, cultures and values.”<sup>698</sup> In this respect, Khan asserts that IGE employs the “top-bottom and from the bottom-up” approach in promoting religious freedom globally. He believes that by using that approach, IGE is able to solve the problems that related to religious freedom issues between religious minorities and their governments in a very amicable way. With regard to such position, Khan points out that; “IGE acts as a bridge between those religious minorities with their governments. IGE often works simultaneously. We are not only engaging with religious minorities but also with their governments. We believe, through both engagements, religious freedom and peace will be promoted.”<sup>699</sup>

## **6.7 The Christian Right and the Implementation of IRFA in US Foreign Policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

IRFA, as a new piece of US legislative machinery, was expected to become an integral part of US public diplomacy and foreign policy, especially in advancing international religious liberty. Theoretically, IRFA is a new paradigm of US foreign policy that tries to integrate a conventional secular-based diplomatic and foreign policy initiative with religious-based foreign policy. Traditionally, promoting liberty, freedom and democracy and protecting human rights around the world have been a central theme to US foreign policy. During George W. Bush’s presidency, these values were always being highlighted. In his 2005 Inaugural Speech, he re-asserts that “The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in the entire world.”<sup>700</sup> In addition, the State Department Report highlighted that its goals are “to advocate religion” and to be a “transnational vehicle of

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<sup>698</sup> Ibid.

<sup>699</sup> Ibid.

<sup>700</sup> George W. Bush, 2005 Inaugural Speech (US Department of State, 2005 [cited 9 March 2008]); available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl>

conflict prevention and post conflict reconciliation”; these clearly manifest the idealism of the US that religion is an important element in maintaining peace and stability. This belief is evident by the official statement of the Office of International Religious Freedom that states its main mission is to promote religious freedom as a core tenet of US foreign policy by identifying and monitoring global religious persecution and discrimination.

However, there is a perception that the introduction of IRFA opened a new avenue for the Christian Right movement to assert its influence on American foreign policy. As the force behind the legislation was partly religious and the congressional support for the legislation was also driven by religious concern about the rights of their fellow believers in other countries,<sup>701</sup> it is therefore argued that the Christian Right has been able to exploit and manipulate IRFA to advance its international interests, especially on proselytizing activities through the instrument of US foreign policy.

## **6.8 IRFA and the Issue of Proselytizing**

The perception that the US foreign policy focuses on Christianity and attempts to impose its religious values globally through IRFA creates negative impression to some countries. They perceived that, the US administration is trying to assert its American Christian-centric cultural values and traditions in the international sphere. As a result, the Act has been seen as a manifestation of cultural imperialism and an attempt by the United States to export Christianity and its values globally.<sup>702</sup> The IRFA annual reports on world religious freedom that mostly emphasize the persecution of Christians around the world as compared to the persecution of other religions inevitably invited negative perceptions to other believers. In addition, there is sensitivity that IRFA is seen as a tool used by Christian Right groups to promote Christianity globally. Lee Marsden for instance, argues that the religious persecution issue has become one of the key issues that have made the Christian Right more organized in persuading the US administration to protect the interest of Christians

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<sup>701</sup> Allen D. Hertzke, interview with author, 18 May 2009, Washington D.C.

<sup>702</sup> Jane Lapman, "In the Diplomatic Hot-Seat: Religion," *Christian Science Monitor*, 8 April 1999.

globally.<sup>703</sup> Furthermore, some Muslim countries have alleged the Act was a sort of pattern of American neo-imperialism that will suppress Islamic beliefs. Likewise, they also regard the Act as “Christian-centric”<sup>704</sup> and carrying a mission of “a new invasion of American foreign policy ... [of] evangelical groups who want to convert Muslims.”<sup>705</sup>

The rapid growth of new converted Christians in the world after the introduction of IRFA increases the suspicious especially among Muslim countries on the role of the conservative evangelicals in the implementation of IRFA. Furthermore, the tremendous growth of US evangelicals who participate in proselytizing programmes around the globe after 1998 justify their allegations that IRFA is a tool for Christians to proselytize others. A report in *Newsweek* (2001) that state the population of Christians in Africa in 1900 was around 10-20 million but had reached close to 325 million in 2000 seem to support the claim.<sup>706</sup> In 2001, around 360,000 evangelicals undertook missionaries work and majority of them were American evangelicals marked a new record in Christian missionary history.<sup>707</sup> As such, it is now surprising when the BBC’s Focus on Africa in July 2005 reported; “Africa is being colonized and Christianized all over again. The colonizers this time are Americans not Europeans and the brand of belief they are bringing to Africa is Evangelical Christianity”.<sup>708</sup> In addition, a research shows that the growth numbers of new church in Africa increased dramatically. The researcher, Kenneth Woodward states that: “... an estimated 1,200 new churches are launched each month – many of them with literature and instructions provided by evangelical organizations in the West.”<sup>709</sup>

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<sup>703</sup> Lee Marsden, *For God's Sake: The Christian Right and U.S. Foreign Policy* (London 2008) p.114

<sup>704</sup> Matthew L. Fore, "Shall Weigh Your God and You: Assessing the Imperialistic Implications of the International Religious Freedom Act in Muslim Countries," *Duke Law Journal* 52 (2001)

<sup>705</sup> William Martin, "The Christian Right and American Foreign Policy," *Foreign Policy* Spring (1999)

<sup>706</sup> Kenneth L. Woodward, "The Changing Face of the Church: How the Explosion of Christianity in Developing Nations is Transforming the World's Largest Religion," *Newsweek*, 16 April 2001

<sup>707</sup> Julie Hearn, "The Invisible NGO: US Evangelical Missions in Kenya," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 32 (2002)

<sup>708</sup> Asteris Huliaras, "A Strange Friend?: The Role of Evangelical Christians in the Making of United States Foreign Policy Towards Africa," (2008)

<sup>709</sup> Kenneth L. Woodward, "The Changing Face of the Church: How the Explosion of Christianity in Developing Nations is Transforming the World's Largest Religion," *Newsweek*, 16 April 2001

## 6.9 IRFA and the Influence of the Christian Right: Between Perception and Reality

The perception that IRFA predominantly represents the interests of evangelicals and their global missionary works that focus on proselytizing people to change their religion to Christianity has been rejected by John V. Hanford III, the ambassador-at-large for the Office of International Religious Freedom at the State Department. He denies that IRFA was established in order to facilitate evangelicals to advance their missionary works. He says:

I don't know where in the world this comes from, because the truth to it, and there is no evidence that has been the case in the way it has been implemented ... what I'm trying to address is the misunderstanding that all this is about is the US trying to get missionaries into their countries. Our office isn't focused on that. We do work on the basic freedom of people to change or choose their faith.<sup>710</sup>

In addition, despite the fact that the Christian Right was actively involved in lobbying for IRFA to become American legislation, Thomas Farr argues that the movement has only had a little role in the implementation of IRFA in US foreign policy, and has thus failed to make a significant contribution towards enhancing the implementation of IRFA.<sup>711</sup> Allen Hertzke also contends that the Christian Right has no role in the implementation of IRFA. He argues that, as the idea underlying the IRFA is a secular justification and the State Department is a secular organization, thus its officials very much interpreted IRFA in secular terms.<sup>712</sup> Former Secretary of State, Madeline Albright, asserts in her book that American diplomats and policy makers mostly ignored the role of religious foreign policy. This attitude is due to their perception that the subject of religion “was above and beyond reason; it evoked the deepest passions; and historically, it was the cause of much bloodshed. Diplomats in my era were taught not to invite trouble, and no subject seemed

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<sup>710</sup> John V. Hanford, John Shattuck, and Thomas F. Farr, "Religion and International Diplomacy: A Ten Year Progress Report," in *Ten Years of Promoting Religious Freedom Through U.S. Foreign Policy* (Washington DC, 2008). Available from <http://pewforum.org/events/?EventID=206>

<sup>711</sup> Thomas F. Farr, interview with author, 12 May 2009, Washington D.C.

<sup>712</sup> Allen D. Hertzke, interview with author, 18 May 2009, Washington D.C.

more inherently treacherous than religion.”<sup>713</sup> Shea, presently a director of the Hudson Institute’s Center for Religious Freedom, argues that her involvement in advancing the international religious freedom issue was completely from a human rights perspective. She suggests, furthermore, that the IRFA initially came from a secular point of view.<sup>714</sup>

In fact, some Christian Right organizations recognized their limitations in the implementation of IRFA. William Saunders asserts that his organization, Family Research Council, though it played a significant role in the process of legislating IRFA, its role was almost irrelevant after IRFA became part of US foreign policy.<sup>715</sup> Likewise, Janice Crouse of CWA states that her organization was not involved directly in IRFA implementation. Instead, CWA, according to her, was more interested in advancing international human trafficking issues and viewed the issue is more important to present American policy presently.<sup>716</sup>

The limited success of the Christian Right in the implementation of IRFA in US foreign policy is also due to the fact that US administration views IRFA as a vehicle of its narrowly defined national interest. For the US administration, promoting religious freedom worldwide has become increasingly critical with the rise of transnational extremism in the post-Cold War era. The September 11 2001 terrorist attack, which was partly motivated by fanatical religious beliefs, strengthened the idea that American government should view religion as an important element in their foreign affairs. In addition, the attack also signified to American authorities that the status of religious freedom in other countries does affect American security as well as its interests. Bush said: “The deepest beliefs of our nations set the direction of our foreign policy. We value our own civil rights, so we stand for the human rights of others. We affirm the God-given dignity of every person, so we are moved to action by poverty and oppression and famine and disease ... We seek the advance

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<sup>713</sup> Madeline Albright, *The Mighty and the Almighty : Reflections on America, God and World Affairs* (New York, 2006), p. 85

<sup>714</sup> Nina Shea, interview with author, May 2009, Washington D.C. However, she recognizes that the importance role of religious people, notably the Christian Right leaders who fought for the introduction of IRFA, probably created a perception that IRFA is religion-based legislation

<sup>715</sup> William L. Saunders, interview with author, 27 April 2009, Washington D.C.

<sup>716</sup> Janice Shaw Crouse, interview with author, 15 May 2009, Washington, D.C.



of freedom and the peace that freedom brings.”<sup>717</sup> As such, the George W. Bush administration regarded freedom to practice any religion in any place in the world as a salient factor in keeping peace and stability, not only for American security but also for international security. In other words, for Bush’s administration, religious freedom was an important part of American national security. As it viewed religious freedom to be a critical component of global security, promoting global religious freedom became a salient part of the administration agenda. The Bush administration’s view was that international religious freedom was a tool to maintain the *status quo* of the US as a sole hegemonic power in international politics. In addition, religious freedom was considered as an important element in the American policy of the war on terror.<sup>718</sup> Thus, the US administration believes that any attempt to restrict the freedom of religion will lead to international terrorism. As Paula Dobriansky, former undersecretary of state affairs says, terrorism “includes a willingness to view other human beings as objects to be destroyed. It is at its core a pure form of anti-religion. At its best, religion is, therefore, an antidote to fanaticism, not its cause.”<sup>719</sup> Likewise, as a study on terrorism has suggested that there is a correlation between terrorism and religious suppression, it is rational for the United States to regard any attempt to discriminate or restrict professed believers to practice their religions are more likely to jeopardize world stability.<sup>720</sup> Gordon H. Smith, in his study on religious freedom and terrorism, suggests: “We need to remember that failure to respect legitimate claims for religious freedom can itself become a source of political instability and terrorism.”<sup>721</sup>

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<sup>717</sup> President Bush Delivers IISS Address (The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2003 [cited 3 March 2009]); available from <http://www.iiss.org/recent-key-address/president-bush-delivers-iiss-address>

<sup>718</sup> Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, "Religious Persecution and U.S. Foreign Policy," in *Religious Persecution as a U.S. Policy Issue*, ed. Rosalind I.J. Hackett, Mark Silk, and Dennis Hoover (Hartford, 2000)

<sup>719</sup> Lee Davidson, "Allies' Stand on Religion Questioned," *DESERET NEWS*, 27 November 2001. Quoted in Matthew L. Fore, "Shall Weigh Your God and You: Assessing the Imperialistic Implications of the International Religious Freedom Act in Muslim Countries," *Duke Law Journal* 52 (2001), p. 427–428

<sup>720</sup> Matthew L. Fore, "Shall Weigh Your God and You: Assessing the Imperialistic Implications of the International Religious Freedom Act in Muslim Countries," *Duke Law Journal* 52 (2001), p. 427

<sup>721</sup> Gordon H. Smith, "Religious Freedom and the Challenge of Terrorism," *BYU L REV.* 205 (2002) Quoted in Matthew L. Fore, "Shall Weigh Your God and You: Assessing the Imperialistic Implications of the International Religious Freedom Act in Muslim Countries," *Duke Law Journal* 52 (2001), p. 427

The importance of religious freedom to the US national interest has been highlighted in various State Department official statements. Among others, it states that the American government seeks to promote religious freedom as a basic human right and sees this endeavour as a source of stability for all countries. In addition, it believes that religious freedom is an important part of any democratic system and will assist countries in implementing freedom of religion and conscience. As Hertzke contends, the US administration believes that religious repression and persecution result in instability, violence and conflict.<sup>722</sup> In November 2006, the State Department announced that the US government was committed to implementing IRFA worldwide and declared that it addresses three main issues: to oppose religious persecution, to release religious prisoners and to promote religious freedom as a priority in its action.<sup>723</sup> Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, in September 2007, gave her remarks on the US Department of State's 9th Annual Report on International Religious Freedom. She said:

Religious liberty is deeply rooted in our principles and history, and it is our belief in this universal human right that leads us into the world support all who want to secure this right in this lives and in their countries. Freedom of religion is also integral to our efforts to combat the ideology of hatred and religious intolerance that fuels global terrorism ... With this year's Report on International Religious Freedom, the State Department is helping to advance President Bush's vision of a world that is growing in freedom and peace ... the United States will continue working to promote religious freedom, to nurture tolerance and to build a more peaceful world for people of all faiths."<sup>724</sup>

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<sup>722</sup> Allen D. Hertzke, interview with author, 18 May 2009, Washington D.C.

<sup>723</sup> Allen D. Hertzke et al., "Legislating International Religious Freedom," (Washington D.C., 2006). Available at <http://pewforum.org/events/index.php?EventID=133>. According to Thomas Farr, the US administration has shown its strong commitment to advancing religious freedom globally and the term 'religious freedom' persistently appears in official US documents. In 2006 alone, there are 19 mentions of religion or religious freedom in the US National Security Strategy. See Thomas F. Farr and Dennis R. Hoover, *The Future of U.S. International Religious Freedom Policy: Recommendations for the Obama Administration* (Washington D.C., 2009), p. 27

<sup>724</sup> Condoleezza Rice, Remarks on the U.S. Department of State's Annual Report on International Religious Freedom (U.S. Department of State, 2007 [cited 9 March 2008]); available from <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2007/09/92113.htm>

## 6.10 US Officials and the Implementation of IRFA

Contrary to the perception that the Bush administration and the State Department were serious about implementing IRFA to advance the global religious freedom agenda and reduce religious persecution, Thomas Farr, a former director of the Office of International Religious Freedom, contends that the Bush administration was not only ineffective in advancing religious freedom abroad, but also failed to engage the foreign religious community. He believes this ineffectiveness was mainly because of the secularist mindset among officials at the State Department.<sup>725</sup> Some officials perceive IRFA as a religion-based issue and is thus not in line with the separation of Church and State as stipulated in the Constitution. As a result, they resist integrating IRFA with foreign policy implementation. In addition, they believe IRFA is a product of Christian Right activism and therefore should be sidelined in order to restrain a possibility of Christian Right influence at the State Department.<sup>726</sup> In recent article, Thomas Farr and William Saunders suggest that the main reason behind the failure of the implementation of IRFA was that the State Department was not really interested in implementing the Act. They argue that, during the Bush administration, the State Department abandoned the implementation policies suggested by IRFA. Therefore, because of that, the Act has played no role in American public diplomacy, or American strategy to promote democracy or to counter the spread of international terrorism.<sup>727</sup> Similarly, Nina Shea argues that the major loophole of IRFA implementation is the lack of understanding among US officials who do not see the importance of religious freedom in American foreign policy. In addition, Shea claims Bush himself was actually not so keen on the global religious freedom issue. Nina Shea argues that Bush's understanding of religious freedom was political and not motivated by his Christian belief.<sup>728</sup> As such, Nina Shea asserts that Bush was only interested in the issue of religious freedom when his grassroots or political supporters, such as evangelicals, pushed him to react. She said "I mentioned to him [President Bush] about [the persecution of]

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<sup>725</sup> Thomas F. Farr, interview with author, 12 May 2009, Washington D.C.

<sup>726</sup> Ibid.

<sup>727</sup> Thomas F. Farr and William L. Saunders, "The Bush Administration and America's International Religious Freedom Policy," *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy* 32 (2009), p.950

<sup>728</sup> Nina Shea, interview with author, 11 May 2009, Washington D.C.

Christians in Iraq, and I spoke to him personally about this, but he was not interested about it ... He was interested in Christian persecution in China because his grassroots or political base wanted him to be.”<sup>729</sup>

## **6.11 Conclusion**

In sum, it was obvious that the Christian Right was involved and contributed significantly to the passage of IRFA. However, this contribution would not be successful without the coalition with other organizations and individuals that was established under the banner of the human rights issue. The ability of the Christian Right to establish contacts and alliances with other conservative movements or secular organizations and individuals galvanised the issue of international religious freedom to be discussed extensively at Congress. However, the chapter also showed limitations of the role of the Christian Right and its allies as they had no control or influence over the implementation of IRFA in US foreign policy. IRFA is specifically located under the State Department’s jurisdiction and responsibility and officials in that department were mostly viewed the legislation in a secular perspective. In addition, the implementation of the IRFA through US foreign policy was mainly based on considerations of US national interest as the US administration viewed freedom to practice any religion or religious values as an important factor in promoting peace and security at international level.

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<sup>729</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER 7

# THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT AND ITS ENGAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN ISSUES: JUBILEE 2000 DEBT RELIEF CAMPAIGN AND SUDAN AS CASE STUDIES

### 7.0 Introduction

The Christian Right is also concerting its efforts regarding international humanitarian issues. Concern and campaign for debt relief for poor countries and getting funds to fight the global HIV/AIDS pandemic became big issues in its international activism. *The Economist* in July, 2005 states:

America's evangelicals are beginning to embrace international causes such as poverty with the same fervor that they have long brought to domestic causes. The overseas issue that first excited their interest was a specifically religious one – the persecution of their fellow Christians around the world. But since the passage of the International Religious Freedom Act in 1998, in the teeth of fierce opposition from the Clinton administration, their interest has broadened to include America's policies on, among other things, sex trafficking, the civil war in Sudan, North Korea, international debt relief and AIDS. They are at the center of a whirligig of congressional legislation, presidential initiatives, diplomatic manoeuvres, international protests and stock divestment campaigns.<sup>730</sup>

The chapter studies the contributions of the Christian Right to the US global humanitarian concerns. The focus will be given to the efforts and contribution of the Christian Right in highlighting the humanitarian issues to the US administration. In this regards, the study

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<sup>730</sup> "Right On," *Economist*, July 2005

explores the role and efforts of the Christian Right's global engagement on international humanitarian issues and its contribution in framing the humanitarian issues to the US administration.

The discussion in this chapter discusses two case studies. Firstly, it highlights briefly Jubilee 2000 - an international campaign to write off the external debts of the world's poorest countries, and secondly, the Christian Right humanitarian's involvement in Sudan. While the case study on Jubilee 2000 discusses briefly the contribution of the Christian Right in framing the issue of debt relief in the United States, the Sudan case study illustrates in more details the interest of the movement in humanitarian crises in African countries. Nevertheless, both parts seek to examine the role of the Christian Right and its contribution to US foreign policy decision making in the area of humanitarian rights.

## **7.1 Global Humanitarianism as Part of Evangelicalism**

Mark R. Amstutz notes that one of the distinctive contributions of American evangelicals to the international community is their humanitarianism.<sup>731</sup> Historically, humanitarian activities were part and parcel of evangelicals' global missionary activities. The motives, inspirations and moral concerns of evangelicals towards humanitarian issues are generally derived from their religious beliefs. For instance, the common Biblical story of the "Good Samaritan" exhorts all Christians to help the needy. Nevertheless, the transnational links and networks brought evangelicals into direct contact with victims of religious persecution, famine, civil wars and poverty, particularly in less developed countries, and increased their concern with highlighting the importance of these humanitarian issues through state foreign policy initiatives.<sup>732</sup>

In addition, the traditional practice among evangelicals of tithing (giving 10% of income to a church sponsored charity) and strong financial back up from private entities mean the evangelical groups have a lucrative source of funds for their humanitarian activities. One of

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<sup>731</sup> Mark R. Amstutz, "Evangelicals and U.S. Foreign Policy: From Humanitarianism to Political Advocacy," in *American Political Science Association Annual Meeting* (Boston, 2008).

<sup>732</sup> See Doris Buss and Didi Herman, *Globalizing Family Values: The Christian Right in International Politics* (Minneapolis, 2003).

the best examples of the financial ability of evangelical organization is World Vision. By 2000, it had become the largest US NGO with its annual revenue exceeding \$700 million, mostly from private sources. Equipped with religious motivation, strong financial independence and a long tradition of involvement in global humanitarian activities, evangelical groups have subsequently become among the most structured, effective, sophisticated networkers and the best international humanitarian providers today.<sup>733</sup>

## **7.2 Humanitarian Aid and US Policy**

The overarching motive of US global humanitarianism particularly in providing humanitarian aid before the end of the Cold War was to defeat communism and this paralleled US foreign policy. Therefore, it has been argued that US foreign aid during the Cold War was designed mainly for political purposes in its global struggle against communism. In implementing this policy, the US used its foreign aid to promote economic development and policy reforms all around the world, in a large part to create stability and reduce the attraction of communist ideology, and to minimize Soviet Union diplomatic links and military advances. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, it is argued that there was no consensus over the new underlying rationale for the US foreign aid programmes. Nonetheless, foreign aid provided by the US government through bilateral development aid, economic assistance, humanitarian aid, multilateral economic contributions and military aid remains an essential instrument of US foreign policy.

Foreign assistance during the Clinton administration, for example, emphasized the promotion of “sustainable development” under the aegis of the US Agency for International Development (USAID). Among others, the Clinton administration rigorously supported six inter-related goals. They were: achievement of broad-based economic growth; development of democratic system; stabilization of world population and

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<sup>733</sup> Mark R. Amstutz, "Evangelicals and U.S. Foreign Policy: From Humanitarianism to Political Advocacy," in *American Political Science Association Annual Meeting* (Boston, 2008).

protection of human health; sustainable management of the environment; building human capacity through education and training; and meeting humanitarian needs.<sup>734</sup>

As noted earlier, a particular concern of US foreign assistance is humanitarian aid and it is considered part of the national security programme. For example, after World War II, humanitarian aid activities aimed to win friends for the United States, and during the Cold War humanitarian aid activities aimed to confine communism. Nowadays, humanitarian aid remains an important tool of US foreign policy to protect its national security. Stoddard, for example, argues that: “The ostensibly non-political nature of emergency relief seemed poised for changed in the murkier foreign policy waters of the 1990s, as the US began to explore the direct use of humanitarian assistance to achieve specific political ends.”<sup>735</sup>

Historically, US policy has avoided mixing its humanitarian assistance with religion or religious values. The reasons behind this are as follows. Firstly, the American Constitution precisely prohibits intermingling government programmes and religion. Secondly, it is to ensure that the recipients of humanitarian aid provided by the US government do not forgo assistance because they do not share the religion of the provider.<sup>736</sup> However, in 2001, a tremendous shift in US aid policy occurred from a secular emphasis to a faith-centred one. The day George W. Bush entered the White House he surprised many people by declaring that religious groups had been systematically discriminated against in the awarding of government contracts or funds, particularly in humanitarian activities. Soon after that, his officials issued a report called *Unlevel Playing Field* that argued that faith-based organizations faced too many restrictions.<sup>737</sup> As a result, the Bush administration initiated “Faith-Based Initiatives”, a new programme that promised to “open up billions of dollars in

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<sup>734</sup> Curt Tarnoff and Larry Nowels, *Foreign Aid: An Introductory Overview of U.S. Programs and Policy*, Congressional Research Service Report for Congress (2005), p. 3

<sup>735</sup> Abby Stoddard, "Trends in US Humanitarian Policy," *Humanitarian Policy Group Briefing*, April 2002, p. 1

<sup>736</sup> Abby Stoddard, *With Us or Against Us? NGO Neutrality on the Line* (Global Policy Forum, 2003 [cited December 2008]); available from <http://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/fund/2003/1200against.htm>.

<sup>737</sup> Farah Stockman, Michael Kranish, and Peter S. Canellos, *Bush Brings Faith to Foreign Aid: As Funding Rises, Christian Group Deliver Help - With a Message* (The Boston Globe, 2006 [cited 12 August 2008]); available from [http://www.boston.com/news/nation/article/2006/10/08/bush\\_bring](http://www.boston.com/news/nation/article/2006/10/08/bush_bring).



grant money competition to faith based charities” and which promised tremendous opportunities, particularly for Christian evangelical organizations.

Bush also established the “White House Office of Faith and Community Based Initiatives” to oversee the programmes. This initiative granted billions of dollars to faith-based humanitarian providers, especially from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). As a result, the funding was more widely channelled to faith-based groups. Between 2001 and 2005 as many as 52,000 awards of contracts, grants and cooperative agreements from USAID went to 159 faith-based organizations. A survey shows that between the fiscal years 2001 and 2005, the USAID humanitarian budget allocation for faith-based organizations increased from 10.5% in 2001 to 19.9% in 2005, which is almost a 100% increment. Intriguingly, the distribution of this \$1.7 billion budget of those 5 years shows that almost 99% of the allocation was exclusively for Christian organizations. In contrast, only two Jewish organizations and two Muslim groups were reported as receiving allocations from that fund.<sup>738</sup>

To date, the US is the world largest humanitarian contributor in term of dollars. US global humanitarian contributions were greater during the tenure of George W. Bush, especially after the introduction of the “Faith-Based Initiatives” as part of US foreign policy. In 2000, US humanitarian relief totalled nearly \$1.2 billion, but the contributions increased to more than double this in 2005, as the Congress appropriated a \$2.6 billion budget for programmes of humanitarian aid.<sup>739</sup>

### **7.3 The Jubilee 2000 Debt Relief Campaign**

Jubilee 2000 was an international campaign that aimed to write off the external debts of the world’s poorest countries borrowed from the most developed countries. Birdsall and Williamson argue that Jubilee 2000 was perhaps the most successful movement in all

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<sup>738</sup> Ibid.

<sup>739</sup> Curt Tarnoff and Larry Nowels, *Foreign Aid: An Introductory Overview of U.S. Programs and Policy*, Congressional Research Service Report for Congress (2005).

recorded history.<sup>740</sup> As a matter of fact, Jubilee 2000 is the only campaign in modern history that obtained support from most countries in the world. The campaign's petition was signed by 24 million people from 166 different countries and earned an entry into the 2001 Guinness Book of World Records.<sup>741</sup> The campaign was actually launched in the United Kingdom in April 1996 and by the end of 2000 the campaign had networks and advocacy groups in more than 65 countries. The concept of Jubilee 2000 was initiated in 1990 by Martin Dent, a former Professor at the University of Keele in the United Kingdom. The term "Jubilee" came from a Biblical notion in the Book of Leviticus that refers to "a time to relieve the debts of the poor". Leviticus states: "Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee too for you; each one of you is to return to his family property and each to his own clan" (25:10).

Dent himself acknowledges that the concept of "Jubilee" and his debt cancellation campaign was inspired by his study of the Bible and his ethical understanding of the third world's poverty being mainly because of debt.<sup>742</sup> In his memoirs, Dent argues that the decision to retain the name "Jubilee 2000" resulted in the strong and influential backing of most of religious leaders, particularly of Christian faiths. He notes:

We have derived enormous momentum from the support of all churches. They have acted like the leaven in the lump to help produce the present extensive level of support for Jubilee 2000. They have been effective inspirers of action in the secular field and have brought to the campaign a dimension of the call for justice and compassion.<sup>743</sup>

### 7.3.1 The Christian Right and Jubilee 2000 Campaign in the US

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<sup>740</sup> Nancy Birdsall and John Williamson, *Delivering on Debt Relief: From IMF Gold to a New Aid Architecture* (Washington, DC, 2002), p. 1

<sup>741</sup> Dennis R. Hoover, "What Would Moses Do? Debt Relief in the Jubilee Year," *Religion in the News* 4 (Spring, 2001), p. 4

<sup>742</sup> Dent revealed this argument in an interview conducted by Australian Broadcasting Corporation in 1999. See Joshua W. Busby, "Debt Relief and US Foreign Policy" (Georgetown University, 2007)

<sup>743</sup> Martin Dent and Bill Peters, *The Crisis of Poverty and Debt in the Third World* (1999), p. 32–33

Jubilee 2000 campaign that was started in the United Kingdom was spread out all over the world. In the United States, intensive debates on debt relief took place during the last two years of the Clinton administration (1999–2000). To gain a full picture of the central issues in the debates, it is necessary to trace back the debt relief historical background. The debates actually started on the issue of poverty reduction in the most heavily indebted poor countries (HIPCs), known as the “HIPC Initiative”. The initiative was part of Clinton’s neo-liberalism policy to create broad-based global economic growth emphasis on global poverty reduction. Timothy Geithner, the Treasury Undersecretary for International Affairs, suggested in his testimony before Congress that the US administration should emphasize poverty reduction. He argued:

Our view is that we need to reform the basic policy framework, which is the foundation of any defective debt program. We want to see the IMF and the World Bank develop, with input from the governments and civil society in the beneficiary countries with the NGO community, a new framework that combines realistic growth oriented macroeconomic policies with a greater emphasis on poverty reduction.<sup>744</sup>

Likewise, Robert E. Rubin, the Treasury Secretary, explained:

Our policy tries to strike an economically sensible balance between competing considerations with respect to debt reduction. Firstly, debt reduction is unlikely to have lasting benefit if not accompanied by meaningful economic reform, so that the resources freed up by debt reduction are used for good purpose ... Secondly, our approach is designed to support substantial reductions in debt service payments and total debt burdens to levels consistent with what these countries can reasonably be expected to afford. And, here, there is a tension with respect to debt relief, and we have tried to find a sensible balance. On the one hand, many developing countries are simply overwhelmed by unsustainable debt burdens. On the other hand, if the private sector does not believe that a country has a culture of credit in which there is a commitment to repaying

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<sup>744</sup> , "U.S. Representative Jim Leach (R-IA) Hold Hearings on Heavily Indebted Poor Countries," in *House Banking Committee*, US Congress (1999).

debt, private sector capital probably won't flow to that country, and private sector capital is an absolute requisite for economic growth over time.<sup>745</sup>

In the United States, the campaign gained support from various groups – both secular and religious. As noted by Mark O’Keefe, the success of the Jubilee 2000 campaign in the United States “illustrates what can happen when the religious left and right unite on an issue.” Laura Billings of the St. Paul Pioneer Press described the coalition movement of Jubilee 2000 as “almost miraculous ... stretching from Catholics to Mennonites, Pat Robertson to Jesse Jackson.”<sup>746</sup> Billy Graham, a prominent Christian Right leader showed his strong support for the Jubilee campaign and asserted that: “The poor countries are saddled with enormous debts, debt they have no hope of ever repaying but which nevertheless sentence them to an endless cycle of poverty, malnutrition and disease.”<sup>747</sup> Most of the Christian Right groups saw the campaign as a religious issue and put in intensive efforts to lobby policy makers. Dennis R. Hoover argues that: “The Jubilee 2000 proved that religious lobbying can still, at least in certain circumstances, tip the scales of American policy making.”<sup>748</sup> In addition, according to Helleiner and Cameron, the Christian Right had successfully switched the justification of debt relief from a purely “secular” – human rights and economic justice – point of view, to a theological discourse of forgiveness and alleviation of poverty.<sup>749</sup> Birdsall and Williamson conclude that the religious arguments as well as the timing of the campaign were the major factors that attracted all levels of people and groups regardless of their left or right ideology. They sum

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<sup>745</sup> , "FY2000 Foreign Ops Appropriations," in *House Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs of the House Appropriations Committee*, US Congress (1999).

<sup>746</sup> Quoted in Dennis R. Hoover, "What Would Moses Do? Debt Relief in the Jubilee Year," *Religion in the News* 4 (Spring, 2001), p. 2

<sup>747</sup> Debt and Debt Remission: A Gospel Challenge (Jubilee Debt Campaign, [cited 21 August 2009]); available from <http://www.jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk/download.php?id=459>

<sup>748</sup> Dennis R. Hoover, "What Would Moses Do? Debt Relief in the Jubilee Year," *Religion in the News* 4 (Spring, 2001), p. 4–5

<sup>749</sup> Eric Helleiner and Geoffrey Cameron, "Another World Order?: The Bush Administration and HIPC Debt Cancellation," *New Political Economy* 11 (2006)

up this phenomenon as a “unique achievement, a testament to the compelling religious frame.”<sup>750</sup>

As a result, the religious argument and its tie with the coming of the new millennium easily motivated the average person to understand and support the debt relief. The debt relief campaign eventually became a nationwide issue and everybody saw it as an important matter. Sonny Callahan, who was a ranking member of the House and Senate, described this debt relief phenomenon as “a speeding train. We’ve got the Pope and every missionary in the world involved in this thing, and they persuaded just about everyone here that this is the noble thing to do.”<sup>751</sup>

At the legislative level, it is believed that the campaigners and lobbyists, particularly the Christian Right advocacy groups, were responsible for persuading influential lawmakers, notably Jesse Helms (R-NC) and Spencer Banchus (R-Alabama). The view is supported by Joshua W. Busby, who also argues that the factors behind the success of the campaign were not only the simplicity of the argument and the timing of the campaign, but also the role of the Christian Right groups. He states: “Campaigners, particularly the religious right advocacy groups, were been responsible for persuading influential lawmakers, notably Senator Jesse Helms and Representative Spencer Banchus of Alabama. Both of them arguably supported the plan because of the religious justification on the foreign aid and debt relief.”<sup>752</sup>

Jesse Helms, a conservative Congressman was considered to be the main actor responsible for increasing awareness about debt relief at Congress. In addition, as the head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, he was the most influential person in prescribing US foreign relations. One of the stories about Helms and his leading role in changing US foreign policy to become more “moral action” especially on the issue of debt relief was his meeting with Bono, the U2 lead singer. In September 2000, Bono met Jesse Helms to

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<sup>750</sup> Nancy Birdsall and John Williamson, *Delivering on Debt Relief: From IMF Gold to a New Aid Architecture* (Washington, DC, 2002), p. 51

<sup>751</sup> Joseph Kahn, "Leaders in Congress Agree to Debt Relief for Poor Nations," *The New York Times*, 18 October 2000.

<sup>752</sup> Joshua W. Busby, "Debt Relief and US Foreign Policy" (Georgetown University, 2007), p. 245

discuss poor countries' debt relief and the AIDS pandemic. After a long discussion about the matters, Helms reportedly embraced Bono and promised his commitment to solve the debt relief. Bono claimed that Helms was fascinated with the Biblical story of Jubilee Year and felt it as a spiritual burden. Bono states: "I talked to him about the Biblical origin of the idea of Jubilee Year ... He was genuinely moved by the story of the continent of Africa, and he said to me, 'America needs to do more'. I think he felt it as a burden on a spiritual level."<sup>753</sup> After the meeting, Helms was very impressed with Bono's ability to convince him to pursue those matters. He said: "He has depth that I didn't expect. He is led by the Lord to do something about starving people in Africa."<sup>754</sup>

In March 1999, the Debt Relief for Poverty Reduction Act of 1999 (H.R.1095) was introduced by Representative Jim Leach (R-IA). The legislation would require the United States to provide bilateral debt relief and improve the provision of multilateral debt relief. In October 1999, Representative Connie Mack (R-FL) introduced a legislation that would write off most of HIPC's debt owed to the United States.<sup>755</sup> Consequently, in October 2000, Jesse Helms and Spencer Bachus led a strange coalition of liberal Democrats and conservative Republicans to pressure the Senate and the House to approve President Clinton's \$435 million debt cancellation.

#### **7.4 The Christian Right and Humanitarian Issues in Sudan**

The campaign for global religious freedom and subsequently the introduction of the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) in 1998 undoubtedly stimulated the Christian Right movement to become more focused on broader US foreign policy especially international humanitarian issues in Africa. Consequently, the Christian Right was seen to successfully raise the awareness of human rights abuses and the humanitarian crisis in Sudan. The issues, such as of the persecution of Sudanese Christians and animists in

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<sup>753</sup> S. Dominus, "Question for Bono: Relief Pitcher," *New York Times*, 8 October 2000.

<sup>754</sup> John Wagner, "In Helms, Bono Finds the Ally He's Looking For," *Raleigh News and Observer*, 21 September 2000.

<sup>755</sup> The bills, however, excluded countries that support international terrorism or have excessive military spending, gross violations of human rights and allegedly involved in drug trafficking.

Southern Sudan and the humanitarian crisis in Darfur, became important aspects of the Christian Right's engagement on global humanitarian issues.

#### **7.4.1 The Christian Right and Sudan: A Brief Historical Background**

Historically, the involvement of evangelical and conservative Christian organizations in Sudan is not a recent phenomenon. As discussed earlier, American evangelicals started to become involved in the missionaries projects in Africa, including Sudan, long before the introduction of IRFA in 1998. In the early stages, the involvement of the conservative Christians in Sudan was largely because of humanitarian issues and proselytizing activities. The Sudanese civil war and famine attracted many Christian organizations and humanitarian organizations to go to Sudan. They provided support such as the construction of clinics and schools, medicine and food to Sudanese people, especially in Southern Sudan. For instance, Samaritan's Purse, a conservative evangelical relief organization led by Franklin Graham, established its relief networks including running its own hospital in Southern Sudan many years ago and its hospital has in fact experienced several aerial attacks by the Sudanese army.<sup>756</sup> In addition to the practical aid given, the evangelicals also showed tremendous interest in proselytizing to the Sudanese people especially in Southern Sudan. In 1996, it was estimated that there were around 44,000 American missionaries in Sudan and this figure escalated to 421,000 in 2001.<sup>757</sup> Arguably, because of their proselytizing activities, the churches in Sudan have grown drastically and it has been reported Sudan was the fastest-growing church in the world.<sup>758</sup> There is also an argument that suggests that in the early 1990s, the focus of conservative Christians changed from humanitarian relief to the issues of the "suffering church" and the "persecution of Christians".

Gradually, conservative Christian groups, notably evangelicals, became major players in placing Sudan as one of the priorities for US foreign policy in Africa and continuously put

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<sup>756</sup> Sudan (Samaritan's Purse International Relief, [cited 23 May 2010]); available from [http://www.samaritanpurse.org/index.php/Where\\_We\\_Work/sudan/](http://www.samaritanpurse.org/index.php/Where_We_Work/sudan/)

<sup>757</sup> Mark R. Amstutz, "Evangelicals and U.S. Foreign Policy: From Humanitarianism to Political Advocacy," in *American Political Science Association Annual Meeting* (Boston, 2008), p. 13

<sup>758</sup> Asteris Huliaras, "Evangelist, Oil Companies, and Terrorists: The Bush Administration's Policy towards Sudan," *Orbis* (Fall 2006), p. 712

pressure on the American government to intervene in Sudan.<sup>759</sup> John Danforth, a former US special envoy for Sudan's peace process in 2001 agrees that Sudan is "a very, very high priority" for US foreign policy. He argues that, besides factors such as the news coverage on Sudan and the crisis in Sudan, the interests of the conservative Christians on the issue of religious freedom in Sudan was also part of the reason why the US has given special attention to Sudan.<sup>760</sup> Similarly, Asteris Huliaras contends that the Christian Right's contribution to Bush's foreign policy toward Sudan was "real, deeper and consistent". He suggests that "never before so many religious activists campaigned so consistently on a single issue, and probably never before were religious activists so successful in persuading a president to pursue such a policy of "constructive engagement". Evangelicals played a significant role in placing Sudan on the U.S. foreign policy agenda."<sup>761</sup> The suggestion that conservative Christians played their part in shaping US foreign policy towards Sudan is also supported by Allen Wisdom, Vice President of the Institute on Religion and Democracy (IRD), a conservative Christian organization. In an interview, he argues that:

Religious groups particularly conservative evangelicals are most influential on US foreign policy in cases where other groups are not interested in the issue. Sudan would be the particular case. As other actors in foreign policy have least direct interest in Sudan, churches on other hand, because we have partner churches in Sudan, and we have missionaries in Sudan who are working on humanitarian issues. They were more influential because other people are not paying attention to Sudan. In addition, they managed to get public attention on foreign issue that might otherwise be neglected.<sup>762</sup>

In addition, Christian Right leaders wrote and spoke frequently on the crisis in Sudan in its media network – magazines, newspapers and websites covered the Sudanese stories in

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<sup>759</sup> Matthias Muindi, "Christian Right Might Inflamm War," *Observer Fear*, May 2001

<sup>760</sup> Asteris Huliaras, "Evangelist, Oil Companies, and Terrorists: The Bush Administration's Policy towards Sudan," *Orbis* (Fall 2006), p. 717

<sup>761</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 723

<sup>762</sup> Allan Wisdom, interview with author, 6 April 2009, Washington D.C.



more detail and more often compared to the conventional media. As early as 1997, Pat Robertson's Christian Broadcast Network (CBN), for example, continuously reported on the anti-Christian situation in Southern Sudan and called it a "plight", urging the audience to give special attention to their fellow persecuted Christians in that area.<sup>763</sup> In addition, some of the Christian Right leaders were invited to testify before Congress; for instance, in 2000, Franklin Graham was called to testify before the Senate Foreign Relation Committee regarding the human rights and humanitarian crisis in Sudan. In the hearing, Graham said the killing events in Southern Sudan were a present day "holocaust" and suggested the US government impose appropriate sanctions and intervene into the crisis militarily.<sup>764</sup>

#### **7.4.2 From IRFA to the Sudan Peace Act**

In its annual reports, the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has consistently listed Sudan under the category of "Countries of Particular Concern" (CPC) since 1999.<sup>765</sup> Sudan's human rights abuses became more obvious in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. The USCIRF 2001 report, for instance, declared Sudan to be "the world's most violent abused of the right to freedom of religion and belief". And in its 2002 report, USCIRF stated the religious persecution in Sudan was "intertwined with ... deliberate denial of humanitarian assistance, abduction of women and children into conditions of slavery, and the forcible displacement of populations from oil-producing areas."<sup>766</sup> Both reports then urged the US government to become involved in Southern Sudan under the banner of humanitarian intervention. There is a suggestion that the implementation of IRFA by the State Department, particularly in Sudan, had "a slightly Christian bias". It claims that the crisis garnered attention from USCIRF and the State Department largely because the victims being killed in the crisis were mainly Christians. It thus gained

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<sup>763</sup> Walid Phares, "The Sudanese Battle for American Opinion," *Middle East Quarterly* (1998), p. 7

<sup>764</sup> Hannes Gerhardt, "Geopolitics, Ethics, and the Evangelicals' Commitment to Sudan," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 26 (2008)

<sup>765</sup> Countries of Particular Concern (CPC) are countries that are considered by the Commission on International Religious Freedom to be engaged in severe violations of religious freedom. The CPC designation makes these countries subject to US diplomatic and economic sanction as prescribed in IRFA.

<sup>766</sup> *Annual Report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom*, (2002), p. 4-5

attention from the conservative Christian organizations who suggested the US administration should intervene in Sudan.<sup>767</sup> As Steve Hirsch argues, “The war in Sudan is, in part, a religious one. That helps explain why conservative Christian groups were among the first to call for stronger U.S. action.”<sup>768</sup>

The possibility of the Christian Right lobbying on the US administration on Sudanese issues was also increased due to their collaborations and alliances with non-evangelical organizations, particularly Jewish organizations, humanitarian groups and African-American activists. In 1995, Michael Horowitz, Senior Fellow at the Hudson Institute, published an article called *New Intolerance between the Crescent and the Cross* in the Wall Street Journal. He claimed that “Christians are the Jews of the 21<sup>st</sup> century” and the “victims of choice of thug regimes” and alleged that Christians have been persecuted in Africa and the Middle East. He also mentioned specifically “the victims of imprisonment, beating, torture and saddling into slavery of thousands of Christians in Sudan by the radical Islamic regime.” He then suggested the US administration should intervene politically.<sup>769</sup> This initiative triggered Jewish organizations such the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Anti-Defamation League to join the Christian Right campaign for religious freedom in Sudan. African-American activists also showed an interest in Sudan and saw the alliances with other lobbies were an opportunity for them to inject their influence in the US administration. Consequently, groups like the National Black Leadership Committee and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) collaborated with other lobbies to establish a strong coalition political force against human rights and humanitarian rights abuses in Sudan.

As a result, from 1999 to 2002, conservative Christian groups such as Family Research Council (FRC), human rights activists such as Michael Horowitz<sup>770</sup> and the Congressional

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<sup>767</sup> Matthew L. Fore, "Shall Weigh Your God and You: Assessing the Imperialistic Implications of the International Religious Freedom Act in Muslim Countries," *Duke Law Journal* 52 (2001), p. 449

<sup>768</sup> Steve Hirsch, "Why Sudan Matters," *National Law Journal* (2001), p. 1642

<sup>769</sup> Asteris Huliaras, "Evangelist, Oil Companies, and Terrorists: The Bush Administration's Policy towards Sudan," *Orbis* (Fall 2006), p. 713

<sup>770</sup> Michael Horowitz is a former advisor to President Reagan. In April 2001, he and other human rights activists chained themselves to the Sudanese Embassy in Washington DC.

Black Caucus formed an informal coalition to lobby Congress to give more attention to the crisis in Southern Sudan. FRC was one of the main Christian Right organizations that worked together with other international religious freedom advocacy groups. In 1998, FRC's senior fellow, William Saunders, headed an FRC-sponsored trip to Sudan to document the human rights abuses in Sudan, particularly on the issue of the persecution of Christians in Southern Sudan. In 2000, Saunders reportedly went to Sudan once again as an official for FRC to extend his investigation into religious persecution.<sup>771</sup>

One of the coalition's demands was to impose US capital market sanctions on any American oil companies investing in Sudan under the justification that it contributes to the human rights abuses in Southern Sudan. This grassroots divestment campaign was drawn mainly on the issues of religious persecution and slavery in Sudan. In fact, from 1998, USCIRF appealed to the Clinton administration to include capital markets in the sanctions to ensure the money raised in US markets was not diverted to Sudan, fearing it would be used to fund the human rights abuses. In June 2001, the House of Representatives voted in favour of the Commission's suggestion to support the Sudan Peace Act bill, with 422 for and 22 opposed.<sup>772</sup> The aim of the Act was to force the Sudanese government to engage in a peace agreement with Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) of Southern Sudan. According to Ed Royce (R-CA), chairman for the Africa Subcommittee, the bill requires companies that intend to raise capital in the US for their operations in Sudan to disclose the nature of those operations. The objective of the disclosure is to ensure the operations will not have any relationship with human rights abuses and religious freedom violation taking place in Sudan.<sup>773</sup> In addition, the bill allows the president to use the international Emergency Economic Powers Act to "prohibit any entity engaged in development of the oil and gas sector in Sudan from raising capital in the United States or from trading its securities (or depository receipts with respect to its securities) in any capital market in the

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<sup>771</sup> Janet Chrismar, *Sudan's Holy War: A Call to Action* (Religion Today, 2001 [cited 13 April 2010]); available from <http://www.crosstalk.com/news/religiontoday/525974>

<sup>772</sup> , "Sudan Peace Act H.R. 2052," (6 June 2001).

<sup>773</sup> Janet Chismar, "Sudan's Holy War," *Religion Today*, 8 June 2001

United States.”<sup>774</sup> As with the 1997 Executive Order that barred US companies from doing business in Sudan, the Act actually targeted foreign companies, specifically Talisman Energy Inc., a Canadian oil company, Lundin AB, a Swedish oil company, and China National Petroleum Company that were doing oil and gas exploration in Sudan, but at the same time were also investing in business in the US.<sup>775</sup> The proposed bill arguably signified a victory for conservative Christian groups involved in lobbying for that kind of sanction since the introduction of IRFA. In the case of FRC, immediately after the bill was passed in the House, William Saunders of FRC made a statement that FRC and Christians could assist to move the bill along. He was reported as saying: “For more than 10 years, the government of Sudan has waged a cruel war against its own citizens, a war that resulted in the greatest humanitarian and human rights catastrophe in the world ... Now is the time to take action and contact Congress to pass the Sudan Peace Act.”<sup>776</sup>

However, the Senate amended the Sudan Peace Act and introduced a new section (S. 180) that excluded both the capital market sanctions and the disclosure requirements. Arguably, the amendment was made due to some pressure from business lobbies and the White House itself disavouring the contents of the Act over concerns that the capital market sanction would create a “boomerang effect” for the US economy.<sup>777</sup> The International Trade Reporter in its comment stated that “A broad coalition, ranging from the Christian Right to the Congressional Black Caucus, back the capital market sanctions ... But business groups believe the sanctions provisions will set a new precedent for using access to US capital market to enforce a variety of political objectives.”<sup>778</sup> In addition, some traditional human rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International did not support the campaign. The State Department spokesman, Richard Boucher, argued that consideration of the imposed economic sanctions in the Sudan Peace Act “would undermine our financial market competitiveness and end up impeding the free flow of

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<sup>774</sup> Section 9. Prohibiting on Trading in the United States Capital Markets, "Sudan Peace Act H.R. 2052," (2001)

<sup>775</sup> See detail discussion in Jamera Rome, "Sudan: Oil and War," *Review of African Political Economy* 30 (2003)

<sup>776</sup> Quoted in Janet Chismar, "Sudan's Holy War," *Religion Today*, 8 June 2001. Available from <http://www.rim.org/muslim/Sudan2.htm>

<sup>777</sup> *Financial Times*, 27 September 2001

<sup>778</sup> *International Trade Reporter* 19 (17 October, 2002)

capital worldwide.”<sup>779</sup> Hufbauer and Oegg, two senior fellows at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, argue that if the sanction was implemented, it would pose long-term harm to the US economy. Describing the legislation as “a new idea, a bad idea, and a frontier that should not be crossed”, they contend that: “The claim made by supporters of capital-market sanctions, that they do not impose any cost on the US economy is misleading. Restrictions on capital markets would run counter to the US commitment to open markets and the free flow of capital. Interfering with these markets for foreign policy purposes would, over time, provide a serious disincentive for foreign companies to list on US securities exchanges and result in their moving financing from New York to London, Frankfurt, or Tokyo.”<sup>780</sup>

Finally, in October 2002, with a 359-8 vote in the House of Representatives and by unanimous consent in the Senate, the Congress passed a new “Sudan Peace Act” that content of which had with no provision for capital market sanctions.<sup>781</sup> Among the main Congressional sponsors of the Sudan Peace Act were Senator Sam Brownback (R-KS), Congressmen Frank Wolf (R-VA), Donald Payne (R-NJ), Tom Tancredo (R-CO) and Eleanor Holmes-Norton (D-DC). In the same month, President Bush signed the H.R. 5531 the “Sudan Peace Act” into Law, which authorized the president discretion to give non-lethal aid up to \$300 million over three years “for assistance to areas outside [Sudanese] government control.”<sup>782</sup> Though the campaign and lobby for divestment in Sudan did not succeed, the role of the Christian Right was important in ending the decades of war in Southern Sudan. The movement was considered to have played a significant role in pushing the Bush administration to take a strong initiative to bring both parties, the SPLA and the Sudanese government, together to sign the peace pact.<sup>783</sup> Allen D. Hertzke, for

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<sup>779</sup>In Ingrid J. Tamm, "Dangerous Appetites: Human Rights Activism and Conflict Commodities," *Human Rights Quarterly* 26 (2004), p. 699

<sup>780</sup>Gary Clyde Hufbauer and Barbara Oegg, *Capital-Market Access: A New Frontier in the Sanctions Debate* (Peterson Institute for International Economic, 2002 [cited 26 May 2010]); available from <http://www.piie.com/publications/pb/pb.cfm?ResearchID=57>

<sup>781</sup> See Public Law 107-245-Oct. 21, 2002. Available from <Http:www.state.gov/documents/organization/19897.pdf>

<sup>782</sup> See Section 5 of the Act at 50 USC 1701 note.

<sup>783</sup>Hannes Gerhardt, "Geopolitics, Ethics, and the Evangelicals' Commitment to Sudan," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 26 (2008), Allen D. Hertzke, *Freeing God's Children: The Unlikely Alliance for Global Human Rights*

example, claims that it was because of the Christian Right and IRFA that the Bush administration passed the Sudan Peace Act in 2002.<sup>784</sup> The passage of the Sudan Peace Act 2002 evoked an angry response from the Khartoum administration who called the legislation “a breach of Sudan’s sovereignty” and the Sudanese charge d’affaires in Washington DC, Harun Khidir, blamed mainly the Christian Right for pushing the Act through Congress.<sup>785</sup> Despite that, the introduction of the 2002 Sudan Peace Act was a key turning point that led both parties to sign “The Comprehensive Peace Agreement” in 2005, consequently ending the decades of wars between the SPLA and the Sudanese government. The next section discusses the involvement of the Christian Right in globalizing the humanitarian crisis in Darfur.

### **7.4.3 The Christian Right and the Humanitarian Crisis in Darfur**

Generally, there is no visible connection between the conflicts in Southern Sudan and the Darfur crisis, except for the fact that both crises were brought to the attention of Bush administration by the Christian Right movement who framed both issues in the light of human rights and humanitarian abuses. Darfur is a predominantly Muslim region located in the west of Sudan. Since 2002, the Darfur humanitarian crisis has increasingly gained international attention. In a report for Congress, Ted Dagne describes the crisis as follows:

The crisis in Darfur began in February 2003, when two rebel groups emerged to challenge the National Islamic Front (NIF) government in Darfur. The Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) claim that the government of Sudan discriminates against Muslim African ethnic groups in Darfur and has systematically targeted these ethnic groups since the early 1990s. The government of Sudan dismisses the SLA and JEM as terrorists. The conflict pits three

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(Lanham, MD, 2004), Asteris Huliaras, "Evangelist, Oil Companies, and Terrorists: The Bush Administration's Policy towards Sudan," *Orbis* (Fall 2006)

<sup>784</sup> Allen D. Hertzke et al., "Legislating International Religious Freedom," (Washington D.C., 2006)

<sup>785</sup> Sudan Peace Act (Christian Solidarity International, 2002 [cited 16 May 2010]); available from <http://www.csi-int.org>

African ethnic groups, the Fur, Zaghawa, and Masslaeit, against nomadic Arab ethnic groups.<sup>786</sup>

Today, Darfur hosts the largest USAID humanitarian relief operation in Africa and one of the largest USAID humanitarian assistance programmes in the world. In 2008, nearly 13,000 Americans were working as humanitarian workers in Sudan and the majority of them were serving in Darfur.<sup>787</sup>

The Christian Right's interest in Darfur became obvious when it allied itself with some Jewish organizations to initiate the Save Darfur movement, focusing the humanitarian abuses in Darfur in 2004. The Save Darfur movement marked a new development in the Christian Right's international engagement as the majority of victims in Darfur are Muslims. Interestingly, within a few months Save Darfur became a well publicised movement and an influential organization in Washington DC. This begs the question, why did the Save Darfur movement successfully gain substantial attention from the US administration and why has Darfur, a strategically unimportant region in Africa, become a focal point for American foreign policy? Describing the Christian Right activists as "the true vanguard", Arlene Getz gave strong credit to the Christian Right in lead the Save Darfur movement in the United States.<sup>788</sup> Similarly, according to Hamilton and Hazlett, the Christian Right was the true leader in elevating the Darfur crisis to the US administration as well as creating awareness within the American public. They argue that, "Without their leadership, legislative action on Darfur would have been much delayed, or may never have occurred at all."<sup>789</sup>

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<sup>786</sup> Ted Dagne, *Sudan: The Crisis in Darfur and Status of the North-South Peace Agreement*, CRS Report for Congress (2009), p. 2

<sup>787</sup> *Testimony of Richard S. Williamson, The President's Special Envoy to Sudan*, (2008). <http://foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/WilliamsonTestimony080423a.pdf>

<sup>788</sup> Arlene Getz, "Packaging a Tragedy: What the Save Darfur Movement Did Right, where it went wrong - and What Its Strategy Can Teach Us About the Future of Political Advocacy," *Newsweek*, 26 October 2007

<sup>789</sup> In *ibid.*

The 2004 US presidential election is part of the reasons why the Darfur issue cannot be ignored by the US administration. David Lanz argues that the timing of the Darfur advocacy campaign that took place near the 2004 presidential election was one of the main factors that could explain why the issue in Darfur gained considerable attention from the Bush administration.<sup>790</sup> As discussed earlier, the Christian Right grass roots votes significantly contributed to the victory of George W. Bush in his first presidential election and the Save Darfur movement was led by the Christian Right; thus to totally ignore the advocacy would have a disastrous impact on Bush's second term campaign. La Franchi in his writing in the Christian Science Monitor magazine suggests that the special attention the Bush administration paid to the Darfur crisis was "certainly cheered not just by a coterie of evangelical advisers, but also the sizable Christian Right constituency."<sup>791</sup>

The second factor is that the Christian Right's experiences in highlighting human rights issues in Southern Sudan and its strong leadership quality were able to attract diverse organizations to join the cause. The movement successfully gathered many different organizations, including Christian organizations, Jewish organizations, human rights advocacy groups, university students and celebrities. The coalition of activists in the Save Darfur movement, which presented itself as "an alliance of over 130 diverse faith-based, humanitarian, and human rights organizations" later on probably became one of the largest international social movements since anti-apartheid<sup>792</sup> or the anti-Vietnam War movement in the United States.<sup>793</sup> David Lanz asserts that the Save Darfur movement was "the largest international social movement ... that had an important impact in shaping the international response to the Darfur conflict."<sup>794</sup> Consequently, this coalition for a single focus issue – Darfur – was able to maximize its impact not only to increase American public awareness but also to influence the US administration. Chester A. Crocker, former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs in the Reagan administration states that: "The base [Christian

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<sup>790</sup> David Lanz, "Save Darfur: A Movement and Its Discontents," *African Affairs* 108 (2009), p. 670-671

<sup>791</sup> Howard LaFranchi, "Evangelized Foreign Policy," *The Christian Science Monitor* 2006. Available at <http://www.fco.cat/files/imatgesa/Butllei%2042/csm.pdf>. Accessed on 24th April 2010

<sup>792</sup> David Lanz, "Save Darfur: A Movement and Its Discontents," *African Affairs* 108 (2009)

<sup>793</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, *Saviors and Survivors: Darfur, Politics and the War on Terror* (London, 2009)

<sup>794</sup> David Lanz, "Save Darfur: A Movement and Its Discontents," *African Affairs* 108 (2009), p. 669



Right] is speaking up on the question of Sudan ... this will add to existing pressures for the [Bush] administration to do what it can to, if necessary, use a two-by-four to gain the attention of Khartoum's authorities."<sup>795</sup>

The Christian Right, as a key force in the Save Darfur coalition, was the first to characterize the crisis in Darfur as "genocide" as early as 2003.<sup>796</sup> By projecting the crisis as "genocide", the Christian Right and its allies successfully placed the Darfur crisis as an important issue that needed urgent attention from the US administration. According to Alex de Waal, the Save Darfur movement "represents an important moral awakening in North America with respect to human suffering on the other side of the world. Without the label "genocide", it is unlikely that the Darfur movement would have gained such vigour and mass support."<sup>797</sup>

In April 2004, Frank Wolf (R-VA), the same congressman that introduced the Wolf-Specter Bill on international religious freedom in 1997, was the first American politician that labelled the humanitarian crisis in Darfur as "genocide". Within a few months, the term "genocide" was used to describe the level of atrocities in Darfur. It thus attracted legislators from both parties, Republicans and Democrats, to show their support for the Save Darfur movement. On 25 June 2004, 52 Senators from both the Republican and Democrat parties sent a letter to Colin Powell, the Secretary of State, and urged him to increase American humanitarian assistance to Darfur. In the letter, they also propose that the US administration should impose economic sanctions, a travel ban and freezing of assets, and should call for a UN resolution for a peacekeeping mission to Darfur.<sup>798</sup> President Bush immediately responded to that letter and, on 30 June, sent Colin Powell to investigate the nature of the crisis. Powell presented his report to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in September 2004 and he concluded that "genocide" was real and

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<sup>795</sup> Alan Cooperman, "Evangelicals Urge Bush to Do More for Sudan," *Washington Post*, 3 August 2004.

<sup>796</sup> Brendan Stone, *The Logic of Human Intervention* (Human Beams International Politics, 2006 [cited 7 April 2008]); available from <http://politics.humanbeams.com/index.php/politics/comments/p1206st>

<sup>797</sup> Alex de Waal, "Reflections on the Difficulties of Defining Darfur's Crisis as Genocide," *Harvard Human Rights Journal* 20 (2007), p. 32-33

<sup>798</sup> Glenn Kessler, "Powell, in Sudan, Presses for Action," *The Washington Post*, 1 July 2004.

taking place in Darfur. He stated “that genocide has been committed in Darfur, and that the government of Sudan and the Janjawid bear responsibility, and that genocide may still be occurring”,<sup>799</sup>

However, before Powell’s investigation into the conflict in Sudan, Congress officially passed a non-binding resolution condemning the atrocities in Darfur on 22 July 2004. The resolution called the crisis “genocide”, blaming the Sudanese government and urging the president to intervene together with the international community.<sup>800</sup> The resolution was the first ever that called an ongoing war “genocide” and, to date, never in the history of the US has an ongoing conflict been declared “genocide” other than the Darfur crisis. However, in 2005, John Danforth, the US ambassador to Sudan, clarified in the BBC’s Panorama programme that the Bush administration’s declaration of the Darfur atrocities as “genocide” was made because of an “internal consumption” factor in the domestic political scenario; that it was to please the Christian Right constituents.<sup>801</sup>

Despite the “labelling” of the conflict in Darfur as “genocide” by the US administration that signified the victory of Save Darfur, the movement did not feel it was sufficient to pressure the Sudanese government. In August 2004, Ted Haggard, one of the most popular Christian Right leaders at that time, with 34 other conservative evangelical leaders, sent a letter urging President Bush to provide considerable humanitarian aid to Darfur, and to take serious and appropriate action against the Sudanese government allegedly responsible for the “genocide” and humanitarian crisis in Darfur. The letter stated: “Now is ... the time for the United States government to take a more decisive role to prevent further slaughter and death.” The letter also called for the Bush administration to pursue “active exploration of all available intervention options, including sending troops to Darfur ... in order to stop the killing.”<sup>802</sup> In other words, the movement suggested that the only way to solve the

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<sup>799</sup> *Testimony of Secretary Collin Powell on the Current Situation in Sudan and Prospect for Peace*, Hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (2004).

<sup>800</sup> House Concurrent Resolution 467, Senate Concurrent Resolution 133

<sup>801</sup> Anne Penketh, "White House Described Darfur as 'Genocide' to Please Christian Right," *The Independent*, 2 July 2005.

<sup>802</sup> Alan Cooperman, "Evangelicals Urge Bush to Do More for Sudan," *Washington Post*, 3 August 2004.

humanitarian crisis in Darfur was by military intervention. The movement also started using mass media advertising campaigns targeting American people to make them aware of the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Darfur. Mahmood Mamdani notes that a Christian Right sponsored advertisement calling for the US government to intervene militarily in Sudan appeared several times in the *New York Times*.<sup>803</sup> Likewise, the *International Herald Tribune* reported that Save Darfur used “full page newspaper ads, television spots and billboards calling for more aggressive action in Darfur, including the imposition of a no-flight zone over the region.”<sup>804</sup> In May 2006, Save Darfur organized a rally in Washington DC and successfully collected more than 750,000 signatures, mostly from Christian Right grassroots organizations who urged President Bush to engage more deliberately in the Darfur crisis.<sup>805</sup> In response to all those activities, Edozie claims the Save Darfur movement manipulated a moral justification to impart a new international humanitarian interventionism in Africa and contends that the Save Darfur rhetoric of saving Darfurians is merely “a slogan that masks a big power agenda to re-colonize Africa.”<sup>806</sup> Likewise, Mamdani sees the approach taken by the Save Darfur movement as counterproductive for a peace solution in Sudan. He argues that the “evangelical movement does not seek to end the civil war in Darfur; rather, it calls for a military intervention in the civil war without bothering to address the likely consequences of that intervention.”<sup>807</sup> However, the Save Darfur advocates received a response that was not expected from the Bush administration. Instead of military intervention, Bush’s foreign policy towards Sudan was more lenient as his administration committed to a peaceful solution to the crisis in Sudan with the Khartoum government. The next sub-section highlights briefly some historical background of the US foreign policy towards Sudan.

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<sup>803</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, *Saviors and Survivors: Darfur, Politics and the War on Terror* (London, 2009), p. 70

<sup>804</sup> In *ibid.*, p. 48-49

<sup>805</sup> Chuck Neubauer, "Thousands Rally to Stop the Violence in Darfur," *Los Angeles Times*, 1 May 2006.

<sup>806</sup> In Rita Kiki Edozie, "Global Citizens and Sudanese Subjects: Reading Mamdani's *Saviours and Survivors*," *African Affairs* 108 (2009), p. 667

<sup>807</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, *Saviors and Survivors: Darfur, Politics and the War on Terror* (London, 2009), p. 70

#### 7.4.4 US Foreign Policy towards Sudan

Historically, US foreign policy towards Sudan has been overwhelmingly concerned with direct American national security and geopolitical strategy. In 1967, following the Arab–Israeli war, Sudan broke off diplomatic relations with the US to show its solidarity with the Arab states. In the 1970s, the Sudanese leader, General Nimeiri, resumed diplomatic relations with the US and the ties became stronger in the 1980s when Sudan endorsed the Camp David Accord between Palestine and Israel. However, throughout the 1990s their relationship worsened. In 1993, the Clinton administration placed Sudan as “a state sponsor of terrorism” as it was seen as a safe haven for terrorists; the US accused it of providing a “refuge, nexus, and training hub” for international terrorists. In addition, Sudan was accused of attempting to destabilize neighbouring countries’ governments and was continuously involved in human rights violations. All these factors were considered as constituting threats to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. As a result, the US tried to destabilize Sudan by isolating it economically, diplomatically and militarily by providing a \$15 million non-lethal military fund for Uganda, Ethiopia and Eritrea in 1996.<sup>808</sup> In 1996, the US closed its embassy in Khartoum and, in November 1997, President Clinton signed the Executive Order (EO) 13067 that imposed comprehensive unilateral financial and economic sanctions on Sudan.<sup>809</sup> The sanctions blocked all Sudanese assets in the US, banned exports and imports, prohibited any financial transactions, and barred US companies from investing in Sudan.<sup>810</sup> Commenting on those

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<sup>808</sup> For example in 1997, George E. Moose, former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs stated that the central objective of US foreign policy towards Sudan was “that Sudan end its sponsorship of insurgent groups which seek to destabilize the neighbouring countries of Uganda, Ethiopia, and Eritrea” and the present US foreign policy was “clear and unequivocal: to isolate Sudan and to contain its support for insurgents and terrorists.” See George E. Moose, U.S. Counterterrorism Policy Toward Sudan (1997). Available from [http://www.state.gov/www/global/terrorism/moose\\_970515.html](http://www.state.gov/www/global/terrorism/moose_970515.html)

<sup>809</sup> What You Need To Know About U.S. Sanctions: An Overview of the Sudanese Sanctions Regulations (U.S. Department of the Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control, 2008 [cited 16 December 2008]); available from <http://www.treas.gov/offices/enforcement/ofac/programs/sudan/sudan/pdf>. The Arab News reported that the Christian Right was partly responsible for pressuring the Clinton administration to impose the sanctions. See Jonathan Steele, “US Neocons, Christian Right and Sudan Conflicts,” *Arab News*, 8 October 2005. Available from <http://www.arabnews.com/services/artid=7133>

<sup>810</sup> The Executive Order 13067 states that “All property and interests in property of the Government of Sudan located in the U.S. or within the control of a US person are blocked. This blocking includes individual and entities that are owned or controlled by, or act on behalf of, the Government of Sudan anywhere in the world, as well as individuals and entities

sanctions, Madeleine Albright stated that “The United States has imposed sweeping new economic sanctions against the Government of Sudan because of its continued sponsorship of international terrorism, its effort to destabilize neighbouring countries and its abysmal record on human rights, including religious persecution.”<sup>811</sup> In 1998, following attacks on US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the US took military action against Sudan by striking Khartoum with cruise missiles. Finally, in February 2000, the US Treasury Department imposed economic sanctions against Sudan’s state-owned oil enterprises, Sudapet Ltd and Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company Ltd, and three oil foreign oil companies: Canada’s Talisman Energy Corp, Malaysia’s state owned Petronas and China’s national oil company, PetroChina. The sanction prohibited US citizens or companies from engaging in trade or conducting financial transactions with those companies. However, it excluded the capital market as part of the sanction, thus allowing any companies to raise money on US stock markets that would benefit Sudan or to use US capital markets to finance projects in Sudan.<sup>812</sup>

In March 2001, after just two months in the White House, President Bush directed the US administration to review the US–Sudan policy. The review, conducted by a group of American counter-terrorism specialists, suggested the US government focus on three aspects: counterterrorism cooperation, an end to regional destabilization in the Horn of Africa, and the achievement of a just peace in Sudan. Moreover, one important fact stated in the review was that the Khartoum government was moving its policy on international terrorism in line with the direction of US policy.<sup>813</sup> The recognition that Sudan was moving in the right direction on counter-terrorism was mainly derived from the fact that the Khartoum administration had taken some measures to improve its record on counter-

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determined by the U.S. Treasury Department to be included in the term ‘Government of Sudan’.” See details in What You Need To Know About U.S. Sanctions: An Overview of the Sudanese Sanctions Regulations (U.S. Department of the Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control, 2008 [cited 16 December 2008]); available from <http://www.treas.gov/offices/enforcement/ofac/programs/sudan/sudan/pdf>

<sup>811</sup> *New York Times*, 5 November 1997.

<sup>812</sup> David Briscoe, US Impose Sanctions on Sudan (Global Policy Forum, 2000 [cited 16 December 2008]); available from <http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/sanctions/sudan2.htm>

<sup>813</sup> Strike Hard, But Strike Sure: The Lesson of Sudan 1998 (The European Sudanese Public Affairs Council, 2001 [cited 29 May 2010]); available from [http://www.espac.org/usa\\_sudan\\_pages/strikes\\_hard.asp](http://www.espac.org/usa_sudan_pages/strikes_hard.asp)

terrorism. For example, in 1995, Sudan cancelled its immigration policy that waived visa applications for Arab nationals and at the same time enforced stricter visa applications for any nationals entering Sudan. In 1996, amid the diplomatic pressure from the US, Sudan expelled Osama bin Laden and his groups from Sudan. In 1997, Sudan signed the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings and two years later it signed the 1999 International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. In addition, between 2000 and 2001, the Sudanese government allowed an American anti-terrorist team to visit and investigate the situation in its country. The report from the investigation was later used by the UN Security Council to release Sudan from the international diplomatic sanctions that had been imposed since 1996.<sup>814</sup> These appropriate actions taken by the Sudanese government were acknowledged by the US State Department. In 2002 the State Department's Patterns of Global Terrorism report stated that Sudan "has stepped up its counter terrorism cooperation with various U.S. agencies, and Sudanese authorities have investigated and apprehended extremists suspected of involvement in terrorist activities."<sup>815</sup>

It should be noted that after 9/11 the US relationship with Sudan changed dramatically as Sudan government officials declared their support for America's "war on terror" policy. Sudan now became a strategic American partner in curtailing the international terrorism movement.<sup>816</sup> Geo-politically speaking, Sudan is probably the most important country in the African region for the US counter terrorism agenda. It is the largest country in Africa and its neighbouring countries include Egypt, Libya, Chad and Uganda. Across the Red

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<sup>814</sup> Ibid.(cited)

<sup>815</sup> Ted Dagne, *Sudan: Humanitarian Crisis, Peace Talks, Terrorism, and U.S. Foreign Policy*, CRS Issue Brief for Congress (2003), p.10. Nevertheless, the report also stated that "Sudan, however, remained a designated state sponsor of terrorism. A number of international terrorist groups, including al-Qaeda, the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, Egyptian al-Gama' al-Islamiyya, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and HAMAS continued to use Sudan a safe haven, primarily for conducting logistics and other support activities." The statement arguably made a major point that was used by the Bush administration to extend Clinton's 1998 Executive Order on Sudan. Thus, in October 2002, President Bush extended President Clinton's Executive Order 13067 that declared a 'National Emergency' with respect to Sudan. Arguably, there is an assumption that this report was influenced by constant heavy pressure from influential conservative Christian leaders, who urged the government to seriously consider religious freedom and human rights around the world as a priority. See Asteris Huliaras, "Evangelist, Oil Companies, and Terrorists: The Bush Administration's Policy towards Sudan," *Orbis* (Fall 2006), p. 714

<sup>816</sup> Asteris Huliaras, "Evangelist, Oil Companies, and Terrorists: The Bush Administration's Policy towards Sudan," *Orbis* (Fall 2006), p. 717-718

Sea is Saudi Arabia and the country bridges the Middle East, the Horn of Africa, and the Sahel. As its location is politically strategic, especially in advancing war on terror foreign policy, the US place Sudan as one of its foreign policy priorities. In addition, American economic interests in Sudan, especially oil, enhanced the need for Bush's administration to engage with the country more closely. In contrast with his predecessor's policies, George W. Bush made drastic changes to American policy towards Sudan. He initiated a high profile "constructive engagement" with Sudan that overhauled almost all the existing policies. The new policy resulted in the US administration became more compromising and accommodating about the situation in Sudan, especially on the issue of religious persecution. As argued by Pastor, "Scholars drew interesting preliminary conclusions after the release of the first three [USCIRF] annual reports [1999, 2000, 2001], the primary, and most scathing, conclusion being that the actions taken [by the State Department] under IRFA depend primarily on the United States' strategic or economic interests rather than on the severe violations of religious freedom."<sup>817</sup>

During the two terms of the Bush presidency, Sudan continued to play a pivotal role in the US war on terror and global freedom agenda. In April 2005, it was reported that the Bush administration had "forged a close intelligence partnership" with the Sudanese government. The government promised to provide necessary assistance such as sharing intelligence and allowing access to terrorism suspects. The Bush administration's view was that Sudan's assistance was crucial and important in America's foreign policy and war on terror. As Kathleen Roberts argues, Bush's administration compromised on its foreign policy commitment to international human rights because priority was given to the war on terror agenda.<sup>818</sup> The US administration noted that Sudan's assistance was "important, functional and current" and its intelligence service is considered a "top tier" partner of the CIA.<sup>819</sup> As a result, in May 2004, the State Department removed Sudan from a list of "non-

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<sup>817</sup> Eugenia Relano Pastor, "The Flawed Implementation of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998: A European Perspective," *Brigham Young University Law Review* (2005), p. 731

<sup>818</sup> Kathleen Roberts, "The United States and the World: Changing Approaches to Human Rights Diplomacy," *Berkeley Journal of International Law* 631 (2003)

<sup>819</sup> "Official Pariah Sudan Valuable to America's War on Terrorism: Despite Once Harboring Bin Laden, Khartoum Regime Has Supplied Key Intelligence," *The Los Angeles Times*, 29 April 2005.

cooperative” countries in the war against terrorism. Richard Boucher, the spokesman for the State Department stated that “Sudan has taken a number of steps in cooperation against terrorism over the past few years.”<sup>820</sup> In September 2005, the State Department removed Sudan from a list of “worst offenders of Trafficking in Persons (TIP)” on a for the reason that the Secretary of State was satisfied with the development that showed Sudan was “making significant efforts to bring itself into compliance”<sup>821</sup> Furthermore, Christian Right lobbying against the Sudanese government were seen as anti-Islam. As Watanabe suggests: “Many Muslims ... suspect that the egregious plight of Sudan, one of Africa’s poorest countries pummelled by nearly four decades of civil war, is being exploited by some Christians to vilify Islam.”<sup>822</sup> The Bush administration, in this respect, opposed the Christian Right’s recommendations for military intervention in Sudan as it would have exacerbated the unsettled relationship between the US and Muslim countries. Richard Cizik of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) comments: “In the midst of the fight against terror, the US administration may be reluctant to upset a Muslim capital, who will then call in other extremists to fight against Crusader West.”<sup>823</sup> At the time of writing, Sudan is the largest recipient of US humanitarian aid in the world. Between 2005 and 2008, the US spent more than \$4 billion on humanitarian aid, relief activities, peacekeeping and development assistance in Sudan.<sup>824</sup> In 2009 alone, the US funded nearly \$1 billion worth of humanitarian assistance to Sudan.<sup>825</sup>

## 7.5 Conclusion

This chapter illustrates the contribution of the Christian Right to the development of US’s global humanitarianism agenda. In the case of Jubilee 2000 international debt relief campaign, the Christian Right played significant role in providing ideas and framing the

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<sup>820</sup> Quoted in Ted Dagne, *Sudan: Humanitarian Crisis, Peace Talks, Terrorism , and U.S. Policy*, CRS Issue Brief for Congress (2004), p. 10. Available from <http://www.fas.org/man/crs/IB98043.pdf>

<sup>821</sup> Ted Dagne, *Sudan: Humanitarian Crisis, Peace Talk, Terrorism, and U.S. Policy*, CRS Issue Brief for Congress (2006), p.11

<sup>822</sup> Teresa Watanabe, "Sudan's Abuse of Religious Freedom Assailed," *Times*, 13 May 2000, p. B6

<sup>823</sup> Rachel Zoll, "Evangelicals Lobby Bush on Sudan Crisis," *Washington Post*, 18 October 2006.

<sup>824</sup> *Testimony of Richard S. Williamson, The President's Special Envoy to Sudan*, (2008). Available from <http://foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/WilliamsonTestimony080423a.pdf>

<sup>825</sup> Ted Dagne, *Africa: U.S. Foreign Assistance Issues*, CRS Report for Congress (2009)



issues and instrumental in attracting various groups regardless of their ideologies and political stance to support the campaign. The campaign that was considered successful attracted many congressmen from both parties, Republican and Democrats to put pressure on the Clinton administration to approve millions of debt cancellation to the heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) that mostly from African countries. This chapter also reveals two aspects of the Christian Right international humanitarian engagement in Sudan. Firstly, its contribution to the peace process in Sudan to end the decades of war between the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in Southern Sudan and the Sudanese government in the north. Secondly, the involvement of the Christian Right in the Save Darfur movement that argues the Sudanese government was committing "genocide" in dealing with the Darfur crisis. Both aspects of engagement showed a contradiction in Christian Right motives. While the former shows the Christian Right's role in the conflict in Southern Sudan more as a movement towards peace, the later involved for military intervention. Finally, in Sudan case study, it also illustrates that, though the Christian Right and its allies strongly lobbied for US military intervention in Sudan, the Bush administration was more preferred a "constructive engagement". Therefore, Bush's foreign policy towards Sudan was more committed to a peaceful solution to the crisis in Sudan with the Khartoum government. This shows the limits and capabilities of the Christian Right and its allies in pursuing their agenda in shaping US foreign policy post-9/11.

## **CHAPTER 8 CONCLUSION**

### **8.0 Introduction**

The discussion in this chapter is divided into two parts. Part One discusses the outcomes of the research. The outcomes of the research are the research's findings that were synthesized from the discussions and results taken from the primary and secondary data. The discussion of this part focuses on the Christian Right's role in US foreign policy decision making process with regards to its weaknesses, strengths, abilities and achievements. Part Two highlights suggestions and recommendations for future research.

### **8.1 The Role of the Christian Right and US Foreign Policy Making**

The thesis has explored the Christian Right international agenda and its interest in US foreign policy. I believe an understanding of the Christian Right's interest and activism in various international issues is important for several reasons. Firstly, it reveals that the Christian Right, as a religious interest group, no longer confines its interest and activism to the United States or only deals with the classical social conservative issues such as abortion or other conservative pro-family issues, but has extended its various interests to international issues. Its international agenda and activities, mainly derived from its religious beliefs and values, could give some impacts and challenges to the *status quo* of international political theory that mainly explains international politics using the realist paradigm. In addition, it shows the dynamism of the Christian Right movement in building networks with non-faith or secular organizations in promoting its international agenda. Moreover, this research shows that the Christian Right has its own abilities, talent and leadership to assert its influence on certain international policies through its political activism, such as in Congress and with US foreign officials. In addition, the Christian Right

has shown its maturity in seeking engagement and cooperation with other organizations, regardless of whether they are secular or religious, to advance its international goals.

The research revealed that the Christian Right has long been fascinated with some international issues in general and US foreign policy in particular. This research recognized that three international issues – the global persecution of Jews by the Nazis during World War 2 and Christians during the Cold War in the Soviet Union countries, the spread of Communism after World War 2, and support for the State of Israel – were the major factors that inspired and propelled the movement to further develop its interest in global issues. The interest of the movement in international issues was increasing and more noticeable during the Bush administration as the study shows that the Christian Right pursued more engagement in international issues by participating in the American foreign policy making process. In other words, the movement has successfully widened its activism by participating, articulating and lobbying its religious version of American foreign policy. The passage of the International Religious Freedom Act in 1998 was a significant episode that galvanized the Christian Right's interest in global issues. The involvement of the Christian Right in US foreign policy marked an important episode in the development of the Christian Right itself. It showed that the Christian Right's interest is no longer confined to domestic issues but is also in international political issues. As a result, the Christian Right has transformed its character, from being purely religiously motivated to being more politically driven, sophisticated and pragmatic.

True, the Christian Right's interest in international issues is not new and its present interest in US foreign policy is a continuance of their tradition. This tradition is largely inspired by Christian Right theological beliefs that perceive its participation in international issues as just another religious responsibility. By addressing some aspects of the Christian Right's theological beliefs and world view, we can better understand how the Christian Right perceive the world and world events. In addition, it also provide us with understanding as to how religious organizations consider religious beliefs and values important factors that drive them to be involved in international issues in general or foreign policy in particular. However, the findings presented in the research suggest that conservative Christians' theological and religious beliefs still can be regarded as important elements that motivated

the movement to be involved in international activities in general and in US foreign policy in particular. For instance, CUFI's unequivocal support for Israel mainly derives from its theological beliefs; similarly, the involvement of the Christian Right in the international religious freedom agenda and global humanitarianism are mostly inspired by its religious beliefs and values.

However, the research also suggests that presently the movement is less overtly religious in its approach and strategy. The thesis has argued that the present three main Christian Right's foreign policies – support for Israel, promoting international religious freedom and global humanitarianism – are no longer defined solely under the blanket of conservatives' Christian theology or religious beliefs. In other words, conservative Christian theological beliefs, such as millennialism and end-time theology, played a less significant role in the Christian Right's political activism during the era of George W. Bush. Instead the Christian Right has tried to relate its interest in international issues with America's democratic values, strategic interests and national security objectives.

This approach is more noticeable since 9/11, when the discourse of American foreign policy placed more emphasis on promoting national security and the global war on terror. Thus, I contend that the Christian Right had been able to adopt a more moderate approach in conveying its international agenda. Instead of using its traditional religious rhetoric, the Christian Right successfully framed its foreign policy interest within the conventional realist discourse of American foreign policy, which was largely based on the objective of national interest and protection of national security. For instance, the research found that the Christian Right movement has extended its support for Israel beyond their traditional theological beliefs. They did not justify their support for Israel solely grounded on their theological religious belief of the rights of the Jews over Palestinian land; instead they have gone a step further in consolidating their support based on the notion of Israeli and American national interest at large. This trend was more apparent after the 9/11 attacks, as the Christian Right shifted its motives for supporting Israel from theological beliefs to secular national interest justifications. For instance, CUFI, a Christian Right organization that mainly focuses on lobbying US foreign policy towards Israel, continuously denies that its support for Israel is mainly because of its end-time theology, but rather is a political and

strategic interest shared between Israel and the US. This interest includes: combating the threat of militant Islam, defeating Iran's nuclear project and global terrorism, and the promotion of democratic values.

In addition, this study found that most of the Christian Right organizations have different opinions on end-time theology and they do not necessarily subscribe or agree to millennialist beliefs or end-time theology. Only CUFI appears to be related to dispensationalist theology, but all other organizations interviewed denied that their organizations have any link with specific conservative Christian theological beliefs such as millennialism or dispensationalism. Therefore, I contend that millennialism or end-time theology is only perceived as a narrative, not as a theological doctrine for the Christian Right movement.

This research also suggests that the Christian Right movement is a diverse and not a monolithic movement. This argument derives from the fact that the Christian Right advocacy groups are varied in term of their objectives, missions and activities. Each group has its own historical background that shapes its focus and emphasis. For instance, CWA and Eagle Forum were established as reactions to the feminist movement. Furthermore, although some of the issues that are carried out by some Christian Right advocacy groups may overlap, their degree of emphasis is different. It thus shows us that the Christian Right employs various strategies to pursue its objectives, including foreign policy objectives.

Having said that, the Christian Right's interest groups basically share similar fundamental conservative Christians' values and their agenda is mostly under the aegis of biblical beliefs and conservative Christian values. These common beliefs and values, which largely derive from its religious beliefs and worldview, provide its members with a strong sense of direction, clear priorities and policy stances not only towards domestic issues in the US, but also towards international issues. Thus, we can witness these organizations are also interested in some international issues and have dedicated their activism to achieving their objectives through lobbying activities. Equipped with their large grassroots membership and support across denominational boundaries, these organizations have therefore tried to

internationalize their agenda by lobbying for their conservative beliefs and values through American foreign policy.

The findings of this research also suggest that the strength the Christian Right derives from its various advocacy groups that provides the movement with a strong leadership capability, well structured organization, lobbying skills and strategies, experience and resources that consist of budget, church network, mass media and grassroots supporters. Apart from that, the thesis suggests that the Christian Right has proved to be especially skilled in framing and defining the issues of its interest. The Christian Right seems effective in selecting and prioritizing the international issues, such as international religious freedom, debt relief, and the humanitarian crisis in Sudan, that have a reasonable chance of being picked up on by foreign policy decision makers, especially in Congress. In addition, it has an influential role in sensationalizing those international issues to the public through its excellent media coverage.

Perhaps the most awaited answer from this research is: Did the Christian Right successfully influence or determine the direction of US foreign policy? My general answer is “No”. Attempts to influence do not necessarily translate into real influence. I have found no strong evidence to support the argument that the Christian Right was able to influence Bush’s foreign policy. There are several reasons to support my argument.

The fact that the Christian Right is just like any other interest group lobby means they have a limited role and have relatively little influence on foreign policy decision making. In addition, the US foreign policy decision making process is very complicated and interconnected; thus, no single factor can absolutely determine the formulation of the policy. Secondly, the Christian Right itself does not consider international interests as a priority of its movement compared to domestic concerns with conservative social issues. Moreover, the various Christian Right advocacy groups are divided in their analysis of international issues. For instance, apart from CUFI, which is primarily concerned with US foreign policy towards Israel, most of the Christian Right organizations do not really have a foreign policy concentration. This shows that the Christian Right’s advocacy organizations

are mainly focused on domestic and social conservative issues, not really on international issues.

It is true that the Christian Right provided strong grassroots voters for Bush and the Republican Party, thus it took advantage of a favourable political environment during the Bush administration. Despite this, I found that no evidence that showed the Christian Right directly influenced Bush's foreign policy. Instead, my findings suggest that the Christian Right's international interests were congruent with American foreign policy interests. During the Bush administration, US foreign policy was mainly defined within the scope of "Bush Doctrine" that focused on the war on terror and the freedom agenda. As such, formulation of US foreign policy mostly took those aspects into consideration. The Christian Right saw this new development as an opportunity to inject its interest into the US foreign policy making process. In this regards, the movement only joined the ongoing process of foreign policy making that already had specific objectives. In other words, I argue that any perceived influence was only due to a convergence of the religious beliefs of the Christian Right and the secular Bush administration in foreign policy decision making. As Dumbrell suggests, "Any lobby will prosper when its prescriptions coincide with perceived US security interests, or when it is joined by other influential interests."<sup>826</sup>

Moreover, the findings suggest that the Christian Right's role in the Bush administration was relatively minor. Therefore, the Christian Right's lobbying efforts were not sufficient to influence the overall policy making process and its implementation. Even when the Christian Right and its allies successfully influenced Congress, for example, regarding the legislation of the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA), the findings suggest that, in the long run, the Christian Right did not have total control over the issues. Its lack of control can be seen in its role in the implementation of IRFA, whereby the US administration officials continued to have the most decisive and influential role in shaping the direction of that legislation.

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<sup>826</sup> John Dumbrell, *The Making of US Foreign Policy* (Manchester 1997), p. 159

Furthermore, in Sudan's case, we can witness the concerted efforts taken by the Christian Right and its allies to influence the Bush administration. President Bush, drawing support from, and seeking to reward, the Christian Right, as his strong and influential grassroots political base during his two presidential elections, tried to compromise between a "realistic" US foreign policy and a "moralistic" foreign policy propagated by the Christian Right. However, in the battle between two different interests, a foreign policy that considered national security, geo-political strategy and economic interest as determinant factors prevailed. Specifically, in Sudan's case, the war on terror, economic interests and avoiding further damage between the US and Muslim states after the Iraq war were important factors in the tactical changes in US policies towards Sudan. Though the evangelical lobby was strong, economic and security interests were more influential on the "constructive engagement" between the Bush administration and the Sudanese government. This shows the limits and capabilities of the Christian Right in pursuing its agenda in shaping US foreign policy post-9/11.

The findings of the research also suggest that the Christian Right has not been able to influence the outcomes of American foreign policy towards the Palestinian–Israeli conflicts. The Bush administration's decision to promote a two-state solution as a permanent solution to the conflict was contrary to what the Christian Right was hoping for. The US was indeed trying to resolve the Israeli–Palestinian conflict amicably to allow both parties to discuss peace in way that would not jeopardize American national interests. The Bush administration was also extremely cautious in their reaction to the crisis in the Middle East and the war on terrorism so as not to offend Muslims at large. While there was a concerted effort by the Christian Right movement to portray Islam as a religion that promotes violence and radicalism, the Bush administration took a moderate stance and distanced itself from this effort. The Bush administration was very constructive over their response towards Islam by stressing that it is not Islam that is at fault but a radical segment of the Muslim community that has brought the religion into disrepute. In fact, George W. Bush himself made great efforts to draw distinctions between the true Muslim believers and the Muslim terrorists.



While this study does not, in any way, conclude that the Christian Right was able to influence or determine the direction of US foreign policy and its outcomes; it does suggest that the Christian Right did contribute and have some impact on the formulation of some US foreign policy. Obviously, as shown especially in Chapters 6 and 7, the role of the Christian Right was outstanding in initiating, framing and highlighting the need for the US government to include issues of international religious freedom and humanitarian crises in US foreign policy priorities. In other words, the policy outcomes would have been different if the Christian Right had not been involved in the process of foreign policy making.

The key factor that made the Christian Right's international agenda widely accepted was because its campaigning strategy did not deliberately focus on religious motives per se, but on more mundane objectives. Moreover, the movement was able to show its effective leadership in establishing contacts and alliances with various groups and activists on common causes. This dynamic and pragmatic approach led them to develop broader alliances and engagements with other groups, regardless of their religions and ideologies. The debt relief campaign and international religious freedom are the best examples to show how the Christian Right can work closely with many liberal and secular groups who mostly disagree with them on social conservative issues, such as abortion and same-sex marriage. The willingness of the Christian Right to forge alliances with other organizations, particularly with secular organizations, and its engagement on a wider range of international issues reflects its growing maturity and sophistication. In addition, these combinations have developed the Christian Right into a potentially influential emerging force in shaping the direction of American foreign policy. Reverend Richard Cizik, a former National Association of Evangelicals President, gave his realistic comments on the political partnership between the religious right and secular organizations by saying "It's the only way you get anything done in Washington ... so be real."<sup>827</sup>

In addition, the success of the Christian Right in playing a role in the foreign policy milieu is due to its ability to convey its international agenda at the congressional level. This is because the Christian Right knows that its lobbies on human rights and humanitarian issues

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<sup>827</sup> Susan Page, "Christian Right's Alliances Bend Political Spectrum," *USA TODAY*, 14 June 2005.

are more effective when the locus of decisions about that foreign policy is largely based around Congress. Thus, the Christian Right targeted some influential figures, such as Senator Jesse Helms, the chairman of Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Senator Sam Brownback, the subcommittee chair for Near Eastern and South Asia Affairs, to bring forward its agenda to the floor of Congress. Both Senators were critical to the success of the Christian Right's international mission. Jesse Helms, for example, was very influential in bringing and highlighting some aspects of Christian Right's international humanitarian concern such as debt relief campaign to Congress. This strategic move indeed provided the movement with an avenue to advance the Christian Right's mission and agenda on international human rights and humanitarian rights more effectively at congressional level.

Perhaps, the structural changes in foreign policy decision making process gave Congress more room to participate in foreign affairs issues and the greater role of the US government in world politics after the Cold War may have resulted in increased involvement of interest group actors in lobbying the formulation of foreign policy. This phenomenon is increasingly relevant and noticeable in 21<sup>st</sup> century US foreign policy. Interest groups that have an international agenda will therefore seek to participate in the foreign policy decision making process. In addition, they will attempt to influence and shape the characteristics and direction of US foreign policy. In sum, despite the fact that US foreign policy is largely shaped by experts and the executive branch of the US administration, the domestic needs and the political demands of interest group forces cannot be neglected by policy makers. Certainly, the Christian Right, with its limitations and constraints, is one of those forces.

The Christian Right, as a movement, has consistently demonstrated a remarkable capability to learn from its own historical experiences to become a more dynamic and effective force in US politics. It has successfully understood how American liberal democracy works, and then planned on how to influence it. The movement has utilized its rights within the liberal democratic system to participate in and, when possible, to influence the US administration as well as the masses to accept and implement its domestic and international agenda. Similar to other interest group lobbies, the Christian Right's influence on US foreign policy should not be exaggerated. Despite that, the role of the Christian Right was important in initiating and framing certain international issues and it has contributed significantly to the

decision making process, especially in non-crisis foreign policies that are largely made at congressional level. Scholars in the field of international relations, as well as US foreign policy officials, should recognize that, at least on a certain level, the Christian Right did manage to insert its agenda into US foreign policy during the Bush administration.

In addition, in relation to the concept of “soft power” discussed by international relations scholars as the ability of a state to convince, attract, encourage, influence and persuade other states to accept its policy at the international level,<sup>828</sup> the emergence of the Christian Right as an actor in asserting its global agenda through US foreign policy can possibly provide an example of how “religious soft power” at the domestic level could also contribute to US foreign policy making. The Christian Right, through its various organizations, mass media, publications, internet websites and other popular means framed the international issues in which it was interested to the public. Issues such as international religious freedom, debt relief and international humanitarian assistance were perceived as important and gained overwhelming attention from a broad spectrum of American society including human rights activists, lobby groups, journalists, academicians, politicians and policymakers. Discourse and discussions on the issues were increased, gained more popularity and consequently shaped and dominated the “climate of opinion” of the American public. Eventually, the issues that were originally brought forward by the Christian Right through its social and religious discourses were transformed into political discourse. In this respect, US foreign policy preferences that were normally grounded on national security agenda were infused with the ideas, values and religious agenda of the Christian Right. Perhaps, the changing political climate during the two terms of the George W. Bush administration could explain this phenomenon. The rise of the Christian Right in American politics especially during the two George W. Bush presidential elections and its increased role in the Republican Party gave the movement a golden opportunity to inject its religious vision of foreign policy. Furthermore, the increase in religiosity among the American public contributed to the effectiveness of the Christian Right in shifting the

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<sup>828</sup> ‘Soft power’ is a concept in international relations that was introduced by Joseph Nye in 1990 in his book Joseph Nye, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York, 1990)

“climate of opinion” towards recognition of the importance of its “religious flavour” international agenda to America’s national interest.<sup>829</sup> At the same time, the resurgence of religions and faiths at the global level as a new phenomenon in the 21<sup>st</sup> century<sup>830</sup> could also spill over to a changing trend of US foreign policy making towards value and moral based foreign policy. In sum, the Christian Right’s religious beliefs and values as source of its “soft power” together with the “climate of opinion” at that time could serve as a valuable new explanatory variable for understanding how US foreign policy was formulated during the Bush administration. Nevertheless, this argument entails further detailed research in order to explore the role of the Christian Right and the effectiveness of its “religious soft power” in shaping not only the “climate of opinion” of the American public, but also policy making elites, in the direction of its foreign policy preferences.

## 8.2 Suggestions for Further Research

During this research, I found that the Christian Right’s advocacy groups were either engaged in or interested in getting involved at the United Nations. The main factor behind this engagement was twofold: to defend their social conservative values internationally and at the same time attempt to promote those values globally. The United Nations is perceived as an influential place for “feminists”, “humanists” and “secularists” to project their own definitions of social and family values globally. The Christian Right organizations see these humanists and secularists as a threat to their values as they have successfully used that international organization and international treaties to advance their secular agenda. In this regard, the Christian Right’s advocacy groups considered the introduction of the 1999 United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) as a product of those movements. Intriguingly, in pursuing their

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<sup>829</sup>See for example in George Weigel, *The Great God Divide: European Secularism and American Religiosity* (Council on Foreign Relations, 2006 [cited 27 May 2010]); available from [http://www.cfr.org/publication/9960/great\\_god\\_divide.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/9960/great_god_divide.html). According to Gallup poll in 2009, 65% of Americans believed religion is an important part of their daily lives. See Frank Newport, *States of the States: Importance of Religion* (GALLUP, 2009 [cited 27 May 2010]); available from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/114022/State-States-Importance-Religion.aspx>

<sup>830</sup> See details in John Micklethwait and Andrian Wooldridge, *God is Back: How the Global Revival of Faith is Changing the World* (New York, 2009)

objectives to defeat those movements, we are also witnessing “unlikely alliances” between the Christian Right’s advocacy groups and conservative Muslim organizations taking place at the United Nations. To explore and study this phenomenon and its relationship to the overall Christian Right global movement would entail further academic research. In this regard, I would suggest two important issues need to be studied academically. Firstly, the level of the Christian Right’s advocacy groups’ activism at the United Nations and what their impact and contributions are to the policy making process at that organization. Secondly, to study the “unlikely alliances” between the Christian Right’s advocacy groups and conservative Muslim groups at the United Nations. As discussed in this thesis, the Christian Right in the US are generally sceptical about Muslims and often link Muslims and Islam with radicalism and terrorism. Ironically, the Christian Right groups at the UN have willingly formed alliances with conservative Muslim organizations. Why, how and to what extent can both conservatives organizations cooperate with each other?

The second area of research I would recommend to be explored is the Christian Right’s global networks and its impact on international politics. As we have observed, in this era of globalization, religions and religious organizations may have some impact on international politics as religion and religious issues no longer stop at state borders. Therefore, any religious organization can play its own role at international level, either by positively contributing to a better international atmosphere, such as with their concern over global humanitarian issues, or it also can pose a threat to the present international system. While research on the resurgence of Religions in international relations becoming more popular presently, a case study of a particular religion that may pose some important impacts or changes to the present international political climax should be selected. In this respect, I believe that the Christian Right, with its wide international networks, would be a perfect case study of such concern. This is because the thesis has revealed that the Christian Right is no longer a purely domestic organization, but can be considered a transnational religious organization that has outstanding international networking with its conservative Christian counterparts all over the world. In addition, the Christian Right, with its exceptional global networking and partnerships, can possibly have some impact on current international politics. Furthermore, any attempts to study the relationships between a transnational

religious movement and international relations can contribute to a better understanding of contemporary global politics.

## APPENDIXES

### Appendix A            List of Respondents

NO	ORGANIZATION / INDIVIDUAL	NAME OF RESPONDENT	DATE
1	Institute on Religion & Democracy	Alan F.H. Wisdom Vice President for Research and Programs	6 April 2009
2.	Institute for Global Engagement	Suhail Khan, Senior Fellow and Specialist in Christian and Muslim Understanding	14 April 2009
3.	Jew on First	Rabbi Haim Shambrook, Founder and Exec. Director	22 April
4.	Family Research Council	Bill Saunders, Senior Fellow and Human Right Attorney	27 April
5.	Muslim Public Action Committee	Salam al-Marayati, Exec. Director	1 May
6.	Eagle Forum	Colleen Holmes, Exec. Director	4 May
7.	Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs	Katherine Marshall, Senior Fellow on Religion and Development	5 May
8.	Focus on the Family	Tim Goeglein, Vice President for External Relations	7 May
9.	Hudson Institute	Nina Shea, Senior Fellow Center for Religious Freedom	11 May
10.	Thomas F. Farr	A former American diplomat. Presently he is a Visiting Associate Professor of Religion and International Affairs at Georgetown's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service. He is	12 May

		also Senior Fellow at the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, where he directs the Religion and US Foreign Policy Program.	
11.	Senator Rick Santorum	Former American Senator 1995-2007, Senior Fellow at Ethics & Public Policy Center	12 May
13.	National Association of Evangelicals	Heather H. Gonzales, Association Director	14 May
14.	Concerned Women for America	Dr Jenice Shaw Crouse, Director and Senior Fellow, The Beverly La Haye Institute, CWA	15 May
15	Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life	Allen D. Hertzke, Visiting Senior Fellow and Presidential Professor at University of Oklahoma	18 May
16.	Islamic Society of North America (ISNA)	Dr Loay Safi, Executive Director ISNA Leadership Development Center	18 May



## **Appendix B            List of Questionnaires**

### **A. General questions**

1. Can you tell me briefly about your organization?
2. What is the main reason why your main office is located in Washington DC?
3. What are the objectives of your organization?
4. Does your organization have any international objective?

### **B. Religious Belief**

1. Do your organization subscribe to any biblical apocalyptic/end-time belief, such as millennialism or pre-millennialism? If yes, to what extent has it effected your organization?
2. Do you think religious belief is important in shaping the direction of your involvement in international issues/US foreign policy?

### **C. Involvement in International Issues**

*The discussion will be focused on the following issues;*

1. What is your general perception on the issues of faith and US foreign policy?
2. Does your organization have any special interest on US foreign policy? If yes, why and what kind of the involvement?
3. What do you think about US policies on the following issues;
  - a. International Human Rights and Humanitarian Assistance
  - b. International Religious Freedom
  - c. War on Terror
  - d. Israel and Middle East politics

4. Do you think US foreign policies on the mentioned issues should have something to do with Christian beliefs?
5. Do you think your organization has had some impact on US foreign policy on the above issues? If yes, how and to what extent?
6. Can you tell me how do you feel about George W. Bush and some of his foreign policies?
7. Do you think George W. Bush was motivated by his personal religious conviction in conducting foreign policies, for example the Faith Based Initiative?
8. Do you think some of George W. Bush's foreign policies were in line with your organization's international objectives?
9. What do you think about Islam?
10. What else would you like me to know about your organization and US foreign policies during George W. Bush?
11. What problems do you anticipate in attempting to exert influence over President Obama's foreign policy?

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