

CHALCEDON CONTEMPORARY ISSUES
#2

The Late Great GOP
and the
Coming Realignment

By
Colonel V. Doner

CHALCEDON FOUNDATION
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Colonel V. Doner

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CHALCEDON CONTEMPORARY ISSUES SERIES

Andrew Sandlin, General Editor

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*The Future of the Conservative Movement:
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Preface

For more than three decades, most Christian conservatives in the United States have hitched their political wagon to the plodding elephant of the Republican Party. The GOP represented — or claimed to represent — the views conservative Christians held dear: constitutionalism, patriotism, individual freedom, anti-Communism, pro-family, pro-free enterprise, and smaller government. Christian conservatives considered Republicanism their best political hope against the ravages of immoral and interventionist liberalism embodied most prominently in the Democratic Party.

Alas, but the old elephant led them where they did not want to go. Time and again, election after election, the same Republicans (who as candidates ostentatiously courted Christian conservatives, and when elected reversed themselves), unceremoniously shut the door in the face of the very Christians who worked so diligently to get them into office, and then pursued policies antithetical to conservative Christianity.

Fed up with this hypocrisy, Christian conservatives have increasingly leveled public attacks on a Party out of touch with their deeply held convictions. They echo the words of Ronald Reagan, “I didn’t leave the Party; the Party left me” — only, Christians are talking about the Republican Party! Considering the burgeoning public influence of Christian conservatives, their

new spirit heralds a realignment on the Right and a new, more consistently Christian politics.

Few Americans are more qualified than Colonel Doner to expose the treachery and faltering of the GOP, as well as the emerging Biblical political consciousness among Christians. A Republican insider in the 70's and early 80's and an architect of the Religious Right, he outlines in *The Late Great GOP and the Coming Realignment* Christians' unwieldy relation with the Party, its dismissal of Christian concerns and policies, and its impending break-up precipitated by its arrogance toward its Christian supporters.

The Late Great GOP and the Coming Realignment is not only an absorbing account of the betrayal of the GOP's most faithful constituency, but also a call to arms for those who are weary of political vacillation and are committed more firmly than ever to the necessity of a truly Christian social order.

Andrew Sandlin
General Editor

Introduction

No one is more qualified to deflate Christianity's false confidence in "political salvationism" (national salvation through secular ideologies) than Colonel Doner. Not only did he share this unbiblical illusion with millions of other Christians, he helped to design and perpetuate it. Now, in a shocking *mea culpa*, he exposes it. From 1966 to 1988, Doner devoted his considerable talents and energies to mobilizing Evangelicals behind the GOP establishment, rising to the top rank of leadership within the GOP-Christian coalition. Drawing on two decades of mobilizing Christian foot soldiers for Republican field marshals, he now offers us a chilling look at the whitewashed tomb of the GOP. From his unique perspective, Doner conducts a startling post-mortem of the GOP's 1996 debacle, zeroing in on Bob Dole as the perfect "microcosm" of the ruling GOP country-club set; and, in the process, provides a rare insight into the anti-Christian mindset of the GOP hierarchy.

Not mincing words, Doner's first chapter convincingly indicts the Party as "faithless to its agenda, as well as to its allies [us], clueless about values, and morally bankrupt." This last charge is underscored by the Party's recent (1998) and shameless refusal to ex-communicate proponents of child genocide (partial birth abortion). Doner explains that, even inside the Reagan White House (despite the President's moving rhetoric), the Christian agenda was never seriously considered. We were, are, and always

will be an embarrassment to the blue bloods who control the Party and fill the senior echelons of the White House staff. Christian conservatives are treated like the “retarded cousin,” kept just out of sight until election time.

In his second chapter Doner punctures the bloated illusions propping up the Christian Right’s unrequited love affair with the GOP, starting by examining the plausibility of actually taking over the Party. In an unusual twist, he outlines the disastrous outcome should such an unlikely coup succeed. He proceeds to debunk the “five most common myths” for staying aboard the sinking GOP *Titanic*.

In a chapter appropriately titled “The Great Divorce,” he provides us with a fresh appraisal of the phenomenon of rapidly growing numbers of independents and culturally conservative Democrats (commonly referred to as “populists”). After proving that this emerging voting bloc holds the key to national elections (defeating Ford in 1976, Carter in 1980, Bush in 1992, and Dole in 1996), Doner imaginatively employs the formidable weapon he helped to make famous: the “Political Report Card.” Doner’s new report card graphically demonstrates that the Christian Right has much more in common with these conservative Democrats and independents than with the Republican establishment. In the process, he sobers the reader with constant reminders that, no matter who heads the ticket — Reagan, Bush or Dole — the team that runs the Party (and the White House) remains essentially the same.

The author then aims his sights at the conservative movement — of which he has been an integral part for over three decades. He explains conservatism’s astonishing lack of a coherent worldview, and the predictable consequences. In his fascinating account we are able to peer inside the “Neo-Conservatives” Pandora’s Box. We are privy to their mysterious history and their less-than-conservative agenda. We also learn how they displaced the “Old Right,” absorbed the “New Right,” and now presume to speak for the Conservative Movement.

The concluding chapter lays out, simply and directly, the choices before us: staying shackled to the GOP plantation (a more appropriate analogy than the GOP’s supposed “big tent”) and quietly acquiescing to the latest political merger (“centrist” Democrats with “centrist” Republicans) the *Remocrat Party*, or breaking the chains of political servitude and moving on. **This**

monograph is the “Emancipation Proclamation” of Christian Conservatives.

What the GOP counts on is that each new generation of Christian activists will fail to learn from the unhappy experience of those burned-out, used-up, disillusioned and betrayed souls who were yesterday’s bright-eyed GOP volunteers. *Not anymore.* Because Doner shares with us the benefit of his twenty years of labors and disillusionments, we can learn from his experience and be spared wasting our time, energy and resources any further. Combining lessons from the past with strategic analysis of current political dynamics, this monograph provides a political road map for a distinctly Christian future.

Rev. Mark R. Rushdoony
President, Chalcedon

Chapter One

The Republican Failure

...Something is wrong in the very heart of the GOP.

—Gary Bauer in an open letter to conservatives, *World*,
November 23, 1996

Although my father is afflicted with Alzheimer’s disease, I sometimes think the Republicans are suffering a much greater memory loss. They have forgotten Ronald Reagan’s accomplishments — and that is why we have lost so many of them.

—Michael Reagan, *Policy Review*, July/August, 1997

The Republicans have passed nothing and fought for nothing.

—Alan Keyes, July 22, 1997

The Republican Party is today in a crisis of the soul, unable to decide who and what it is.

—Patrick Buchanan, quoted in *Chalcedon Report*,
January, 1998

In the past, reassessing the strategic alliance between the Christian Right and the GOP (as the vehicle of choice to correct the numerous ills besetting our Republic) seemed either an

unaffordable luxury or an exercise in irrelevance promoted by a few cranks. Now, it is a necessity. The bitter verdict is upon us, ushered in by the 1996 Dole debacle and a catastrophic collapse of the GOP's "Contract with America." The GOP has proven itself an unworthy steward of our hope to return America to "traditional values." It has also shown itself to be hopelessly inept. Its aristocracy of country-club dolts and visionless mechanics has once again demonstrated that it can no longer sustain the Reagan coalition of evangelicals, populist-leaning blue-collars, independents, and conservative Catholics who defected in droves to Pat Buchanan and Ross Perot. The "black-balling" of Pat Buchanan, coupled with the GOP's egregious insistence on running away from (rather than on) its own platform, were the last straws. The Congressional majority's subsequent meltdown in 1997 simply confirms our diagnosis: D.O.A.

Consequently, a new political realignment is now taking place, driven by the suddenly inescapable revelations that the GOP is: 1) faithless both to its proclaimed principles and to its allies; 2) suffering from terminal stupidity and clearly out of touch with the concerns of average Americans; 3) incapable of mobilizing the "Silent Majority" or "Moral Majority"; and 4) visionless and morally bankrupt, without a clue as to how to restore the Republic to even a modicum of sanity. Most damning of all, has been the inexorable realization that its soul (i.e., its real power center) is much more comfortable with liberal secularists than with Christian activists. Having been an apologist for the Republican Party for more than two decades (1966 to 1986), I will examine each of these assertions in detail, as well as the consequent course of action they suggest.

The GOP is faithless to its proclaimed agenda.

...[in 1996] very few (GOP congressmen) ran on the principles embodied in the party's Contract With America. Apparently intentionally, they failed to make the case that the Contract needed to be augmented and extended.

—Thomas Patterson, Arizona State Senate Republican Majority Leader, quoted in *Policy Review*, January/February, 1997

The budget deal represents, at every level, a complete reversal of the platform which brought the Republicans to power in 1994.

—Paul Weyrich, May 30, 1997

In May 1997 Republicans found themselves discussing how to rejigger the calculation of the consumer price index and of projected economic growth so they could make a deal with a Democratic president to spend more money.

—U.S. Senator Phil Gramm quoted in *Policy Review*, July/August, 1997

While many examples of the GOP's faithlessness to its stated agenda might be cited, none could be more indicting than its shattered "Contract with America." (Newt, please note: The downside of proclaiming a "National Covenant" with the American people is that you lose credibility when it is abandoned without even a peep.) Pity the poor Republicans. They tried their best to prove they have principles (and that they — unlike those two-faced Democrats — would actually stick to them) to the point of making a solemn covenant with the American people. But all these new-found principles soon faded in the face of the politically expedient. Now we have a broken contract, and a disillusioned electorate that registered its displeasure at being snookered — either by voting for a paranoid Texas billionaire, or (in not bothering to dignify what they correctly perceived as a political sham) by simply sitting out the 1996 election.

Now might be an appropriate moment for you to explore your own feelings concerning this unexpected and inexplicable letdown. Do you remember how hopeful you were in January, 1995, when Newt, the revolutionary, and his army of reformers launched their blitzkrieg on Congress and promised to turn the political establishment upside down before they stood again for reelection?

That plan lasted about six months. We never saw or heard from Newt again about the revolution (or anything else it seemed). Shell-shocked by his high negatives (professorial arrogance does not play well on TV), Newt went into hiding, while his agenda floundered on the rocky intransigence of the GOP Senate establishment (shepherded by "Mr. Republican" himself, Bob Dole). Gingrich's Congressional troops went into a long funk after

losing the moral high ground on the budget battle to none other than Mr. Balance-the-Budget, Bill Clinton. Licking their wounds, they decided that Bill had won the day so they had better lay low until a charismatic visionary like longtime party leader Dole could whip the Republic into a frenzy of excitement and a consequent electoral sweep in 1996.

In the news void that followed hard on the heels of Dole's annihilation, the media turned up the heat on their favorite clown, Bill Clinton. His "Teflon" began to look more like Velcro, with Whitewater (thanks to Webb Hubbell and Hillary) and Paula Jones (thanks to the media and the Supreme Court) pressing in. Much more important was Clinton's daily skewering in the headlines for involvement in a campaign funding scandal that threatened to dwarf all previous political scandals dating back to Benedict Arnold. While posturing as the ultimate moralist, it seems that this "Man from Hope" was raking in tons of illegal cash from a fascinatingly diverse spectrum of unsavory rogues — from South American drug dealers to Chinese gunrunners. Much of the cash came illegally (washed through various ingenious schemes) and much of it came from the "People's Republic" of China. At this point the precise role of the Communist government of China in this intrigue is unclear (thanks to Democratic stonewalling) but is suspected to be significant.

Did the leaders of the Republican Congress take advantage of Clinton's weakness, proclaiming him to be "morally challenged," and move ahead with the agenda they had promised? Of course not.

In Round One of the budget battle, fought in late 1995, the GOP threatened Clinton with the closure of the Federal government if he didn't cooperate. He didn't, the GOP blinked, and Round One went to Mr. Fiscal Discipline. After the American people reaffirmed the GOP's mandate (in the face of a massive, hostile, labor campaign and a GOP ticket programmed to self-destruct at the top), Congressional leaders inexplicably decided to forfeit Round Two of the budget battle without a fight. Even worse, the Republicans (apparently deciding that if they couldn't beat the opposition, they should join them), entered into a duplicitous cover-up with Clinton to claim a "bi-partisan" victory on a budget that was not only smoke and mirrors, but that actually spent five *billion* dollars more than the Clintons' original plan.

This overnight conversion to “Remocrats” (as the *Wall Street Journal*’s editorial page deemed them) created a surreal political landscape where the only serious budget cutters turned out to be twenty-three “Blue Dog” conservatives — *Democrats* led by the courageous David Minge of Minnesota (of all places!). Thus it was Rep. Minge, a Democrat, who publicly lamented that *both* parties had conspired to act as though their bi-partisan “illusion show” actually balanced the budget. **Incredibly, not only did the GOP refuse to deal with the real cause of the deficit — entitlements — but they blocked Representative Minge’s amendment, which would have mandated deeper cuts if projected revenues fell below the wildly optimistic prognostications of the budget magicians.** It seems the “Blue Dogs” smelled a disingenuous fiscal scheme when they noticed that those anointed by their respective parties to steward the nation’s financial future had, at the last moment, increased their income projection by a modest *225 billion*. This astounding leap of blind faith (surely the most daring since Darwin) was predicated on the assumption that the economy would continue to improve, uninterrupted, for the next *half decade*! As one of the Senate’s few legitimate budget experts (with a Ph.D. in economics), Phil Gramm observed:

... 97 cents out of every dollar of deficit reduction in the budget is simply assumed. That is, it comes from assuming that the economy is going to grow faster, interest rates are going to be lower, unemployment is going to be lower, tax collection is going to be higher. Only three cents of every dollar come from any policy change. And they all come in the last year of the budget.

... the deficit goes up this year and next year and stays at a higher level until the end of this century. Not until the 21st Century do we get deficits as low as we have now.

In light of Senator Gramm’s candid analysis, the GOP’s refusal to consider Rep. Minge’s amendment as a reasonable back-up plan speaks volumes. Presidential aspirant Gramm ominously concluded: “This is the kind of budget that comes about when the two great parties stop debating and start conspiring, against the public.” *Welcome to the new bi-partisan Remocrat Party!*

The disappearance of Newt's agenda in less than twelve months from its unveiling, after having engineered one of the greatest electoral reverses in history, is surely one of the most bizarre episodes in the history of the Republic. It is especially noteworthy that the panjandrums of the GOP have made no coherent effort to offer a rational explanation for their malfeasance in this regard to party regulars, let alone to the American public. Emulating the man they profess to disdain, in the epitome of faithlessness they simply walked off. No sustained effort, no strategic adaptation, no explanation. Just a void filled with silence, a political black hole.

As conservative pundit Robert Novak noted: "...the revolutions are over — both the Reagan Revolution and the Gingrich Revolution." Well, not quite. Apparently believing he will find political redemption if he can gain momentum, Gingrich is on the move, and lurching noticeably to the left. His honored guest at Clinton's 1997 State of the Union address: none other than the very un-Reverend Jesse Jackson. While chastising Black conservative, J. C. Watts, he befriends Black neo-Stalinist Maxine Waters. What sort of message does this send to Black conservatives? To any conservative? Obviously Newt doesn't really care. His symbolism is having the desired effect. These days in Congress, Democrats and liberals seem to comprise the most vocal portion of Newt's rapidly diminishing cheering section.

The GOP is clueless about values.

The Party doesn't stand for anything.

—Steve Curtis, Colorado GOP State Chairman,
Washington Times, February 1, 1998

As Ronald Reagan handed over the reigns of power in January 1989, he said that his greatest regret was that he had not been able to accomplish more to limit abortion. Conservatives today wince at the very mention of the word.

—Gary Bauer, *Policy Review*, July/August, 1997

Newt's "Contract With America" was a very good beginning, but many Republicans regarded it as the Alpha and Omega: Pass

this legislative package — and presto — America is back on track. Having abandoned their covenant (once it served its purpose, securing their election), the confusion swamping the GOP ship suggests that most of the GOP's top-ranked players do not have a clue about the real ills besetting America. A balanced budget and term limits are twentieth-century answers for twenty-first-century problems. *Secular medicine for a disease of the spirit.*

Indeed, the man on the street demonstrates a clearer comprehension of the bedrock issues facing the republic than all the GOP think tanks (increasingly an oxymoron) combined. Pollster George Gallup, Jr. confirmed as much in August, 1996, when he reported that moral values had displaced economic issues as the nation's primary concern. In fact, the loss of public virtue and personal morality surpassed economic concern by an astounding fifty-three to thirty-eight percent, leading Gallup to note, "Americans are more concerned about moral values now than at any time in sixty years of polling." Even more amazing, a super majority of voters — fifty-seven percent — indicated that where presidential candidates stood on moral problems was "very important." (Another thirty percent rated moral issues "important.") Thus, Republicans were presented a near-perfect opportunity to follow up their juggernaut of 1994 and toss out the sleazy gang surrounding the most amoral president in history — right? A golden chance for the GOP to pick up the White House and improve its margins in both Houses — right? An obvious clue that the GOP "war room" (if they had one) should emphasize, "**It's values — stupid!**" Right?

Not quite! In fact, it appears that the only campaign strategist who read the issue correctly was Bill Clinton's alter ego, Dick Morris (the well-known moralist).

Tragically, as it turns out, the powers that be in the GOP are profoundly uncomfortable with moral issues, as pathetically illustrated by the hapless Dole choking out what must be one of the most humiliating admissions in the recent history of presidential campaigns. When queried by *USA Today* about how his campaign was faring in the contest to present itself and the GOP as the "Values Party," as compared with Clinton, Dole mumbled, "Oh, he's ahead of me on it." Simply amazing! Here we have the standard bearer of "God's Own Party" taking second place to the King of Sleaze when it comes to restoring even a measure of confidence in the president's ability to be an exhorter of the public morality. How

could this be?

Our first clue is to note that the duly anointed standard bearer of Republicanism at the close of the twentieth century could not even bring himself to utter such relatively meaningless terms as “moral issues” or “traditional values.” Rather, he referred to them (and thus to the hottest issues of 1996) with an alienated “it,” as if he were afraid to touch the “M” word lest he be thought a religious zealot. Meanwhile, Bill Clinton, with instincts honed by years of vegetating in Baptist churches and governing a “fundamentalist” state, had no such compunctions. He knew exactly how to manipulate value symbols; and, Hillary notwithstanding, he had enough Bible belt stuck in his craw to handle the issue comfortably, and with apparent conviction to boot.

The Real Meaning of the Dole Debacle

To accurately assess the limits of the GOP’s vision, or the deficiency of its value system, we first need to fathom the world-view of Robert Dole. This is useful not only because he was Chairman of the Party in the 1970’s, or the Senate Majority Leader in the 80’s and 90’s, or because he is the GOP’s most recent standard bearer, but because he is the archetype of the traditional Republicans who control the Party. He is the consummate clone of his pragmatic predecessors, Nixon, Ford and Bush, all eerily similar in their lack of vision beyond the next day, and in their seeming inability to express ideas — any ideas — coherently. He flawlessly mirrors the redundant opportunism of the political mechanics, the stage managers, the blind hierarchs of the party apparatus. **In short, Bob Dole is a GOP microcosm. He is not an aberration. He is the Party. To understand his limitations is to understand the Party’s inability to accept, let alone produce, statesmen with a vision for the future based on a consistent world-view.**

In the traditional old-school mold shared by the entirety of the GOP establishment, Dole is profoundly ill at ease with any discussion of morality or values. Politics is the art of the possible; morals or values are regarded as “private matters” with no discernible connection to the process of governing.

In the August 8, 1996, full-page interview with *USA Today*, the GOP Senate leader was as revealing as he was stupefying.

Presented with an opportunity to reach out to millions of readers in a special edition actually dedicated to “values,” right off the bat Dole repeated the tired liberal cliché that “you can’t legislate morality.” (O.K., Mr. Rocket Scientist, then why are murder, rape and theft outlawed?) When *USA Today* provocatively opened Pandora’s Box, asking Dole whether Clinton even *had* any values, what was candidate Dole’s response to this gift of a question? Did he address what almost everyone in Washington (pro- or anti-Clinton) acknowledges: that the President is a pathological liar? Did Dole answer that the Prince of Lies is as unfaithful to his political pledges as he is to his wife? That his entire history — draft-dodging to drug abuse, Gennifer Flowers to Paula Jones, Whitewater to Filegate, espousing his much-touted religious beliefs while embracing abortion, homosexuality and radical feminism — is characterized by unfaithfulness, chicanery, evasion and deceit? No, of course not. Rather, Dole answered with an astonishing, “Obviously he has values.” His only real critique of Clinton’s values was that Clinton had lost “credibility” because he had reversed his positions on welfare reform and taxes (kind of like George Bush!). Seemingly unable to cope with any meaningful discussion of values, Dole simply drew the conversation back to mundane political matters.

On the subject of abortion, Dole likewise defended his waffling on the Party’s plank this way: “[Abortion] is a moral issue. It’s not like all the other things in the platform” (emphasis mine). Clearly in Dole’s traditional Republican mindset, political principles and moral values are two very different things. Morality is something very private, “a matter of private conscience,” something about which we should not be expected to agree, or even discuss in polite company. Thus, Dole posits that Republicans can be expected to agree on taxes, trade, immigration, and all the various issues in the platform — except for abortion. Here we need to tolerate a divergence of opinion because this is an issue of private conscience. **Standing the moral universe on its head, what we have here is the essence of Republican establishment thinking.** All are expected to march in lock step on such secondary issues as free trade, taxation policy and immigration, but on fundamental moral issues we are free agents. *What’s wrong with this picture?*

Of course, what this picture really reveals is that the Party’s heart is centered around issues that protect its leaders’ pocketbooks.

We all need to agree on the most efficient way to protect our economic interests or our freedoms of choice. Beyond that, everything else is up for grabs. **Henceforth, the litmus test for being a true Republican will not be the issues of life and death, but, as Pat Buchanan found out, issues of real concern like free trade.**

When pressed in the pathetic *USA Today* interview, Dole finally thought of a value he stood for. He wanted to restore “dignity” to the White House! And there you have it. For the Doles, Bushes, Fords, and the party hierarchs, **values really boil down to good manners.** This is typical of New England and Midwestern “cut-flower” moralists who enjoy the benefits of Christian culture while denying their moral and spiritual foundations. Western Cultural Values — “family,” honesty, responsibility, personal honor and the like — are simply considered to be generic customs shared by all well-mannered WASPS. In this post-Christian paradigm, masterfully modeled by both George and Barbara Bush, such “cultural moralism” supplants any consideration of root moral questions of right and wrong. These are thought to be private, and hence beyond the realm of polite discussion. This secular sanctimoniousness is precisely why the Christian Right is held in such disdain by the self-appointed arbiters of acceptable social discourse. We demonstrate a distastefully uncouth lack of proper etiquette when we bring up such “private issues” as morality or religious values. How uncivilized! How rude!

Finally, to unequivocally demonstrate how out to lunch Dole really is when it comes to any metaphysical or theological exercises, no matter how simple: When asked whose values he admired most, to whom he turned for direction or coaching, who do you think came to mind? Jesus? Senate Chaplains Dick Halverson or Lloyd Ogilvie? Or perhaps every presidential candidate’s favorite cop-out answer, “Billy Graham”? How about the Pope or Mother Teresa? No such luck. It turns out that Dole relies on his wife Elisabeth: “She really believes and practices her faith.” After further prodding by a clearly nonplused reporter, Dole blurted out “Pete Dominici” — a moderate Roman Catholic Senator from New Mexico. Strange. Very strange.

Why the GOP is vision averse...

Bob Dole is visionless. —Jack Kemp, 1988

Conservatives, for the most part, lack an internal belief system.

—Paul Weyrich, March 12, 1997

We as a party don't know what we want to accomplish.

—David Norcross, former General Counsel and current member, Republican National Committee, *Washington Times*, February 1, 1998

Bob Dole and his ilk are not only uncomfortable with the fundamentals of “values” and “moral issues” but with vision itself. They seem equally estranged to the basic concept that ideas have consequences. The saga of Dole's much-heralded speech attacking Hollywood moguls for their ravenous and senseless debasing of culture is an interesting case in point. It represents the one and only time that Dole's handlers were able to nudge him close to an encounter with something so alien. Dole reportedly had to be brought “kicking and screaming” to this fateful event. He did not want to give the speech. Too uncomfortable. All this talk about morality. Besides, a lot of Hollywood types supported his campaign. No sense to risk alienating them. Finally, Dole's aides prevailed. Hesitatingly and with many misgivings he gave the speech. He was reportedly shocked by its positive reception. As Bob Woodward reported in *The Choice*: “The impact was beyond anything in Dole's entire political history. This was entirely new territory.” Dole was apparently amazed by the effect that an idea could have ... (an interesting revelation after three decades as a party leader!).

Of course, ideas are scary things, and Dole never felt comfortable enough to dabble again with this strange new force. Instead, shrewd old politician that he is, he recruited Jack Kemp (who had previously ravaged Dole as visionless) to be his token visionary. Kemp could do the thinking and he, Dole, would run the show. We must understand that Robert Dole is not exceptional in his aversion to vision (any vision); rather, he *is the rule* when it

comes to his fellow GOP panjandrums. This is why he was openly critical to the point of ridiculing Gingrich's Contract with America. Too revolutionary. This is why his colleagues in the Senate totally decimated the work that Gingrich's House labored to build, thus eviscerating the short-lived Republican revolution.

Finally, the GOP's ingrained aversion to visionaries is what motivated the unprecedented show of unity when the entire Republican establishment (including Gingrich, Kemp and Bill Bennett) closed ranks to oppose the only real visionary with any chance of winning the nomination, Pat Buchanan. Why this deep-seated, knee-jerk aversion to vision, visionaries, values — or even ideas? First, ask what these things have in common. Answer: They all spring from, or at least are integral to, fundamental moral and metaphysical presuppositions. When deeply held values find their context within a vision that powerfully articulates, and then provides a methodology of implementation, personal zealousness is often the result. This zeal is not easily given to compromise or an unswerving devotion to the etiquette of impeccable civil discourse as defined by the reigning establishment.

Since values, ideas and visionaries threaten to alter the status quo, the GOP hierarchs feel threatened on four counts. First, they are uncomfortable with people of strong religious persuasion because "true believers" tend to break the taboo that spiritual or moral issues are a strictly private matter. Such an egregious violation of their code blurs the crucial secular distinction between the private sphere (personal morality) and the public (law) — leading to unnecessary ideological warfare and confrontations over fundamental moral issues, and making governance by a broad "consensus" all but impossible. This, in turn, disrupts the primary goal of the neoconservative/corporate/establishment/technocrat axis: to efficiently partner a liberal-secular culture with a modified free-enterprise system (reminiscent of the "Christian Democrat" regimes in Europe). Moralism also tends to focus on the necessity of personal reform preceding structural reform. Drawing attention to man's flawed nature wreaks havoc with the neoconservative dream of building a near-perfect society (an unfortunate hangover from their Marxian Utopia days) through superior public policy management, fine tuning and timely remedial intervention.

Second, value-driven visions foster true believers who are unwilling to compromise, thus violating the first sacrament of modern

American political strategy — the necessity of “broadening the base” through continual accommodation. Third, as antinomians who have consciously rejected God’s law and Christ’s redeeming power, they do not wish to be reminded, however obliquely, of the eternal condemnation they have brought upon themselves. Raising moral issues obviously implies that there is a God who sits in judgment — of them. Fourth, vision is dangerous because, as with nitroglycerin, it gets easily out of control and is likely to upset the apple cart. Since the Mandarins of the GOP own most of the apples in the cart, this is not an acceptable option.

Dole and his ilk, as the embodiment of the GOP soul, represent the very antithesis of the revolutionary — just another bunch of bureaucrats, as a younger Gingrich once complained. The truth is, the party platform notwithstanding, the GOP has never been a party of vision. (Platforms are uniformly ignored by the people who actually run the Party, by the way. For instance, at the 1996 GOP Convention both Dole and Gingrich proudly proclaimed that neither had even bothered to read the platform and would certainly not feel bound by it!) Even those who have appeared to have vision have basically faked it. Both Goldwater and Reagan had deeply held conservative beliefs (Communism and big government are bad, a limited government governs best, etc.), but neither could be accurately described as a visionary or as one who could embrace a full-orbed vision for governing from a new paradigm. What about Goldwater’s *Conscience of a Conservative* which served as a manifesto for many of us back in ’64? The fact is that, not only did Goldwater not write his book, he didn’t even bother to edit it before it was published!

The GOP is morally bankrupt as well as visionless.

The Republican Party seems well on the way to denying its conservative birthright, and with every passing day you and I are becoming strangers to it.

—Malcolm Wallop, Republican U.S. Senator, March 8, 1997

Nobody could ever tell the literal truth publicly and...be able to run this country.

—Leonard Garment, Republican counselor and Nixon confidant, March 11, 1997

We don't have to look far to discover pandemic symptoms of the GOP's moral bankruptcy. First is the glaring lack of coherent vision to rectify the virulent complex of social viruses threatening the future of our civilization. The best of the current GOP visionaries, from Kemp to Kristol, offer answers that are almost exclusively economic or political in nature: balanced budgets, term limits, immigration reform, supply-side economics, various empowerment schemes, tougher crime packages, and so on. Significantly, they fail to deal with the underlying "structural" value systems that provide both the form and substance to culture, law and economics — while vast sections of the Bible are devoted to all three. What little intellectual firepower the GOP does pack is almost exclusively from secular "neoconservatives" like Bill Kristol, editor of the *Standard* and former chief-of-staff for Dan Quayle.

A second symptom is the proclivity of the GOP to marginalize or preempt moral issues. The months-long pre-convention fight in 1996 over retaining the Party's pro-life plank is a case in point. When Dole's operatives realized that they couldn't somehow make the issue quietly disappear, they sought to render it meaningless with the following declaration: "Members of our Party have deeply held and sometimes differing views on issues of *personal conscience* like abortion and capital punishment. We view this diversity of views as a source of strength... recognizing that tolerance is a virtue and *we call on all Republicans to reject the forces of hatred and bigotry.*" From this revealing confession we can deduce how the GOP ultimately holds issues of right or wrong. We note the stomach-turning capitulation to post-modern moral relativism (as previously voiced by party spokesman Bob Dole) on issues of moral import. Such life and death issues as abortion and capital punishment are relegated to matters of personal conscience, since there are presumably no universal standards of right or wrong upon which the Party can agree. It would seem, for some, that rape, incest, lying, theft, physical abuse and infanticide are matters of individual conscience.

As Pat Buchanan so poignantly summarized, above, the gravity of this latter issue (infanticide) was underscored in early 1998, when the Republican National Committee defeated a resolution to deny funding to GOP candidates who embrace "partial birth" abortion. Just wait 'til grandma and the GOP small-donor base

realize where their money is going!

With this spineless capitulation to the politically correct pluralism of the humanist zeitgeist, the GOP has declared moral bankruptcy. Its “all inclusive” position posits a willfully blind and amoral “tolerance” over and above God’s law — begging the question: If there are no absolutes, if all morality is an issue of private conscience, when or where or how do we draw the line? Since the Party can’t agree on something as basic as acceptable moral conduct, it must remain neutral on all issues of ultimate import: the fundamental questions of right and wrong that all cultures and political parties must address — and address correctly — or be consigned to oblivion.

To make sure we get the message, we are forewarned that if we refuse to abide moral relativism, or if we inject an uncivil tone into the debate (as I’ve just done), then, well, we may just qualify as hateful bigots! Hmmm. This sounds suspiciously like secular liberal Democratic “politically correct” rhetoric. Perhaps there is more than immediately meets the eye here. *Could it possibly be that the Republican Party leadership — on a visceral level — has more in common with liberal Democrat secularists than with Christian conservatives?*

“A Choice, Not An Echo!”

Bob Dole is the Tax Collector for The Welfare State

—Newt Gingrich

Since the (‘96) election, the Republican majority in Congress sometimes seems more concerned with demonstrating that they can work with the White House than with legislating conservative principles.

—Jeane Kirkpatrick, *Policy Review*, July/August, 1997

In short, there is no real opposition party...the conservative leadership has bought the major premises of liberalism.

—Paul Weyrich, March 12, 1997

While rhetorically light years apart, the margin of difference between what the Democratic Party actually does

and what the Republican Party actually does is rapidly shrinking. In the early 1960's, we Goldwaterites challenged the power of GOP's liberal eastern establishment with the slogan "a choice — not an echo," emblematic of Goldwater's sharply defined libertarian conservatism versus liberal Republicans' "evolving" secular democratic statism. In a *deja vu*-like rerun, the GOP's current disposition to relativism and compromise has not only left it morally bankrupt, but has in fact produced results alarmingly similar to the Democratic agenda (while still maintaining a basically conservative rhetoric).

Historically, the GOP has never pretended to be "God's Own Party." It has been the Party of business, of free enterprise, of anti-Communism. It has never been a particularly religious Party. What evangelicals have found attractive is its rhetorical bent toward libertarianism, exemplified by Goldwater, Reagan and Kemp. To Christians, the libertarian mantra that "the government that governs least governs best" has resonated well — partly because it suggests a hands-off approach to churches, Christian schools, homeschoolers and families — in contrast to the multifarious and intrusive schemes hatched by Democrats in their social laboratory from hell.

We as Christian activists have failed to consider the downside of secular libertarianism, however. First, a libertarian "hands-off" approach essentially means that we should all be free to do our own thing. As sometimes-party-spokesman P. J. O'Rourke eloquently puts it, "We leave you alone." This, of course, means that people should be free to express themselves in whatever way they please — including "sexual expressions" or the consequences thereof, i.e., abortion. Thus, the libertarian wing, from Goldwater to O'Rourke, regards Christian morality as an affront equal to the Democrats' weird form of onerous secular morality, which is improperly termed "political correctness." No doubt this sentiment is what prompted Sen. Goldwater a decade ago to proclaim that Rev. Falwell required a good swift kick to his posterior. Second, the philosophical ramifications implicit in the GOP libertarian dogma — relying so heavily on the dignity, potential and power of the individual, uninhibited by restraints (whether they be governmental or religious) — inexorably leads to idolization of the individual at the expense of God's sovereignty. (It should be noted that there is a small-but-growing Christian or paleo-libertarian movement which has correctly sought to emphasize "lib-

erty” over “libertine,” and thus should not be confused with the more virulent antinomian and nihilistic strains of libertarianism.)

If we were to boil down the basic presuppositions of the two parties to bumper-sticker slogans, the Democrats’ would be: “Man is the answer and government is the vehicle.” The GOP’s entree: “Man is the answer and the individual is the vehicle.” Both parties’ hopes are deeply rooted in the political salvationism stemming from the Enlightenment’s confidence in the basic goodness of man and his consequent potential for progressive perfection through economic improvement and education. (Remember George Bush, the “education president”?) The only difference is that Republicans place their confidence in individuals, as opposed to the Democrats who favor the power of collective society (i.e., the state). Nevertheless, both are deeply rooted in the great lie of secular humanism: Man is the author of his own salvation, and, if we only have enough (choose one): 1. social engineering or 2. supply-side economics, we can fashion a humanistic economic and political paradise on earth. When’s the last time you’ve heard a Republican candidate say that no Party had the answers, that people were fundamentally flawed, and the only answer to America’s long-term problem was national repentance? **Clearly, our slogan, “God is the answer and His people are the vehicle,” would seem quite out of place on the GOP bumper.**

If all this were not bad enough, what we have not yet considered is that the GOP establishment, while paying lip service one day of the week to the Christian agenda and six days of the week to the economic conservative or libertarian agenda, has in fact been loyal to neither. Richard Nixon, who inexplicably remains an icon to many on the Right (primarily because of the enmity between him and the liberal establishment), funded a rash of newly intrusive and left-leaning federal programs. Under Ronald Reagan’s budget-cutting stewardship the national debt increased from one trillion to almost three trillion dollars, and the government’s budget increased from around 680 billion to well over one trillion dollars a year. Hardly a fitting tribute to the influence of Milton Friedman and Von Mises! It is, however, a tribute to Reagan’s Senate Majority Leader, Bob Dole, who rammed \$150 billion in tax increases through Congress to keep Reagan’s deficit laden budget afloat.

Reagan was succeeded by his hand-picked heir, George Read-

My-Lips Bush, who went out of his way to break his word to the American people not to raise taxes, so that he would have the funding necessary for financing various Planned Parenthood and abortionist schemes, as well as propping up the NEA's pornographic arts projects. As former Nixon aide, Howard Phillips, summarizes: "In the 20 years from Kennedy to Reagan ['61 to '81] government spending rose by 500 billion dollars. In the twelve years of Reagan/Bush it grew by twice that amount to over 1,000 billion (one trillion) dollars." It's hard to notice a commitment to less government here. Of course, such a commitment would entail telling the truth to the American people about our impending bankruptcy — and the necessity for cutting (not just slowing down the growth rate of) the budget. Not a politically expedient thing to do (as another former Nixon aide, Leonard Garment, stated in 1997: "Nobody could ever tell the literal truth publicly and...be able to run this country." Meanwhile, the GOP Congress proposes a budget that would have us paying up to a trillion dollars a year just in debt service by the year 2002. Simultaneously, the Budget Office of the Congress predicts an annual deficit of 400 billion dollars by the year 2004. And the GOP band plays on for the benefit of its budget balancing parade/charade.

The GOP is faithless to its allies and supporters, willing to betray them for momentary advantage.

From the start (1981) Reagan aides were quick to downplay the difference that the Religious Right had made on election day.

—Kevin Phillips, *Post-Conservative America*

We should...keep faith with those who made it possible for us, today, to be in positions of leadership.

—Trent Lott, Senate Majority Leader, *Policy Review*, July/August, 1997

That Christians and conservatives have been consistently instrumental in providing tens of millions of votes to the GOP, from Reagan to Bush to the Congressional elections of '94 is accepted fact. That the Christian Right has made the difference in

literally hundreds of legislative and Congressional races since 1980 (a year in which I personally helped to channel the Christian Right's energy in defeating over three dozen Congressmen), is not questioned. That evangelicals' loyalty as a voting block is second to none — with eighty percent of the vote usually being cast for the Party in question (rivaled only by the loyalty of the Black vote which normally delivers ninety percent of its votes to the Democrats), is a key strategic consideration in any GOP campaign manager's handbook. Given our significant voting strength, and our record of awarding ever-higher percentages of the evangelical vote to the Republican Party (to say nothing of supplying the majority of volunteers that do the real work of campaigning), what is the *quid pro quo* for our remarkable fealty? Why, of course, a slap in the face!

Well-meaning, but easily manipulated Ronald Reagan rewarded us by allowing Nancy, Jim Baker, Dick Darman, Don Regan, Mike Deaver and Ken Duberstein (all of whom regarded Christian conservatives as “kooks”) to run his administration and eviscerate his conservative agenda — which is why Reagan didn't even push for symbolic issues like prayer in school, let alone more substantial issues like the human life amendment. George Bush, of course, couldn't stand the sight of us, and preferred stacking the White House staff with gays rather than evangelicals — a practice that got so out of hand that it forced the departure of the Christian Right's sole token on the White House staff, Evangelical Liaison Doug Wead (who, over a long lunch with me in view of the White House, spilled out an incredible tale of betrayal and subterfuge waged against the few conservatives remaining on the Bush staff).

Then came the Republican Convention of '96. Here we see the GOP's “happy face” mask torn away to reveal a sobering mix of ingratitude and superciliousness etched in stone. Rather than acknowledge the key role Christians played in delivering a Republican Congress for the first time in a half century, we are told that it's our fault that George Bush lost. It wasn't that George Bush was a lackadaisical, inarticulate dilettante, totally out of touch with the nation — who hardly even bothered to campaign (and was widely acknowledged by pros like Reagan campaign manager, Ed Rollins, to have presided over the worst-run political campaign in modern history) — no, it was the Christian Right's fault for turning the '92 Houston Convention into a “Right Wing spectacle!”

It was also that meany Pat Buchanan's fault. And those horrid Christian Right people.

Consequently, the GOP bureaucrats in charge of the '96 Convention were committed to one theme. Ironically it had nothing to do with what polls showed the public was interested in, namely the rapid deterioration of the nation's values. Nor did it (as Bill Clinton not-so-subtly pointed out) have anything to do with following up on Gingrich's Contract with America which had served as the GOP's centerpiece just twenty months previous. Rather, the goal of the wise men controlling THIS Convention was to "not repeat the mistakes of '92" — code-words meaning that Christian conservative zealots would have to be kept in the closet. In other words, the Convention would be "safe" (read: boring), with no upsetting visionaries (like Pat Buchanan) to unsettle the emasculated little bureaucrats running the show. As a further affront to common sense, or even common decency, beyond this almost diabolical treachery (i.e., after handing the GOP Congress an unprecedented victory, we get accused of sinking the imbecilic campaign of feeble King George), the Dole campaign spent most of its pre-convention energy attacking conservatives, from Gary Bauer to Pat Buchanan.

Even the normally congenial Dr. Dobson, who had just prayed with Dole, publicly accused him of going out of his way to insult and alienate the Christian vote. Dobson was reportedly so upset with Dole's effort to marginalize social conservatives that "he threatened to sit out the election" (as no doubt much of his megamillion listening audience did). Washington's pre-eminent conservative sage, Paul Weyrich, wryly noted that most candidates begin by solidifying their base, but Dole began by "carpet bombing" his base! Of course Dole expected all to be forgiven because he selected neoconservative hero Jack Kemp (who reportedly stated that he would never vote for Pat Buchanan) as his running-mate. One shivers to think, once in office, how Dole's chief advisors — i.e., his pro-choice chief of staff, feminist Sheila Burke, or Donald Rumsfield (Gerald Ford's former chief of staff) — would have "rewarded" our labors!

The GOP is suffering from terminal stupidity.

The Party's leadership seems determined to follow the disastrous example of the Canadian Conservative Party, which became afraid to challenge the socialists except with empty rhetoric, and which was (consequently) wiped out at the polls! [*Italics mine.*]

—Malcolm Wallop, Republican U.S. Senator, March 8, 1997

Clearly, the sheen is off the GOP's aura of electoral prowess which was beginning to border on invincibility. If there's one thing the GOP spin-meisters have consistently demonstrated of late, it is a unique knack for distancing themselves from winning issues. No doubt historians will note the great irony of the '96 campaign: the most shamelessly amoral presidential candidate in recent history being elected on a "pro-family, moral-values" agenda! **To compound this indignity it will be recorded that Mr. Clinton, well regarded as the patron saint of whores of all description (whether financial, political or sexual), did not abscond with the GOP's moral agenda by stealth.** Rather, it was awarded to him by default when GOP "strategists" jettisoned it as non-relevant at best, "divisive" at worst. Since the received "wisdom" of the party elders dictated not repeating the mistakes of the '92 Houston convention, the year's hottest issues (as the Gallup Poll demonstrated) were abandoned for political scavengers like Dick Morris to reclaim.

It is symptomatic of the blindness besetting the GOP wise men that, in correctly seeking to avoid a repetition of the '92 debacle, they overlooked the most obvious reason for their defeat, i.e., the nomination of a know-nothing, do-nothing (described by the man who elected him to the vice presidency, Ed Rollins, as lacking both conviction and vision) scion of the Eastern establishment, George Bush. Searching high and low, they finally found a suitable scapegoat for their own incompetence: "moral-issue conservatives." Now we know how the early Christians felt when Nero blamed them for burning Rome! Which gets us to the next piece of evidence suggesting the irreversible hemorrhaging afflicting the GOP brain trust: their unequalled penchant for anointing tongue-tied visionless mediocrities.

What is the GOP's fascination with nominating men who consistently lack the primary ingredients of a successful candidate: a message and an ability to articulate it? Emulating the barely ambulatory Ford, and the clueless Bush with his "vision thing," Dole could never even manage a coherent guess as to why he should be elevated to the highest office in the land. Indeed, the GOP's top money men were said to be horrified that, in an extended conference call with them, Dole was at a total loss to tell them even in the most rudimentary fashion why he was running or what he hoped to accomplish! What sort of political aneurysm would precipitate selecting a candidate who can't even spell "vision," let alone articulate or implement one to lead us into the twenty-first century? A candidate who is not only wrong on the issues but whose lack of charisma and articulation makes us pine by comparison for the wit and wisdom of the glib George Bush? Clearly the party elders are suffering from some political variant of Alzheimer's — debilitating them from remembering the hard-fought lessons of the recent past, and propelling them to continually prostrate themselves before the candidates with the least substance or least appeal possible. This bizarre scene is eerily reminiscent of the octogenarians who ran the Soviet Politburo: a gaggle of senile half-wits, completely insulated from reality, sitting around congratulating each other on how vital and brilliant they were — while occasionally rotating the Premiership amongst their small number.

As the ultimate indication that our patient is operationally brain dead, and thus beyond any conceivable resuscitation, let us dissect exactly how it was that field marshals Gingrich, Dole and Barbour, with a legion of highly motivated Congressmen and zillions of dollars available from corporate America, managed to be outmaneuvered by one of the most liberal presidents of the twentieth century *on their own turf* — balancing the budget. Every poll taken in the last forty years has confirmed that the American public places far greater confidence in the GOP than in the Democrats when it comes to fiscal sanity. How then did Clinton win the battle of the budget, forcing the Republicans to renege on their threat to close down the Federal government if he didn't sign an honest budget? The answer is simple. Unlike his adversaries, who (as previously noted) suffer from a serious lack of non-impaired gray matter, Clinton is a masterful tactician.

While Congressional Republicans were totally absorbed with micro-managing legislative tactics, Clinton was analyzing the larger strategic picture. Realizing that the battle would be won, not in Congressional cloakrooms but in the court of public opinion, Clinton launched a massive counter attack employing over eighteen million dollars raised by the Democratic National Committee for precisely this purpose. The “Lyin’ King” personally directed the massive media campaign predicated upon the foundational premise that if you tell a lie big enough and long enough, no matter how outrageous it is, it will be believed.

Clinton’s TV spots (which incidentally violated the spirit if not the letter of Federal election law governing campaign spending limits) were, as usual, half-truths and distortions. They falsely claimed that, in trying to balance the budget, Republicans were going to eliminate Medicare. (Actually they were only going to try to slow its growth rate down by a paltry few percentage points.) Republicans were charged with trying to abolish school lunches for children, loans for deserving college students, and perhaps even the very air we breathe. Clinton’s scare tactics were so successful that Republican Majority Leader Dick Armey’s aunts thought that he was trying to cut off their Medicare! The effect of this unprecedented propaganda campaign, personally directed by a sitting president, was to drive his favorability ratings up fifteen points or higher than they had been (a gain of roughly one percent for every one million dollars invested) in crucial states, while simultaneously driving the Republicans’ ratings down. Clinton’s strategy intimidated the GOP into backing down, while placing himself in a position of overwhelming strength to begin the election year. Guess where the Democratic National Committee chose to spend these dollars which they were prohibited from giving directly to the candidate? TV time in the key states that Clinton needed to clinch the election twelve months later. What a coincidence!

Now what is truly incredible about all of this is not that a clever politician figured out that he could use TV to his advantage. Rather, the startling thing was the lack of a counter move from the wunderkinds at the RNC. Since they were sitting on a multi-million dollar war chest, one is hard-pressed to conceive why they didn’t come to Newt’s rescue. *If they’d gone on the offensive, exposing the Democrats’ charade as the self-serving scam that it was, they most certainly would have reversed the polling numbers*

and won the battle of the budget. Moreover, if they had pressed the matter further, revealing Clinton as the characterless leader that he is — cynically attempting to manipulate the American people by exploiting their fears while blatantly and purposefully misrepresenting the truth — he would have been forced to capitulate on the budget; and would have been greatly weakened entering the election-year cycle. But, oh no, the RNC was too busy worrying about what the Christian Right was up to, to pay attention to such minor things as a multi-million dollar campaign to bash their heads in.

In sum, the brilliant strategists of the GOP (who constantly remind us of our political inexperience and thus the necessity for allowing them — the pros — to handle strategy while we concentrate on licking stamps) allowed Bill Clinton, who never saw a spending bill he didn't like and who was hobbled by dangerously low ratings in the polls on the issue of his character, to hijack the moral high ground on balancing the nation's books.

President Clinton: “Doing What’s Right and Good”

At last year’s National Education Summit, Republican governors spoke about training a more efficient work force to supply the needs of multi-national corporations. Clinton spoke about moral values in education, the proper place of religious free expression in the schools.... No wonder Americans consistently tell pollsters that Clinton “cares about people like me.”

—Gary Bauer, *Weekly Standard*, September 1, 1997

Even more astounding than the chronic tactical fumbling was ceding to undoubtedly the sleaziest president in the history of the Republic the title of DEFENDER OF THE FAITH, of the family, of traditional values, of motherhood, the flag and apple pie. This president, subject to so many and various investigations (Whitewater, Travelgate, Filegate, Hillarygate, *ad nauseam*) by multiple Congressional committees and independent counsels that he made Nixon look like a choir boy; a president surrounded by more Cabinet members and senior officials either convicted, under

investigation (or about to be) than any president in history, was once again conceded the moral high ground by the GOP wizards.

Didn't it ever occur to the GOP's leadership to use one of the Democrats' favorite tactics against them and run against Clinton on "the sleaze factor"? If ever a president or an administration deserved it, it is this one! This would have been an eminently sound strategy in light of the character questions most Americans hold about our beloved leader. It would also have allowed Dole's managers to capitalize on one of his few apparent assets: a relatively decent and honest character. Surely this strategy would have offset Clinton's incredibly hypocritical claim to moral leadership for the twenty-first century — a claim bolstered by millions of dollars spent on *Christian media* proclaiming little gems like: "As Americans, some things we do simply and solely because they are moral, right and good..." (the spot then goes on to depict evil "Grinchites" poised to snatch Grandma's social security check, and her wheelchair as well, and then features "El Bill" as the savior of the elderly). The drivel continues: "President Clinton. Doing what's moral, good, and right by our elderly." What about by the millions of babies consigned to "partial birth" executions? What about by Paula Jones (*et al*) and women's dignity? What about by the tax payers forced to bail out corrupt bankers like Bill Clinton's Arkansas partners?

To offset Clinton's unseemly stake-out of family values, why not remind voters where Clinton's actions (rather than his rhetoric) actually place him on a "moral report card"? Examples abound. Remember the Values President's first major effort upon capturing the White House? To make the military safe for homosexuality! What about his ambassador to America's families, the unforgettable Joycelyn Elders — who took such great delight in lecturing school children on how to properly masturbate, and who went on record as stating, "If I could be the condom queen...I would wear a crown on my head with a condom on it. I would." Well stated, Madam Surgeon General! Or how about Clinton's aborted attempt to replace the finally uncontrollable Ms. Elders with Dr. Henry Foster who, midway through Senate hearings, began to recall that after all — gee-whiz — he had performed quite a few abortions! Or how about contrasting Clinton's newfound fondness for public virtue with the fact that he is the first president to be hit with a sexual harassment lawsuit and the first presidential candidate to

openly have senior staff members assigned to cover “bimbo eruptions” to contain, one way or the other, an array of women from coming forward with even more lurid tales than those spilling forth from Gennifer Flowers’ twelve-year sordid affair with Mr. Moral Leadership.

The irony of a man possessed of all the moral virtue of a common street hustler posturing as the very embodiment of moral values is lost on the GOP leaders, however. They are obsessed with staying clear of moral issues, lest they be confused with religious fanatics or Pat Buchanan. Thus, happily for Bill Clinton, the Republicans snatched defeat from the jaws of victory when they ceded the moral high ground which they themselves did not have the desire or the common sense to occupy. The consequences: the loss of twenty-five percent of the normal evangelical vote margin (i.e., garnering a paltry fifty-five percent versus the eighty percent that we generated for Reagan) and a major electoral rout.

Unfortunately the GOP brain-dead syndrome did not cease with the 1996 election. Remembering how Clinton clubbed them silly when a government shutdown was threatened over the budget debacle, Republicans drew up legislation that would allow the government to be funded at the previous year’s level if they once again ended up at loggerheads with the President. They attached it as an amendment to the 8.6 billion-dollar flood disaster relief bill for Minnesota and the Dakotas. Once again, Congressional Republicans lost the moral high ground to our moral desperado of a President as he gushed, “in the name of the people who had to face the floods, in the name of suffering families ... I ask you to put aside political games.” Now how hard would it have been to take the offensive against this bellyaching man-child and point out the obvious? Republicans were willing to put the bill on the President’s desk immediately, if only Democrats would cooperate, and if the President stopped haggling over amendments. (These amendments are standard procedures, and in this case it was an amendment that any American, particularly President Clinton — who reached fever-pitched levels of hysteria at the thought of a government shutdown in 1995 — should be anxious to support.) Moral of the story: Even in the simplest maneuvers the GOP either can’t figure out a game plan, or gut it out to stay with it.

The big question in all of this is what should our reaction be to the Republican morass of moral bankruptcy, electoral

incompetence, sheer stupidity and hostility to the Christian Right? What reasonable, workable options do we have? First, let us review possibilities that present themselves within the GOP's current framework.

Chapter Two

The Christian Right and the GOP

The Republican party...represent[s] the establishment, not conservatives.

—Paul Weyrich, *Weekly Standard*, September 1, 1997

He who chases fantasies lacks wisdom. —Proverbs 12:11

Christian activists within the Republican Party normally fall into two categories: those like the ubiquitous Ralph Reed who simply hope to “gain a place at the table,” that is, an opportunity to influence GOP policy and policy makers; and those who are motivated by the intoxicating and quixotic allure of an ideological coup d’etat. Many, if not most, activists combine these two expectations to varying degrees; and since the latter presumption clearly has the least chance of success, let’s dispense with it first.

**Premise: “The GOP should remake itself
into the party of moral virtue — preferably
Biblical virtues.”**

Infanticide is awful, you see, but it must not be permitted to disrupt party unity. Killing a baby halfway out of the birth canal by ramming scissors into its head and sucking

out its brain is evil, but supporting it does not disqualify you from our endorsement. The Big Tent comes before a baby's right not to be butchered.

—Pat Buchanan, *Washington Times*, February 1, 1998

The first question we should ask ourselves, if we can gain a moment's objectivity by viewing the question from the GOP's vantage point, is why should they? Why should the real power players rush to the anxious bench for a politically born-again experience? Why should we expect them to? Why should they betray their humanism, libertarianism, or political pragmatism and sell out their friends in the process? Why should they depart from their historical stance?

Nevertheless, we can dream for a moment. Let us suppose we *were* to drive the Philistines from their lofty perches. Where would they go? The answer is quite clear: They would leave the Party, just as GOP establishment strongholds deserted Reagan and Goldwater in droves. A little known political factoid is that *both* Reagan (in 1980) and Goldwater ran thirty to forty points behind normal GOP voter trends in traditionalist GOP enclaves. What gave Reagan the edge, not enjoyed by Goldwater, was the so-called Populist vote — the Christian Right, southern Democrats and conservative Catholics switching to Reagan. Ironically, this is the precise voter profile most disdained by the GOP hierarchy. So, good riddance you say! But not so fast.

When the establishment walks, the framework goes with them (the campaign managers, pollsters, state organizers, fund-raisers and assorted technicians). They also take the foundation — the “mother's milk of politics” — money. The key to the Party's power is the hundreds of millions of corporate dollars funneled through the Republican National Committee, the Senate and House campaign committees, and a multitude of various “independent” business PACs or “educational” tax-exempt foundations. Without this funding source, it's doubtful we would be able to afford to mail the Party's fund-raising lists, let alone marshal sufficient resources into hundreds of races. Ominously, even as this essay was being written, an exclusive gathering of 200 of the GOP's top money bags (appropriately ensconced in the elitist enclave of Palm Beach) heard John Moran, the Party's finance chairman, warn his fellow financiers that the Party was drifting “too far to the right,”

and it was their “job” to push the Party back to its “moderate center.” A little later he threatened to turn off the financial faucet if the RNC attempted to prohibit funding for GOP candidates unable to determine whether human babies should be extended the same protection (from execution through so-called “partial birth” abortion) that kangaroo rats and other “endangered species” routinely enjoy.

Over the past decade, activists have taken great encouragement from their hard-fought victories in taking over numerous county GOP committees and a handful of state parties. While these actions do represent important victories on a local level, they also demonstrate the inapplicability of this approach to the national level. The assumption is that, if we controlled enough states, we could elect the national chairman and thus control the Party apparatus. There are, however, two slight flaws. Usually the chairman of the RNC is hand picked by the sitting president (if, of course, he is a Republican). Secondly, even if a coalition of state chairs and national committee members prevailed, as Moran reminds us, the Big Money would simply redirect funds to campaign coffers not controlled by us. In multiple instances when we gained control of a local party structure, the Big Money Boys simply withdrew their resources and redirected them through alternative channels.

So, without the establishment framework or foundation, what are we left with? An impressive neon sign that flashes “**Republican Party**” and a few truck loads of pachyderm novelties. By then, even the GOP name will have lost its efficacy. In their withdrawal from the Party, the establishment (with the connivance of the media) will surely blow enough holes through our billboard (warning the nation of the take-over of the Party by Right-Wing religious zealots) to render it virtually useless in attracting voters to its standard.

At first blush, this next scenario — the unchanging dream of all Christian Right activists (including myself for almost three decades) — to hold a place of influence within the smoke-filled back rooms of the GOP decision-making process, seems to hold a more realistic chance of materializing. But here, too, we find significant obstacles. First, we have to realize that the GOP is, and will remain, a “Big Tent”; and for its part, the GOP is happy to have us under its “Big Top” where our activities can be safely monitored and channeled. Christians even have their own cheering

section in the GOP circus, assigned on the basis of our willingness to moderate our perceived zealotry. The Christian Coalition's relatively tame "Contract with the Family" earns it a place closer to the center ring than that enjoyed by Reconstructionists, "true believers," pro-lifers, and other "hard-core" types who may be exiled to the "freak show" area. Yet, no matter how enthusiastically the crowd applauds when it's our turn to perform, we must remember that we *are just one act* in the Big Tent — along with many other equally popular performing teams, none of whom share our peculiar religious world-view or our paradigm for issues prioritization. Libertarians, defense hawks, economic conservatives, pragmatic populists, Country Club Republicans, neoconservatives, and establishment conservatives take up the majority of the tent — as well they should. It is their tent — bought and paid for. **The fact of the matter is that, although the various camps co-exist under one umbrella of short-term political advantage, we are worlds apart.**

As I previously noted, the GOP has never seen itself as a vehicle for Biblical solutions to the country's problems. On the contrary, the Republican Party takes seriously its commitment to the vision expressed within our nation's Constitution (largely crafted by men very much like themselves — heavily influenced by the "right wing" of the Humanist Enlightenment): the preservation of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Through the decades, the GOP has interpreted the Founders' dreams primarily in terms of freedom for the individual from "big government" interference. There is much here to be applauded: freedom to make (and keep) the fruits of one's labors, freedom from government over-regulation and intrusiveness, etc. *Freedom for man to enjoy his liberty, however, and to pursue happiness as he defines it, presents us with a double-edged sword. It connotes for many a widely drawn freedom of choice* — regarding sexual preferences, religious views (or enforcement thereof), and especially abortion.

Thus, one of the most articulate voices for Republican majoritarians, libertarian P. J. O'Rourke, in issuing a major apologetic for the GOP in the nation's leading conservative journal, the *American Spectator*, enthusiastically declares what attraction the GOP holds for a large part of its core: "We leave you alone." To underscore the reasons for his personal affinity for the Party, and to recruit those like-minded free spirits, he adds: "I still detest

authority...I spit on dominion and control.” His point is that the GOP is the Party most likely to dismantle “big government,” which he defines as morally superior types “telling you what to do.” If, as I suspect, that P. J. O’Rourke represents at least the same market share of the GOP’s soul as the Christian Coalition, then how successful can our attempt be to woo the heart of the GOP?

In addition to the fact that our Biblical world-view (i.e., God and his Law are sovereign over man and his law) is metaphysically antithetical to true-blue Republican individualism, there remains the profoundly simple equation (normally ignored by us): political parties stay in business by winning elections — not by publicly posturing on potentially alienating issues. Herein lies the paradox of our love-hate relationship with the GOP. It pays off handsomely for the “moderates,” neocons, corporatists, and political technicians controlling the Party to accommodate us by dropping a few applause lines into well-timed speeches, or by manipulating symbols (as in occasionally sharing the platform). The GOP thereby enhances its ability to employ “wedge issues” in marginal races, and to recruit lots of energetic volunteers (political cannon fodder); and we get a crack at playing power politics. This tightrope act would quickly unravel, however, if the GOP were to publicly identify in a substantial way with anything that remotely smacked of a Biblical agenda.

It is one thing for the GOP to rhetorically decry liberal excess, or out-of-control big government stopping little kids from praying, or even to insert a pro-life plank into a largely meaningless and traditionally ignored platform statement. (Note that both Dole and Kemp unashamedly abandoned the Christian-Right-influenced platform whenever convenient.) It is quite another gamble to actually wage a concerted high-profile campaign against Godless and unlimited freedom of choice, to aggressively advocate biblical constraints on the pursuit of liberty and self-fulfillment, and thereby risk being perceived as diminishing the “sovereignty of the individual.” The unvarnished truth is that, since 1980, our dream of a permanent seat at the Bargaining Table has been just that — a dream, an illusion — encouraged in the past by people like myself and Chuck Colson (who candidly admits how he and other White House operators manipulated special interest groups by flattering them with a little attention or dangling a few “photo opportunities”). As previously noted, the fact is that when we rewrite the Party

platform, it is ignored. When we elect a Ronald Reagan, we (and our agenda) are locked out (except for a few photo-ops) by the “shadow president,” Jim Baker (an old Ford/Bush hatchet man who relentlessly opposed Reagan in 1976 and 1980, whereupon he was summarily awarded the White House’s top spot [Chief of Staff] which he employed to systematically undercut Reagan’s more conservative aides and eviscerate Reagan’s agenda). When we elect a Bush or a Dole, we are banished by him personally — no middle man required.

Younger activists, like Ralph Reed, were still in school in the early 1980’s, safely cocooned from the real world of power politics; consequently, their “school-boy-like” optimism hasn’t yet been tempered by the hard reality of false hope betrayed. They haven’t yet experienced the joy of having sacrificed everything, of “having delivered,” only to be relegated to an endless cycle of White House face-saving meetings with “liaison deputies,” marionettes lacking any real power, who in turn are cynically manipulated by the real players — the senior staff — to keep us pacified. Of course, if Reed’s then-candidate had won, he would have learned this lesson in less time than it would have taken Sheila Burke to erase his phone number from President Dole’s rolodex!

If one has spent any real time with GOP regulars, it doesn’t take long to realize that the enmity runs deep. We are seen as zealots, nuts, backwater buffoons, rednecks, Ayatollahs, and — worst of all — as “party crashers.” Our value is calibrated in terms of our usefulness as cannon fodder. The further one ascends the GOP power ladder, the more intense these feelings become. It is clear: we are tolerated but not wanted. This leads to the next question. *What keeps us locked in this “Grand Old Party” that, while definitely old (verging on senility), is neither very “grand” nor much of a “party”?*

Five Bad Reasons For Going Down With A Ship That’s Not Even Ours

...Both parties may already be on life support systems.

—Paul Weyrich, *Policy Review*, January/February, 1997

We may be moving into the nadir of the Republican-Democratic party system.

—Kevin Philips, Republican demographer,
late November, 1996

1. **We'll lose our place at the table.** In fact, our place setting is manipulated at will by party plutocrats — mysteriously disappearing during back-room policy discussions and only reappearing when a few sacrificial lambs or scapegoats are required (usually around election time). Let's apply the "reality test." After twelve years of Reagan-Bush, how did our agenda fare? How many Christian scholar/thinkers or leaders were recruited into key positions? With minor exceptions, it has been all show and no go. Smoke and mirrors.

2. **We can take control.** Look what we've done in county/state parties and with the platform! This particularly deceptive illusion has been, I believe, adequately explained here.

3. **It's the only ship in port.** (Or): What else would we do? This unseemly "plantation mentality" rests on a number of faulty assumptions: A.) We lack the adequate vision and resources to strike out on our own. B.) We can't do better than the self-possessed political half wits who have almost self-destructed the Party. C.) If we will just go along with the Big Boys, obsequiously standing by, in true "step 'n fetchit" fashion, we will be tossed a few scraps from the table.

4. **We don't have time to build our own party** (and it would be doomed anyway) because our dispensationally driven eschatology dictates the Devil cleaning up — and soon! We are not only *not* going to win the culture wars — we're not even supposed to — 'cause the earth is not the Lord's, it's the Devil's!

While this Gnostic-Dualist-Dispensational model of "the End Times" has been largely abandoned by most evangelical churches in terms of teaching, defending, or even strict adherence, its perfidious residue after a century of permeating almost every denomination, continues to subconsciously (at the very least) inform our world-view. The practical consequences of this particularly abominable and destructive heresy have discouraged

long-term planning, strategic thinking, or even the forming of a rudimentary “Christian world-view.” Thus, investing massive resources in the scholarly “heavy-lifting” necessary to develop a full-orbed world-view that comprehensively applies Biblical truth to all areas of life (as the Protestant Reformers and Puritans did) is nonsensical when viewed from the currently dominant evangelical-pietist dispensational paradigm.

For those who haven’t caught on yet, in this novel scheme cooked up by British layman, John Nelson Darby — and institutionalized by convicted felon turned Bible commentator, C. I. Scofield — 1800 years of church theology, history and Biblical scholarship are disregarded, the church doomed to defeat, and the Devil inherits God’s earth, making a lie of Matthew 28:19-20. For the last century, Evangelicals under the sway of this dispensational Zeitgeist (particularly students and businessmen) were mandated to devote all their resources to emergency “soul winning strategies,” since the Lord would not tarry beyond 1988, at the very latest. In practice, this meant obtaining a two-year degree in “Bible” at a backwoods “Bible College,” or joining a plethora of para-church campus organizations committed to an inwardly privatistic scheme of personal piety, spiritual perfectionism and more “soul winning.”

Abandoned was the historic Christian mandate to engage and disciple the culture, restoring godly righteousness, mercy and justice (Matthew 23:23, Matthew 25, Matthew 28:19-20, Isaiah 1 and 58), a process which begins, but does not end, with personal piety and evangelism. Businessmen’s roles were limited to financing all the above, feeling guilty that they weren’t doing something “more spiritual,” and joining Bible studies or “Christian businessmen’s groups” where the theme seemed to be “meet, eat and retreat.” **Consequently, Evangelicals bereft of their own coherent world-view, were forced to cobble together an eclectic series of contradicting notions; and, suffering a breakdown from the consequential cognitive dissonance, simply fell back on secular conservative thinkers to provide a “world-view,” at least when it came to cultural engagement or defending “family values.”** Essentially, we looked to the GOP to provide political salvation rather than to God’s Word to discover His plan for redeeming the world, including the world’s cultures.

5. A multiple-party system, or the disappearance of the GOP, is simply not feasible. Wrong! Ever hear of the Whigs? They were replaced by a group of upstarts referring to themselves as “Republicans,” when the Whigs failed to adequately address the “culture war” issue of their day — slavery! Guess who is not addressing cultural survival issues today? (Hint: The Democrats *are* addressing these issues — and quite boldly — in their discredited post-modernist, neo-Marxian fashion.) Not only are third parties inevitable (as Chuck Colson recently noted, “the split is coming”), if anyone hasn’t noticed, they are already here — a total of eight or more the last time I checked. Of course, the question is: Will they mature into “real” parties — that exercise significant power?

To discover the answer, we need to pose the larger question: How will our antiquated two-party system fare in a new world of powerful and irreconcilable competing interest groups, rapidly shifting political realignments, culture wars *and* a collapsing economy (the federal debt *will* catch up, and the glory of humanist achievement — the current Dow Jones average — *will* tank) ...to say nothing of our rapidly disintegrating social order? Not very well, according to one of the GOP’s preeminent political demographers and social scientist, Kevin Phillips (no relation to Howard), who prophesied the “Emerging Republican Majority” back in 1968. According to Phillips, the two-party system is “decreasingly viable” since the “old coalitions appear to encompass *unbridgeable* sociological disparities.”

Sound familiar? Think about the amount of common ground shared by Christian Right “zealots,” secular neoconservatives, libertine libertarians, old-line establishment types, and superficial-but-fashionable (and irreligious) country clubbers! Phillips, in fact, doesn’t leave room for any doubt about this unlikely marriage of convenience lasting: “...fundamentalist-tilted forces of the New Right, and the GOP’s...social progressives are as hostile and incompatible as the McGovern/New Class and George Wallace Democrats were in the late 1960’s and 1970’s.” This condition, Phillips suggests, could lead to a powerful “third force” effort: “If the Religious Counter Reformation is as massive and as in depth as partisans suggest, *it could seek a vehicle of its own.*” Veteran conservative strategist Paul Weyrich offers considerable hope as to the future of such a vehicle: “When the anti-establishment

conservative parties emerge, they do well, often displacing the older party” (the *Weekly Standard*, September 1, 1997). Indeed, the historically dominant conservative party in Canada has recently been replaced by the upstart Reform Party, and in France the long-ruling Gaullists were similarly doomed.

Chapter Three

The Great Divorce

Soon, sometime soon, the elites of the Republican Party had better find the courage to speak for the values of the people whose votes they count on on Election Day. My sense is, from traveling around the country, that the patience level is gone. Not another four-year cycle of this. Catch on now, GOP, or suffer the consequences.

—Gary Bauer, Family Research Council President, in a speech to the Heritage Foundation, December, 1996

As evangelicals have gained political maturity and experience, they have solidified themselves as a recognizable power block, closely linked with, yet not sheepishly beholden to, the Republican party. Yet they remain dissatisfied with the results. This pair of factors is precisely the combination needed to motivate a large social movement: people must be dissatisfied with the current situation but must also believe that, by acting, they can change it.

—Bruce Barron, *Heaven on Earth?*

To foresee the coming realignment we must first examine the rapidly shifting loyalties within the Republican party. As friction accelerates between various camps, the dynamics of realignment

will, I believe, inevitably lead to a new third force in American politics. The only unknown is the precise form it will take. The GOP establishment is composed of its old liberal eastern core melded together with a new infusion of neoconservatives (right-wing secular social democrats), libertarians and business types. Establishmentarians George Bush Sr., Bob Dole, Pete Wilson, Christine Whitman, George Pataki, Pete Wilson *et al* are the spiritual heirs of the watered-down Social-Democrat “New Dealism” practiced by their liberal predecessors Willkie, Dewey, Ike, Gerald Ford, Everett Dirksen and Bob Michael. These country-club Republicans basically concur with secular statist that government “is the answer” — but that it can be run more efficiently and on a tighter budget. Its growth should be slowed, not reversed. The welfare state should be fine tuned, not abolished.

The new partners in the GOP governing coalition (the neoconservatives) are represented by such names as Kemp, Bennett, Gramm and George Bush, Jr. The tie that binds these factions is economic, but two groups of elitists do not a victory make. Thus, the new partners in the GOP establishment have had to rely upon attracting a polyglot alliance of “independents” or “swing voters”: southern Democrats, northern ethnics, small business people and professionals, conservative Catholics and, of course, evangelicals, to fuel their empty tanks. Most of these voters (especially southern evangelicals) are recent defectors from the Democratic Party: they are the fifteen percent of the national electorate that first followed Alabama Governor George Wallace out the two-party door in 1968 and who, in 1996, defiantly proclaimed their unwillingness to settle for warmed-over Republican New-Dealism by casting their lot with Perot, Buchanan and even Bill Clinton. In essence, they are “America First” populists.

In the intervening three decades since 1968, a critical shift took place in electoral dynamics, greatly strengthening this populist coalition. Evangelicals, representing a full twenty percent of the electorate, became increasingly active — awakening from their fifty-year dispensational/separatist stupor. It is this massive voting block (America Firsters and Evangelicals), estimated at about one-third of all voters, that awarded the GOP its winning margin in 1980, 1984, 1988 and 1994. The defection of these same voters deprived the GOP of victory in 1976, 1992 and 1996. In 1976,

southerners and Evangelicals went for fellow Evangelical and self-described populist, Jimmy Carter, over a puppet of the GOP's eastern establishment, the quasi-comatose Gerald Ford. Consider: *Carter's essentially populist strategy carried all the old Goldwater states with the exception of Barry's home state, Arizona, which Carter replaced with a far-bigger plum — the normally Republican, but heavily populist, state of Texas!*

Again, in 1992, after stomaching four years of centrist swill dished out by the affable-but-clueless Bush, enough of the populist vote defected to Perot (almost twenty percent of all votes cast) to award Bush the dubious distinction of being the first GOP sitting president to be defeated at the polls since 1932. Deserted by a resounding twenty-five percent of Republican voters, his final vote tally was actually two percent less than the infamous Herbert Hoover. Finally, someone rescued Hoover from his solitary seat in Republican Hell as the world's all-time loser. As Kevin Phillips noted of the '92 debacle: *"The Republican Coalition crumbled in two directions: ...Clinton tore off one crumbled chunk and ex-Republican turned populist Perot ripped off another."*

Acting as the ultimate political "spoiler" in 1996, this newly empowered populist movement once again denied the GOP the presidency. First voters surged behind Buchanan, providing his campaign with unanticipated momentum — until foiled by an unprecedented united front of opposition from the GOP establishment and a deadly stealth attack on their right flank in South Carolina by Dole covert political operative, Ralph Reed. With their preferred standard bearer gunned down, they broke in a mostly unpredictable pattern: hard-core Christian activists by holding their noses and voting for Dole, *a shocking thirty-six percent of all evangelical voters by casting their votes to re-elect the "family values President"* (who ran a populist-oriented campaign far to the right of the hopelessly outmaneuvered and tongue-tied Dole), and many by simply staying home. Two-thirds of this voting bloc (twenty percent of the electorate), ended up almost evenly split — between Ross Perot with 10,000,000 votes, and Clinton with a like number — just enough to provide Clinton the "whopping" forty-nine percent of the popular vote he needed to win.

The vital thing for us to understand is that *in numerous swing states the Perot vote clearly cost Dole his winning margin.* For

instance, in such conservative/populist states as Florida, Arizona, Kentucky and Tennessee, Perot voters deprived Dole of his margin of victory while simultaneously re-electing staunch conservatives to the House and Senate. If we “back-in” Perot’s totals into Dole’s in these states, Dole garners 263 electoral votes versus Clinton’s 277 (270 are needed to win). However, *a switch of less than 15,000 votes in two states, New Hampshire and Delaware — easily accomplished if Evangelicals had been motivated to turn out and vote — would have given the Republicans the requisite 270 electoral votes to win, versus 268 for Mr. Bill!*

In key counties of the heartland states (Pennsylvania, Michigan and Ohio) that produced Clinton’s winning margins, the amazing fact is that our lout of a president gained no more votes than Dukakis and Carter when they went down in flames, vanquished by Reagan and Bush! What happened in ‘96 is that seventeen percent of the voters in conservative Catholic strongholds, who had joined the Reagan Revolution in 1980 and stayed loyal to the themes Reagan struck in ‘84 and ‘88, *voted en masse for Perot*. Contrary to the popular perception, Perot’s vote came almost exclusively from former Reagan voters — and the defectors were more than sufficient to kill off whatever slim chance Dole might have had to win.

Common Interests

...old coalitions appear to encompass unbridgeable sociological disparities.

—Kevin Phillips, Republican demographer

Real conservatives are a populist anti-establishment force that is not represented by “establishment” conservative parties.

—Paul Weyrich, *Weekly Standard*, September 1, 1997

What commonalties tie the rather divergent members of this “populist bloc” together? A concern for inflation (and job security) to be sure, but, as the Gallup Poll recently noted, an overwhelming majority of them are concerned with the cultural and moral deterioration that liberalism has nurtured and which is now taking its toll on our streets and in our schools. Crime, sex and violence

on TV, drugs, and teen pregnancy are driving issues. Their children aren't safe, let alone educated in school, and they're not safe on their own streets. Chiefly though, this archetypal slice of America is beset by a diffused-yet-rising anxiety over the relentless crumbling of the cultural foundations that formerly preserved their families from the ravages of the nihilistic social Darwinism which is now rearing its ugly head in their local communities.

In the classic pattern of American populism, this huge group of disaffected voters has learned to distrust bureaucracy in all its many manifestations: big government, big business, big labor, big media, etc. They tend to resent both the very rich and the perpetually poor — based on their dislike for what they correctly suspect is a federal wealth-redistribution scheme that favors both the wealthy (through subsidies and tax breaks) and the voluntarily indigent (in the form of a self-perpetuating welfare system). They reject the notion that exporting American jobs to Third World countries, while importing millions of (mostly illegal) aliens, represents justice for those at home or abroad. **They recognize that affirmative action is racism, that feminism is sexism, and that political correctness is the laughably desperate attempt of a decadent and dissipating liberal overclass to cling to power.**

The GOP “moderates” were able to domesticate the social conservative-populist dynamic as long as they availed themselves of an unwitting front man like Ronald Reagan — who was entirely manipulated by the fearsome foursome: Chiefs-of-Staff Don Regan and Jim Baker, and Deputies Darman and Deaver (and of course the astrology queen herself, the former First Lady) — or a “fellow traveler” like George Bush, who employed speech writers and “liaison” staff to manipulate conservative “value symbols.” Then Pat Buchanan called the hierarchy’s bluff. That Buchanan represented an implicit threat to their ability to manipulate this vote (for the first time here was the *real thing* — a populist social conservative, fire-eating warrior who meant business) was verified by the exceptional speed with which neoconservatives like Bennett, Kemp and Krystal condemned Buchanan in order to head off a barbarian invasion of their just-won neo-establishment estates. The cause of Buchanan’s waterloo was twofold: being undercut by a supposed ally — the Christian Coalition — and playing by the enemy’s rules. By staying within the GOP fold, Buchanan gave the power to beltway patriots to call the shots. And shoot they did.

Metaphorically, Buchanan was terminated by a bi-partisan (Remocrat) Beltway firing squad for activities unbecoming an establishment lackey: consorting with America Firsters, Bible Belters, Populists and the lower classes. While the GOP manicured class was busy congratulating itself for quashing the unclean forces of Populism, someone else had noticed they'd left both flanks exposed, and ripe for picking. Our hero, the chameleon President, morphed himself into a full-fledged social-conservative-family-values populist and ran his support up by ten percent. Incredibly, between Clinton and Perot, the GOP campaign masterminds managed to blow off at least twenty percent of the 1996 electorate — the same voters who faithfully followed the “Populist Path” from Wallace to Nixon to Reagan to...Clinton!

Clinton, the only candidate perceptive enough to look beyond his own pre-conceived notions to see what was actually happening outside the Beltway, quickly abandoned his own left-of-center agenda in order to attract the populist vote the GOP had made a free agent by unnecessarily humiliating their standard bearer (Buchanan) and by methodically eliminating every trace of their concerns (affirmative action, immigration, morality, abortion, crime, etc.) from the GOP's newly sanitized “centrist” agenda. Clinton's pollsters quickly identified the twenty percent of the electorate considered “switch hitters”; and, unlike their blind counterparts in the GOP, immediately seized on the appropriate “wedge” issue: America's moral decline, which was scoring a much higher level of interest in focus groups than Kemp's supply-side nostrums.

Thus it was that the GOP Fortune 500 agenda (sans social issues) went up against Clinton's formidable populist formulation: school uniforms, “v-chips,” curfews, more cops on the street, a balanced budget, and welfare reform — most of which he lifted from the GOP without so much as a coherent protest. Did you hear or see Dole yell “thief” during the so-called debates? If this weren't enough, Clinton finished off his Oscar-winning performance (in the dissimulation category) by wrapping himself in a family-values cloak centered around the issue of “family leave time” for employees with ill family members. Then, following his horrific endorsement of partial-birth abortions, he flooded Christian radio stations with spots portraying himself as “pro-life” while overwhelming the nation's TV viewers with the hands-

down winner of the year's most blatantly duplicitous TV spot: "President Clinton — protecting your values." One wonders how Monica Lewinsky fit into the President's "values strategy."

Meanwhile, Dole/Kemp droned on about fifteen-percent tax cuts, which probably helped solidify their base with the \$100,000 plus crowd. Guess which agenda was more apt to attract populist voters? According to exit polls, *an astounding twenty-five percent of self-described conservatives, and an even larger percentage of "moderate" but "culturally conservative" voters, succumbed to Clinton's strongly populist and values-oriented charade.* **In the final analysis, it appears that Clinton won the Goldwater South and the conservative Catholic vote in the North because these voters would rather gamble with a Democrat who at least pretends to be a populist as opposed to a secular/centrist carrying the GOP's corporatist flag.**

Why social and economic conservatives are divorcing.

There is very little the GOP has done to protect families and traditional standards of morality since becoming the majority party.

—James Dobson, July 1997

In 1996, Bob Dole told cultural conservatives to take a hike, and they did.... The establishment Republican Party...which seems to have learned nothing from Dole's defeat, often sells out conservatives, sometimes even with enthusiasm.

—Paul Weyrich, *Weekly Standard*, September 1, 1997

With the unifying issue of anti-Communism fading, the deep disagreements between the neocons and traditional conservatives are surfacing. And the time to split the blanket has probably arrived. Before true conservatives can ever take back the country, they are going to have to take back their movement.

—Pat Buchanan quoted in *Reclaiming the American Right*

Earlier, I suggested that the GOP establishment seems to be more comfortable with secularists, even rather-liberal secularists, than they do with Christian conservatives. By the same token, it appears that we have more of an affinity with populist “cultural conservatives” than we do with the GOP establishment or even neocons, economic conservatives, *et al.* Let’s examine why.

GOP pundits postulate that we could all be happy under their “Big Tent” if we will just resist the temptation to “Christianize the Party.” But the philosophical chasm that divides us is much more severe than mere difference of opinion or emphasis. What is at issue here are two very different moral world-views. For starters, our divergent world-views shape our notions of education and crime, two of the biggest issues (and budget items) on any political agenda. It doesn’t take a membership in Mensa to realize that social policy and law eventually reflect the moral concepts held by the ruling elites, whether liberal Democrats or establishment Republicans. Clearly, the context of this morality, and hence the resulting public policy, flows from certain presuppositions about God (does He exist?) and His law (is it applicable)?

Public education, for example, a favorite issue for GOP candidates (e.g., George Bush, the “Education President”) is based on humanist-philosopher John Dewey’s theory that children are born as “naturally good citizens,” need only to be “educated” (in a values vacuum), and they will make all the right choices on their very own. Thus, there is no need for moral instruction or corporal discipline, since both imply something is inherently wrong with the child (i.e., his sin nature). This line of thinking is one reason that unbelievers have trouble with the concept of being “born again,” when nothing was wrong with them in the first place! If one adopts this sunnily optimistic view of man’s nature — as many Republicans do (following in the footsteps of Jefferson, Franklin, and friends) — any remotely “moralistic agenda” seems suspect as an intrusive attempt at proselytization or enforced religious conformity (*à la* Iran).

Our assumptions about the moral nature of man likewise dictate our position on criminal justice. One of Clinton’s policy advisors recently lamented, “We don’t have the slightest idea what causes crime.” As unbelievably ignorant as this admission seems, it makes perfect sense from a humanist point of view. If men are born “good,” some mysterious unknown force (*à la* Darth Vader) must

turn them from their true nature. Thus, the answer is humanistic therapy at “correctional institutions” to correct “what went wrong.” Liberals resist capital punishment as vehemently as they do because it serves as an inescapably finalistic judgment on the failure of all their rehabilitation schemes, based on their concept of sinless man. While Republicans in general are known for being “tough on crime,” their reputation is largely undeserved. What “toughness” actually exists is usually driven by social-issue religious conservatives within the GOP — not by the Jack Kems or Bob Doles. Even when secular or economic conservatives agree to take a “get tough on crime” stance, it is a defensive reflex rather than a thoughtful policy rooted in a Christian understanding of man’s nature. In GOP hands the weighty matters of “crime and punishment,” even justice itself, often are treated as no more than a convenient wedge issue (e.g., George Bush’s Willie-Horton blitzkrieg on Dukakis).

Our world-view also frames our approach to economic policy. In Jack Kemp’s remarkably inane performance during the vice presidential debate (where he at least accomplished, by default, rehabilitating Dan Quayle’s reputation as a debater), he stated his belief that all the world’s evils (Nazism, Fascism, Communism, Apartheid) had been “banished” except one: poverty. Overflowing with enthusiasm, Kemp blathered unrelentingly about full employment and prosperity (the imagined results of unfettered capitalism) being the panacea for all of America’s problems: racial tension, crime, incivility (perhaps even low self esteem!) and so on. Following in the philosophical footsteps of LBJ and his “war on poverty,” Kemp’s position would logically prioritize economic policy as the Number One solution to remedy our most pressing social problems.

This is precisely the course chosen by the economic conservatives who dominate the GOP. “Grow the economy” is their constant refrain — to banish forever the ills that beset us! That’s why Dole/Kemp campaigned solely on a fifteen-percent tax cut, and left moral issues to Bill Clinton and his family-values advisors Monica Lewinsky and Dick Morris to sort out. Of course, the Christian community, as well as the populist/social conservative bloc, realized that more jobs and prosperity are not the answer to the frighteningly rapid disintegration of the nation’s moral fabric. After all, drug dealers’ violent tendencies don’t seem to be

noticeably ameliorated by their more-than-adequate income. The entertainment business, awash in cash flow, seems to be more interested on destroying decency with each passing year. Leaders of commerce, with the Dow Jones at its all time high, show little inclination to reclaim their earlier role as moral pillars of their communities.

Conversely, those who operate from a self-consciously Christian world-view realize that neither education, nor building more prisons (as opposed to restitution or the death penalty), nor the government creating more vocational training programs and jobs are going to usher in the perfect society. **Humans are fundamentally morally flawed, and when we act like they aren't, we create a school system that produces violence-prone imbeciles, a criminal justice system that spawns more crime than it cures, and government-subsidized wealth-redistribution programs that are as wasteful as they are immoral. Thus, it's unavoidable, when these crucial public-policy issues are debated, that social and economic conservatives will approach them from two very different and ultimately antagonistic world-views.**

In perfect timing to illustrate the unbridgeable nature of this gap, a civil war has broken out within the neocon camp (which we'll further identify shortly) over, of all things, moral issues. It seems that Roman Catholic neocon editor, Richard John Neuhaus, had the temerity to invite several conservative Christian scholars (mostly Catholic, but including several Protestants like Charles Colson), to dialogue with "secular neocons" on how to face an increasingly adversarial culture. When Christians suggested that the government may be losing its moral legitimacy to govern, a number of leading neocons (primarily conservative statist) stalked out in a huff. The two camps then broke into open warfare — even questioning each others' motives and sanity. The "secular neocons" consciously chose the highly charged term *sedition* in order to intimidate "Theo-Cons" (Christian neoconservatives) from ever again straying from the Party Line. If the neocons cannot agree amongst themselves, then how do we expect to reconcile our much-more-fundamental disagreements with their dominant secular wing?

Since one of my former organizations, Christian Voice, was the first Christian political group to employ "Report Cards" and

“Biblical Score Boards,” I take the liberty here to suggest a Report Card on “Issues Compatibility,” to assist us in determining which camps will invariably end up aligning together. *The categories obviously represent broad generalizations.* I have arbitrarily assigned each of the camps its positions (yes or no) based on the assumed likelihood of at least seventy-five percent of the member constituencies agreeing on the position ascribed to them. If I suspect that the “75 Percent Rule” is too rigid, I’ve designated “*Some*” (representing more than twenty-five percent but less than seventy-five percent) in probable agreement with the position stated. Where I have insufficient data to warrant an educated guess, I’ve stated “*Unknown.*”

DONER'S ISSUES-COMPATIBILITY SCORECARD

ISSUE	Christian Right	Populists	GOP Moderates	Liber-tarians	Liberal Democrats	Neocons
Identify self as Orthodox Christian	YES	YES	SOME	NO	NO	SOME
Affirm Bible as appropriate cultural model	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
Frequently attend Evangelical or Orthodox Church	YES	YES	SOME	NO	NO	SOME
Prioritize moral family issues	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
Identify self as social conservative	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	SOME
Special protections for churches, Christian schools and religious freedom	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	SOME
Prefer separation of church from politics	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES
Tougher Immigration laws	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
Protect U.S. jobs (America First)	Unknown	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
Eliminate corporate subsidies	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO
Recognize God's Law over Man's law	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO

As you can see, it appears that we have a great deal more in common with our cultural conservative/populist friends than we do with our current co-belligerents. Like Cinderella, we are eternally condemned to do all the dirty work and then be shunted off to the kitchen when the inaugural ball commences. As Kevin Phillips reported (in *Post-Conservative America*), “From the start, Reagan aides were quick to downplay the difference the religious Right had made on election Day 1980.” Of course, such lines are not easy to draw. Not everything is black and white. A few neoconservatives and many “paleo-conservatives” may have empathy for us on various issues, and to varying degrees. The reality is, however, that they need the financial resources of the GOP Fat-Cat financiers more than they need an alliance with hard-scrabble populists and seemingly other-worldly “born again Christians” (a euphemism frequently employed in place of “Weird Religious Fanatic”), whose eyes glaze over at the first mention of supply-side economics or capital-gains tax cuts, but who become outright incensed at any mention of those “off limits” moral issues.

Where to Now?

If you're still unconvinced, here's one last test: Who do you find more representative of your world-view, Gary Bauer, Howard Phillips, Alan Keyes and Pat Buchanan — or Bob Dole, Jack Kemp and Colin Powell? **If you still can't decide, the good news is you don't really have to. The GOP establishment has made its preference very clear. We are the unwanted stepchild.**

Whether we like it or not, or choose to acknowledge it, a realignment is taking place. The train is beginning to pull out of the station. The only question is, will we be helping to drive the locomotive or clinging frantically on to the caboose? With Kevin Phillips I believe, “as traditional politics breaks down, the ‘center’ becomes radicalized: a huge slice of middle America has come loose from its electoral moorings.” Who will appeal to this new “radical middle?” By withdrawing its support from Ford, Bush and Dole (via Jimmy Carter, Ross Perot and even Bill Clinton) this disaffected third of the electorate has sent an unmistakable signal: it will not be corralled into the GOP camp by establishment Republicans. **This thrice-verified thesis proves that the GOP**

cannot win a national election unless it nominates a strong cultural conservative with populist sympathies (remember Ronald Reagan) — which of course the party bosses will no longer tolerate. As Pat Buchanan so poignantly observed in personal conversations with this author, “The GOP establishment would rather lose with one of their own (i.e., Bob Dole) than win with someone from outside their ranks!”

Before considering our future options, we need to understand the strange metamorphosis that has rendered the GOP’s once-vital conservative base impotent.

Chapter Four

The Problem with Conservatives

After a decade in power, why has the conservative movement failed to make so much as a dent in the growth of big government? ...Because opponents of the welfare state long ago lost control of the conservative movement.

—Justin Raimondo, *Reclaiming the American Right*

...to win transforming political victories, conservatives have to arrive at a clearer idea of what they stand for, and why they stand for it.

—Charles Kesler, *Weekly Standard*, September 1, 1997

“Conservatives for the most part lack an internal belief system.” At first blush, this is an extraordinary statement (March, 1997) from Paul Weyrich, the godfather of the beltway conservative establishment. Bear in mind that he is not just talking about Republicans. No, he’s addressing the mystery of the hapless and rudderless crew of Republican *conservatives* in Congress — flailing their arms, desperately screaming for someone, *anyone*, to take the helm of the Good Ship GOP as it descends in rapidly tightening circles downward into a whirlpool of compromise, neutrality and irrelevancy.

The GOP is visionless in large degree because its one component capable of generating vision — the conservative

movement — has failed to do so. This has happened for two reasons. First, most men in leadership lack the time or interest in forming an internally coherent belief system on “the way up,” and certainly have no time to do so now that they’re in charge. It’s a little late to take navigation lessons when you’ve just been handed the helm.

How *does* one form a coherent comprehensive world-view (as opposed to an eclectic collection of contradictory notions inherited from childhood and cobbled together haphazardly as we hurtle through life)? Once upon a time, when most public servants actually possessed a Christian world-view, it was imparted by the local Calvinist minister who was probably the best educated man, and — not coincidentally — the foremost leader in almost every town. Thanks to a century’s dose of dispensational pietism, now the local pastor is likely to be the least-educated “leader” in town. What education he (or she) does have will most likely be the antithesis of a Christian world-view. The Devil owns the earth, culture is doomed, and the church is destined to increased corruption, weakness and death. Only a remnant is to be saved by an extra-Biblical “rapture” previous to the second coming of Christ. Consequently, to form a world-view today means devoting painstaking years (perhaps decades) to disciplined self study — the rough equivalent of structuring your own Ph.D. program. This is *not* the road preferred by most men of action, at least not by those who strive for political office.

Normally, our public servants have “arrived” through one of two paths. Some (the minority) have spent their lives as political junkies, graduating from Teenage Republican’s (TAR’s) to Young Republicans (YR’s) or Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) to become Party hacks or legislative aides. Then they get lucky and win their boss’s old seat. The second route, and the one that sees the most traffic by far, is traveled by the businessman-politician. In this model, one spends the university years focusing on career goals: law, medicine, business, etc. Then another decade or two are invested in becoming the most successful lawyer, doctor, dentist, hog farmer, car dealer, real estate broker or rancher possible in Middletown. Then comes service in city, county or state office (usually in that order) where one spends endless days mastering the intricacies of zoning ordinances, water policy, land management and the politics of subsidizing the local crop (cattle, oil, tobacco,

gas, fisheries, tourism, etc.). Not much time for intensive study here. Then the Big Break comes, “Mr. Smith Goes to Washington,” and, filled with heady idealism, is sworn into the House of Representatives.

Unhappily, he is soon informed that most of his time and energy must be spent in “constituent service”: pothole fixing, expediting government wealth-transference checks, and meeting with delegations from the local metal workers union, 4-H Club, Catholic bingo league and Hog Farmers Association. He quickly learns that all this is vital to his re-election campaign (which incidentally starts TODAY since his primary is a scant eighteen months away, and Billy Joe Bob, whom he barely defeated last time, is already out on the hustings, raising money, kissing anything that moves, promising voters everything he can think of, but will never produce, and otherwise nailing down votes).

Whether (or not) anything in the Congressman’s background has prepared him for rigorous thinking, weighing competing truth claims (or even recognizing the distinctions between various philosophical systems), or for plumbing the depths of the religious assumptions that undergird particular cultural and governmental models (which always express the dominant religious zeitgeist, whether humanism, Calvinism or Marxism), he now realizes that he is out of time. **Whatever he has learned to this point is all he is going to learn.** Whatever time, energy and mental focus he can muster up must now be devoted to his political survival.

What to do? Fall back on the usual Washington practice of total dependency on Party-certified “policy experts” — the antithesis of anything remotely visionary. Incidentally, to reach outside the beltway networks for ideas or “vision” is to risk alienating “the mainstream” and the media; and more importantly, risk scaring off big corporate contributors. Even Ralph Reed plays this game, preferring, in his books on the future of the Christian Right, to quote Tony Campolo or Martin Luther King, Jr. rather than Abraham Kuyper, R. J. Rushdoony or Francis Schaeffer (none of whom, interestingly enough, he appears to have read). So our hero searches for a conservative “think tank” chuck full of conservative “wise men” with world-shattering vision. The problem is that they don’t exist. Political strategists, fund-raisers and sycophants of every description, yes. Conservative world-view philosophers, no.

So now our beleaguered true-blue conservative representative finds the most accessible fount of “vision” to be the self-aggrandizing and eclectic “futurism” of a former Junior College history instructor, Newt Gingrich. His only other viable alternative, or so he is led to believe by his Washington staff, is to rely on a never-ending stream of policy papers generated by “neoconservatives.” These “policy studies” are most notable for their avoidance of any discussion of principles, first causes, or morality. In keeping with the neoconservative secular temper, they are pragmatic or scientific in nature rather than principle-driven (e.g., welfarism isn’t wrong because it’s immoral, it’s wrong because the statistics prove it’s counter productive). Thus, our new Congressman finds himself looking for guidance from 1950’s-style centrists (exemplified by the Vice President of the United States, Dan Quayle, appointing Bill Kristol — son of neocon patriarch, Irving Kristol — as his chief of staff). **What I am asserting is that there is no longer an intact “conservative movement” or vision. What we have now in its place is a twenty-first-century melding of corporate America’s internationalism with the Utopian Global- Democratic Capitalist New-World Order of the neocons.**

The Disappearing Conservatives

It now seems increasingly likely that the New Right is on its death bed.

—Paul Gottfried, *The Conservative Movement*

The old conservative consensus of the Reagan years is finished...

—Justin Raimondo, *Reclaiming the American Right*

The question now is, whatever happened to the conservative movement? How could it be so easily supplanted by a “neoconservatism”? Indeed, what was once a vital conservative movement has been so thoroughly consumed by its neocon predator that only a few brittle bones remain. Or, to employ a different metaphor, it’s not that the conservative emperor is bereft of clothing, it’s that he’s clothed in a neocon skirt, the political equivalent of a cross dresser.

Upon exploring the roots of modern conservatism we encounter our first clue as to its surprising vulnerability to a hostile takeover. Simply stated, American conservatism never had its own world view or a coherent, “internal belief system,” as Weyrich correctly surmised. Ironically enough, the history of the conservative moment has been one of progressive syncretization. It began with a coalition of isolationists and free-market theorists reacting to FDR’s “war mongering” and quasi-socialist government interventionism. In 1944, a handful of them founded the weekly newspaper, *Human Events*, still the flagship publication of “the Old Right.” This small-but-vocal group evolved into an ad hoc alliance with “traditionalists” like Russell Kirk (who authored his definitive work, *The Conservative Mind*, in the early 1950’s). Kirk’s philosophy was largely drawn from a confluence of European conservatives, the Irish philosopher Edmund Burke, Roman Catholic “natural law” theories, and from a school of thought known as “New Humanism.” With Senator Joseph McCarthy’s (and Senator Richard Nixon’s) Communist-hunting forays, the movement took a distinctly anti-Communist turn and expanded exponentially. In the early 60’s, the movement further widened its already eclectic ideological range with the addition of various stripes of libertarians and Randians (devotees of “objectivist” novelist Ayn Rand), alongside fundamentalist Communist-fighters like Rev. Carl McIntire and Rev. Billy James Hargis (the predecessor to Jerry Falwell). The movement’s quantum leap in popularity came with the formation of the “Draft Goldwater Committee” in 1963. For the boomer generation of activists, this was the beginning of our (myself included) self-conscious identity as “conservatives.”

The movement, ill defined as it was (enhancing its ability to attract subcultures as diverse as Randians and fundamentalists), was bonded together by five central concerns: 1) anti-Communism, 2) “big government,” 3) free enterprise, 4) abortion, and 5) “traditional values” (whatever that may have meant, and surely the meaning was in the eye of the beholder). Of the five, a fierce anti-Communism provided the centrifugal force which held the movement’s otherwise-disparate elements together. Badly out flanked by the media, academia, and the political establishment, conservatives were in some ways what the Left characterized them to be: “reactionaries.”

We were, in fact, so overwhelmed “reacting” to the seemingly unstoppable march of Communism across the globe, and to frightening cultural disintegration at home, we had little inclination or time to develop a coherent world-view philosophy. Just protecting our children in public school from a myriad of wild-eyed social programmers seemed a full-time task. In such a setting, concentrating on immediate threats seemed entirely justifiable. When the barbarians are at the gates, it’s not the time to wax philosophical, it’s time to man the walls and start dumping cauldrons of boiling oil. In sum, under siege and out-flanked by vastly superior forces, we didn’t have time for the luxury of developing a coherent philosophy (or so we thought). Besides, we knew what we stood for: free enterprise, traditional values (meaning that we were for conserving anything the Left proposed changing), and “freedom” (meaning “Better Dead Than Red”). Ironically, it was this overarching priority of destroying the Red Menace that opened the gates to the neoconservative Trojan Horse.

The Neoconservative Trojan Horse

Their relationship to the movement has always been parasitical.

—Patrick Buchanan quoted in *Reclaiming the American Right*

The old conservatives of the 80’s were being swallowed up by the alliance they initiated and sustained.

—Paul Gottfried, *The Conservative Movement*

The offensives of radicalism have driven vast herds of liberals across the borders into our territories. These refugees now speak in our names, but the language they speak is the same one they always spoke.

—Paul Gottfried quoting *Conservative Intercollegiate Review* (Spring, 1996), in *The Conservative Movement*

They have a lock on all the money and all the institutions created by the right; they have established a cozy relationship with the leftist establishment media who recognize them for what they are: safe and well-groomed

lapdogs who bark but never bite.

—Justin Raimondo, *Reclaiming the American Right*

The Conservative movement of the 1970's, dispirited from the successive annihilation of its two most prominent anti-Communist heroes, Barry Goldwater and Richard Nixon (exactly one decade apart), was desperate for new allies, especially ones with impeccable academic credentials and media connections. Enter the "neocons," the "New Conservatives." In brief, "neoconservatism" came about as the 50's Harry Truman-Scoop Jackson anti-Communist establishment (mostly liberal intellectuals, and many of them former Marxists) were repelled by the violence and anti-establishmentarianism of the radical left. A predominantly Jewish group, they were also alarmed by the New Left's rabid anti-Israel-pro-Arab rhetoric and the radical sea change that was swamping the Democratic Party — as illustrated by the exploding popularity and influence of hard-left Senators Eugene McCarthy and George McGovern.

Disillusioned by liberalism's receptivity to the Marxist critique of Western culture, and concerned for Israel's security (the Soviets were effectively surrounding Israel with their client states), this Gideon's band of "liberal anti-Communists" searched for a new home. Deeming themselves the "New Conservatives," they began writing for conservative magazines and supplying the intellectual capital for a handful of conservative foundations. Nevertheless, they remained classic establishment liberals, or "Democratic centrists," with their twin goals of establishing a "new world order" of democratic pluralism and a well-managed, budget-balanced, neatly ordered, welfare state here at home. These "New Conservatives" were, in fact, anything but, then or now. They were conservative only in relation to the far-out radicalism of their former comrades. "Old Right" godfather Murray Rothbard referred to them as "mensheviks" (less ardent Marxists who lost out to the dominant "Bolsheviks" we call Communists), claiming that they had now evolved into "neocon Social Democrats."

By insinuating themselves into the heart of the conservative movement, this small band of less than a hundred was gradually able to dominate intellectually or financially (or both), the key publications (*National Review*, the *Washington Times*, the *Weekly Standard*) and think tanks (The Heritage Foundation, The Hoover

and American Enterprise Institutes) of the Right. As Gottfried notes in *The Conservative Movement*, **“neocons’ progressive influence over foundation purse strings (with grants of \$30 million a year!) gave them “control over the form and content of movement conservatism.”** Not a few of the Old Guard objected to these brazen house guests evicting their hosts, but with the neocons’ media cachet and their new found pot of gold, opponents were easily marginalized or black-listed as anti-Semitic. This tactic was most recently employed with some success against Pat Buchanan who, in personal conversation with me, noted, “their attacks on me became personal, savage, and vindictive.”

In short, most of the old, post-WWII conservative movement that didn’t die off was run off by the neocons’ blitzkrieg, or absorbed by the New Right (circa 1970-1980). In turn, during the 80’s the neocons co-opted the few real assets the New Right possessed (which wasn’t much beyond its heavily incestuous and burned-out mailing lists). In 1997, the breathtaking success of the neocon sweep was dramatically underscored by “The First International Conservative Congress” (“Reinvigorating Conservatism Worldwide”) held in September, 1997, where the vast majority of several dozen featured speakers were neocons. In fact, the *only* name from the Old Right was neocon convert William F. Buckley. The lone Christian Right token was, of course, Ralph Reed.

The Neocon Agenda

Almost all neoconservatives ... remain qualified defenders of the welfare state.

—Paul Gottfried, *The Conservative Movement*

The egalitarian and globalist premises of the neoconservatives now define what [Washington Times columnist Samuel] Francis calls the “permissible right.” This tame pseudo-conservatism masquerades in a variety of guises; the “Big Government conservatism” touted by Fred Barnes, Jack Kemp’s “progressive conservatism,” Newt Gingrich’s “opportunity society...”

—Justin Raimondo, *Reclaiming the American Right*

To inquire about the specifics of the neocon agenda, all we need do is observe the Republican agenda in Congress. Ironically, while “Newt’s Freshman” complain that “the revolution” has stalled and that things have become boring for lack of action, the neocon agenda (which has subsumed the Speaker and his minions) is rolling along quite smoothly. In foreign affairs we continue to use tax dollars and American troops to transplant American-style “Democratic capitalism,” while encouraging “open immigration” from the Third World (and accelerated emigration of blue-collar jobs to Red China and sundry Third-World sweat shops). This seemingly disastrous policy is the neocons’ *raison d’etat* in foreign affairs: the pursuit of international cultural and political homogeneity based on secular democratic values.

At home the neocons betray their true colors as *neo-Liberals* with their vehement defense of big government (albeit a well-managed one!) and the welfare state (again, an efficiently run one!) and their bizarre fixation with propping up the failed humanist experiments of public “education” and social “security.” As a whole, neoconservatives are interested in containing or moderating the government’s role as sovereign caretaker for the people, not replacing it. Irving Kristol (Bill’s father, and the progenitor of the neoconservative movement) freely confesses, “we are not at all hostile to the idea of a welfare state,” implying that it is merely the gross mismanagement of the welfare state that neocons find irksome. Pat Buchanan, a favored lightning rod for neocon wrath, defines their agenda this way:

Ex-Great Society liberals, almost all of them, they support the welfare state and Big Government. They are pro-civil rights and affirmative action, though anti-quota. They are pro-foreign aid, especially for Israel.... Many are viscerally hostile to the Old Right, and to any America First foreign policy. They want to use America’s wealth to promote ‘global democracy’ abroad and impose ‘democratic values’ in our public schools. (Quoted by Justin Raimondo in *Reclaiming the American Right*)

The unexpected victory of the conservative coalition over its two great enemies of the last half century — Communism and liberal-Democratic control of Congress — has revealed the movement’s bankruptcy in terms of a coherent vision for the future.

In fact, it seems that the movement even lacks agreement on the first principles (world-view) necessary to construct such a vision. Now that the “tie that binds” (resistance to the Evil Empire) has dissolved, what’s to hold the increasingly diverse elements of the movement — libertarians, America Firsters, isolationists, interventionist neocons, corporatists, country clubbers and Christians — together?

Remember the five-legged stool on which the old conservative agenda rested? The five legs were 1) anti-Communism, 2) pro-Free Enterprise, 3) anti-Big Government, 4) anti-Abortion, and 5) pro-Traditional Values. Number one is moot. Numbers two and three are now axiomatic for everyone not living in Cuba, China, North Korea or Massachusetts, and are consequently of little interest to most activists. On point four Christians will most likely find themselves at loggerheads with the rest of the movement, especially the neocons. The last issue, “traditional values,” surely will turn out to be the most divisive, as the recent neocon/Theo-Con war vividly demonstrates.

What we have yet to perceive is that a majority of the GOP — from libertarians to country clubbers, from neocons to secular conservatives — are purposefully disinterested in Christian Right issues. Read one hundred conservative pundits, peruse the policy papers generated by ten conservative think tanks, and you will find that ninety percent deal with balancing the budget, fine tuning the bureaucracy, or exporting “democratic values” to Swaziland.

War of the World Views

...if the evangelicals should lose their foothold within the Republican party or if the abortion battle should swing against them with an aura of irreversible finality, a larger number of conservative Christians will begin to think more seriously about overt forms of social protest and resistance. If that should occur, the Reconstructionists will be waiting for them with open arms.

—Bruce Barron, *Heaven on Earth?*

With the unifying issue of anti-Communism fading, the deep disagreements between the neocons and traditional

conservatives are surfacing. And the time to split the blanket has probably arrived. Before true conservatives can ever take back the country, they are going to have to take back their movement.

—Patrick Buchanan quoted in *Reclaiming the American Right*

While the neocons are high on “traditional values,” they are really talking about “generic” civic virtues that provide the gravitational grounding to keep our culture from flying apart. Antithetical to their concept is anything as divisive as Christianity’s exclusive truth claims. The neocons fancy themselves managing a polite, *pluralistic secular* democratic capitalistic society where everyone gets along nicely — a “kinder gentler” society. Thus, we have the stage set for a replay of the neocon vs. Theo-Con war. Having successfully vanquished their opposition from the Conservatives’ old guard, their next most likely target is the Christian Right, or at least those who cannot be co-opted or who stubbornly insist on the primacy of a Christian world-view which mandates “disciplining the nations to follow all God’s Law” (Matthew 28).

If the neocon bile spat at Pat Buchanan, or the charges of sedition launched against Christian neocons (Theo-Cons) are any indication of the tenor of the coming attack, the Christian Right is in for quite a mudslinging contest. Unfortunately, it is a contest in which the neocons enjoy almost every strategic advantage: deep financial pockets; excellent access to, and approbation by, the secular media; control of the conservative media, and increasingly, of the movement itself. The one critical ingredient that both neocon and the Remocrat establishment lack is popular support as Pat Buchanan has observed: “While they may control its foundations, they have never won the movement’s heart; and they do not have its young” (in *Reclaiming the American Right*, by Justin Raimondo).

It appears that a large slice of culturally and religiously conservative southerners, northern Catholics and western independents (loosely identified as “populist”) is determined to defy the political establishment, be it center-left or center-right. **The Christian Right must now decide whether it is content to**

stay in the neocon dog house, learning to love our ugly stepchild role, or whether we will seek to independently build a bridge to these culturally conservative but independent voters. If the Christian Right gets the courage to leave the Remocrat plantation and hook up with these political rebels, we may have a fighting chance. Nevertheless, it will be a long and difficult road. As Professor Gottfried observes in *The Conservative Movement*: “Not only neoconservatives but the Republican Party flourishes with the expansion of the welfare state. No one is likely to ‘break the clock of the great society’ without first having to take on the ‘respectable’ conservative movement *and* the Republican Party.” A formidable challenge, to say the least; but then there’s that second advantage which the secularists lack. It’s called God’s Sovereignty, and the timetable is exclusively His.

Chapter Five

“Choices”

Christians have been living with illusions long enough. It is time to get *dis*-illusioned. So let's bust a few illusions that have encouraged our seduction by political salvationism (the false hope of pursuing cultural reformation solely through secular political means) by diverting us from a truly Biblical agenda.

Illusion # 1: The GOP is a “big tent” where the Christian Right is welcome.

The GOP/neoconservative Establishment would rather lose with one of their own than win with an outsider.

—Patrick Buchanan, October 14, 1997

Some in the GOP have already drawn the long knives to further disassociate the party from issues of concern to social conservatives. The Republican establishment risks precipitating a new party if they persist on alienating these conservatives.

—Paul Weyrich, *Policy Review*, January/February, 1997

The reality, as Pat Buchanan has noted, is that the GOP is controlled by an alliance of two establishments: “country club” Republicans — big-business types and neocons or Economic

conservatives. In this marriage of convenience, the neocons supply the intellectual capital and the “clubbers” provide the financial underwriting. Neither clique has the slightest inclination to respect, let alone embrace a Christian or “populist”-oriented agenda — *ever*. Indeed, their disdain for anyone outside their secular/pluralistic New-World-Order paradigm runs so deep that, as Pat Buchanan noted, “They would rather lose a presidential election with one of their own than win with an outsider.”

Illusion # 2: Given enough time and prodding the party will begin to exhibit a little backbone and “revolutionize” Washington.

Every day I open the newspaper, hoping for some sign the Republicans have grown a backbone — and every day I find that the Republican majority has caved on yet another issue.

—Michael Reagan, *World*, December 6, 1997

We as a party don’t know what we want to accomplish.

—David Norcross, former General Counsel and current member, Republican National Committee, *Washington Times*, February 1, 1998

The fact of the matter is, the Republicans have had their chance and have proved themselves moral cowards. In the face of enemy fire they not only blinked, they deserted their positions. As Buchanan observed in a recent conversation with me: “The Republicans in Congress were routed by Bill Clinton and they’re like a retreating army, having not yet found a new line of defense and hurriedly disregarding their equipment in a disorderly retreat.” *The problem is timidity*. The three components comprising the GOP leadership core are given to compromise and caution, not to the courage of their convictions (assuming they had any).

The first cohort is made up of political technicians who get their direction from hooking people up to electronic devices in “control groups” to record whether a certain image or phrase causes Billy Bob and Mathilda to flinch in apprehension or twitch in excitement. Wired as they are to the fickle whims of Mr. and Mrs. Average Voter, the “pros” who set the agenda for the candidates are the last to provide decisive leadership. As previously noted,

the academically minded neocons who compose our second grouping eschew confrontation on moral issues as needlessly divisive. There's no danger of real leadership emerging from this quarter.

Then we have the numerically and financially dominant country clubbers and business types, guided by the principle that "what's good for business is good for America." In other words, their pocketbooks (or off-shore accounts) are the bottom line. While this slogan may have had some validity a century ago, it is much more suspect now that the Fortune 500 have internationalized themselves. This is a vital point for us to understand. *Today, politics is essentially about money.* The business community rewards politicians who enable them to reap huge profits from such irresistible opportunities as... selling super computers or nuclear technology to the Red Chinese and "relocating" one's work force from Tennessee to Togo or from Bakersfield to Botswana.

Today, the philosophy of big business is: if our interests coincide with America's — make the most of their PR value; if not — tough! As Professor Gottfried observes in *The Conservative Movement*: "...multinational business has never been interested in the provincial loyalties and rooted tradition advocated by conservatives." Businessmen also tend to be politically timid — reticent to do anything that might rock the boat (or the markets). Their vision usually does not extend beyond today's deal. As Lenin predicted "the capitalists will sell us the rope (or computers) to hang them!"

The real business of the GOP is making money for its special interests — not providing moral leadership for the Third Millennium. On the contrary, since big business now finds it profitable to shift jobs overseas, so does the GOP. Since big business has come to terms with the inevitability of the welfare state, so too (following the lead of the neocons), has the GOP — as it remade in the image of the neocons, a right-of-center "Social-Democrat" party, the "Remocrats."

Welcome the Remocrats!

As the GOP power structure moves ominously to "The Center," so do the Democrats. "I see the Democratic Party being brought

in around the center,” exclaimed Clinton’s pollster Mark Penn after apparently emerging from a decades-long liberal haze to discover that a majority of Democratic voters considered themselves to be moderate to conservative. It seems pollster Penn was astonished to find that over half his voters closely matched Republican constituencies. “New-economy” Democrats (twenty-eight percent of the Party) mimicked their supply-side GOP brethren with a predominant concern for economic growth. *Another twenty-eight percent were given the curious label “suburban values Democrats,” owing to their overriding concern with “family values and crime.”* Question: Do suburbs actually produce values systems, or simply reflect the spiritual values of those who live there? Obviously Democrats are uncomfortable acknowledging their own religious-right cohort so they re-christen them “suburban values.”

Clearly both parties, in a glorious burst of pragmatism, have moved to the center, in a basically unacknowledged corporate merger. *Welcome to the Remocrat Party, the General Motors of politics.* The difference is, instead of one company’s owning several different competitors (i.e., Chevrolet versus Buick versus Oldsmobile), we have Democrat versus Republicans. In essence, then, we will soon have only one party — one set of values, one policy paradigm. Hence, *the two-party system is in fact dead*, but not for the reasons most expected. The competition has simply been co-opted by a philosophical merger — not (even) a hostile take over!

Again, the Christian Right must decide whether it is content to be marginalized in the Remocrat dog house, or whether we will build our own bridges to culturally conservative “populists,” “Independents” and “suburban-value” Democrats. The real question is: what confluence of events will serve as a catalyst to fuse the weighty percentage of “suburban-values” Democratic voters with the social-conservative majorities that now exist within the Republican and Reform (Perot) parties?

Finally, what leaders who understand both the necessity and limitations of political action will step forward? ...leaders whose grasp of Christian truth will immunize them from falling prey to the seduction of political salvationism? ...leaders with vision who are willing to commit to a long-term strategy of Biblical governance: telling the truth, restoring justice, serving the community and stewarding God’s creation; and doing it with Godly love

and compassion, and perhaps most important of all, with great wisdom?

As God brings forth individuals of this caliber to lead their communities, old political designations and labels will become increasingly irrelevant. A new team will take to the field, uniting the “moral blocs” within the Democrat, Republican and Independent camps.

We need to pray for a sovereign move of God and, particularly, for those He is raising up to carry His standard.

To indicate your own interest in being involved in, or staying apprised of, this ongoing realignment process, please see the form provided.

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About the Author

Colonel Doner spent three decades in Republican and Christian politics as a speaker, writer, and political strategist — culminating in his pivotal role as an architect of the early Christian Right (1978-1986). In the 1970's the range of his clients spanned from The American Conservative Union to Ronald Reagan. He co-founded a half-dozen of the first wave of Christian Right organizations in the late 1970's, including the Christian Voice (which pioneered the issuing of "Report Cards" to grade members of Congress on their voting records) and the American Christian Voice Foundation which published the renowned *Presidential Biblical Scoreboard* magazine.

Considered one of the preeminent political strategists for the Christian Right, his work has been featured in hundreds of print articles, in over a dozen books, as well as on "60 Minutes," "Donahue," "20/20," and on ABC, CBS and NBC news specials. In 1980, his ground-breaking work was credited by the media for being a decisive factor in defeating over three dozen members of Congress, including Senators John Culver and George McGovern. As media strategist for Christians for Reagan in 1980, his TV spots tying the Democratic National Committee to the gay rights movement made all prime-time network news programs and drew a direct attack from an irate Jimmy Carter.

In 1984, he served as chairman of the national Reagan/Bush Christian voter registration and mobilization campaign, raising and spending millions of dollars to mobilize the evangelical community. Long-term Reagan confidant and campaign manager Lyn Nofziger noted: "*Your role played a significant part in the President's overwhelming victory in November.*" In the process, he co-founded the American Coalition for Traditional Values (ACTV) with author Tim LaHaye, the broadest-based coalition of major evangelical leaders ever to unite behind a political objective. His ferocious televised attacks on Geraldine Ferraro and his distribution of over five million *Presidential Biblical Scoreboard* magazines (highlighting Walter Mondale's anti-family positions) earned him a television assault from Mondale. After serving as a senior strategist for two of what the media dubbed the "big three" Christian Right organizations (Christian Voice, ACTV, and the Moral Majority), he left Washington in 1986 to author several books including the widely acclaimed *The Samaritan Strategy: A New Agenda for Christian Activism*.

He is currently working on several new books and serves as president of an international consulting company specializing in organizational, media and fundraising strategies. He resides in California with his wife, Miriam, and their son Brant.

Other titles by Colonel V. Doner:

The Samaritan Strategy: A New Agenda For Christian Activism

The Responsible Parents' Guide to Television

The Ministry of Chalcedon

CHALCEDON (kal•see•don) is a Christian educational organization devoted exclusively to research, publishing, and to cogent communication of a distinctively Christian scholarship to the world at large. It makes available a variety of services and programs, all geared to the needs of interested ministers, scholars and laymen who understand the propositions that Jesus Christ speaks to the mind as well as the heart, and that his claims extend beyond the narrow confines of the various institutional churches. We exist in order to support the efforts of all orthodox denominations and churches. Chalcedon derives its name from the great ecclesiastical Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451), which produced the crucial Christological definition: "Therefore, following the holy Fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man...." This formula directly challenges every false claim of divinity by any human institution: state, church, cult, school, or human assembly. Christ alone is both God and man, the unique link between heaven and earth. All human power is therefore derivative: Christ alone can announce that "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18). Historically, the Chalcedonian creed is therefore the foundation of Western liberty, for it sets limits on all authoritarian human institutions by acknowledging the validity of the claims of the One who is the source of true human freedom (Galatians 5:1).

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