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Nativist activists like Los Angeles talk show host Terry Anderson, here at a Las Vegas anti-immigrant summit in May 2006, are making common cause with the Christian Right in their effort to close the borders.

Photo: Greg Gajjar/Reuters/Corbis

How Roman Catholic Neocons Peddle Natural Law into Debates about Life and Death

By Frank L. Cocozzelli

As the rightist philosopher Richard Weaver famously said, “ideas have consequences.” And I can tell you from personal experience some of the consequences of at least one idea, that of “natural law.”

I have a form of LMG muscular dystrophy. When I was first diagnosed in 1985, I walked with a slight limp. Today I am bound to a wheelchair, a virtual quadriplegic. Nevertheless, I am a practicing attorney. Monday through Friday my wife wakes up at 5 a.m. and gets herself ready for work. An hour later she wakes me up, then dresses me for court. Since my body does not mostly move of its own volition, she must roll me back and

Roman Catholic Neocons continues on page 9

Nativist Bedfellows

The Christian Right Embraces Anti-Immigrant Politics

By Tarso Luis Ramos and Pam Chamberlain

If the September 2007 Values Voters Summit is anything to go by, the Christian Right is now nearly as worked up about illegal immigration as about abortion and same-sex marriage. At that political gathering—sponsored annually in Washington D.C. by such key groups as the Family Research Council and attracting grassroots activists from across the country—the Heritage Foundation’s Robert Rector used fuzzy math as he told a packed room that low-skilled immigrants from Latin America actually drain, rather than bolster, the U.S. economy. A parade of Republican presidential hopefuls there to

court support from right-wing Protestant evangelicals attempted to outdo each other with the aggressiveness of their border security plans and the severity of their proposed policies towards immigrants.

Even former Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee, who once charged, “Some anti-immigrant Republicans are guilty of demagoguery and racism,” took a much harder line on this occasion—equating the issues of abortion and illegal immigration: “Sometimes we talk about why we’re importing so many people in our workforce. It might be because for the last 35 years we have aborted more than a million people [each year] who would have been in our workforce had we not had the holo-

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NO EXIT

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**WE'VE SPENT
A HALF
TRILLION
DOLLARS
IN FIVE
YEARS OF
WAR IN IRAQ**

**THIS YEAR, AS A
STARTING LAWYER,
I EARNED THE
EQUIVALENT OF 30
SECONDS
IN IRAQ.**



**MY NEW MERCEDES
COST 16 SECONDS
IN IRAQ.**



**OUR ANNUAL CITY
BUDGET IS EQUAL TO
3 DAYS IN IRAQ.**



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Pastor Hagee and Christians United for Israel Push for Armageddon

This article is excerpted from *God's Profits: Faith, Fraud, and the Republican Crusade for Values Voters* (Sausalito, CA: PoliPoint Press, 2008).

By Sarah Posner

Those nations who align with God's purpose will receive His blessing. Those who follow a policy of opposition to God's purpose will receive the swift and severe judgment of God without limitation.

—John Hagee, Jerusalem Countdown

The carnival at Cornerstone Church in San Antonio looks, at first glance, like any other church festival, with rides, games, food, and children playing in the waning sunshine of a warm October afternoon. But look again and you'll see some unusual twists. The festivities are ringed with twelve booths selling food, each booth meant to signify one of the tribes of Israel. The booths, visitors are told, are in celebration of the Jewish holiday of Sukkoth. Under the tent, there's no preacher, no laying on of hands, no casting out devils. This tent houses a very different kind of revival, one in which Christians are buying challah covers, tallith, kiddush cups, mezuzahs, and other Judaic items, all made in Israel. They are buying products even though, as one woman remarked about the Hebrew writing, "I don't know what it says." Here on John Hagee's sprawling church property, on the weekend of Hagee's annual Night to Honor Israel, Hagee's followers from all over the country have come to celebrate what they call their "Hebraic roots" and to claim ownership of the world's most hotly con-

Sarah Posner writes The FundamentaList, the American Prospect's weekly web column about the religious Right.



John Hagee of Christians United for Israel speaks during a visit he led of evangelicals to the Israeli settlement of Ariel in the occupied West Bank in April. They received an enthusiastic welcome, not only because of the millions of dollars they have given the settlement, but because of pastor Hagee's firm opposition to returning the land to the Palestinians in peace negotiations.

tested piece of real estate: not for the Jews but for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Inside the building, the entertainment is the stuff of biblical prophecy: stories of blood, gore, conflagrations, and apocalyptic showdowns between good and evil. Hagee's injection of the charged rhetoric of biblical prophecy into contemporary foreign policy has catapulted him to the forefront of an American Christian Zionist movement that has become the darling of conservative Israel hawks in Washington and neoconservatives yearning for regional war in the Middle East. This weekend former CIA director James Woolsey is a featured speaker, and Vice Prime Minister Shimon Peres of Israel will speak by video link. National and local Jewish leaders are on hand to pay homage to Hagee's alleged support for the Jewish people and the state of Israel. The Jews have no greater friend, the audience is told, than John Hagee,

even though the book he wrote, prominently advertised on the church's parking lot marquee, predicts they will perish in a lake of brimstone at Armageddon.

The line for the Night to Honor Israel started forming outside the church even before the doors were scheduled to open. The atmosphere is festive, and people are filled with anticipation. But the party they are looking forward to is not taking place inside the church, where the Cornerstone Choir sings "Hava Nagila Texas Style!" and where, in a video montage of Jerusalem, the Dome of the Rock magically disappears. Rather, the anticipation is for the Second Coming, when, Hagee has said, Jesus will sit "right there on that Temple Mount" and rule the world.

In its short history, Hagee's grassroots movement, Christians United for Israel (CUFI), has become the most visible organization of American Christian Zionists.

Hagee launched the organization in February 2006, just a month after the release of his book *Jerusalem Countdown*, which became a best seller. In the book Hagee asserts that an American and Israeli war on Iran is not only biblically prophesied but necessary to bring about Armageddon and the Second Coming, a theme that drew four hundred pastors and Christian leaders to San Antonio to the inaugural meeting of his Christian Zionist organization.

Many of the attendees were televangelists well-known for their Word of Faith preaching on TBN. Benny Hinn, Kenneth Copeland, Joyce Meyer, Jesse Duplantis, and Mac Hammond were there, as was Stephen Strang, president of Strang Communications. (Strang Communications is publisher of *Charisma* magazine, the leading magazine in Word of Faith and charismatic circles, and the umbrella organization for numerous publishing imprints, one of which published Hagee's book.) A strong supporter of Bush and the Iraq War, Strang has said that many times when a pastor launches a new organization, "second-tier" figures show up in support, "because everyone's busy, and everybody's busy with their own agenda, . . . but this, in my opinion [was] pretty top level." Others, like Parsley and Hagin, did not attend the launch but signed on later for leadership roles in the organization. Many of them, including Strang, Hammond, and Duplantis, were on hand for the Night to Honor Israel weekend festivities in 2006; Parsley and Jakes agreed to speak at the 2007 event.

CUFI shows how Word of Faith melds with conservative evangelicalism, movement conservatism, and the GOP. Janet Parshall, the popular conservative talk radio host, was at the launch and signed on to the board of advisers. Gary Bauer, the former Bush Sr. White House aide and Republican presidential candidate, and George Morrison, the former chairman of the man-centered Promise Keepers, are on CUFI's executive committee, as was Jerry Falwell before his death. The organization's executive director, David Brog (who is Jewish), is a former chief of staff to

Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA).

An evangelical pastor from Colorado, Morrison is a long-time ally of Hagee's in the Christian Zionist movement. Speaking just two months after the 2006 CUFI launch, Morrison predicted that although prior efforts to create a unified grassroots Christian Zionist movement had stumbled, CUFI would gain steam because of the escalating tensions with Iran and the recent election of the Hamas-led Palestinian gov-

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ernment. Morrison said that "almost every evangelical organization that I know of" was present at the CUFI launch, "a tremendous turnout." Hagee, said Morrison, "has the platform, his TV ministry, . . . he has the great respect of a lot of other leaders, so certainly, he's in that position . . . of spiritual leadership and authority to lead the evangelical churches and help unite them" around CUFI. Hagee has claimed that he has a mailing list of two million people, and the twenty thousand "spiritual leaders" on his list all forward his e-mails to their own supporters, who in some cases have their own lists of a million people.

The launch of CUFI around the time of the release of Hagee's book undoubtedly propelled sales and helped hype a case for war against Iran. By April 2006, two months after CUFI's launch and three

months after its release, the book had sold over 620,000 copies. Some of the sales are accounted for by the fact that ministries like Hagee's will buy books in bulk, then give them as "gifts" as part of fund-raising campaigns. But even apart from sales directly to ministries and churches, the book ranked twenty-first on *USA Today's* best-seller list and topped the *Publishers Weekly's* religion best-seller list, Wal-Mart's inspirational best-seller list, and the Christian Bookseller's Association (CBA's) best-seller list.

Hagee's long-standing view that "Jerusalem must remain undivided as the eternal capital of the Jewish people" (meaning no portion of it should be turned over to the Palestinians) has made him popular with neoconservative hawks. One Jerusalem, an organization committed to that principle, has embraced Hagee's CUFI effort. One Jerusalem was founded by, among others, Douglas Feith, who became Bush's undersecretary of defense for policy and notoriously peddled in cherry-picked intelligence to push the case for the war against Iraq, and Natan Sharansky, the former Soviet dissident and Israeli government official. Bush admires Sharansky's writings and awarded him a Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2006.

On the Saturday before his Night to Honor Israel, with his audience dotted with Christians wearing tallith and yarmulkes, Hagee hosted his Middle East Intelligence Briefing, billed as insider information not available anywhere else. James Woolsey, the former CIA director, thrilled the crowd when he pronounced Israel an essential ally in the war against Islamic fanaticism. But he bewildered it with his suggestion that to see who might be aiding terrorists they should look in their rearview mirrors when they fill their cars up with gas. (The parking lot outside was filled with gas-guzzling SUVs.) Other speakers lent a distinctly anti-Muslim shrillness to the afternoon, less a diatribe against terrorism and more an indictment of Islam. Brigitte Gabriel, a Lebanese Christian who survived the turmoil of the Lebanese civil war in the 1980s, gave a

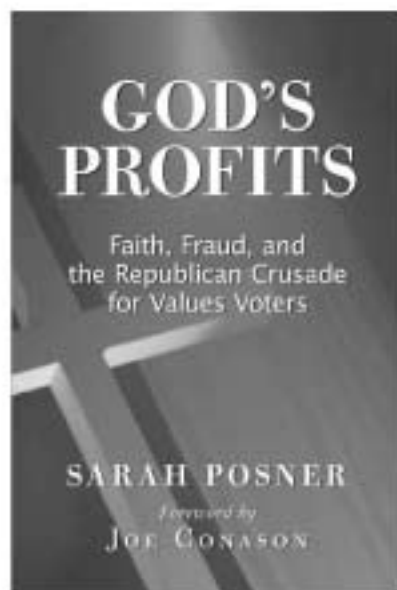
fevered, vindictive speech about why she supports Israel. (No Muslim was ever nice to her, and Israeli soldiers saved her from starvation.)

Gabriel, author of the book *Because They Hate: A Survivor of Islamic Terror Warns America*, attempts to draw parallels between her experience in Lebanon and an Islamic threat to American democracy. When Muslims became a majority in Lebanon ("they multiply much more quickly than we do"), Christians were "attacked for tolerance, open-mindedness, and multiculturalism." (At the same time, Gabriel derides "political correctness" as ignorant and dangerous.) Gabriel added that "because we are Christians, Muslims want to kill us." In contrast, she went on (conveniently not noting Israeli-led atrocities against civilians during the same period), "Jews showed compassion in a way that Muslims didn't."

Gabriel also runs the Virginia Beach-based American Congress for Truth (ACT), whose board of advisers is stacked with inside-the-Belway neoconservative hawks often featured in print and broadcast conservative media outlets: Kenneth Timmerman, founder of the Foundation for Democracy in Iran and author of the book *Countdown to Crisis: The Coming Nuclear Showdown with Iran*; Harvey Kushner, author of *Home Front: The Secret Islamic Terror Network in the United States*; Walid Phares, senior fellow at the neoconservative Foundation for the Defense of Democracies and a critic of withdrawal from Iraq; as well as Woolsey himself. The founding principles of ACT sound like a Rush Limbaugh playbook, as the organization aims to "give Americans their voice back. That unique American voice, full of joy and anticipation of better days and infinite aspirations . . . muted by the scourge of political correctness. We are now a society neutered by this scourge, . . . unable to act or speak for fear of offending, or of lawsuits, or of accusations of one-sided political views. Millions either do not realize, or deny the threat of militant Islam to America, Israel and all of Western civilization."

To Hagee's audience, Gabriel, a regular

on the conservative talk radio circuit, claims that Hamas has cells in all major American cities and that Hezbollah has eleven cells in the country, one with a general who was smuggled over the U.S.-Mexico border. She tells heartbreaking tales of her family's dire brushes with starvation and death during the bloody civil war, but her disdain for all things Muslim and her defecation of all things Jewish is hysterical and bizarre. Nevertheless, the



more she implores Hagee's audience to love the Jews because a group of Israeli soldiers rescued her from Muslim fanatics, the more they adore her. She gets a huge standing ovation (and a hug from Woolsey) after imploring the receptive audience to "throw political correctness in the garbage where it belongs!" Gabriel, an immigrant who became a U.S. citizen, once told Hagee that America's "immigration problem" mirrors the problem Lebanon had that led to its "fall to radical Islamic forces." Gabriel further claimed that al Qaeda and Hezbollah are working with the Salvadoran MS-13 gang in the United States. "Not only are we inviting our enemy in, but this enemy is coming into the United States, marrying American citizens who are Muslims who are sympathizers of Hezbollah terrorists, and producing more children.

. . . There is going to be a severe crisis in the near future because America has allowed a policy of open borders."

Jerusalem Countdown, Hagee's manifesto for war with Iran, provides a peculiar mix of biblical prophecy, purported inside information from Israeli government officials, and a mixed-up, pared-down lesson in nuclear physics. "I wrote this book in April 2005, and when people read it, they will think I wrote it late last night after the Fox News report," Hagee has said, without a trace of irony. "It's that close to where we are and beyond." But the particulars of Iran's nuclear program do not seem to interest Hagee. In many of his television and radio appearances in early 2006, he glossed over the obstacles faced by Tehran in creating a viable nuclear weapon, arguing that "once you have enriched uranium, the genie is out of the bottle." In March 2006 he claimed that within a month, "Iran will have the nuclear — the enriched uranium to make the — have the nuclear capability to make a bomb, a suitcase bomb, a missile head, or anything they want to do with it." So when the Iranian president announced the following month that Tehran had enriched uranium (although not enough to make a bomb), Hagee claimed — despite prevailing scientific opinion to the contrary — that the Iranians "now have enriched uranium that will lead to the production of nuclear suitcase bombs designed to destroy American cities with one blast. These nuclear weapons will also be used against Israel." To fully emphasize the need for war, Hagee added, "the question is not if there will be a military preemptive strike against Iran. . . . The question is when." To prime his followers for such a possibility, Hagee has argued that Iran's development of nuclear weapons must be stopped to protect America and Israel from a nuclear attack. He has also warned of a supposed Iranian-led plan to simultaneously explode nuclear suitcase bombs in seven American cities, or to use an electromagnetic pulse device to create "an American Hiroshima."

His rhetoric is directed not only at his audience of believers but also at a broader

audience, whose justifiable nervousness about terrorism he seeks to exploit. Hagee was for months comparing Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to Hitler — still a favorite rhetorical device — before Seymour Hersh informed the reality-based world that the Bush administration, too, was talking up the confrontational, Holocaust-denying Iranian president as the next führer. In early April 2006, Hersh reported that “Bush and others in the White House view him as a potential Adolf Hitler, a former senior intelligence official said. ‘That’s the name they’re using. They say, ‘Will Iran get a strategic weapon and threaten another world war?’”

Hagee seems to delight in a coming confrontation. He argues that a strike against Iran will cause Arab nations to unite under Russia’s leadership, as outlined in chapters 38 and 39 of the book of Ezekiel, leading

to an “inferno [that] will explode across the Middle East, plunging the world toward Armageddon.” During Hagee’s appearance on Benny Hinn’s program, Hinn, who frequently predicts the end is imminent, enthused, “We are living in the last days. These are the most exciting days in church history.” The master of signs and wonders then went on to add, “We are facing now [the] most dangerous moment for America.” At one point, Hinn clapped his hands in delight and shouted, “Yes! Glory!” and then urged his viewers to donate money faster because he is running out of time to preach the gospel.

Hagee’s book, and his discussion of it in Christian media outlets, is absolutist. He speaks not only of good against evil, believer against nonbeliever, Judeo-Christian civilization against Islamic civilization, but also of an American-Israeli alliance against the

rest of the world. He plays on conservative disdain for anything European while promoting the Bush unilateralist mentality that has had catastrophic results in Iraq. He expresses contempt for diplomacy, calling the UN Security Council “a joke.” Rabbi Daniel Lapin, the Orthodox rabbi who once worked with convicted lobbyist Jack Abramoff, said after a Purim appearance on TBN with Hagee that “Pastor Hagee has a very realistic understanding of the United Nations . . . and recognizes it as unlikely to be any more helpful in this looming tension than it has been in any other in the past.” He paints Russia and China as America’s enemies, claiming, without basis, that Russia has helped Iran build long-range missiles that could reach New York City.

In Hagee’s telling, Israel has no choice but to strike at Iran’s nuclear facilities, with or without America’s help. The strike

Pastor John Hagee

By PRA’s RightWeb

PRA’s Right Web, an online resource, profiles key individuals and organizations promoting militarist policies in the Middle East. <http://rightweb.irc-online.org>. This profile is an excerpt.

Like many Christian fundamentalists, Pastor John Hagee sees the return of Jews to the Holy Land as fulfilling biblical prophecy. This idea traces back to the 1600s but gained prominence with the creation of Israel in 1948. Hagee and many other Christian Zionists read the Book of Revelation and other prophetic biblical texts to suggest the creation of the state of Israel started a countdown to the second coming of Jesus in the apocalyptic End Times.¹

In Hagee’s view, the End Times usher in a global struggle between the armies of good and evil in the battle of Armageddon, located in what is now a valley in Israel. Unlike most fundamentalists, Hagee predicts a specific imminent scenario. According to the BBC, in his 2006 book *Jerusalem Countdown: A Warning to the World*, Hagee argues that Russian and Arab armies will attack Israel and that God will step in to destroy them. This event will spur conflict between China and Satan’s earthly agent in the End Times—the Antichrist, who will be masquerading as the head of the European Union—over the fate of Israel, which in turn will lead to the second coming of Christ.² According to Hagee, President

George W. Bush’s support for Israel, which Hagee says “fulfills a biblical injunction to protect the Jewish state,” will also play “a pivotal role in the second coming.”³

A CNN poll found that “59 percent of American evangelicals believe Israel is the fulfillment of biblical prophecy.” Only a handful of evangelicals, however, believe in the theological assertion shared by Hagee and Christian author Tim LaHaye that there will be a “Rapture,” in which godly Christians will be drawn away from earth into a protective embrace while God punishes the nonbelievers during the Tribulations. Rapture belief can promote a provocative encouragement of strife in the Middle East as a way to hasten the End Times fulfillment of prophecy.⁴ Hagee and many other believers in apocalyptic Christian prophecy support Israel’s control of the ancient Holy Land because they expect Jesus to return to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem once Jews have rebuilt the Temple of Solomon—requiring the destruction of Islamic shrines and mosques currently on that site.⁵

Since the 1990s, some apocalyptic Christians have viewed Islam as the false religion supported by the Antichrist in the End Times.⁶ The resulting Christian Islamophobia intersected with the “clash of civilizations” thesis of Samuel P. Huntington and provided support for the Bush administration’s backing of aggressive Israeli policies toward its neighbors. The Christian Right, neo-conservatives, and militarists found themselves in

an uneasy coalition under the Bush administration—all promoting a confrontational and apocalyptic view of strife in the Middle East.⁷

In a 2006 interview with Terry Gross on National Public Radio, Hagee said that there was “no room for compromise” with “radical Islam.” When Gross asked about “Islam in general,” Hagee responded, “Well Islam in general—those who live by the Koran have a scriptural mandate to kill Christians and Jews.”⁸ In a March 2006 interview with the right-wing *Human Events*, Hagee predicted that by May 2006 Israel would militarily engage Iran, the country that he blamed for attacks on targets in the Western world. Asked if the United States should support Israel against Iran, he said, “Iran is a threat to western civilization . . . not just to Israel. Iran with nuclear weapons will be the world’s worst nightmare. America and Europe will be blackmailed to bow to the Islamofascist agenda. The attack on 9/11 proved Islamics have the will to kill us, they are now searching for the power to kill us . . . nuclear power.”⁹

In early 2006, Hagee founded Christians United for Israel to promote his vision of Middle East politics. He called upon Christian leaders from across America to join him in launching this new initiative. Over 400 Christian leaders answered the call and Christians United for Israel was born.¹⁰

Hagee’s controversial views go beyond the Middle East. In a widely viewed video, Hagee argues

will provoke Russia — which wants Persian Gulf oil — to lead an army of Arab nations against Israel. Then God will wipe out all but one-sixth of the Russian-led army, as the world watches “with shock and awe,” he says, lending either a divine quality to the Bush administration phrase or a Bush-like quality to God’s wrath.

But Hagee doesn’t stop there. He adds that Ezekiel predicts fire “upon those who live in security in the coastlands.” From this sentence he concludes that there will be judgment upon all who stood by while the Russian-led force invaded Israel, and he issues a stark warning to the United States to intervene: “Could it be that America, who refuses to defend Israel from the Russian invasion, will experience nuclear warfare on our east and west coasts?” He

Hagee’s long-standing view that “Jerusalem must remain undivided as the eternal capital of the Jewish people” (meaning no portion of it should be turned over to the Palestinians) has made him popular with neoconservative hawks.

says yes, citing *Genesis 12:3*, in which God said to Israel: “I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you.”

To fill the power vacuum left by God’s

decimation of the Russian army, the Antichrist—identified by Hagee as the head of the European Union—will rule “a one-world government, a one-world currency and a one-world religion” for three and a half years. (He adds that “one need only be a casual observer of current events to see that all three of these things are coming into reality.”) The “demonic world leader” will then be confronted by a false prophet, identified by Hagee as China, at Armageddon, the Mount of Megiddo in Israel. As they prepare for the final battle, Jesus will return on a white horse and cast both villains—and presumably any nonbelievers—into a “lake of fire burning with brimstone,” thus marking the beginning of his millennial reign.

that Adolf Hitler merely built on the work of the “Roman Church,” which he called “the Great Whore,” in spilling the “blood of saints,” who Hagee claimed are mainly Jews.¹

When Bill Bennett, the former Ronald Reagan cabinet member who is now a right-wing radio broadcaster, asked John McCain about Hagee’s views (since Hagee had endorsed him), McCain said, “Well, obviously I repudiate any comments that are anti-Semitic or anti-Catholic, racist, any other. And I condemn them and I condemn those words that Pastor Hagee apparently—that Pastor Hagee wrote. I will say that he said that his words were taken out of context, he defends his position. I hope that maybe you’d give him a chance to respond.” He then added, “I will say, I’d like to say on his behalf, he’s been a very strong supporter of the state of Israel and when we were doing the No Surrender tour [a weeklong pro-Iraq War tour and campaign rally with stops in Iowa, New Hampshire, and South Carolina], he came and spoke on behalf of not surrendering in Iraq.”²

Hagee controls a formidable media empire. According to his CUFI biography, “John Hagee Ministries occupies a 50,000 square-foot production center which houses both radio and television studios, 100 telephone prayer partners, and a vast distribution center. Currently, Hagee telecasts on eight major networks, 162 independent television stations, and 51 radio stations through-

out the globe broadcasting in over 190 nations.”³

The ministry, which is incorporated as the non-profit GETV,⁴ has spurred accusations of inappropriate enrichment of Hagee and his family.⁵ The *San Antonio Express-News* reported that GETV’s 2001 tax statement showed the non-profit organization earned more than \$18 million that year and that Hagee’s compensation package amounted to nearly \$1.25 million.

End Notes

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¹⁶ “Pastor John Hagee,” CUFI, http://www.cufi.org/intel/PagesServer/pagesnew/about_pastor_john_hagee.
¹⁷ “John Hagee Ministries’ Global Evangelism Television,” *Ministry Watch.com*, http://www.ministrywatch.com/new2.1/f_SumBps.asp?EIN=741986308.
¹⁸ Analisa Nazareno, “Critics Say John Hagee’s Compensation Is Too High,” *San Antonio Express-News*, June 20, 2003.

Postscript

During the 2008 presidential campaign, televangelist and CUFI founder Hagee was thrust into the spotlight after he endorsed John McCain and the presumptive Republican nominee proclaimed he was "proud" to have the pastor's support. The extremist right-wing Catholic League, headed by provocateur and media hound Bill Donohue, seized the moment to excoriate Hagee for his allegedly anti-Catholic views. (Donohue claimed that Hagee sermonizing that "the apostate church" was the "great whore" depicted in the Book of Revelation proved that Hagee was anti-Catholic.) The media leapt on the story—which broke around the same time as the explosive sermons of Barack Obama's pastor, Jeremiah Wright, surfaced. But by focusing on Hagee's supposed anti-Catholicism, the media largely ignored Hagee's dispensationalist ideology and his

deep connections to the neoconservative foreign policy establishment.

Hagee later apologized for any perception that his statements were anti-Catholic, and Donohue issued a statement that the Catholic League considered the matter closed. After that controversy died down, Hagee continued business as

usual—preaching about the end-times, endearing himself to Israel's most hard-line right-wingers, stoking fears of a nuclear Iran, and planning CUFI's next summer summit in Washington, which will feature leading neoconservative pundits and elected officials. ■

In his best-selling *Jerusalem Countdown*, Pastor Hagee asserts that an American and Israeli war on Iran is not only biblically prophesied but necessary to bring about Armageddon and the Second Coming.

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CATHOLIC NEOCONS *continued from page 1*

forth to get my pants on, lift me onto a slide board to get me into my wheelchair, lift my arms to get my shirt on and then knot my tie. After she gives me breakfast, she attends to getting our kids ready for school. She does all this before working an eight-hour day. I usually leave for court shortly thereafter, driven either by my father or my uncle.

My condition has led me to be politically active in the battle for federal funding and oversight for embryonic stem cell research, which potentially could help me manage my disease. This battle has required me to confront the hierarchy of my own religion, Roman Catholicism, as well as allied neoconservative groups. This battle has also required me to come to better understand the intricacies of "natural law" as an animating idea of their movement. I have also come to understand that natural law arguments can be easily turned around to advance enlightened positions on science and biology and pluralist democracy.

Roman Catholic* neoconservatives such as Richard John Neuhaus have President George W. Bush's ear, and have succeeded in thwarting vital research using stem cells, research that has shown such promise in developing treatments for many diseases—including my muscular dystrophy.

Neoconservative Catholics and fundamentalist evangelicals vehemently oppose embryonic stem cell research because it destroys blastocysts, or early-stage embryos in the first few days of cellular division. Research opponents regard the harvesting of the undifferentiated, "master" stem cells of the blastocyst, and their use in research, as the destruction of human life (which, after all, begins at conception). They argue that the embryo is being denied its *telos*, or "end," in not being allowed to develop into a child. This is the crux of the objection to embryonic stem cell research.

But the Catholic neocons promote another objection to the research: a general antipathy toward any kind of meddling

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*References in this article to Catholics refer to Roman Catholics.



Roman Catholic neoconservatives have introduced natural law arguments against stem cell research to the anti-abortion movement. Here a California Life Coalition member protests outside of a conference in San Diego in 2002.

with nature. Beyond any religious considerations, the issue is seen as an injunction against "playing God"; a pragmatic reluctance to engage in futile attempts to change nature.

Many neoconservatives hold a kind of nihilistic respect for nature, and most importantly, the naturally ordered inequalities, such as between the weak and the strong and the rich and the poor. Meddling is ill-advised and doomed to create catastrophes worse than the original problems they sought to address, from their point of view. It isn't difficult to discern within the arguments of both Catholic neocon Robert P. George and secular neocon Eric Cohen their distaste for what they see as the radical egalitarian effect science and technology have had on society, a state of affairs that must seem intolerably subversive of the "natural order." Moreover, the Catholic neocons view natural law as the true basis for a national moral order of all Americans.

Encountering such sentiments led me to explore how the Catholic neocons (or as defector Damon Linker calls them, "theocons,") have introduced Catholic notions of "natural law" into the larger neocon movement—and thus into critical Amer-

ican debates about life and death.

Why Natural Law Matters

Neoconservatives are tiny in number, yet large in influence due to their prolific writing, thinking, and support from wealthy patrons that locate them close to the corridors of power. It is a small movement of intellectuals that emerged in earnest opposing political trends of the 1960s, without a mass base and with only the power of their ideas and connections to win influence. Their vigorous defense of the free market, capitalism, and a militarist foreign policy wins them powerful allies. Yet other currents run through their thought, including a defense of natural law and the championing of religion.

"Natural law," meaning the rules God set into motion in the world and also instilled in our own natures, has been a central, animating philosophical idea in Christian thought for a thousand years. However it has taken some important turns along the way, and there are now what we might call several branches of thought about the definition of natural law.

One of these, the Classic view, is embraced and promoted by the leading

thinkers of Catholic neoconservatives in the United States and their political allies in conservative Protestant evangelicalism. Roman Catholicism as a whole employs natural law principles as a means to rationally explain and interpret the morality of Scripture. However, many in the Vatican have recently pressed to superimpose their particular interpretations on the greater secular society. This is driven by the belief that natural law principles are so universal that even non-Catholics are subject to their tenets.

On the religious Right's hot button issues of the culture war—feminism, birth control, abortion, gay marriage, stem cell research—natural law-based ethics are routinely employed by the Catholic wing to refute the progressive position. This is important for a very powerful reason: one of its guiding principles is that any law that violates natural law (or at least the way orthodox Catholicism interprets natural law) should be ignored as unjust. What's more, evangelical social conservatives have been increasingly adopting natural law arguments in support of their shared opposition to issues they view as assaults on traditional values.

The Catholic Neoconservatives

Catholic neoconservatives, like most neocons, are elitists who see social inequality as a natural condition of society. As a result, they often stress the need to control knowledge in order to better instruct the general populace. But unlike neocons such as Irving Kristol who tend to be either atheists or not terribly religious, theocons are traditionalist-minded Catholics, many with ties to ultra-conservative organizations such as Opus Dei. Theocons also share a history with the rest of the neo-conservative movement—their leading lights moved from left to right in reaction to what they saw as the threat of the '60s cultural revolution and inattention to the true threat of communism.

This group is spearheaded by the triumvirate of Richard John Neuhaus, Michael Novak and George Weigel. They had a good friend in Pope John Paul II—but now have even better ones in Pope

John Courtney Murray and America's Founders

The appropriation of Classical natural law arguments to advance the modern agenda of Catholic neoconservatism and the broader Religious Right originated with the Jesuit priest John Courtney Murray (1904-1967).

Murray was a key advocate in developing the Vatican's modern approach to pluralism in liberal democracies such as in the United States. He argued that Catholic doctrine is compatible with the thought of America's founders, citing their various allusions to natural law-derived, self-evident, truths. Murray argued that as a result, Catholicism, Protestantism, and Judaism would increasingly influence national morality in the second half of the twentieth century. The only problem with this is that Catholic notions of natural law had little to nothing to do with the thinking of the framers of the Constitution. For one thing, there is more than one interpretation of natural law and where it leads us.

Nevertheless, Catholic neoconservatives such as Richard John Neuhaus, George Weigel and Michael Novak have seized on this erroneous view of natural law like a cudgel to further a revisionist narrative of American history that supports Religious Right notions of Christian nationalism. To this end, Thomas Jefferson and other of the founders are often portrayed as fervent evangelicals who cited thirteenth century interpretations of Aristotle's teachings; an inaccurate accounting that belies Jefferson's (among others) Arian Unitarianism (a belief in God as a single person as opposed to being three persons in one, a Trinity). "When they [the Founders] are not being denounced as infidels," historian Garry Wills bemusedly wrote, "men like Michael Novak dress them up as crypto-Evangelicals, crypto-Jews, or crypto-Catholics."¹

The natural law beliefs of the American founders were—theoconic thinkers like Murray, Novak and Weigel notwithstanding—different than those of the Vatican. For one thing, the founders followed a form of natural law much evolved from Aquinas's version. The first significant revision was by Anglican theologian Richard Hooker (1554-1600) whose belief that God cares more about individual souls than church hierarchies was a direct rebuke to the Vatican. But perhaps more importantly, Hooker took Aquinas one step further by saying of Scripture, "Words must be taken according to the matter whereof they are uttered." This means that people must use their reason in reading the Bible, with a key component of that understanding historical context.

Hooker's views on tolerance in particular directly influenced the Enlightenment thinker John Locke, whose views in turn guided the framers of the Constitution. (Locke directly cites Hooker in his *Second Treatise on Civil Government*.) It is through Locke that Aristotelian thought is reintroduced into the ethics of governance after it was elided by a steady stream of philosophers beginning in the late Middle Ages, and ending with Thomas Hobbes at the dawn of the Age of Reason. Hobbes' sole concern was for the preservation of secular sovereign rulers and he had no use for a morality based upon rational thought. The social contract was the price paid for social order—even if the price paid for that peace was abusive authority.

Locke applied an inverse form of Hobbes' social contract theory, one in which if a ruler violates natural law principles by failing to protect "life, liberty, and property," the governed are justified in overthrowing the regime. Locke, in turn, heavily influenced the thinking of the framers of the Constitution. His legacy is found in Article VI proscribing "religious tests" for public office as well as in Jefferson's pivotal 1802 letter to the Danbury Baptists in which he uses the metaphor of a wall of separation between church and state to explain the meaning of the establishment clause of the First Amendment.

The clear influence of John Locke demolishes the theocon argument that Catholic natural law principles are at the root of the Founders' beliefs. Locke, in his *Letter on Toleration* advocated separating church and state—an idea thoroughly rejected by the theocons who want to insert Catholic theology as the cornerstone of American morality.

Garry Wills observes, the argument of "John Courtney Murray that America was really founded on Catholic principles [is] an idea that would have made Adams and Jefferson snort with derision."

Benedict XVI and President George W. Bush.

Michael Novak started out the 1960s as both a democratic Socialist and vocal proponent of liberalizing Catholicism but has been marching rightward since the mid-1970s as an avatar of laissez-faire capitalism—as well as of Catholic orthodoxy. His 1982 book, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* is often credited with softening Vatican hostility to free market economics and directing criticism towards democratic socialism.

While some neocons embrace the late founding philosopher of conservatism Leo Strauss's warnings about "the corrosive effects" of liberalism, in dozens of books Novak extols the merits of liberal democracy, pluralism, and individual liberty. But he does so through the lens of John Courtney Murray (and the medieval Catholic philosopher St. Thomas Aquinas) who viewed liberty as doing what one ought to do, with orthodox Catholic theology defining the parameters of what "ought" means. (See box on Murray.) As its director of social and political studies, Novak brings a religious flair to the neoconservative think tank, American Enterprise Institute.

George Weigel has been prominent on the Right since the Reagan administration, when he was very involved in supporting the Nicaraguan Contra guerillas against the revolutionary government of the Sandinistas. He is the official biographer of Pope John Paul II¹ and from his perch at the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C. has been the greatest proponent of John Courtney Murray's idea that when America's Founders spoke of "self-evident truths" they were evoking Catholic notions of natural law.

But perhaps the most influential of this group is Father Richard John Neuhaus, whose ideological and religious transformation is one of the more remarkable journeys in modern religious and political life. The one-time anti-Vietnam war Lutheran minister left behind radical left politics (as well as his Lutheranism) to become in 1990 a Roman Catholic priest and icon of the neoconservative move-

ment. He promotes the civic power of religion as president of the Institute of Religion and Public Life, a neoconservative institute "whose purpose is to advance a religiously informed public policy for the ordering of society."

Neuhaus has had the ear of President George W. Bush throughout his administration, as well as enjoying a direct line of communication with Pope Benedict XVI. Neuhaus, acting on directives from Rome, in 2004 pushed for the denial of the Sacrament of Communion to then-Democratic Presidential candidate John Kerry for his prochoice, pro-embryonic stem cell

Many neoconservatives hold a kind of nihilistic respect for nature, and most importantly, the naturally ordered inequalities, such as between the weak and the strong and the rich and the poor.

research positions. But unlike Pope John Paul II and Benedict XVI, who both opposed the 2003 Iraq War, Neuhaus (along with Novak and Weigel) openly argued for preemptive invasion.

The theocons, unlike most mainstream Catholics, are evangelical in nature, using religious conversion as an important tool to augment their influence. For example, they are attempting to seize control of the Catholic Church from within, first by trying to get mainstream Catholics to return to traditionally orthodox practices, (including a return to the Latin Mass) while simultaneously reaching out to traditionalist

groups such as the Society of St. Pius X which have rejected the liberalizing reforms of Vatican II.

Part of this effort entails the marginalization of moderate and liberal Catholics. They hope to offset these losses by converting socially conservative Protestants and even some Jews. Such notable converts include U.S. Senator Sam Brownback, the Kansas Republican; former Bush advisor and editor of *Crisis* magazine Deal Hudson; columnist Robert Novak; and CNBC's Lawrence Kudlow. The conversions of Brownback, Novak and Kudlow were overseen by the prominent Opus Dei priest, Rev. C. John McCloskey.²

Catholic theocons also frown on any and all dissent. For example, when the lay group Voice of the Faithful demanded accountability from the Church during the recent pedophilia scandal, Weigel dismissed them as part of "a culture of dissent."

The theocons are easy to identify by their terminology. Pundit Dinesh D'Souza for example, invokes a twelfth century understanding of "just war" doctrine to explain the need for preemptive military action. We can hear it at work when theocons and neocons falsely describe value pluralism as "moral relativism," and agnosticism or atheism as "nihilism."

In the stem cell debate, neocon Eric Cohen and Catholic theocon Robert P. George both argue that an individual human being exists from the moment of conception, as if it were based upon a scientific consensus, even though that is clearly is not the case. Underlying their argument are Classical Greek natural law principles as interpreted by the Catholic theologian Thomas Aquinas. This becomes significant because the theocons view such Catholic orthodoxy as the template for a national morality.³

Defining Natural Law

The notion of natural law comes to us from the Classical Greek philosopher Aristotle, who sought to explain the logical order of the universe based upon empirical analysis. Unlike his teacher Plato who believed that this world was an imperfect

vision of another ideal world, one in which God, justice and morality are unchanging, Aristotle believed in one universe, one in which what is before us is all there is, but set in motion by "an unmoved mover." And unlike Plato who believed in the immutable nature of things, Aristotle taught that change is the one constant. In his treatise, *Physics*, he famously declared that that which has changed, is changing.

Aristotle's teachings virtually disappeared with the fall of the Roman Empire, while Plato's worldview found its way into orthodox Christian teaching, notably in the writings of Saint Augustine. Plato's influence on Augustine leaps out in the latter's lack of faith in the goodness of man. However, with the Catholic reconquest of Spain from the Moors, Church scholars came into contact with the works of Jewish and Islamic scholars who studied and expounded upon Aristotle's works; thinkers such as Moses Maimonides and al-Farbi. These writings influenced a series of Middle Age theologian philosophers such as Peter Abelard and Thomas Aquinas. It was Aquinas who succeeded in adapting Aristotle's teaching to Catholic theology.

Then just how does orthodox Catholicism interpret natural law? *The New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia* offers a somewhat dense definition, but when broken down into basic parts becomes much more understandable. First the basic premise:

According to St. Thomas, the natural law is "nothing else than the rational creature's participation in the eternal law"... The eternal law is God's wisdom, inasmuch as it is the directive norm of all movement and action. When God willed to give existence to creatures, He willed to ordain and direct them to an end. In the case of inanimate things, this Divine direction is provided for in the nature which God has given to each; in them determinism reigns.

Humanity is instilled with intelligence with which to make rational choices:

Like all the rest of creation, man is destined by God to an end, and

receives from Him a direction towards this end. This ordination is of a character in harmony with his free intelligent nature. In virtue of his intelligence and free will, man is master of his conduct. Unlike the things of the mere material world he can vary his action, act, or abstain from action, as he pleases.

But humanity cannot do as it pleases. Instead, justifiable choice is defined by what one ought to do. Divine determinism is interpreted to mean that humanity is prohibited from interfering in natural occurrences:

Yet he is not a lawless being in an ordered universe. In the very constitution of his nature, he too has a law laid down for him, reflecting that ordination and direction of all things, which is the eternal law. The rule, then, which God has prescribed for our conduct, is found in our nature itself. Those actions which conform with its tendencies, lead to our destined end, and are thereby constituted right and morally good; those at variance with our nature are wrong and immoral.

Natural Law—at least as seen by orthodox Catholicism inspired by St. Thomas Aquinas—is so resolute that even God is bound to its principles. It is the order of the universe. Thus if God is bound to its precepts, so too is humanity. Every being has its *telos* or end to fulfill and it is not for humanity to interfere with this process of fulfillment.

Aquinas provides a rationale for faith, instead of one of mere belief. Still, it is the philosophical step away from a more fundamentalist approach to faith to a comfortable and evolving relationship of faith and reason. Aquinas provides an effective argument against fundamentalism in general, and its theocon variants in particular. Historically, Aquinas is a pivotal figure in the change in rational thought that eventually led to the strengthening of faith by separating it from the state.

Strident Dogma Versus Open Empiricism

Theocon thinkers such as Notre Dame's George V. Bradley, Robert P. George of Princeton, and George Weigel, have mostly frozen their definition of "reason" with Aquinas rather than allowing for any broad applications of humanity's "free intelligent nature." And in good Platonic fashion, they embrace a peculiar definition of reason—one encumbered by dogmatic obedience to ecclesiastical authority—and which differs significantly from the commonly held definition, especially where dissent is concerned.

This prioritizing of obedience over individual conscience was on full display when Neuhaus wrote:

Given a decision between what I think the Church should teach and was the Church in fact does teach, I decide for the Church. I decide freely and rationally—Because God has promised the apostolic leadership of the Church guidance and charisms that He has not promised me; because I think the Magisterium [the teaching authority of the Church] just may understand some things that I don't; because I know for sure that, in the larger picture of history, the witness of the Catholic Church is immeasurably more important than anything I might think or say. In short, I obey.⁴

Where Aristotle followed a path garnering new evidence with which to test accepted truths, Plato emphasized censorship and the usefulness of "noble lies" to ensure a top-down social order. This censorious nature was on full display when Weigel recently demanded to know what the Jesuit Order's newly elected leader,

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California took the lead in passing Proposition 71 in November 2004 to support stem cell research. Here producer Jerry Zucker speaks at the victory party in Los Angeles.

Father Adolfo Nicholas, would "do about Jesuits who are manifestly not obedient to the Pope or to the teaching authority of the Church?" It is also on display when Pope Benedict XVI, then-Cardinal Ratzinger, spoke at Rome's Sapienza University about the church prosecution of Galileo in the 1633 Inquisition. While acknowledging that Galileo's theory of the universe was correct, he nevertheless called his trial "reasonable and just."

Indeed, as late as the seventeenth century, the Vatican adhered to the earth-centered view of the solar system described in Scripture. The Church had begun to accept Aristotelian thinking in terms of theology, but it still held fast to the Bible's earth-centrism and Platonic censorship on matters of science.

Inherent in this approach is a distrust of the common person seen among other neoconservatives inspired by the University of Chicago philosopher Leo Strauss. Seen through the neo-Platonist eyes of traditionalist Catholics and neocons alike, people are neither good nor rational. Therefore, to trust the common person with the ability to reason is tantamount to societal

suicide. Instead, knowledge should be left to the control of an intellectual elite who—in their eyes—can handle it. The masses need, not reason, but belief. The question then becomes how to transform society to effect this goal?

Their answer is simple: remove reason from religion. Such a belief echoes the twelfth century Platonic theologian Bernard of Clairvaux's view that "faith is to be believed, not disputed." It is this line of reasoning that winds its way through neoconservative think tanks such as the Institute on Religion and Democracy and the Ethics Public Policy Center. Anything but traditionalist-based orthodoxy is viewed by these groups as disputing faith, even reasoning that seeks to reconcile science with faith. And in the antithesis of Aristotelian logic, empirical scientific knowledge is attacked. Evolution—long accepted by the Vatican and even reaffirmed by Pope John Paul II—has been increasingly derided under Pope Benedict, a red flag revealing a desire to return to a more fundamentalist form of Catholicism; stem cell research is attacked; and literal interpretations of Scripture are emphasized.

However, unlike the Catholic neo-Platonists who see this life as a less perfect version of God's Kingdom, many neoconservatives have adopted Leo Strauss's marriage of Plato to Nietzsche's nihilism. Strauss and many of his students believe that there is no afterlife, but argue that teaching this view to the general population would lead to widespread atheism resulting in societal collapse.

Movement founder Irving Kristol is up front about this, going so far as to argue the Church should return to mindset of the Middle Ages, specifically citing the Syllabus of Errors by Pope Pius IX that included attacks on reason, Protestantism, and the separation of church and state.⁶ Pius IX was a well-known authoritarian who led a virtual one-man war on modern science

and democracy.

Such brook-no-dissent authoritarianism has not gone unnoticed by socially conservative Catholics. As former Neuhaus aide Damon Linker noted in his authoritative book, *The Theocrats*:

Catholics were, first of all, the single largest religious group in the country, making it exceedingly difficult if not impossible to launch a successful program for political and religious reform in the country without significant support from within the ranks of the Catholic faithful. Then there was the church's long history of theological and political reflection, which made Catholics far more competent than evangelicals and other Protestants to take the lead in pressing religiously based moral arguments in the nation's political life.⁷

Two passages later, Linker hits the nail on the head:

But most promising of all was the Vatican's robust defense of ecclesiastical authority. Unlike the Protestant mainline, whose leadership had

Photo: Harrison/Getty Images

come to preach unorthodox, anti-traditionalist views, the heads of the Catholic Church in Rome [Pope John Paul II and Cardinal Ratzinger] refused to compromise with or capitulate to blatant theological deviancy.

Still, traditionalist Catholics alone do not have the numbers to bring about the societal change they seek. Protestant Evangelicals, with their literal Biblical interpretations and their view that "faith is to be believed, not disputed," are natural allies.

And yet there are significant tensions within this alliance particularly on matters of theology. One such tension is the Protestant doctrine of "*Sola Scriptura*" ("by scripture alone") that clashes with Catholic notions of Magisterium (meaning the Church as interpreter of Scripture). This has required a great deal of diplomatic bridge building mostly via the most conservative and traditionalist evangelical Protestants, and neoconservative precincts of Catholicism. And while some Catholics have yielded to fundamentalists' opposition to the theory of evolution, socially conservative Protestants seem to be increasingly amenable to Vatican notions of natural law principles that underlie their opposition to abortion, end of life issues, and stem cell research.

Writing in the November 1996 issue of Neuhaus's periodical *First Things*, Charles Colson draws on Aquinas in his discussion of a federal court system that "sanctions abortion, euthanasia, and homosexual marriage" and in arguing against the need for social conservatives to resist what he deems to be illegitimate rulings:

Augustine's dictum remains the most famous formulation of the broader view of a Christian's relation to the state: "An unjust law is no law at all." Aquinas argued that God's delegation of authority to civil authorities was linked to the fostering of virtue. When a ruler meets that test, when his laws and actions are in accord with the *lex divina*, and when human law promotes the *tranquillitas ordinis*,

The State of the Debate

Finding a plentiful source of stem cells is only the first step towards understanding and treating complicated human diseases such as Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, and diabetes, and treatments may still be years away.¹ Since President Bush banned funding for most embryonic stem cell research in 2001, eleven states have authorized funding for stem cell research to fill the vacuum left by the federal funding restrictions. Seven states explicitly permit research on embryonic stem cells.²

In an attempt to sidestep the contentious debate, scientists have devised new laboratory techniques that would not use embryos. Yet the new techniques—which gather stem cells from the amniotic fluid around a developing embryo or transform adult skin cells into stem cells—are untested and might not be effective for research and treatments in all the same ways embryonic stem cells are.³

Furthermore, these alternatives will take time, maybe years, to develop to the point where embryonic stem cell research is now. And because these alternatives are at an early stage of development, there is a chance that they might not be effective, supporting a continued push for using federal funding for the promising and more developed embryonic stem cell research.⁴

Finally, the argument against embryonic stem cell research was contradictory to begin with because much of the research could be done on embryos that were made, but never used from fertility clinics (which routinely develop extra embryos to increase the chances of conception and routinely dispose of extra embryos). If the Bush administration were so concerned with protecting embryos, how could it praise the fertility clinics which routinely dispose of embryos they do not need while prohibiting researchers from using these same embryos and then claim it was defending the embryos on moral grounds?⁵

— Aaron Rothbaum

¹ Andrew Pollack, "After Stem-Cell Breakthrough, the Real Work Begins," *The New York Times*, November 27, 2007.

² "State Embryonic and Fetal Research Laws as of January 2007," *Kaiser Family Foundation*, <http://www.statehealthfacts.org/comparable.jsp?ind=111&cat=2>

³ "State Funding of Embryonic and Fetal Research as of January 2007," *Kaiser Family Foundation* <http://www.statehealthfacts.org/comparable.jsp?ind=112&cat=2>

⁴ Alan I. Leshner and James A. Thompson, "Standing in the Way of Stem Cell Research," *The Washington Post*, December 3, 2007.

⁵ Gina Kolata, "Scientists Bypass the Need for Embryo to Get Stem Cells," *The New York Times*, November 21, 2007.

⁶ Michael Kinsley, "Why Science Can't Save the GOP," *Time Magazine*, November 28, 2007.

then human law is just; but if it "runs counter in any way to the law in us by nature, it is no longer law but a breakdown of law."

Colson, the former Watergate felon who founded the evangelical Prison Fellowship, has also written, "It goes back to the Greeks and Plato's saying that if there were no transcendent ideals, there could be no concord, justice, and harmony in a society."⁶ The language in either quote could have easily have been authored by Catholic theocons such as a Robert P. George or George Weigel.

A key bridge between the conservative evangelicals and orthodox Catholicism

has been neoconservatism. This is on prominent display in the world of Washington think tanks where, for example, Neuhaus, Novak, and Weigel advise or serve as directors of a number of key neo-conservative agencies such as the Institute on Religion and Democracy and the Ethics Public Policy Center. It is through such organizations that traditionalist Catholic natural law principles are married to conservative talking points and percolate into the national discourse. This brings me around to how evangelical Protestantism and Roman Catholicism have both argued natural law principles in the battle over embryonic stem cell research.

Refuting The Right's Natural Law Arguments

Theocons argue that the embryo is being denied its *telos*, or "end," in not being allowed to develop into a child, and that humankind meddling with nature in this way will end in disaster. Yet such beliefs ignore an alternative natural law argument that I and other pro-research advocates constantly put forth: that the use of spare embryos for medical research may indeed be the *telos* or end of these blastocysts.

Today there are approximately 400,000 frozen blastocysts lying in a state of frozen limbo at in-vitro fertilization clinics. For thousands of these embryos, the decision has already been made that they will never be transferred to a woman's body and that means they will never grow beyond a tiny clump of undifferentiated cells briefly existing in a petri dish.

Most orthodox Catholics and fundamentalist evangelicals believe that those clumps of cells constitute a human being, but most of us don't think that microscopic cellular life is equal to, or the same thing as, a human life. As William Neaves of the Stowers Institute (and fellow Catholic) observed:

Other religious traditions acknowledge the product of fertilization to be a life but do not accord it the status of a human being. For example, both Judaism and Islam hold that full human status is acquired progressively during embryonic development, not at fertilization. Until 40 days after conception, Judaism considers the developing embryo to be "mere fluid." The early embryo is respected as a potential human being, but it is not yet a person. Accordingly, both Judaism and Islam permit the use of embryonic stem cells for therapeutic and research purposes.⁹

To merely assume that those who consider themselves religious and who take ethical issues seriously are inevitably on the anti-research side of the equation would be way off the mark. Different organized religions take different or no position at all on

the research. In fact, many religious organizations, including the Presbyterian Church USA, the Church of England (as well as its American counterpart, the Episcopal Church USA), the American Jewish Congress, United Church of Christ, the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America and a clear majority of America Roman Catholics support this potentially life saving research.¹⁰

If the primary frame of an issue such as stem cell research is based on neoconservative/neo-orthodox Catholic arguments, then, as linguist George Lakoff would have it, we have to address the frame. One classic—and classically effective—way to do so is by employing Aristotle's time-tested methodology.

Empirical studies long ago revealed that a newly created embryo can either split into multiple embryos or unite with another embryo to form a single embryo. Until that happens, individuality is far from guaranteed. What's more, before an embryo can successfully develop into a fetus there is yet another intervening event that must first occur: attachment to the uterine wall of which only 30 to 40 percent of zygotes ever survive to do. It follows that an embryo situated in a petri dish is no more an individual human being than an unplanted acorn is an oak tree.

In addition to applying Aristotle's empirical methodology we add Charles Curran's historicism to the stem cell debate, and we wind up at a different place on the issue than either George Weigel or Robert P. George would have us be.

In fact, there is nothing in the Gospels to indicate that Jesus would oppose stem cell research. His constant healing of the sick and disabled was not only one of his primary activities, it was in accordance with the Jewish notion of *Pikuach nefesh*, the moral imperative to save lives. The healing and the amelioration of the sick and disabled is far more deeply rooted in the world's spiritual traditions than the modern concept that life begins at fertilization.

By applying strident dogmas and historical revisionism, what the theocons are essentially doing is not using natural law

as a means of interpreting Scripture, but instead using it to override Scripture by creating a false historical context.

Aristotle believed in empirical evidence in determining the natural end of any thing or being. Galileo employed this method when he presented the Vatican with evidence that the earth was not at the center of the solar system. Galileo's Italy, unlike America in the twenty-first century, was not a literate, pluralistic, post-Enlightenment society. And thankfully, unlike the case of the great scientist, the Inquisition can no longer stifle challenges to its Biblical geocentrism and natural law views with the threat of death at the stake. Both the diversity of religious beliefs, rooted in the constitutional rights related to individual conscience; and a more literate populace give us the capacity and the opportunity to openly challenge orthodox Catholic notions of natural law when they collide with Constitutionally derived liberties.

Alternative Future

While the theocons remain ascendant in the hierarchy, there is an intellectually formidable movement within Catholicism that challenges traditionalist notions of natural law. This got theologian Fr. Charles Curran fired from teaching at Catholic University in 1986 for opposing the Church's opposition to artificial birth control. Curran took the hit, but he was on the right track. The way to pull the rug out from theoconish natural law arguments both within the Church and without is to challenge their premises with a broader understanding of both natural law and when necessary, the Eternal as stated in Scripture.

Curran offers a much simpler definition of natural law that shows a healthy respect for the role of reason in human affairs:

The natural law maintains that human reason reflecting on human nature is able to arrive at moral wisdom and knowledge. There are two aspects to the question of natural law. From the theological point of view, natural law responds to the question of where the Christian and

moral theologian find wisdom and knowledge. Here I accept wholeheartedly the Catholic position that human reason can and should arrive at the moral truth. The philosophical aspect of natural law concerns the meaning of human reason and of human nature.

Curran's definition better reflects Aristotle's view of natural law, where reason is unobstructed by dogma; it is allowed to reach its own logical ends based upon new information. Curran, like others before him, employs an evolving historical context of time and place, in which new knowledge does not obviate our understanding of ethical behavior rooted in natural law (as many neoconservative, Catholics and otherwise believe), but actually clarifies it. It is one of the most effective mechanisms in refuting many of the Religious Right's charges of moral relativism.

Historical consciousness is often contrasted with classicism, which understands reality in terms of the eternal, the immutable, and the unchanging. Historical consciousness gives more importance to the particular, the contingent, the historical, and the individual.... The Catholic theological tradition has recognized historicity in its rejection of the axiom, Scripture alone. Scripture must always be understood, appropriated, communicated, and lived in the light of the historical and cultural realities of the present time. The church cannot simply repeat the words of Scripture. Catholicism has undergone much more development than most people think. Creative fidelity is necessary for any tradition, and such fidelity is consistent with the philosophical world view of historical consciousness.¹¹

Curran does not challenge the Religious Right by claiming that God is not immutable—far from it. Instead, following the centuries-old lead of Anglican theologian Richard Hooker, he explains that humanity's understanding of God and

morality is ever changing (see box). More importantly, that change results from advancements in knowledge being used to challenge and to reform existing doctrines.

Conclusion

For those of us who come from Christian traditions, we need to learn to be confident that the history and doctrines in both Catholicism and Protestantism show that challenging conventional wisdom does not necessarily make one an enemy of the faith. If anything, mindless dogmatic resistance to new empirical evidence is an ongoing invitation to greater skepticism as we have certainly seen as American Catholics ignore and are openly contemptuous of the Vatican encyclical prohibiting artificial birth control. Indeed, we stand in a grand tradition of loyal dissent that stretches from Galileo to Father Charles Curran (and many more). It is the path that many of us who support embryonic stem cell research now take. For all of us, the debunking of theonomic notions of natural law is still a powerful argument; especially when combined with dismantling the bizarre Catholic forms of Christian nationalism; and fully embracing the broad Constitutional doctrines that guide and govern our society away from sectarian doctrines toward inclusive, secular ideas of the common good. ■

End Notes

¹ George Weigel, *Witness to Hope*. Harper-Collins 2005

² Chris Suellentrop, "The Rev. John McCloskey: The Catholic Church's K Street Lobbyist," Salon.com August 9, 2002. John McCloskey is described as "...an Ivy Leaguer who graduated from Columbia and a former Wall Streeter who worked at Citibank and Merrill Lynch...." He further noted, "As a result, he travels comfortably in elite circles, and his ministry is focused on them: on young priests and seminarians (the intellectual elite in many Catholic communities), on college students at elite universities and "strong countercultural" Catholic institutions, and on "opinion-makers and people of influence." The self-described supply-sider has a top-down strategy to transform the culture, too. He wants to turn Blue America into Red.

McCloskey describes his ideal believer: "A good Catholic isn't worried about going deep into these theological levels....You say, 'I believe.'"

³ Robert P. George often plays fast and loose when citing sources for his position that the embryo is an individual from the moment of conception. For example, as William Saletan observed of George's recent book, *Embryos: A*

Defense of Human Life, "While quoting from embryology textbooks, the authors omit passages that confound their bootstrap theory. One such passage reports that 'the early embryo and the female reproductive tract influence one another' as the embryo is 'being transported' to the uterus. Another observes that 'implantation requires a high degree of preparation and coordination by both the embryo and the endometrium' — preparation that begins, on the womb's part, well before conception. Maternal factors don't just facilitate the embryo's program; they direct it. Maternal RNA guides the embryo's early organization. Later, factors in the womb apparently influence traits like sexual orientation." "Little Children," *New York Times*, February 10, 2008.

⁴ Damon Linker, *The Theosom*. (New York: Doubleday, 2006), pages 193-194, citing Richard John Neuhaus, "The Persistence of the Catholic Moment," *First Things*, February 2003, 29.

⁵ George Weigel, *Questions for Father General*. *Denver Catholic Register* Week of February 20, 2008.

⁶ Irving Kristol, *NeoConservatism: The Autobiography of an Idea*. (New York: The Free Press, 1995), 434.

⁷ Linker, Damon, *The Theosom*. (New York: Doubleday, 2006), 69.

⁸ Charles Colson, "The Problem of Ethics," *Christian Ethics Today*, December 2000, Issue 31, Volume 5, Number 6

⁹ William B. Neaves, *When Does Life Begin?* Stowers Institute for Medical Research, 2005.

¹⁰ Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, August 13, 2005; link: <http://pewforum.org/news/display.php?NewsID=5238>

¹¹ Charles Curran, "Catholic Social and Sexual Teaching: a Methodological Comparison" *Theology Today* v. 44., no. 4, page 427.

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NATIVIST BEDFELLOWS *continued from page 1*

caust of liberalized abortion under a flawed Supreme Court ruling in 1973.”²

All of this represented a significant shift from the previous year’s summit, where the opening address by rising GOP star Congressman Mike Pence of Indiana linked biblical principles to a guest worker program without amnesty. Quoting *Exodus 22:21*, Pence said:

“You should not mistreat the alien in your midst, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt.” . . . There is for the believer no asterisk, no exception. . . . We are called as believers to action, an admonition that we do not abandon the alien and a call to defend law and order and justice and a belief in the ideals of our founding fathers that we are a nation of immigrants.³

Far from embracing anti-immigrant politics as a central movement concern, back in 2006 leaders such as Connie Mackey, vice president of the Family Research Council (FRC) reported: “We are wrestling with it. . . . The hardest part: what to do about those people who are here now.”⁴

The FRC—a D.C.-based spin-off of James Dobson’s Focus on the Family that helps coordinate the Christian Right’s legislative and political agendas—was hardly alone in its reluctance to jump headlong into the battle over immigration. During 2006, spokespeople for the evangelical Right generally remained quiet on the issue despite pressure from the Bush administration to support its guest worker program. Some openly warned against alienating conservative Latino evangelicals. The National Association of Evangelicals’ policy director Richard Czik stated, “Evangelical leaders are concerned that our voice be a biblical voice that does not send the wrong signal to the growing Latino community.”⁵

In October 2006, the organization attempted to stake out a moderate position

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The Christian Right is now nearly as worked up about illegal immigration as about abortion and same-sex marriage.

on immigration with a resolution that read, in part, “Let us secure our borders, care for all families, and seek further expressions of Godly compassion and justice.”⁶ Still, one month later, the Republicans paid a price for their identification with harsh anti-immigrant policies that targeted Latino communities in the mid-term elections: Latino support for Republicans—strongest among Protestant evangelicals—

fell from around 44 percent in 2004 polling to 29 percent in 2006.⁷

By January 2007, the position of some prominent Christian Right leaders hardened considerably, with the launch of the “Families First in Immigration” campaign. This sought to take a “family values” approach to the issue while also adopting a militantly anti-immigrant position. The proposal offered a path to citizenship for those unauthorized immigrants with family who are U.S. citizens while at the same time issued a frontal assault on the U.S. Constitution’s birthright citizenship provision.⁸ That is, children born on U.S. soil to noncitizens would no longer receive U.S. citizenship as provided for under the 14th amendment. Many anti-immigrant activists view birthright citizenship as an incentive for immigration without documents and decry so-called “anchor babies” whose legal status encourages their undocumented parents and other relatives to remain in the country.

Meanwhile, prominent Christian con-



servatives, including former House Majority Leader and Texas Republican Tom DeLay, Prison Ministries' Chuck Colson, and 2008 presidential hopeful Mike Huckabee, all began to argue that abortion creates a worker shortage that in turn produces an immigration problem as workers flow in from across the border to fill jobs.

Pressure from Below

Why would the Christian Right's position on immigration shift so drastically from 2006 to 2007, even though it could have a divisive impact on the Republican Party? It seems some of the movement's shepherds are following their flock. That is to say, it is the Christian Right's base—not its leadership—that is aligning the movement with anti-immigrant forces.

A 2006 Pew Research Center survey revealed that 63 percent of conservative white evangelical Protestants—the base constituency of the Christian Right—view immigrants as a threat to “traditional American customs and values,” as compared with less than half of the general public and 39 percent of the nonreligious.⁹ That same year, an FRC survey of its own constituency confirmed that anti-immigrant sentiment is especially strong among those white evangelical Protestants who identify with the Christian Right. The FRC reported that 90 percent of “values voters” believed deportation of “illegal immigrants” to be consistent with “the requirements of Christian discipleship” while a mere 10 percent opted for welcoming rather than punishing “strangers searching for a better life for themselves and their family.”¹⁰

In 2005, the Christian Coalition of Georgia hosted an immigration forum attended by Reverend Julian Herrera, a local evangelical pastor from Mexico. Herrera was offended by what he heard: “They said they needed to ship us back to our countries like a UPS package.... They blamed us for traffic congestion and overloaded hospital emergency rooms.” Sadie Fields, the executive director of the host group, disputed Herrera's memory, but she did say that “Illegal immigrants break the law in

coming here, and they put a burden on hospitals, schools and other public services.... Open borders also put the United States in danger of terrorist infiltration.”¹¹

Conservative Christian radio programs across the country now broadcast broadsides against illegal immigration and demands for a more forceful federal response.¹²

Confronted with this kind of anti-immigrant zeal at its base, FRC and other Christian Right groups began to stake out a hardline position on immigration. Although influential conservative strategists

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Richard Viguerie, Paul Weyrich, Gary Bauer, Donald Wildmon and others signed on to the “Families First in Immigration” campaign led by Manuel Miranda, aide to ex-Senator Bill Frist, Republican of Tennessee, the effort collapsed because its family reunification provision was soon perceived to be too soft on “illegals.”¹³ For hardliners, this element of the proposal, which put a “Christian” face to an otherwise boldly nativist proposal, amounted to splitting the baby. Viguerie, who prides himself on taking an accurate pulse of the conservative grassroots, has said, “Unhappy conservatives should be taken seriously. When conservatives are unhappy, bad things happen to the Republican Party.”¹⁴ In this instance Viguerie explained, “[T]here's a line here. Any Republican

candidate who tries to compromise on [amnesty] will lose in 2008, and I and a lot of others will work very hard to make that happen.”¹⁵ Yet again, the movement's base had moved well to the right of its leadership on the issue of immigration.

Coming full circle, in announcing the 2008 Values Voters Summit, the Family Research Council's political arm, FRC Action, gave the immigration issue high billing:

This event is a call to action for voter participation, education and training and a rallying event for patriotic Americans who want to transform the political landscape on issues such as the sanctity of life and marriage, illegal immigration, religious freedom, health care, radical Islam, judicial activism, Hollywood's influence, the media and much more...¹⁶

So the Christian Right now finds itself in a *de facto* alliance with leading anti-immigrant organizations that favor sterilization and abortion among non-European migrants to the United States. They are finding common ground in a resurgence of nativism.

Why Now?

Since its resurgence as a social movement in the mid-1970s, the Christian Right's leadership had largely steered clear of the immigration issue. Even as most of the movement's base supported measures such as California's successful Proposition 187 campaign in 1994 to deny public education and social services to unauthorized immigrants, most of its leadership considered the issue a liability, particularly in light of their commitment to “racial reconciliation.” Author Sara Diamond describes the movement's late '80s and early '90s racial reconciliation movement as “a drive led by white evangelical clergy to publicly repent for decades of institutional racism, the kind that led to the formation of racially segregated Baptist and Pentecostal churches in the first place.”¹⁷ Given that the courting of Black and Latino conservatives remains an important move-

ment goal, it is particularly notable that Christian Right leaders and groups have in recent years publicly adopted anti-immigrant positions. A complex combination of beliefs and material developments has helped shape the Christian Right's animosity towards immigrants.

A segment of the contemporary Christian Right continues to mobilize around the belief that the United States was founded as a Christian country. According to these "Christian nationalists," America is God's chosen land, a "city on a hill" to echo 17th century Puritan writings, that must set an example to the rest of the world of a nation governed by Christian principles.¹⁸ Secularists and moral relativists represent a threat to the Christian nation, in their view, but so, too, do those who challenge American (i.e. conservative Anglo-Protestant) cultural norms, such as immigrants who bring their own religious beliefs into the country.

Reactions to immigration—both authorized and unauthorized—are shaped in part by significant changes in the nature of immigration to the United States over the last few decades. Unusually heavy immigration has driven the foreign-born population from a low of five percent in 1970 to 12.5 percent of the total U.S. population in 2000, approaching the 15 percent high-water mark set around 1890.¹⁹ Earlier waves of immigration have given rise to similarly strong anti-immigrant movements.²⁰ In the present period, the settlement pattern of immigrants—once highly concentrated in such "gateway" cities as New York, Los Angeles, Miami, and Chicago—is increasingly decentralized, resulting in much wider exposure to recent arrivals by U.S.-born communities around the country. The foreign-born now account for over nine percent of Georgia's population and nearly six percent of Idaho's.²¹

And since the repeal in the mid-1960s of the racial quota system that privileged immigrants of European descent, most of those immigrating to the United States have been people of color, particularly from Latin America and Asia—a development that has inflamed white nationalism among

those who perceive immigration as a threat to a superior "American" culture established by Anglo (and generally Protestant) settlers [see glossary, p. 20]. Historically, the interplay between Christian nationalism and white nationalism has been an especially explosive combination. Backlash against earlier waves of Irish and Italian immigrants was informed by the prevailing view that these populations were neither Christian nor white.²²

Economic instability is another factor nurturing anti-immigrant feelings among the Christian Right. Scapegoating immigrants for the difficulty in finding a good job, overcrowded public schools, ruined housing stock, and overburdened health care and other social services offers a familiar outlet for frustrations caused by complex, and in some cases systemic, factors.²³

Alongside these factors, the "war on terror" has mobilized Christian Right resentment against immigrants by recasting immigration as a national security matter. One of the most popular workshops

at the 2007 Values Voters Summit was one on "Islamofascism" by prominent neo-conservative and Center for Security Policy president Frank Gaffney. An overflow crowd listened as he charged President Bush, commander-in-chief in the "war on terror," with being soft on the enemy and for repeatedly embracing "Islamofascists" for fear of appearing racist.²⁴

The Christian Right leadership and base have fervently supported the war on terror since its inception, viewing Islam as a central threat to national security. "Clash of civilizations" arguments that depict a Christian West in a global, apocalyptic confrontation with "radical Islam" inflame Christian nationalism in ways that find parallel expression in the immigration debates.²⁵ Republican Congressman Steve King of Iowa, a member of the House Immigration Reform Caucus, and the only Congressman in the 109th Congress to receive a 100 percent score both from the FRC and National Right to Life Committee, has been a leader in making the

The FAIR Network

Since founding the Federation for American Immigration Reform in 1979, John Tanton and his collaborators have built an influential network of anti-immigrant front groups that tailor their messages to a range of constituencies, including environmentalists, population control advocates, nativists, elected officials, mainstream news media outlets, and Protestant evangelicals.²⁶ Groups in the network include:

U.S. English: Lobbies against bilingual education and for English-only legislation;

Pro English: Launched by Tanton after he was forced to resign from the U.S. English Board;

Center for Immigration Studies: Positions itself as an objective think tank studying the effects of immigration;

NumbersUSA: A lobby group that portrays itself as "pro-immigrant and pro-immigration but anti-overimmigration";

U.S. Inc.: Raises money for these and other anti-immigrant groups, such as Population-Environment Balance—which courts environmentalists to the anti-immigrant cause;

Center for the Future American Worker: Runs a public relations campaign arguing that illegal immigration is a particular threat to African American workers;

Evangelicals for Immigration Reform: Aims to, "examine the religious and moral aspects of the immigration debate."

immigration-terrorist connection.

Apologists for illegals refuse to acknowledge the connection between terrorism and our lax immigration policies....The Sept. 11 hijackers used our own laws to enter the country, but remained in the country and violated their visas by staying when they expired. Only four years has passed since Sept. 11, 2001, but did we learn no lesson?²⁶

Characterizing the southern land border as a major front in the war on terror has helped facilitate the Christian Right's focus on immigration. According to Colin

Hanna, the president of Let Freedom Ring, an anti-immigrant group that positions itself "between faith and politics," only a 2000-mile fence along the southern U.S. land border will repel an "alien invasion."²⁷

Irreconcilable Differences?

If anything could discourage the Christian Right from lending support to the anti-immigrant movement, it might be that many of its most prominent organizations were created to advance a population control agenda including sterilization and abortion for immigrants of color. However, using segmented outreach that targets different constituencies with different messages, the network of groups—many founded by a retired ophthalmologist named John Tanton—appears to have done a good job of keeping this secret from the Christian Right.

Tanton, founder and primary patron of the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) and a half-dozen other leading anti-immigrant organizations, is undeniably the individual most responsible for building up the infrastructure of the contemporary anti-immigrant movement over the last thirty years [see box, p. 19].²⁸ The first president of Northern Michigan Planned Parenthood (which, like other Planned Parenthood affiliates, provides abortions), Tanton's support for population control and focus on immigration stem from his goal of maintaining the numerical and cultural dominance of Americans of European descent. His is a white nationalist agenda.

While the groups in Tanton's network generally take pains to disavow any racial animus and have become increasingly successful at mainstreaming themselves in news media and policy circles, Tanton was quite forthcoming in private memos to anti-immigrant leaders that were never intended to become public. In one such memo from 1986, Tanton reveals his obsession with the fertility rates of Latina immigrants in the U.S. "To govern is to populate," he asserts, and goes on to ask, "Will the present majority peaceably hand over its political power to a group that is

simply more fertile? ... As whites see their power and control over their lives declining, will they simply go quietly into the night? Or will there be an explosion?"²⁹ Under Tanton's leadership, FAIR accepted some \$1.2 million from a 70-year-old nativist philanthropy, The Pioneer Fund, which finances eugenics research—studies that seek to demonstrate that intelligence is linked to sex and race.³⁰

Before the latest anti-immigrant backlash, which has turned known bigots into seemingly credible news sources,³¹ Tanton's racist diatribes carried more significant repercussions. They led celebrated news

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anchor Walter Cronkite and even anti-affirmative action campaigner Linda Chavez in 1988 to resign from the Tanton-founded U.S. English, which promotes official English legislation at the state and national levels.³² Watchdog groups like Center for New Community and the Southern Poverty Law Center labor to expose the racism of Tanton's network and the anti-immigrant movement more generally.³³ By contrast, there has been no comparable criticism from the Right of Tanton's advocacy of abortion and sterilization.

Since founding FAIR in 1979, Tanton and his collaborators spawned a hydra of front groups that presents different faces of the anti-immigrant movement to different constituencies. The network markets anti-

GLOSSARY

Christian nationalism: The belief that the United States was founded as a Christian nation. As a subset of the Christian Right, Christian nationalists actively oppose liberal ideas such as feminism, secular humanism, and support for homosexuals as undermining "God's chosen land."

White nationalism: A belief system that claims the superiority of "white" or Anglo culture over all others. In the United States, early white Anglo-Protestant settlers are thought to have established the true, essential, national culture. White nationalists consider non-white peoples as threats to U.S. democracy, viewing their cultures as too distinct from—and therefore in inevitable conflict with—the dominant White one.

Nativism: An ideology that combines belief in the superiority of one's country (nationalism) with a fear of outsiders and "foreign" ideas (xenophobia). Nativists believe that immigrants cannot or will not develop a primary allegiance to the United States, making newcomers a class a threat to national unity.

immigrant perspectives and policies to, among others, environmentalists, population control advocates, trade unionists, African-Americans, nativists, elected officials, mainstream news media outlets and, of course, conservative evangelicals.²⁴ The upsurge in local anti-immigrant activity has brought this national anti-immigrant network greater prominence, including regular exposure on mainstream news programs such as CNN's strongly anti-immigrant *Lou Dobbs Tonight* show. According to *Nativism in the House*, a 2007 report by the Center for New Community (CNC), lobbyists for Tanton's NumbersUSA have even served as "virtual staffers" and legislative counsel for the large and influential House Immigration Reform Caucus founded by retiring Republican Congressman Tom Tancredo of Colorado.²⁵

However, while concerns about the growing Latino immigrant population figured significantly in this national anti-immigrant network's outreach to environmentalists—most notably in a controversial 1998 campaign to transform the Sierra Club into an immigration opponent—such arguments are downplayed or altogether absent in the movement's outreach to evangelicals.²⁶ This capacity to effectively niche-market anti-immigrant views to a range of different and even conflicting constituencies is one of the movement's major achievements.

While sophisticated messaging plays a role, it is also worth noting that not all grassroots anti-immigrant militants share the national groups' sometimes unspoken obsession with defending the nation against the fertile wombs of immigrant women. While committed to protecting the United States from what they regard as foreign hoards who cannot, or will not, assimilate, most grassroots militants aren't focused on population growth or population control as issues in their own right.²⁷ Rather, they're preoccupied with the idea that the United States has too many of the *wrong kind of people*—and that more are coming here every day. Local groups may derisively characterize Latina immigrants as

"breeders," but in keeping with the homeland security moment their focus tends to be on mass deportations and a heavily militarized border rather than abortion and sterilization.²⁸

But while abortion and population control are not yet dividing pro-life nativists from their brothers and sisters in anti-immigrant politics, some Christian conservatives have sounded the alarm. Utah Republican Chris Cannon, who has a solidly pro-life voting record and in 1999 was among the thirteen House members who prosecuted President Bill Clinton's impeachment trial, is especially vocal.²⁹ During a 2004 congressional subcom-

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to be a stronger bond
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mittee hearing on guest worker programs, Cannon referred to NumbersUSA and the Center for Immigration Studies as "part of the family of Tanton groups" whose goals Cannon later described as "zero population, sterilization, abortion, eugenics, euthanasia."³⁰ Cannon, in turn, has come under fire for siding with western agricultural interests in their support for immigrant guest worker legislation.

Unlike Cannon, most conservative Christian leaders have so far opted to overlook the eugenicist baggage of leading anti-immigrant groups. Nativism is proving to be a stronger bond between these sectors than abortion is a wedge.

Unholy Alliances

In the 19th century, Protestant nationalists deemed waves of largely Catholic Irish, Italian, Polish, and German immigrants as incapable of assimilating into Anglo-Protestant society—much as Latinos and Muslims are viewed today.³¹ Anti-Catholic sentiments persist within today's burgeoning nativist movement. However, today the conservative white Protestant evangelical movement is in a strategic alliance with the Roman Catholic Church on a range of "life" concerns, with abortion serving as the cornerstone of this coalition. Could hostility towards Catholics become a wedge?

Anti-Catholic bigotry is not as virulent in today's immigration debates as it once was, and some of the most strident anti-immigrant pundits and activists—including Pat and Bay Buchanan—are themselves Roman Catholic. Yet anti-Catholicism nevertheless remains a significant dynamic in the anti-immigrant movement. During an October 2007 debate on immigration in Chicago, FAIR field representative Rosanna Pulido, an evangelical Protestant, lambasted the Roman Catholic Church for its allegedly wholesale support for the immigrant rights.³² Pulido claimed, "When you have a Catholic Church that... has been ravaged because of all the children who were molested and a lot of people upset with that leaving the Church, what better way to fill your pews and fill your offering coffers than with inviting in and giving sanctuary to illegal aliens?"³³

Pulido's remarks arguably reveal less about the substance of her views on Roman Catholics than about her willingness to go to any lengths to discredit a perceived adversary. Internally, however, John Tanton's network has long fretted over the Roman Catholic Church's anti-abortion stance as a factor in the higher fertility rates of Latino immigrants. In one of his infamous leaked memos from the organization's first decade, Tanton pondered the utility of anti-Catholic rhetoric, asking, "What are the implications [of Latino immigration] for the separation of church and state?"

The Catholic Church has never been reticent on this point. If they get a majority of the voters, will they pitch out this concept? Linking Catholics to the thorny issue of abortion, Tanton added, "Same question of the topic of abortion/choice, birth control, population control."⁴⁴

Grassroots nativist activists can be even less subtle in the expression of their anti-Catholic views than national anti-immigrant think tanks and lobby groups. Upset at a Roman Catholic church in San Diego that provides breakfast to day laborers and allows them to wait for employers outside the building, local Minutemen and a group called San Diego Christians for Secure Borders launched a campaign in the summer of 2007 to close the longtime day labor site. Dozens of anti-immigrant demonstrators turned out for the demonstrations, which featured an effigy of a priest with horns and a "Father Satan" label. Signs at the protest read, "More Illegal Aliens = more \$\$\$," and "Tax the Catholic Church: a political organization."⁴⁵ San Diego Minutemen founder David Schwilk explained that, "Someone very upset wanted to show the evil in the Catholic Church."⁴⁶

If segments of the anti-immigrant movement see the Roman Catholic Church as an adversary, the anti-choice movement looks upon Roman Catholics as vital allies. After all, Catholics were the first opponents of abortion in this country and have played a crucial role, both financially and in the growth of an energized base, in the development of a "pro-life" movement. The future of the Christian Right's alliance with the Roman Catholic Church could possibly be altered by these expressions of anti-Catholic sentiment, but the strength and importance of an anti-choice coalition that includes them both would probably survive such a challenge.

Nativism: A Third Force

While the diverse anti-immigrant upsurge is greatly benefiting from support within the Christian Right, there is little evidence that influence is flowing in the other direction. Rather, some anti-

immigrant nativists are responding to Christian Right interest in their cause by stepping up outreach, further solidifying the relationship's imbalance.

In January 2008, Roy Beck of NumbersUSA and Michael Cutler of the Center for Immigration Studies headlined a "Culture Conference" for the California branch of Concerned Women for America (CWA), the largest Christian Right women's organization in the country, which up to now has not paid much attention to immigration. Beck usually presents a slideshow depicting an imminent population explosion disaster in the United States resulting from unchecked immigration. At the conference Cutler did his best to appeal to CWA's main concerns: family values and national security. In fact, he managed to combine the two in a single anecdote about the "Hezbollah-connected" Nadim Prouty "whose sham marriage enabled her to eventually become an FBI as well as a CIA employee!"⁴⁷

At least until recently, such outreach to conservative white Protestant evangelicals by the anti-immigrant establishment—for instance through Roy Beck's Evangelicals for Immigration Reform—has fallen something short of robust. A front group for the Federation for American Immigration Reform, Evangelicals for Immigration Reform, doesn't even maintain a website. Moreover, while the Christian Right and anti-immigrant movements have largely distinct leaderships and separate movement and organizational identities, the borders that define their goals and constituencies are overlapping and permeable. However useful it is to examine the shifting relationships between these movements' leaders and institutions, it is equally valuable to look upon nativism as an overlapping social movement, as well as a tendency coursing through various movements and campaigns on the Right, including the two movements discussed here. It constitutes a third force.⁴⁸

Consider: The media success of the Minuteman groups ushered militant anti-immigrant politics into the mainstream during the spring and summer of 2005,

stoking the flames of white nationalism within the Christian Right that had already been ignited by 9/11 and the "war on terror."⁴⁹ In this way, sectors of the anti-immigrant movement opened political space for Christian nationalists at both base and leadership levels to express their anti-immigrant nativism, causing a shift in focus within the Christian Right.

In this political campaign season, when many mainstream pundits are—yet again—declaring the death of the Christian Right, it is instructive to remember that part of the movement is vibrantly, even forcefully, engaged in anti-immigrant campaigns. To the extent that such pundits focus solely on the Christian Right's ability to choose the president of the United States and to win legislative bans on abortion and what it regards as sexual perversion (e.g. same-sex marriage), they fail to perceive the movement in its true dimensions, complexities, and capacities.

It is early yet to know how various Christian Right leaders will assess the costs and benefits of their alliance with anti-immigrant nativists. Their calculations will be further complicated by the Republican Party's nomination of Senator John McCain for president. Despite his hawkish national security credentials, McCain has been widely excoriated by the Right as being "pro-amnesty"—soft on immigration. Pragmatists surely are aware that the immigration issue did very little to help conservative candidates in the 2006 Congressional elections or the presidential candidates in the primaries. Having responded to pressure from their constituencies to address immigration, some Christian Right leaders may simply be making the best of a difficult situation until they can extricate themselves from the morass. The moment seems ripe for splits between pragmatists and purists.

In the meantime, it is nativism that continues to drive this movement convergence, and it is nativism that must be confronted if the anti-immigrant resurgence is to be turned back. At an April 2007 anti-immigrant rally sponsored by FAIR, L.A. talk radio host Reverend Terry Anderson

told the crowd, "We've got to make it in this country so [immigrants] can't exist here.... We've got to rattle their teeth and put their feet to the fire."⁵⁰ ■

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Book Reviews

Race in the Courts

The Execution of Willie Francis: Race, Murder and the Search for Justice in the American South

By Gilbert King

Basic Civitas Books, 2008, \$26 cloth, 324 pages.

Reviewed by Eleanor J. Bader

They called the Louisiana electric chair Gruesome Gertie and in her years of service to the state, no case was more notorious than that of long-forgotten Willie Francis. A 16-year-old teen at the time of his 1945 arrest, Francis was barely literate, the youngest of 13 children in a desperately poor, devoutly Roman Catholic, African American family.

The story begins in November, 1944 with the murder of 53-year-old Andrew Thomas, the well-liked owner of Thomas's Drug Store in the pastoral Cajun town of St. Martinville, Louisiana. Thomas, who was white, was hit by five shots fired at close range. Theories of who might have killed him were abundant. The lifelong bachelor and purported Don Juan was suspected of numerous romantic liaisons with married women, but after a nine-month investigation, all leads had run cold.

That changed in August 3, 1945 when police in Port Arthur, Texas, 150 miles from St. Martinville, happened upon Willie Francis who was there visiting his sister. Francis was carrying a large valise and the cops, on the lookout for drug traffickers, took Francis into custody for questioning.

In short order, Francis convinced his interrogators that he was not a narcotics dealer. Nevertheless, the cops noted that he stuttered—a mannerism they determined indicated guilt—and proceeded to ask him about his involvement in numerous robberies and assaults in the Port Arthur area.

King reports that police accounts reveal a startling—maybe even unbelievable—turn of events. According to Port Arthur Chief of Police Claude W. Goldsmith, "who did not keep any notes or records of the interrogation, Willie confessed to the St. Martinville murder [of Thomas] in a matter of minutes."

What's more, when they inspected Francis' wallet they found an ID bearing the name of Andrew Thomas.

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Francis' written statement, replete with spelling errors, admits that he stole a .38 pistol for the planned murder. His statement further concedes that he took Thomas' wallet, containing \$4, along with a gold watch which he later pawned. No counsel was present at the time of this alleged confession.

A month later Francis was indicted by a grand jury and in no-time flat a trial was scheduled. A jury of twelve white men—clearly not Francis' peers—was selected. As testimony unfolded the jurors learned that there was no forensic evidence linking Francis to the crime. "Also missing," King writes, "were the murder weapon and bullets that had been recovered from the scene." Both had been lost in transit to the FBI Crime Lab. Worse, King writes, "no fingerprints had been lifted from the gun. Without the alleged murder weapon or the wrist watch as evidence,

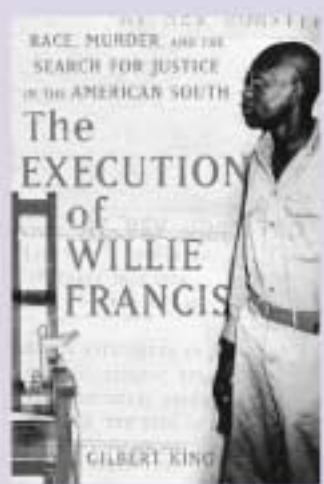
the bulk of the District Attorney's case rested exclusively on confessions obtained by police while the teenaged Willie Francis was in custody and without legal counsel." Later, attorneys and journalists reviewing the trial transcript dubbed the proceedings "a farce and travesty."

Nonetheless, Francis was found guilty and sentenced to die in Gruesome Gertie.

His executioners were Angola Prison captain Ephie Foster and prisoner Vincent Venezia. Both men were charged with transporting the contraption to St. Martinville and insuring Francis' death by electrocution. They had done this before and ostensibly knew how to proceed. Indeed, they were so relaxed that they opted for a night of serious drinking in the hours immediately before the scheduled execution.

Eyewitnesses report that the pair were visibly drunk when they arrived at the jail the following morning. Still, they did the state's bidding and strapped Francis into the chair before applying the current.

Then something surprising happened—despite being zapped by electricity, Francis did not die. Spectators were horrified, then relieved to learn that the mechanical malfunction would be cor-



Their tireless advocacy to save Willie Francis from the death chamber emboldened others and helped catapult racial injustice and the inhumanity of killing youthful offenders into public consciousness.

rected and a second execution ordered.

What happened next can only be described as a whirlwind. Attorney Bertrand DeBlanc, a deeply religious white man just returned from serving in World War II, agreed to take Francis' case—pro-bono. During the next year-and-a-half, he would share legal work with the NAACP and with another white attorney-later-judge named J. Skully Wright.

The more DeBlanc learned about Francis' case, the angrier he became. At the same time he never challenged Francis' guilt—Francis himself never proclaimed his innocence or took issue with his arrest or conviction—but instead zeroed in on proving that a second execution would constitute cruel and unusual punishment and amount to double jeopardy.

The case bounced from court to court and eventually wound up in D.C., where the U.S. Supreme Court heard DeBlanc's argument. King's rendering of the proceedings is fascinating. "Sixty years later," he begins, "alleged violations of double jeopardy, cruel and unusual punishment, and due process would constitute unquestionably valid legal strategies for attorneys. But not in 1946. Not once, not twice, but many times the U.S. Supreme Court had held that the first ten amendments to the Constitution, rights citizens decades later would take for granted, simply did not exist for litigants in a case originating at the state level—cases like Willie's. In other words, one's right not to be tried twice for the same crime could only be invoked if one was being tried in a federal court. . . . The Supreme Court had ruled that in a state court a man [sic] could be tried twice for the same murder. Furthermore, in 1908, the Supreme Court held that the Fifth Amendment—the right regarding self-incrimination—did not apply to state court trials."

DeBlanc, Wright and the NAACP pushed forward anyway, arguing that the Bill of Rights should apply to the states. They also argued that a second encounter with Gruesome Gertie would be cruel, unusual and patently illegal.

The Court disagreed. In a five-to-four decision, issued one day after Francis turned 18, the Justices opted to send him back to the chair. Despite seething and eloquent dissents, the Court refused to save Willie Francis' life.

His attorneys were despondent and tried to push the Justices to reconsider; they simultaneously petitioned Louisiana governor Jimmie Davis to commute Francis' sentence to life imprisonment. In a bizarre turn, Justice Felix Frankfurter, who voted with the Court majority, petitioned Davis on Francis' behalf.

Their efforts failed. On May 9, 1947, Francis was executed, making him the 24th state resident killed by Gruesome Gertie.

To this day no one knows what really happened between Francis and Thomas. Years later, rumors that Thomas was gay—and that his friendships with married women never strayed beyond the platonic—began to circulate. Francis' one-time assertion—his enigmatic explanation of what had transpired, "it was a secret about me and him"—was never probed. Whether this was because of squeamishness, incompetence, or negligence is unknown.

King's exploration of Willie Francis' tragic life and the myr-

riad efforts to save him is riveting. Well-researched and fast-paced, Francis' poignant story showcases the collision between social justice activists and a legal system hell-bent on maintaining the status quo. But it does more than this, reminding us of the ripples beneath the surface of most social change efforts. In this case, even though DeBlanc and colleagues could not save Francis, their courage, fortitude, and resistance set other acts of resistance into motion. Indeed, their tireless advocacy emboldened others and helped catapult racial injustice and the inhumanity of killing youthful offenders into public consciousness.

All in The Family

The Family: the Secret Fundamentalism at the Heart of American Power

By Jeff Sharlet

Harper Collins, 2008, \$25.95 cloth,

Reviewed by Frederick Clarkson

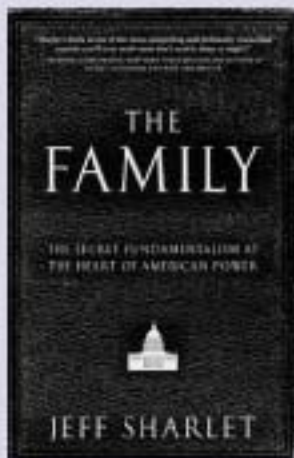
Jeff Sharlet's new book *The Family: the Secret Fundamentalism at the Heart of American Power*, is in the best tradition of American investigative journalism. Sharlet, a scholar of religion based at New York University, writes with insight, verve and, thankfully, none of the bogus punditry and bad sociology that often passes for informed discourse about the contemporary role of religion in public life. His refreshing narrative style is as engaging as his groundbreaking information.

The story begins when Sharlet is invited to join a Christian community in Virginia, (suburban Washington D.C., really), called Ivanwald. It turns out to be an entry level training facility for a network of what Sharlet calls "elite fundamentalists" that operates partly in the open, but mostly behind the scenes of power for much of the American Century—and into the present day.

The Family takes us down some familiar roads of American history, bringing fresh perspectives on such influential evangelists as Jonathan Edwards, Charles Finney, and Billy Graham. We also gain significant new understandings of contemporary political leaders including Senators Sam Brownback and Hillary Clinton as well as former Senator Dan Coats, (Republican of Indiana), John Ashcroft, and Jack Kemp; and religious right leaders Bill Bright, Ted Haggard, and Chuck Colson.

Sharlet explores the role of a distinct "elite fundamentalism"

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through our history and culture, and illustrates how it currently operates at top levels of American business, government, and the military. This may come as a shock to those for whom overt fundamentalism in the federal government was not apparent before the administration of George W. Bush. But Sharlet demonstrates its role during the Cold War and since. We learn for example, of how "charitable choice," the legislative precedent for George W. Bush's "faith-based initiative," stemmed from ideas incubated by The Family, and was sponsored by Family members, Republican Senators John Ashcroft and Dan Coats—with an assist from Family associate Senator Hillary Clinton.

Originally called The Fellowship, now The Family, the organizational roots of this elite fundamentalism was a powerful corporate clique, founded in Seattle in the 1930s as a virulently anti-labor group backed by local big business leaders. Now The Family is headquartered on Washington, D.C.'s Embassy Row.

The Family rarely steps out of the shadows. One very public event is an annual breakfast designed to appear as benign as one of the thousands of other staged photo opportunities with presidents and their White House guests. This is the National Prayer Breakfast that The Family has hosted at the White House since the Eisenhower Administration.

Prepublication publicity about Sharlet's book has focused on the peculiar role of Senator Hillary Clinton in the group. But true to the Family's culture of secrecy, she has yet to explain her involvement, the current political fashion of discussing one's faith

journey, notwithstanding. Sharlet reports that she is not a "member," but is a longtime participant in a Family-sponsored prayer cell, with the wives of other leaders such as Susan Baker, wife of former Secretary of State, James. Sharlet names other "associates," including former Republican Senators Don Nickels of Oklahoma and Strom Thurmond, of South Carolina.

The roles of secret societies in shaping political pressure blocs, from the Masons to Opus Dei, may or may not be benign, but due to their secretive nature (and especially when they have powerful and ambitious members), they are naturally the subject of

speculation and unfortunately, conspiracy theory. Sharlet's book, however, is based on unique first-hand experience that led him to seek out and access the archives of the The Family stored at Wheaton College. When the Family realized what Sharlet was up to, they slammed the door shut. But Sharlet made the most of the opportunity to detail and document the history and inner workings of the group, its role at top levels of American society, and its extraordinary global reach. Sharlet mines the boxes of files to tell the story, for example, of how soft outreach by Family members opened a remarkable series of doors for the

Somali dictator General Said Barre during an American proxy war with the Soviet Union.

"In 1981, Family members made contact with Said on behalf of his then-enemy, Kenyan dictator Daniel arap Moi—a brutal American ally—whom Siad agreed to meet." The end result: "The United States nearly doubled military aid to the regime,

pouring guns into a country that before the decade was out would achieve a unity not seen since, when nearly everyone—politicians, warlords, children—united in opposition to Siad." He fled in 1991, but as Sharlet observes, not before he "scorched as much of his enemy's land as he could... three hundred thousand died in the famine that followed. It is considered Siad's legacy. It was also the Family's gift to Somalia."

Sharlet shows how The Family's highly elastic fundamentalist theology boils down to one idea, which members describe as "Jesus plus nothing." Which is to say that the person of Jesus is all that matters. Not coincidentally, the leader of The Family, Doug Coe, is said to have the closest relationship to Jesus of all of its members, whose respective closeness to

Prepublication publicity about Sharlet's book has focused on the peculiar role of Senator Hillary Clinton in the group.

GROUNDBREAKING REPORT FROM POLITICAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

Pushed to the Altar:

The Right Wing Roots of Marriage Promotion

The Bush Administration has abandoned proven poverty reduction strategies and instead is encouraging women — especially welfare recipients — to marry their way out of poverty. PRA founder Dr. Jean Hardisty traces the influence of right-wing fatherhood groups on the Administration's "marriage promotion" programs, and the channeling of millions of federal dollars back to these groups, violating the separation of church and state. Jointly published by PRA and the Women of Color Resource Center.



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Jesus may be measured in concentric circles of closeness to Coe. It could be that Coe is the most important Religious Right leader you have never heard of, but his influence is often acknowledged, if not always noticed. *Time* magazine in 2005 named him one of the 25 most influential evangelicals in the country.

Coe and his emissaries introduce a particular persona of Jesus to "key men" with whom they may open various business relationships, sometimes backdoor diplomatic or military channels. Even barbaric military dictators are introduced to Jesus and invited to pray with a designated Family liaison, as in the case of Gen. Siad. They don't really care about whether he is a Christian or ever becomes one; because it is all about power and power relationships of a kind that are greased by amoral rationalization and turning blind eyes to horrendous crimes — such as the Indonesian genocide on East Timor, which was conducted even as the Family developed relationships with General Suharto, and played an intermediary role with the U.S. government similar to that in the case of General Siad.

Sharlet views the considerable behind-the-scenes clout of Chuck Colson as epitomizing the underestimated power of The Family. Colson's work, Sharlet writes, "is shot through with a cagey regard for Plato's 'noble lie,' by which the elite must govern masses who don't know what's good for them, and a reverence for 'leadership' as a semimystical quality bequeathed to a small elect who already possess the kind of confidence others might call arrogance."

Their form of fundamentalism, Sharlet says, has promoted "foreign policy on a near constant footing of Manichean urgency for the last hundred years; 'free markets' imprinted on the American mind as some sort of natural law; a manic-depressive sexuality that puzzles both prudes and libertines throughout the rest of the world; and a schizophrenic sense of democracy as founded on individual rights and yet indebted to a higher authority that trumps personal liberties."

Elite fundamentalism, he concludes, is "certain in its entitlement, responds in this world with a politics of noblesse oblige, the missionary impulse married to military and economic power. The result, he writes, is "the soft empire of America that...recruited fundamentalism to its cause even as it seduced liberalism to its service...."

Sharlet warns that "Secular democracy, such as it is, faces no serious challenge. Nor, for that matter, does the elite fundamentalism that has coexisted alongside it for the last seventy years, ensuring that the United States was never fully secular, nor democratic."

The effect, Sharlet summarizes, is the "center slouches rightward, and the faithful forget that anyone ever dreamed otherwise."

An Evangelical, a Cherokee and a Scholar *Native Americans and the Christian Right: The Gendered Politics of Unlikely Alliances*

By Andrea Smith

Duke University Press, 2008, \$23.95 paperback, \$84.95 cloth, 356 pp.

Reviewed by Pam Chamberlain

Andy Smith's ambitious new book reveals her wide-ranging interests beyond the work she is best known for, women of color anti-violence organizing. This University of Michigan professor (now in a contested tenure bid) examines how evangelical Christianity affects Native people, not just in the familiar ways of exploitation, but from the surprising perspective of one who is a member of both worlds. From this perch as an evangelical Cherokee she has learned that coalition work involves strange bedfellows and that this is a complicated, but not necessarily a bad, thing.

Calling her approach an "intellectual ethnography," Smith chronicles a variety of coalition-building events that involve the Christian Right and Native Americans, including prison abolition, native sovereignty, and reproductive freedom. She conducts interviews, observes many Christian events, and absorbs an extraordinary range of source material chronicled in an impressive bibliography. This book explodes the myth of the monolithic Christian Right. Smith asks if the "Christianization"

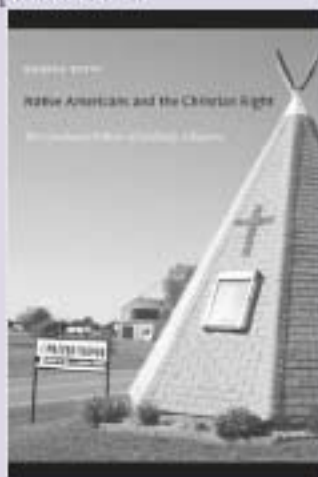
of Native people always results in assimilation and then provides numerous examples of evangelical Native Christians who address moral and political issues in ways that do not conform to a purist model of conservative evangelicalism.

In her account of a debate about abortion in a conservative Bible study group, she demonstrates that people can shift their thinking about abortion from typically polarized positions.

While most members are strongly anti-choice, the male Bible study leader describes how he shifted from this position. A friend of his had an abortion, even though she thought it was murder. After this incident, he asked his Christian friends, "If you had an unwanted pregnancy while single, would you have an

abortion?" and they all answered yes. When he asked his male friends, they all said no. He concluded that a "pro-life" position is in a sense founded on male privilege.

Smith's journey takes her from postmodern analysis of identity politics to the realities of being an evangelical in the modern world, from Foucault to Falwell. Although her prose can be dense and her primary source material ranges across two decades, the book presents important new ideas for progressive audiences. What's challenging about her ideas is not her critical race the-



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ory or her fierce feminist challenge to the male supremacy of the American Indian Movement but her insistence that we have much to learn about alliance creation from the willingness of some on the Christian Right to align themselves with those who disagree with them.

She believes it possible to "rearticulate" the Christian Right through these alliances so that it supports more progressive "political projects" than one would expect. Prison Ministries, a huge evangelical prison organizing effort, is a case in point. Chuck Colson, staunchly Rightist on many social issues, is a prison activist who shares multiple perspectives on the prison industry with Critical Resistance, the left radical voice of prison abolition. Colson's personal prison conversion led Smith to joke that the most effective way to abolish prisons might be to incarcerate as many members of the Christian Right as possible!

For Smith, the examination of ideas is never an end in itself. All concepts have their context to her, and this book reveals how indigenous people, and Native women in particular, incorporate evangelical principles into their lives. The unheard voices of Native peoples echo throughout her text, teaching us new things. Her point is that progressive organizers can benefit from a more nuanced understanding of the Christian Right that might result in forging some unlikely, but effective, alliances. She calls for a mobilization of the "malcontents" within the Christian Right to act on their disagreements with George W. Bush, although it remains to be seen how that force can be channeled towards progressive campaigns. ■



Marines returning home from Vietnam on the warship Bexar in October 1969 display a handmade peace symbol and make peace signs. From the book, *Peace: 50 Years of Protest* by Barry Miles (Pleasantville, N.Y.: Reader's Digest, 2008).

Bernard Cobble

.....Reports in Review.....

REPORT OF THE MONTH

Taking Stock on Race and Economics

Forty Years Later: The Unrealized American Dream

Institute for Policy Studies, Washington D.C., April 2008.
<http://www.ips-dc.org/report/249>

Economic Mobility of Black and White Families

Brookings Institution, Washington D.C., November 13, 2007.
http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/papers/2007/11_black-white_isaacs/11_blackwhite_isaacs.pdf

Forty years have passed since the murder of Martin Luther King, Jr., and "The Unrealized American Dream" draws on the Biblical imagery of Israelites wandering through the desert for forty years to consider whether African Americans have reached the Promised Land. In some ways yes. Educational achievement has skyrocketed, so that now 81 percent of African Americans over 25 graduate from high-school (2.5 times the figure in 1968), as compared to 91 percent for whites. Still, while college graduation levels have increased four-fold for African Americans, only 19 percent are currently college graduates, as compared to 31 percent for whites.

Brute economics shows a sorer picture. The rate of African American children in poverty dropped only a quarter-of-a-percent annually since 1968, and the racial wage gap barely shifted in that period, with African Americans earning 54 percent of whites' earnings in 1968, to African Americans earning 57 percent of whites' earnings in 2008. African Americans' incomes have increased 1.5 times overall.

Brookings' report on "Economic Mobility of Black and White Families" compares parents' earnings at 40 with their children's when they are the same age, and breaks the data down by race. A method-

ological side note: The data could underreport children's earnings because they are more likely to have a shorter workforce experience since they leave school later.

Key findings: For middle-income families, only one-third of black children end up in families with higher incomes than their parents, while two-thirds of whites do. Seventy three percent of blacks from low-income families earn more than their parents, but blacks at higher income levels generally earn less than their parents.

While median incomes for both black and white men have decreased, the incomes of both black and white women significantly increased, leading to an overall growth in family incomes. Also, family structures have changed significantly between 1969 and 1999 with more blacks and whites living in single person households and single parent households. These numbers show that family incomes would have increased more if family structures had not changed at the same time (tending towards smaller families), and that any direct comparisons between incomes in black households and white households are misleading unless they account for the differences in family structures.

Two-thirds of both blacks and whites earn more than their parents, yet median family incomes for whites in their 30s rose 19 percent over the 30 year period and only ten percent for blacks. Even more troubling are the numbers showing that 24 percent of blacks live in families below the federal poverty threshold (down from 39.3 percent in 1967), while that figure is 8.3 percent for whites (down from 11 percent).

— Aaron Rothbaum

Other Reports in Review

Military Truths

The Truth Behind the Camouflage: A Youth Investigation into the Myths and Truths of Military Recruitment and Military Service

American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California, San Francisco, Fall 2007.
http://www.aclu-nc.org/youth/publications/asset_upload_file610_6754.pdf

"Our purpose was to educate ourselves so we could educate others and make a difference," opens this amazing document created by 23 high school students in August 2007. They talked with veterans, military recruiters (past and present), conscientious objectors and others, creating artwork, poetry and prose, and preparing themselves to present their findings to other young people in Northern Califor-

nia. The project looks like a great model for other organizers.

The students introduce the groups they visited over each of the eight days of the project, so the report serves as a guidebook to counterrecruiting resources. Like Alberto Gomez, they also reflect on their visits. In "The Military Recruiter," Gomez writes of visiting a charismatic Navy recruiter in a mall: "Even if I knew that he might be telling lies, it still sounded so good — money for college, job training, traveling. What made me scared was if I had been in that office alone with the recruiter, I swear I would have joined. He really just made it sound so good, like a guarantee for success. And that's what a lot of us dream about."

Alysha Aziz wrote a poem "3635 (The number of American soldiers killed in Iraq as of August 12, 2007, the last day of our trip)":

3,685.

*It's just a number really,
 Just a cold, abstract number that
 I can file away with all the other
 numbers I learned in history, algebra,
 and statistics.*

*And yet, as she shows us the picture of her
 smiling son, killed in
 Iraq, suddenly
 that number begins to pulse, and breathe,
 and laugh, and smile,
 and dream....*

*I want people to realize what just one
 combat death looks like,*

feels like, tastes like.

*Because maybe then we will stop unjustly
blowing apart countries,
Blowing apart families,
Blowing apart people...*

—Abby Scher

Legalized Unionbusting

Neither Free Nor Fair: The Subversion of Democracy Under NLRB Elections

By Gordon Lafer, *American Rights at Work*, Washington, D.C., July 2007.

<http://www.americanrightsatwork.org/publications/general/neither-free-nor-fair.html>

Nearly one-third of nonunionized workers want to be members of a union. One key reason they are not is the intimidating process governing union elections. In 2005, American Rights at Work's "Free and Fair?" report by Gordon Lafer drew on the founding fathers and other political philosophers to show the gap between the democracy we expect in political life and the laws governing union elections. This follow-up delves into how employers intimidate workers and deny their free speech rights in the workplace thanks to the practices and rules of the National Labor Relations Board — the federal agency governing union elections.

Employers regularly break the rules governing elections because there are few sanctions against them and their overriding goal is to avoid any election at all. But they largely don't have to break the rules to stop a union. Bosses hire union busting advisors who write scripts for supervisors who hold intimidating, but perfectly legal, one-on-one discussions with workers to determine whether the employee is pro-union. They plaster their worksites with anti-union posters — again perfectly legal — while workers aren't allowed to post any signs or talk to union organizers in the parking lot. Employers stalk pro-union workers, gluing supervisors to them during the course of their workday, and even sending goons out to follow union activists. And they fire pro-union workers — this is not legal, but it is done with impunity since employers need only provide backpay if they are caught and proven guilty before the NLRB.

This report is most valuable as an exposé of advice and tactics from so-called "union avoidance" consultants. Their advice runs from holding captive meetings, to what to look

for: "Supervisors should not spend time looking for union buttons or bumper stickers, one advisor warns; by the time these are visible, it will be too late... Under the heading of 'Signs of Union Activity You Should Watch For and Report,' [an advisor] warns that 'employees receiving new or unusual attention from other employees' may be a dangerous omen." But the tactics can be crude and illegal. A disgruntled employer's suit against advisor Jackson Lewis reveals it advised this South Carolina manufacturer to spy on workers, fire activists, create front committees of "anti-union" workers, fake derogatory flyers supposedly from the union, and offer bribes.

—Abby Scher

There is an Alternative

Over-Raided, Under Siege: U.S. Immigration Laws and Enforcement Destroy the Rights of Immigrants

By Sheila Chung Hagen, *Human Rights Immigrant Community Action Network*: Oakland, California, January 2008.

The National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR) has accomplished something only an organization of its kind can do. It created HURRICANE, the Human Rights Immigrant Community Action Network, to collect and analyze incidents of immigrant rights violations from across the country. Member groups in the network helped identify these incidents, and the **100 Stories Project** forms the core of this report. Reading through the stories leaves the reader with evidence of widespread government "collective punishment" of immigrants.

Reviewing these stories, the report concludes that:

- ICE, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Bureau, uses raids as a political response to immigrant rights activism;
- Immigrants in detention centers, some run by private companies, are the fastest growing prison population in the country;
- Homeland Security uses employers as enforcement agents, using Social Security 'no match' letters to arrest immigrants on felony "identity theft" charges;

- The southern border has been militarized to the extent that it has created a humanitarian crisis;
- Homeland Security has invited local law enforcement to collaborate with them in apprehending undocumented residents.

These incidents are powerful enough individually; as a collection, they provide the evidence policymakers need to correct past wrongdoings. Among the report's eleven recommendations: end immigration raids and racial, religious, and ethnic profiling; stop the expansion of guest worker programs; provide funding for immigration services; and pass an immigration reform bill that honestly deals with current problems.

— Pam Chamberlain

Transgender Politics

Opening the Door to the Inclusion of Transgender People: The Nine Keys to Making Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Organizations Fully Transgender-Inclusive

by Lisa Mottet and Justin Tanis, *National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the National Center for Transgender Equality*, Washington, D.C., 2008.

A recent thorny issue for LGBT groups is the realization that they want to work for transgender inclusiveness but have few trans people in their memberships or on their staffs and boards. Two such national organizations have joined forces to publish a manual on how to include transgender people in authentic ways into activist and social organizations.

This has real consequences because the lack of unity with the LGBT movement about whether to fight for including transgender people in ENDA, the Employment Nondiscrimination Act, contributed to its defeat in 2007. (Of course, rightwing organizing also was rampant: Lou Sheldon of the Traditional Values Coalition, master of fear-mongering, called the bill "dangerous" and transpeople "gender confused individuals" and "she-males.")

With its detailed suggestions for LGBT organizations to become more trans-inclusive, the report also provides models for other types of organizations that recognize they, too, must come to terms with inclusion issues.

— Pam Chamberlain

Eyes RIGHT

EDUCRATS ARE TO BLAME FOR, WELL, PROTECTING CHILDREN

Pro Life Educators and Students (PLEAS) plan to picket the National Education Association (NEA) conference in Washington in July. They are upset at "... America's largest, socio-politically meddlesome union for misrepresenting so many teachers on abortion. Seize this opportunity to focus nationwide attention and condemnation upon the pro-abortion activism of arrogant educrats disingenuously pretending to protect children and teachers' jobs." Translation: The NEA has passed resolutions supporting reproductive freedom.

Source: "Pro-Life: Let's Picket NEA Teacher Convention in Washington, DC & NEA HQs in State Capitals July 2" *Christian Newswire*, May 6, 2008. <http://christiannewswire.com/news/840056503.html>

ANTI-IMMIGRANT GROUP PROUD OF ITS ASSOCIATION WITH AMERICAN NAZI

In February, former neo-Nazi organizer Elton Hall, 74, was injured by a car while protesting outside an immigrant workers center in Phoenix. The Arizona Patriots Border Alliance honored Hall with a picture on its website with the caption: "In appreciation for your deactivated service, devotion, commitment to securing American borders and promoting THE RULE OF LAW."

Source: *Nativism in the News*, Southern Poverty Law Center, May 6, 2008. <http://www.splcenter.org/blog/2008/05/06/nativism-in-the-news-2/>

DO AS THE GAYS DO

Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council is jealous that one third of lesbians and gays are engaged in the political process compared to about one fifth of the population in general, according to a Hunter College report issued in April http://www.nyu.edu/public-affairs/pdf/hunter_college_poll_report_co

mplete.pdf. "In my opinion, values voters could stand to learn a few things from the peaceable side of these activists as we try to transform the culture. Imagine the influence Christians could have if we all resolved to engage the public square and speak the truth!"

Source: "Strength in (Small) Numbers," *FRCAction Update*, May 5, 2008. email correspondence.

METHODISTS REFLECT; IRD CLAIMS VICTORY

The United Methodist General Conference has struggled with its position on abortion since its first resolution in 1972. At this year's event, it added support for "the Church to assist the ministry of crisis pregnancy centers and pregnancy resource centers that compassionately help women find feasible alternatives to abortion." This pleases Mark Tooley, director of the Institute for Religion and Democracy's United Methodist Action Committee, a group dedicated to pushing Methodists to the Right. "These incremental steps continue a trend from the last several General Conferences towards an increased acknowledgement of the sanctity of all human life. The United Methodist Church is slowly moving towards the historic Christian concern for the most vulnerable."

Source: "United Methodist General Conference Takes Steps to Affirm Life," *Christian Newswire*, May 3, 2008. <http://christiannewswire.com/news/9066485.html>

Eye LASHES

The Banality of Torture?

"In Part IV, we discuss defenses to an allegation that an interrogation method might violate any of the various criminal prohibitions discussed in Part II. We believe that necessity or self-defense could provide defenses to a prosecution."

—Memorandum for William J. Haynes II, General Counsel of the Department of Defense Re: Military Interrogation of Alien Unlawful Combatants Held Outside the United States, U.S. Department of Justice Office of Legal Counsel, March 14, 2003, aka John Yoo's Torture Memo, released in April 2008. http://www.aclu.org/pdfs/safefree/yoo_army_torture_memo.pdf

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