

American Religion and the Idea of Unprecedented Violence

By Niels Thorsen

University of Copenhagen

In recent years religious issues and rhetoric have again become prominent in American politics. Jimmy Carter campaigned for the presidency in 1976 as a born-again Christian. Ronald Reagan has twice been elected with both the verbal and the financial support of various religious groups, often of fundamentalist persuasion. To the surprise of liberal Americans and foreign observers alike, well established issues of economic planning, urban renewal, abject poverty, etc., were largely ignored during the campaign of 1984 in favor of issues with deep religious resonance, such as the issues of abortion, school prayer, and creationism. While biblical references pervaded political debate, there was at the same time a marked increase in international tensions and a dramatic intensification of the arms race. The notion of "godless Communism" returned to American politics. "Armageddon" appeared as a point of contention in the presidential debate over foreign policy between Walter Mondale and Ronald Reagan in October 1984.

In this light it appears reasonable to ask whether there is some kind of relationship between the new readiness to contemplate the means of unprecedented violence and the increase of religious oratory. The question is: do religious sentiments and concerns somehow serve to adjust societies to new and intensified levels of potential violence? If so, what are the cultural and religious preconditions which can be used to prepare Americans to invest their tax-money to develop weaponry capable of inflicting unparalleled destruction upon the earth and the heavens?

One objection to this kind of inquiry may be cleared away at the outset. This is the charge that the question is distorted, because outside threats, such as the existence of Communist missiles or international terrorism, fully explain the recent American emphasis upon preparedness. This objection fails in several respects. First, it cannot explain why different societies respond to the same threats in different ways. While

Russian missiles presumably threaten the whole Western world, there are obvious differences between European and American responses to the perceived threat. Secondly, it cannot explain why prominent American politicians use religious references and metaphors to a much greater degree than do those European governments which share the official American attitude that the public should be persuaded to accept the necessity for new generations of attack and defense missiles.

It may seem, finally, that the objection itself is dependent upon certain prejudices that are nourished, for the most part in secret, in a Lutheran culture. Luther, in marked contrast to Calvin, did his utmost to build a Chinese Wall of doctrine that would serve to separate religion from the exercise of secular political power.¹ His primary intention was undoubtedly to protect religious communities from being contaminated by secular violence. But he fully accepted the logical corollary which was to release secular power from traditional religious restraints. Thus, he allowed no appeal for mercy in exhorting the German princes to slay the rebels during the Peasants' War. Since Luther, European protestantism has generally found it easy to regard the secular order as an autonomous sphere, where government can marshal its means of violence with only a minimal recourse to moral homilies.

As evidenced by numerous religious wars, Lutherans emphatically rejected turning the other cheek when assaulted. But they also rejected, at least as a matter of theological doctrine, the defense of their Lord with the sword, as Peter, the disciple, had suggested. Instead, Lutherans maintained with Paul that unto God should be rendered what properly belonged to his realm of grace, while violence and its repression by violence belonged to the realm of Caesar. Regardless of whether they consider themselves members of a church or not, most people in Lutheran cultures find attempts to combine religious and political reasoning obscene or even blasphemous. Thus, Danish newsmen and commentators, who are hardly known as a group for their deep religious commitments, often observe and present American political rhetoric with a noticeable distaste for its religious overtones that reflect a Calvinist or Puritan ethic.

While the Puritans in England had been strongly critical of the alliance between the Church of England and the state, they developed a different view once they had the opportunity to create a state of their own in America. The first Puritan company 'on Boarde the Arrabella, on the Atlantick Ocean' declared their hope for a new Jerusalem where ecclesiastical and secular orders would be separate, while preserving their

capacity to act in consonance. They wanted, in John Winthrop's famous words, to build "a Citty upon a Hill, the eyes of all people upon us." The Puritans saw themselves as the salt of the earth, as an elect minority, whose function was to penetrate the life of the commonwealth, but at the same time remain distinct as a holy body of saints in order to preserve their status as an inspiring model.

Citizenship in early Massachusetts was dependent upon church membership, which in turn was limited to a minority of individuals able to verify their deep religious experience. As Ernest Barker has put it: "To the early Puritans of Massachusetts the State was an organ not of the mere justice of law, but of the abounding righteousness of grace and election."² In England and Scotland, Puritans for the most part advocated limits to governmental control over the moral and religious life of the citizens. Puritans in the New World, in contrast, demanded that government be carried out according to principles that prepared the citizen for higher religious ends. A typical example was the demand that secular authorities punish the display of luxuries. In Europe, the ruling classes had always assumed that conspicuous consumption among the wealthy served to humble the lower classes. In Boston, lavish display of worldly goods was thought to undermine the cohesion of society, not only because luxuries encouraged the sin of pride, but also because they were an insult to the civic spirit of the colony.

The culture of righteousness and austerity was undermined in the course of a few decades. The very success of the colony, its commercial expansion, and its attraction for immigrants who looked for economic opportunities rather than for spiritual salvation, contributed to this development. In addition, Puritan leaders worried about the coming of age of a new generation which had not experienced the trials of persecution, suppression, and hardship that had informed the politics of the early settlers. In order to preserve as much as possible of the original spirit of the colony, Puritan divines attempted to institutionalize the sense of crisis which had kept spiritual leadership in command, strengthened communal bonds, and made people willing to sacrifice their self-interest on demand. The primary means of the routinization of crisis was a ritual of communal castigation, consisting of days of repentance, fast, and prayers and augmented with what later scholars have termed "the Jeremiad." When the congregation was well prepared, Puritan preachers heaped upon the believers the solemn warnings of the Old Testament, reciting long lists of afflictions measured out by an angry God: premature death, Indian assault, disease, crop failure. The congregation was reminded of the terms of its covenant with the Almighty and awed by the fate of Israel:

If we should so frustrate and deceive the Lords Expectations, that his Covenant-interest in us, and the Workings of Salvation be made to cease, then All were lost indeed; Ruine upon Ruine, Destruction upon Destruction would come, until one stone were not left upon another.³

The modern form of American religion with its periodic waves of intense, evangelical revivalism did not emerge until the 1740s with the outbreak of the "Great Awakening." By this time, Puritanism had faded away and along with it the political commitments of religion. The Great Awakening was not addressed to a political elite responsible for the moral standard of society, "the Clergy," "the Noble," or "the Wise." It was directed towards "what we call the *Mob*, the *Rabble*, the *common* and *meaner* Sort," explained Samuel Finley, one of the foremost revivalist preachers, who compared his audience to the ragged crowd that followed Jesus.⁴

The great revival turned almost all the Puritan premises for religious activity upside-down. Puritans had held biblical knowledge in high regard. They had taught their members to hold their own in dogmatic disputes, and they took pride in their intolerance towards heretical ideas. The revival, in contrast, was for everybody, not only for Puritans, but for Church of England-men, Presbyterians, Baptists, and for every other Christian denomination. While the Puritan system of church government presupposed lasting ties between the pastor and the congregation, revivalism was effected by itinerant preachers who travelled up and down the coast in search of sinners. As Benjamin Franklin shrewdly remarked, this was the secret behind the perfection of revivalist preaching. The sermons were "so improv'd by frequent Repetitions, that every Accent, every Emphasis, every Modulation of Voice" were timed and tuned to create a result that compared with "an excellent Piece of Musick." Stationary preachers had no similar opportunity to "Improve their delivery of a Sermon by so many Rehearsals."⁵

Puritans were notoriously restrained in manners, intellectual in outlook, methodical and disciplined in conduct. They were deeply suspicious about outward affectations. Revivalists were proud of their ability to collect great sums of money. But the most important justification of revivalism came from its demonstrated capacity to set the masses in motion. Itinerant preachers saw the finger of God at work when huge audiences went into religious ecstasy. Jonathan Edwards, the greatest of the Awakeners and probably America's foremost theologian, praised the "holy affection" which came about when sinners began "to look pale," when they "shed tears," when they began "to tremble," "faint," "cry out," and were "put into convulsions."⁶

Thus, despite changes in format and setting, revivalism was the inheritor of the Puritan Jeremiad. The artful rhetoric of lamentation, renunciation, and exhortation, carefully cultivated by Puritan divines, was turned into an emotional climax by the revivalist. To enter the community of the saved, the sinner was required to engage himself in a state of mental purification designed to destroy any political aspirations or ideas of communal action. All political values and bonds were dissolved, and the common ground was verbally removed from under his feet. The sinner was left dangling in a nowhere-land with all his or her attention focussed upon the wrath and mercy of divine power:

The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you and is dreadfully provoked: his wrath towards you burns like fire, ... he is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight ... It is nothing but his hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment.⁷

This was Puritanism fit for the poor, the humble, and the powerless. It was also, as one political theorist has remarked, "an object lesson in how ordinary people contribute to their own victimization - not because they believe in God but because they have come to distrust themselves."⁸

The political content of Puritanism was subverted in the process of revivalism. Edwards made no secret of the fact that the Great Awakening depended upon the ability to put other concerns to sleep. Primarily, it involved systematically forgetting the wordly structures of power and powerlessness. Significantly, Edwards paused to report that religious excitement did not mean that laborers ceased to work, nor did people "ordinarily neglect their wordly business." But, as Edwards' abundant writings testify, politics simply disappeared from sight, when "this work of God" was unleashed upon the sinners: "Religion was with all sorts the great concern, and the world was a thing only by the by. The only thing in their [the people's] view was to get the kingdom of heaven, and every one appeared pressing into it."⁹

The Great Awakening established a pattern of periodic popular revivals that have continued to overrule denominationalism and religious pluralism down to the present day. It has been called America's "national conversion" by a prominent historian of religion.¹⁰ The Civil War and its aftermath, by contrast, may be called America's "conversion to nationalism." The most important fact about American nationalism is that it flowed from a civil war, not from a war between nations. In national wars, the rulers tend to excite hatred and contempt for the population of the opposing nation. Rulers mobilize religion to protect the national

army, to make its weapons irresistible, and to destroy the power of the enemy. The United States had fought wars of extermination against both the Indians and the Mexicans. The Civil War, however, was a war against neighbors, brothers, and friends who would "read the same Bible" and "pray to the same God" and with whom the North shared a confession to liberty and popular government.¹¹ It was thus a war which permitted the application of violence to be presented as an attempt to save the soul of the South from her sin of apostasy. Victory was not enough. The wounds of the Union required an apocalypse that would clear its spirit for a "new birth of freedom."¹² The Unionists prayed for nothing less than the Second Coming of Christ, most memorably in the song that was soon to be adopted as "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."¹³

In the contemporary speeches of Abraham Lincoln, the *Jeremiad* was reformulated to provide a rationale for the wars which put the idea of the nation above the contestants on the battlefield. The endless bloodshed became a visitation by God, a supreme ritual of catharsis, the sign of divine wrath which purified the land and prepared the rebirth of the Nation:

The Almighty has His own purposes. 'Woe unto the world because of offenses' He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom offense came.... Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continues until the wealth piled by the bondsman's two-hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'The judgements of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'

With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds.¹⁴

Violence, even applied with unprecedented intensity, could be carried out righteously if it was inspired and guided by the spirit of charity and compassion.¹⁵ These motives were authenticated by an arcane compact which tied both parties of the war together in a political union and assumed the features of a sacrament. In Lincoln's view, this holy compact was the Declaration of Independence and its institution of "government of the people, by the people, for the people."¹⁶ Lincoln's stunning transvaluation of values established that violence and compassion were not opposites but closely interconnected in the process of purifying the fountain and the mysterious origins of the compact which tied the contestants together on the deepest plane of reality. Violence became charity by other means, as it were.

Most modern commentators have focussed their attention upon Lincoln's refusal to set himself up as an interpreter of God's will. Lincoln has been praised for his "scepticism" which was "elevated by piety and humility."¹⁷ It has often been overlooked that Lincoln's reasoning is also distinguished by its overruling of such ancient virtues as clemency and mercy. When shared love dictates compulsion, mercy cannot be allowed to interfere and upset decisions of the battlefield or in the councils of state. While Lincoln's justification for the war is distinguished by his reluctance to sanctify the violence of the one side in the process of condemning the power of the other, his argument left no room for compromise until the utter prostration of the enemy was accomplished.

Lincoln's conception of war, which allowed him to bypass in silence the liberal idea of consent as the basis of the Constitution, came to bedevil American foreign policy in the twentieth century. Lincoln's role in the defeat of the slave regimes, his heroic fate, and the incomparable beauty of his public addresses with their deep resonance in Puritan culture came to predispose Americans to see all wars in the image of civil war, where power is brought to bear on people for their own sake. It was easy to forget that Lincoln's argument presupposed a political communion, sealed by a holy compact. It could only justify violence within political borders, not across them, because borders signified the geographical limits of the compact. Lincoln himself had been a persistent opponent of the Mexican war in 1848. But soon enough, friendship, brotherhood, and neighborliness were declared on a global basis. The view that war can serve the course of righteousness when moved by a spirit of charity was tirelessly repeated during the War of 1898 in order to save Cubans and Philipinos from the Spanish and from themselves. The argument without its original presuppositions was repeated again during World War I, although it was now phrased as the idea of "making the world safe for democracy."

But while religious appeals were able to sustain the nation during and after the Civil War, they laid the ground for later conflicts. Liberal protestantism, as exemplified in the Progressive age by such Presidents as Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, embarked on a course which turned "the City upon the Hill" into a modern world power dependent upon industrial and military resources, not upon old-fashioned morality.¹⁸ Modernity proved to be the most formidable enemy of religious truths, rural pieties, and moral homilies. A rapid pace of invention, a convulsive pattern of social change, the continued growth of an urban, secular culture, and an increasing commitment to science and technology turned out to be some of the requirements that

a modernizing liberal society exacted incessantly from its population. Given the choice between accommodating religion to worldly circumstances or insisting that social and economic development conform to basic religious modes of thought, progressives had no serious doubts.¹⁹ As pointed out by historian Richard Hofstadter, conservative religion was not only discredited with the fight over evolution during the so-called Scopes trial in 1925. It was wounded and humiliated.²⁰ But it did not pass away. Conservative or fundamentalist beliefs were in fact reproduced continuously, as modernization proved to be a continuing process which accelerated after World War II. As society moved forward, large groups of the population were left behind with outmoded skills and with forms of knowledge that ill equipped them to participate in a modern technological culture. For such groups, the result is best described not as their "loss of status," but as their heightened sense of vulnerability and as a fact of powerlessness.

The sequel to the Scopes trial was the election of President John F. Kennedy. Kennedy was not only the first Catholic to be elected President. He presented himself as the spokesman for the cutting edge of young, urban, professional, cosmopolitan America. His inauguration address is usually read for its tasteful invocation of "His blessing and His help," and for its "belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God."²¹ It has therefore been less noticed that the same words which recommended the individual to God's hands, allocated omnipotence to the state: "Man holds in his mortal hands the power to abolish all forms of human poverty and to abolish all forms of human life."

Twenty years later President Reagan was elected on the basis of promises that recapitulated Kennedy's commitment to leadership, to tax reduction, to fill a missile gap (updated as the "window of vulnerability"), to technological advance, to a vigorous economy, and to military rejuvenation. Reagan inherited a liberal legacy which had grown old and experienced, hardened by defeat in Vietnam and by constitutional crises surrounding the presidency itself. The popular constituency was now marked by its experiences of stagflation, its fear of shrinking resources and exacerbated problems of pollution. After Vietnam, there were fewer promises to save "any friend." Instead, the emphasis was put upon a "pledge" to keep the world at peace.²² This task, full of Christian appeal, was subsequently launched by the Reagan administration as the rationale for the development of highly sophisticated weapons. Given mankind's proclivity to disturb the peace, it was clear that such weapons

must be capable not only of striking everywhere on short notice but also able to patrol the ski.

Perhaps a brief consideration of a recent incident will serve to measure the distance from Lincoln to Reagan, i.e., the distance between a religion fit for the nation and a religion fit for global superpower. During the Congressional discussions in early 1985 about the size of the defense budget, Reagan entertained a fundamentalist group of supporters with speculations about a passage of St. Luke (14:31-32). Reagan told reporters afterwards that the passage meant that "the Scriptures are on our side."²³ It was not made clear whether "our side" referred to the contest with Russians or to the contest with the opponents in Congress. But the implication was obviously that God-fearing Americans were again called upon to invest in weapons of righteous violence, including the Star Wars Program (Strategic Defense Initiative).

The incident is useful because it reveals the nature of the President's personal religious beliefs. To recruit the Gospel verbally and to get it to join ranks "on our side" is to put divine authority under secular command. Reporters correctly assumed that the intention was not to declare the beginning of a military crusade, but to solicit support from groups who were supposed to have a more inspired relationship to the Bible. Thus, Reagan's words highlight the problematic relationship between the administration and the fundamentalist minority of true believers in God's words. While the administration welcomes the support of the fundamentalists, it is also fearful that too close an embrace will alienate substantial numbers of moderate conservatives. In addition, a political program which depends upon old-fashioned moral rearmament can easily endanger the complex system of bureaucratic control and industrial production upon which the republic depends for its defense. The damage done by Senator Joseph McCarthy's investigation of spiritual deficits in the State Department and in the army in the beginning of the 1950s is a reminder of the need to shield a complicated bureaucratic machinery from anti-communist fanatics, the modern luddites of rational defense procedures.

To preserve the Republican electoral alliance and to prevent a clash between moral and military rearmament, the current administration hopes to fend off the fundamentalist persuasion with biblical references that presuppose a certain amount of political illiteracy. In the spring of 1986, however, Reagan ordered a limited attack against Libya, adding action to rhetoric and projecting the image of "the revenger to execute wrath upon him that does evil."²⁴ American officials took care to emphasize that avenge in the form of state counter-terrorism could only

be carried out where the adversary was isolated and politically and militarily defenseless. Evidence that pointed to Syrian complicity was treated with some moderation, while evidence of Libyan involvement with Palestinian terrorists was widely publicized.

Several commentators have argued that American fundamentalism is of limited use in the long haul of defence expenditures. If Samuel P. Huntington may be taken as a representative example, conservative political scientists have long since determined that American fundamentalism is the expression of a parochial and separatist frame of mind.²⁵ Fundamentalists want to clean America of homosexuality, of pornography, of Communism in high places, and of welfare recipients. They believe that the rest of the World is so mired in these sins that it is hardly worth saving. While they want American power to triumph everywhere, they also tend to see inevitable compromises of foreign policy as the source of conspiracy and corruption in America. Indefinite foreign entanglements, as required by a global power, are considered not only demoralizing and contaminating but too expensive. To overcome these problems, Reagan has developed a remarkable talent for moving adroitly in the gap between the organizers of the electronic churches and their constituency. While self-appointed fundamentalist spokesmen, such as Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson, can make a nuisance of themselves when they expose official policy toward South Africa by praising P.W. Botha as a saint and the Krugerrand as a coin of righteousness, the ordinary supporter of the Moral Majority seems to remain a loyal supporter of President Reagan, whose administration is marked by the ability to combine biblical references and deep-seated hatred of Communism with a fairly cautious approach to foreign policy. Ronald Reagan was only made the candidate of the Moral Majority at a late date before his nomination as Republican candidate for the presidency.²⁶ His surprising skills may be described as a matter of providing a form of leadership that the organizers of the fundamentalist minority cannot refuse. It is unlikely that a new republican candidate will be able to repeat Reagan's success.

Perhaps a more stable and important source of religious support is being put together among conservative Lutherans in the hope of convincing the majority of American voters about pressing defense needs. This may be inferred from comments made by Richard Neuhaus, director of the Center of Religion and Society in New York. In reaction to Reagan's reference to St. Luke, Neuhaus rushed to save the President from being further embarrassed by his supporters from the backwoods of American

fundamentalism. Far from suggesting that Reagan should read his Bible more carefully in preparation for his fight with the Evil Empire, Richard Neuhaus suggested that Reagan abstain from religious references that would weaken his case for military superiority. As Neuhaus put it: 'I think the president would be well-advised to make the argument for his military budget and strategies on the basis of public reasoning rather than invoking dubious biblical authority.'²⁷ Neuhaus' comment is symptomatic of a return to a Lutheran wall between sound "public reasoning," i.e., expert calculation of technical opportunities and enemy capabilities, on the one hand, and "biblical authority" on the other.

The central article of faith that unites neo-orthodox, neo-conservative theologians is their perception that Lutheranism is better suited to deal not with creeping Communism at home but with the threat of Soviet dominance and world revolution. There is also a noticeable fear that Americans cannot be endlessly persuaded to invest in weaponry of over-kill just to match Soviet paranoia. With Luther these theologians reject the idea of a tenable division between righteous and unrighteous *ends* of violence. But they seem to agree that Lutheran theology can be claimed for a distinction between righteous and unrighteous *means* of violence, which is more likely to stiffen the nerve of the American tax-payer. Look again at Lincoln's discrimination between means of violence, "the lash" and "the sword."

Coercion by the lash is the perfect metaphor for dirty violence; it is continuously applied, it is bloody, it is debasing for the subjugated no less than for the yielder of power. Coercion by the sword, in contrast, is sudden, effective, overwhelming, perhaps even honorable, because it is applied on the basis of a formal equality which is established by choice of weapons and shared risks. While the lash corrupts the soul of societies that depend upon physical violence as the means of order, the sword - especially if transfigured into modern weaponry - signifies that violence is exerted at a distance, normally by highly trained experts, so as to preserve the common tax-payer and society in general from the stench of bloodshed. As implied by conservative theologians, the debauchery of dirty violence, presumably inherent in the very form of government of the enemy, must be measured against the means of purified violence which is cultivated by scientific genius in Western civilization. Lincoln's metaphors and their reverberation in recent American war experience can then be translated by Neuhaus' organization. The premise is:

In this century of Hitler and Stalin and their lesser imitators the most urgent truth to be told about secular politics is the threat of totalitarianism.

The conclusion is quickly drawn:

The United States of America is the primary bearer of the democratic possibilities in the world today. The Soviet Union is the primary bearer of the totalitarian alternative.²⁸

The Reagan administration faces a pressing dilemma. It is convinced about the need for extraordinary means of global violence. At the same time, however, the administration has to acknowledge the existence of a widespread revulsion against the destructive capacity of modern weaponry. The modern abomination of desolation is seen to involve nothing less than a direct challenge to the ultimate mystery which sustained religious imagination in the Judaic-Christian tradition from its very origin. After the Flood, a long time before the idea of human salvation and eternal life was introduced, the revengeful Jehova decided to restrain his impatience: "And the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake. ... Neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. ... Summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."²⁹

The same science which produced the technology of modern warfare has repeatedly assured the public that neither human nor any other higher organic form of life can be expected to survive even a limited nuclear contest. The present religious anxiety represents a reaction to the suppressed knowledge that primal divine limits to power are being discredited as a matter of mundane, budgetary planning. The rise of religious rhetoric in recent years reflects, at least in part, an agitated search for an inspired mystique that can take the place of the Genesis. Such a mystique is needed when a reluctant population is to be implicated in renewed risks of suffering and perpetrating unprecedented violence. One may perhaps get a glimpse of the difficulties that the present administration is faced with. While Lincoln asked for public sacrifices that would make America safe for majoritarian republicanism, Reagan's policy is best characterized by its costly initiatives to make the world safe for nuclear competition.

NOTES

1. The political views of Luther and Calvin are compared in Sheldon S. Wolin, *Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought* (Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown, 1960), pp. 141-194; see also George H. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory* (London: George Harrap, 1937), pp. 304-318 and H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Kingdom of God in America* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1937), pp. 17-44. The politi-

- cal background is surveyed in Hans Baron, "Calvinist Republicanism and its Historical Roots," *Church History*, VIII (1939), 30-42.
2. *Church, State and Education* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1957), p. 121.
 3. William Stoughton, "New England's True Interest, Not to Lie," 1688, as quoted in Perry Miller, "Errand into the Wilderness," *Errand into the Wilderness* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1964), p. 6. Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), pp. 3-30, 176-212, stimulated the current wave of interest in the Jeremiad and its continuing role in American politics in the 19th and 20th centuries.
 4. *Christ Triumphant and Satan Raging. A Sermon on Matth. xii. 28*, in Darrett B. Rutman, ed., *The Great Awakening: Event and Exegesis* (Huntington, N.Y.: Robert E. Krieger, 1977), pp. 70-79.
 5. *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, Leonard W. Labaree, et. al. eds., in Rutman, *Great Awakening*, pp. 38-39.
 6. *Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival of Religion* (1742) in Rutman, *Great Awakening*, p. 82.
 7. Jonathan Edwards, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," in *Jonathan Edwards: Basic Writings*, Selected by Ola Elizabeth Winslow (New York: New American Library, 1966), p. 159; Sheldon S. Wolin, "America's Civil Religion," *Democracy*, II, no. 2 (April 1982), 7-17.
 8. Wolin, "America's Civil Religion," pp. 12-15.
 7. Jonathan Edwards, *The Surprising Work of God* (1736) in Rutman, *Great Awakening*, p. 32.
 10. Niebuhr, *Kingdom of God*, p. 126.
 11. Abraham Lincoln, "Second Inaugural Address," in Bernard E. Brown, ed., *Great American Political Thinkers*, 2 Vols. (New York: Avon Books, 1983), II, 67.
 12. Abraham Lincoln, 'Gettysburg Address,' in Brown, *Great American Political Thinkers*, II; 66.
 13. Ernest Tuveson, *The Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millennial Role* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1968).
 14. "Second Inaugural Address," in Brown, *Great American Political Thinkers*, II, 67-68.
 15. Lincoln's basic argument had first been worked out in political theory by St. Augustin, see Wolin, *Politics and Vision*, 118-19.
 16. "Gettysburg Address," in Brown, *Great American Political Thinkers*, II, 66.
 17. John P. Diggins, *The Lost Soul of American Politics. Virtue, Self-Interest, and the Foundation of Liberalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1984), p. 329. Diggins is inspired in particular by Reinhold Niebuhr's various writings, such as his "The Religion Abraham Lincoln," *Christian Century*, Vol. 82 (Feb. 10, 1965), 172-75. See also, Robert N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," in William G. McLoughlin, eds., *Religion in America* (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1966), pp. 3-23.
 18. Loren Barits, *Backfire* (New York: William Morrow, 1985).
 19. Phillip E. Hammond, "The Curious Path of Conservative Protestantism," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 480 (July 1985), p. 55.
 20. Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), pp. 288-89.
 21. As cited in Richard Hofstadter, *Great Issues in American History, 1864-1969* (New York, Vintage, 1969), p. 453.
 22. *Time Magazine*, Nov. 19, 1984, p. 51 is a representative example.

23. *The Herald Tribune*, Feb. 7, 1985.
24. John Calvin, "Commentaries on the Epistle to the Romans," as cited in John T. McNeill, ed., *Calvin On God and Political Duty* (Indianapolis, Ind.: The Library of Liberal Arts, 1950), p. 85. For Reagan's use of allusions to the Old Testament, see his address to the nation, *the New York Times*, April 15, 1986.
25. *American Politics: The Promise of Disharmony* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981) which presents an interpretation of American politics based upon the fear of religiously or morally inspired waves of "credal passion."
26. James L. Gunth, "The New Christian Right," in Robert C. Liebman and Robert Wuthnow, eds., *The New Christian Right: Mobilization and Legitimation* (New York: Aldine Publishing Company, 1983), p. 36.
27. *The Herald Tribune*, Feb. 7, 1985.
28. The statement was part of a manifesto, prepared for a new Institute on Religion and Democracy, sponsored by such notables of the sociology of religion as Richard Neuhaus and Peter L. Berger, among others. it is cited in Peter Steinfels, "Neoconservative Theology," *Democracy*, II (April 1982), 20-21.
29. Gen. 8:21.