Whose Mission?

A Comparison of French and US Perspectives on American Civil Religion

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American civil religion is a cultural phenomenon of malleable political significance. In its broadest forms, civil religion supplies Americans and their leaders with a bland repertoire of religious symbolism to adorn their dollar bills and presidential addresses. More narrowly, however, civil religion can facilitate religious nationalism in the United States and lend to policy programs the unyielding righteousness of orthodoxy. Because civil religion employs *religious* and, more specifically, *Christian* language and symbols to articulate the national story, even its rote invocations maintain a cultural climate that privileges Christian constructions of American politics and identity.[1] Thus, every time a president finishes a speech by repeating the boilerplate "And may God bless the United States of America"— in other words, every time a president makes a speech of any importance whatsoever— those members of American society inclined towards religious nationalism receive renewed confirmation that theirs truly is

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a Christian nation. This implicit marriage of American national identity and Christianity also impresses outside observers, feeding the perception that the United States is inordinately confident in its own virtue and for reasons rooted in a particular faith tradition.

Elaborating its connection with nationalism allows us to consider both how civil religion functions today in American politics and how it influences the way that others, in this case French analysts, perceive the United States. National identities structure the way individuals interpret events, politicians motivate their publics, and outsiders define nations as collective actors.[2] Nationalist symbols can therefore be easily manipulated for political purposes. Civil religion is an integral part of this dynamic, making it easy for those in the United States who argue that America is a Christian nation to legitimate their political preferences by using its motifs.[3] In the American political process, policy proposals defined as un-Christian and, by extension, un-American can be sapped of crucial support, while practices that seem to represent Christian values are more easily defensible using patriotic vocabulary.[4] In this article, we argue that America's civil religion is a construction that allows religious conservatives to justify their policies as representative of "true" American values, which gives their ideas greater purchase on the identity of the United States in the eyes of outsiders.

Those seeking to define the United States as a Christian country with all the policy implications that follow ave exploited civil religion's essentially unchallengeable place in the heart of the national identity by developing four embedded themes within it.[5] These themes include the idea of American mission, the Protestant work ethic, the notion of a transcendent "free market," and the belief in an Edenic American history to which the United States must return if it is to recapture its lost promise. French observers have interpreted these motifs as indicating essential aspects of American national identity, although they seem to recognize that not all Americans embrace these ideas with equal solicitude. By comparing how French and American analysts describe American civil religion, we can see that conservative Americans have been able to perpetuate two beliefs: that the United States is a "Christian nation" and that this identity shapes American politics, including its foreign policy.[6] Our conclusion is that civil religion remains a potent political tool that is both difficult to impugn due to its integration with the national identity and, despite its seeming ecumenism,

particularly susceptible to manipulation by cultural conservatives seeking to secure their vision of what America should be.

We develop this argument in four stages. First, we explain how civil religion functions as a form of religious nationalism that has been used to inject conservative Christian norms into American political discourse. Second, we elaborate the four-part model described above. Third, we survey how French observers have construed the nature and significance of American civil religion, and we connect their analyses with a broader overview of French perceptions of the United States. Finally, we consider the possibilities of maintaining a "civil religion" in the original sense of the term in today's climate of political and cultural polarization, when shared narratives of a unified national identity seem difficult to articulate.

Nationalism and Civil Religion in the United States

Robert Bellah coined the term "civil religion" in 1967 to denote America's collective expression of the basic human need to assign meaning and purpose to one's existence.[7] All political communities are social constructions without any permanence or value beyond that with which their members choose to endow them. Each nation or state therefore must justify itself, pronouncing that *this* way of organizing and demarcating oneself rather than *that* potential alternative is meaningful enough to warrant continued loyalty. Typically, polities attain coherence in two basic ways: they define themselves, in tribal fashion, against "others" who do not belong, or they ground their essence in a higher reality not easily challenged.[8] These two strategies easily coincide, as Anthony Marx observed when he wrote of the emergence of nationalism in early modern Europe: "A chosen people are all the more inspired by their election and cohered when under threat, much as the cohesion of any group is solidified by conflict with some out-group."[9] As a consciously created nation-state, the United States felt a particularly acute need to attain existential confidence. Along with Enlightenment teleology and race, civil religion has helped to perform this task from the nation's origins, through its Civil War, and continuing to the present.[10] It defines the United States in religious terms with the effect that the nation itself seems to have religious importance. As Bellah explained in the classic article in which he gave civil religion its name, "civil religion at its best is a genuine apprehension of universal and transcendent religious reality as seen

in or, one could almost say, as revealed through the experience of the American people."[11] In other words, civil religion is the expression that we use to describe the American people's quest to situate themselves within a higher, essentially religious framework of meaning.

Although its focus is America itself, civil religion is closely related to Christianity. Its terminology, indeed its very existence, implies that the United States is a community of biblical significance (e.g., it is a "chosen nation," "the New Israel," or "favored by Providence" to identify some popular historical constructions). As a result, civil religious expressions and practices impart an unmistakably Christian aura to American patriotism.[12] This blending of Christianity and American identity reflects the ordinary pattern of cultural construction, wherein societies take from the conceptual materials they have at hand to articulate themselves in a mutually intelligible way.[13] Thus, American civil religion "borrowed selectively from the [nation's dominant] religious tradition in such a way that the average American saw no conflict between the two."[14] This tethering of the United States to a specific religious tradition, however, implicates the state in that religion's values and identity, a practice that becomes more clearly at odds with America's democratic ethos as its religious pluralism increases. Given civil religion's roots in the broader culture, it is unclear whether the United States would boast such a richly religious national myth if it were founded today. Imagining their state to occupy a distinctive role in the Christian firmament can be difficult for those now-numerous Americans who are not also Christian.

The "religious tradition" from which civil religion emerged was in the first instance Christian, though, because the colonists who specifically tasked themselves with creating a political entity on the North American continent were not only Christian but also exceptionally vigorous in their faith. Intending their polity to be comprised only of Saints, the Puritans covenanted with God to create the City of God that England had failed to become.[15] Their entire conceptual apparatus was biblical, and it generated the earliest vocabulary of national self-understanding among those who would eventually become the American people.[16] The continuing prominence of Christianity in American society☒ ven Jefferson articulated his Enlightenment ideas on occasion by using Deist language☒ nsured that Puritan motifs would continue to structure American interpretations of

their identity and destiny.[17] Civil religion evolved naturally out of a broadly Christian culture, and its ecumenical ambitions exist primarily within the confines of that faith tradition.[18] Cultures do not change easily, especially those as dedicated to their founding myths as the United States has proven to be; civil religion benefits from its deep association with both the historical identity and the still-dominant religious culture of the United States.

This cultural stickiness is not without consequences. Civil religion, as a theodicy that places the United States within a specifically religious conceptual terrain, allows its Christian members in particular to conceive of their national project as consistent with their most basic moral and religious beliefs. John F. Wilson persuasively argued that civil religion is not a "religion" in the traditional, institutional sense of the term.[19] Nevertheless, the label captures an important dynamic in that the role which civil religion plays for Americans comports with that of religion more generally: to provide coherence and confidence in the "continuing viability" of relevant social structures by lending them "ontological status" within a sacred, cosmic frame of reference.[20] Complex cultural phenomena like religion provide individuals and groups with their identities and norms; America's civil religion is essentially the solution that Americans came up with to allow them to remain loyal to both their religious beliefs and their nation without undue tension. It gives them a moral vocabulary and a cosmic foundation for their patriotism, especially if they are Christian. As outsiders in particular have noted, American nationalism has also absorbed at least one other quality of religion in addition to its power to generate stories of ontological significance: it provides Americans with a basis by which to ascribe *moral* relevance to their actions.[21] Thus, responding to the human need for moral self-legitimation, civil religion often finds expression in a fiercely moralistic vocabulary.[22]

In his sweeping overview of American political development, James Morone characterizes American history as "a moral tale," writing that "political life constantly gets entangled in two vital urges edeeming 'us' and reforming 'them.'"[23] The Puritans established this pattern by seeking to create a City of God heir "city on the hill." By characterizing their political project as the creation of God's beachhead in a sinful world, they gave to themselves the huge responsibility of serving as the caretakers of Providence's plans for humanity.[24] This meant that their labors pertained not

only to their own experiences but also to the destiny of the human race as a whole; everything they did had ramifications beyond themselves.[25] Other states have at various times adopted such a self-understanding, but in America a sense of global responsibility has persisted along with its underlying moralizing impulse.[26] America's national identity presumes that the nation's values have universal meaning and that the United States is the highest embodiment of those values.[27] This sentiment has yielded noble crusades to help oppressed individuals around the world (and the sense of moral outrage driving its interventions against Spain in 1898 and the Nazis in World War II, for example, was sincere), but it also implies that the United States occupies an unimpeachable moral vantage from which it can pass judgment on others around the world, almost as if they were not equal human beings.

Analyses of civil religion describe the two moral "urges" that Morone identified as reflecting its "priestly" and "prophetic" dimensions.[28] The priestly role is basically that described above: the notion that the United States has some sort of official relationship with God. It is a source of national self-esteem: we *must* be worthy because we have been *chosen* to be God's partner in reforming the world.[29] As Kenneth Wald put it, "God blesses the nation because it serves a sacred purpose. So long as the nation conducts its affairs according to some higher purpose, it warrants allegiance from its citizens on grounds other than mere self-interest."[30] Critics note that this attitude, among other things, essentially constitutes the co-optation of religion by the state, which uses religion's normative power for its own purposes.[31] For American patriots, however, such criticism withers before the pride that the combination of civil religion / great-power nationalism engenders. The belief that the United States was *created* because it is special translates into a sense of being anointed, and this spirit of borrowing God's moral authority to legitimate secular state interests has been ubiquitous in American history, especially in the realm of foreign policy.[32] We discuss it below in its form as the idea of American mission.

The prophetic function, meanwhile, refers to the requirement that the United States honor its divine obligations lest it suffer God's judgment.[33] The Puritans introduced the prophetic dimension to America's civil religion as a logical concomitant of the priestly role.[34] The posture that they helped to establish in America was one of intense moral vigilance: any slippage in

the hostile environs of the New World would lead God to withdraw His favor, which meant sure destruction for their delicate wilderness experiment. Undoubtedly, Americans have continued to believe that the United States is destined for greatness or, in recent decades, is deservedly enjoying the greatness befitting its moral stature. But the prophetic side of America's civil religion tells the nation that such greatness belongs only to those who continue to earn it.[35] Sin, and you forfeit God's support, without which the national project cannot be sustained.[36] "Prophetic rhetoric," Wade Roof reminds us, "de-emphasizes notions of chosenness and uniqueness and, at its best, calls the country into question when it fails to live up to its own ethical ideals."[37]

Among members of American society, conservative Christians are most apt today to resort to any sort of civil religious language, but the decided trend in their tone seems to tilt in the priestly direction. Criticisms of the United States are typically unwelcome in their ranks, and the prophetic function appears most commonly invoked, as in the earliest era of religious nationalism, to identify moral outliers already within the United States whose exclusion from the body politic (or conversion) would provide the surest path to collective redemption.[38] The "culture war" literature thus catalogs conservative or "orthodox" Christians seeking national redemption by changing the behavior of those who, unlike them, believe in evolution, "practice" homosexuality, get abortions, have problems with leading classrooms in Christian prayers, and so on. Despite their priestly tendency to celebrate American greatness as evidence of Providential support, in other words, conservative Christians have proven adept at turning civil religion's prophetic judgmentalism against American "others."[39] Below, we develop four themes that have become associated with America's civil religion, especially for French analysts, but which on closer inspection are actually platforms for the conservative Christian agenda in American politics. If by "American civil religion" we mean a consensual understanding of America's theodicy, then that concept no longer holds analytic water for describing American culture and politics. However, it remains a relevant concept for describing the country using vaguely Christian language; its more comprehensive application, however, has been co-opted by the American religious right, thus shaping how French analysts define the United States.

The Religious Right and the Four Themes of American Civil Religion

Bellah cites presidents' inaugural addresses as important ceremonial events in which religious references accord legitimacy to the nation's highest political authority.[40] Looking for references to the Almighty in these addresses is akin to carrying coals to Newcastle. These speeches, and many other forms of political discourse, are replete with rhetorical attempts to accord a divine purpose to America's existence and mission. Discussions of American civil religion often focus on these ceremonial and ritualistic aspects. By exploring the *theological* dimension of America's civil religion— n other words, the nature of its fundamental beliefs— ne can gain greater insight into how members of America's religious right have appropriated its motifs. In this discussion, we provide a broad overview of the nature and origin of civil religion's four theological tenets (mission, work ethic, free-market fundamentalism, and "lost Eden") and survey in general fashion how they have historically played out in American politics and law.

As noted above, American civil religion was forged in the early days of English colonialism in the Americas. Starting with Jamestown in 1607, the founding of the American colonies had a strong religious dimension, and references to God and the Almighty are infused in early colonial charters, state constitutions, and most conspicuously in the Declaration of Independence.[41] Many founders cited their religious faith in their writings, and some saw divine Providence as a central reason for the independence of the United States.[42] As it evolved, this religious patina was heavily influenced, if not practically dictated, by the Calvinist doctrines implanted by the Puritans, the Presbyterians, and other religious groups. Calvinism wholeheartedly embraced predestination, hard work, rigorous self-improvement, and the accumulation of capital.[43] Once transferred to the New World, where these doctrines were free to develop without excessive hindrance from the English government and ecclesiastical authorities, they gradually formed the basis of the American character.[44] How did this Calvinism later evolve into American civil religion? Without pretending to encompass the totality of political beliefs that have a religious dimension, this article now explores four core beliefs of American civil religion, around which many other contemporary political beliefs orbit. This overview highlights aspects of the

American project most clearly articulated by conservatives, especially those influenced by Calvinist motifs.

The Idea of American Mission

The *American missionary spirit* is a force that helped to accord a divine imprimatur to territorial expansion to the West, the ideological battles of the Cold War, and everything in between.[45] One can conceive of "mission" in two important ways. On the one hand, there is the sense of mission as an objective. On the other, like religious missionaries, it takes on the sense of inculcating a distinct political worldview within another people. We see its beginnings in the religious convictions of many colonial Americans who considered it their mission to create a New Jerusalem or a shining city on a hill.[46] It manifested itself in the increasingly assertive American foreign policies after the War of Independence, the notion of manifest destiny, and the subsequent imperial undertakings during the Spanish-American War.[47] Its contemporary interpretation maintains the assertion that the United States has a divinely inspired moral obligation to spread democracy and free markets throughout the world.

Given the doctrine of predestination, Calvinist theology does not emphasize the practice of conversion. Salvation is for the elect, so the conversion of individual souls is not a priority for Calvinists per se.[48] However, Calvinism contains several elements that animate the missionary spirit, among them the creation of a holy community through work. Puritans, as a chosen people, felt they had something to teach the rest of humanity.[49] This confidence in their enterprise brought them to encourage others to follow their example. In this way, Puritans sought to spread their ethics and practices but not necessarily their theology. Puritanism was missionary more through its influence than its specific intent.[50] The most significant legacy of Puritanism for the idea of American mission was its interweaving into colonial culture and thereby into American nationalism the notion that the United States had a specific, divinely ordained role to play in the human drama. It was to be, in Ernest Tuveson's phrase, the "Redeemer Nation."[51] Interpreted prophetically, the idea that the United States occupies a discrete place in millennial history would suggest a fastidious attention to keeping the country's moral slate clean in preparation for end-time judgment. In practice, however, it has meant that the United States can dispense with the

frivolity of judging itself. "It's just fine, thank you very much." Focusing instead on evaluating others and, inevitably, bringing them up to America's (and God's) standards.

Throughout US history, therefore, America's sense of mission has had a particularly profound effect on foreign policy.[52] Because they conceive of their country as the embodiment of universally meritorious values, advocates of the idea of American mission argue that America's interests are coterminous with mankind's.[53] Globally extending American power thus fulfills American interests (whether defined economically, geopolitically, or otherwise) while also serving both God and freedom. American actions abroad are ipso facto moral, and opposition to them is immoral, because the expansion of American power and influence also extends the realm of the City of God.[54] Civil religion embeds in American nationalism the exceptionalist notion that the United States is a factor in millennial history, a deeply rooted cultural construct that inevitably inspires moral self-confidence and, sometimes, missionary zeal.[55] Unsurprisingly, then, one finds conservative Americans today lamenting multilateralism as "capitulation" and American power as good not for itself alone but as a force for peace in world affairs.[56]

Protestant Work Ethic

The second pillar of American civil religion is a strong *Protestant work ethic*, especially its emphasis on social grace through work. This idea finds its roots in the Calvinist notion of predestination, which, as Max Weber pointed out, holds that an individual's worth to God is indicated by his or her propensity to work.[57] The more one works, the more material wealth one gathers, and the more one is held to be favored by God and likely to be saved. Although the doctrine of predestination largely passed from the pulpits in the wake of the Second Great Awakening, given the evangelical emphasis on salvation through worldly works rather than uniquely for the elect, the association of wealth with morality retains a hold on the imagination of Christian conservatives. Michael Lienesch describes members of the New Christian Right as "contemporary Calvinists" for their emphasis on material indications of spiritual election: "They assume a close connection between salvation and success. Moreover, since they equate economic enterprise with moral value, they tend to see success as synonymous with

wealth. . . . By the same token, they describe poverty as punishment, frequently deserved by dint of moral and spiritual failings."[58]

During the Gilded Age, the association of Calvinist election, social Darwinism, and material accomplishment achieved an unusually persuasive synthesis in American culture. The reverence with which such cultural financial icons as John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, and Bill Gates are held affirms this enduring sentiment. The flip side of this ethic is that laziness, unemployment, and poverty are held to reflect God's disfavor with the individual. As Henry Ward Beecher wrote in 1871, "The highest prosperity, then, is associated with spiritual good."[59] One need look no farther than the debate over welfare reform in the 1990s to see the degree to which economically disadvantaged groups are even today held out for particular scorn among conservatives, based on the perception that they are poor because they don't want to work.

Americans' association of work with virtue and the possession of wealth with having a strong work ethic (leading to the association of wealth with virtue) emerged in part from the unique history of the United States. The amount of labor involved in constructing such a vast territory led America to become a country where hard work is literally existential. Throughout the slave era and the massive industrialization of the late nineteenth century, workers built the infrastructure that made the United States such an economically powerful nation. Millions of immigrants came through Ellis Island and other points of entry to feed America's insatiable appetite for manual labor. As mechanization became more and more widespread, the intrinsic meaning of work evolved, making it more of a commodity and less of a calling. For many today, the American dream of prosperity through hard work is being replaced by mere survival through very long hours in unrewarding employment, but the protean association of work with success remains fixed in the national mythology. Given the reality that social mobility is now as limited in the United States as it is elsewhere, American civil religion has played an important role in sustaining Americans' confidence that their labor has intrinsic value, their belief that through work they exhibit their virtue, and their conviction that American society is uniquely beneficent in rewarding the truly deserving.[60] The Calvinist inheritance, in other words, has helped to secure a deep cultural commitment to the economic Darwinism of the Gilded Age.

God's Free Market

The third canon of American civil religion is the belief that the *"free market" is a transcendental force*, beyond the control of humans. It is held to share many of the same attributes as the Christian God: omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, and omnibenevolence.[61] When economics articles speak of the market as "jittery" or "nervous" or "confident," they implicitly transfer a quasi-divine sentience to an infinitely complex set of commercial transactions. Adam Smith's "invisible hand" and Milton Friedman's profound faith in the providential nature of the market established this association and helped structure the conceptual framework for modern free-market conservatism. This "free-market fundamentalism" holds that the market not only is worthy of reverence but also is a panacea for social and economic problems. Thus, the divinely ordained market must remain completely separate from the inherently impure government, just as the City of God must remain apart from the City of Man. Despite the current economic difficulties in the United States, the market, rather than the government, is still widely viewed as the main motor for economic growth and prosperity; American civil religious ideas have supplied these ideas deep cultural roots.

Although the Calvinists neither invented nor articulated the notion of a free market, it is nevertheless possible to affirm an abstract relation between Puritan economic practices and Smith's invisible hand, noting the correlation between Calvinist predestination and the "economic predestination" suggested in the *Wealth of Nations*. Conservative religious thinkers have employed civil religious logic to link free-market fundamentalism with American national identity, spelling out a biblical theory of economics.[62] For example, George Gilder wrote that "socialism is inherently hostile to Christianity and capitalism is simply the essential mode of human life that corresponds to religious truth."[63] At a more fundamental level, the commercial practices and attitudes that the Puritans and other Protestants in the New World bequeathed to Americans contributed to the formation of free-market fundamentalism. The Puritan emphasis on individualism, honesty, education, probity, rigorous administration, and commercial innovation became core free-market values.[64] The loathing of *big government* by many free-market conservatives demonstrates their belief that the state is in-

herently incompetent and that socioeconomic affairs are invariably better left to the market.

Arguments over the proper economic role of the government in American society have occurred since colonial times. English colonies in America were founded to be part of the mercantilist system, under which the Crown and Parliament developed a complex network of taxes, customs, and import duties among the colonies which financed the British army and further imperial expansion. The fact that the Stamp Act, the Tea Act, and other economic measures taken by the British Parliament were major causes of American independence attests to the primordial importance Americans attribute to economic liberalism. Since independence, we have observed a swinging of the pendulum between strong laissez-faire economic policies and more government intervention. After independence and throughout the nineteenth century, expansion and the progressive construction of government institutions in the states left little scope for meaningful federal economic intervention. Classical liberal economists increasingly viewed the market as the solution to social ills, according it a moral force beyond simple commercial transactions. Drawing on their ideas in the late 1970s, politicians such as Jack Kemp and Ronald Reagan embraced free-market ideology with evangelical fervor, prescribing tax cuts and regulatory reductions as cure-alls for the difficult economic conditions afflicting American society.

Reagan's election in 1980 ushered in an era of tax cuts and deregulation, and faith in the free market began to reach an apex. According to this ideology, everything associated with the free market was good. Government was the problem, not the solution. "Big government" became a synonym for incompetence, corruption, and inefficiency. Such a notion fostered an increasingly widespread perception of the government as an economic bully, choking the market with burdensome regulations and taxes. The free market was perceived as the key not only to maximizing financial gain but also to resolving society's ills. This dual conception fuelled the conservative economic ascendancy throughout the 1980s and 1990s. George W. Bush's administration promoted the freedom of the market through tax cuts, largely to upper-income individuals and large corporations. The financial crisis that began in 2008 has not visibly shaken conservatives' faith in free-market fundamentalism.

Lost Paradise

The final precept that characterizes American civil religion is the notion of *lost paradise* in American political discourse. Broadly speaking, one can detect a political narrative, especially among religious conservatives, that mirrors the biblical one of paradise, the fall of man as the consequence of original sin, and redemption. In the American political version of this narrative, "paradise" was the period between the founding and the 1950s, during which moral values were stronger, divorces and out-of-wedlock babies were rare, and individual piety was rampant. For the Calvinist colonists who came to the New World to escape religious persecution, their mission was the establishment of a paradisiacal holy community. Many contemporary conservative Christians who view this mission as a success feel that this paradise has recently been compromised. The "fall" occurred during the 1960s and 70s, when the counterculture, hippies, Woodstock, and Vietnam War demonstrators purportedly undermined traditional moral values that had hitherto characterized US society and diminished the moral authority of governing institutions. The religious purity that had ostensibly existed since the birth of the nation was no more. A conservative Christian perspective holds that a secularization of American society brought this about, with a major trigger of the above calamities provoked by Supreme Court rulings in the early 1960s that found teacher-led public school prayer in violation of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.

This narrative, culminating with the desire to restore this lost paradise, has remained a dominant theme within the modern Christian conservative movement. The mid-1970s witnessed the emergence of efforts to bring about such a restoration, during which an increasing consensus emerged among politically activist Christians that a prerequisite to returning to this state of national grace was the election of their kindred to all levels of government. Pat Robertson summed this up rather artfully in a 1986 interview. Comparing non-Christians in places of authority to termites "who destroy" governing institutions, he opined that "the termites are in charge" and that a "godly fumigation" was necessary.[65] Stated less lethally, conservative Christians hold that electing like-minded candidates to office is necessary to bring about a return of moral/family values, bring God back into the public sphere, and bring the United States back more squarely into God's favor. According to Richard John Neuhaus, this era did not signal a re-

evaluation of the moral state of the United States; rather, the belief that the "forces of righteousness" could do something to change direction gained broader currency: to "set the divinely willed eschatological scenario back on course."[66] Collective national redemption became politically conceivable among those who felt that the tenets of civil religion had been violated by allowing America to slide into a moral abyss.

The electoral strategy to bring about this moral restoration has varied in form over the last 35 years. Jimmy Carter campaigned in 1976, openly proclaiming himself a born-again Christian. He garnered significant support from southern Christians, but that was not to last. In 1980 Ronald Reagan openly sought the support of religious conservatives. He received it, and the Moral Majority, led by Jerry Falwell, further enhanced the participation of conservative Christians within Republican Party politics. At the same time, Reagan by no means accomplished all of their objectives. Abortion was still legal, teacher-led prayer in public schools was still banned, and "secular humanism" was still present when he left office. The Moral Majority dissolved in 1989. Robertson, longtime host of the 700 Club, ran for the Republican nomination for president in 1988. He lost to George H. W. Bush, but the Christian Coalition was subsequently created from the remaining structure and mailing list of his presidential campaign. The 1990s witnessed a rise and sharp fall of the influence of religious conservatives. They seemed to have reached their apex in 1994, when Republicans broke Democratic control of the three branches of government. The participation rate in the election fell to an all-time low, but among conservatives it was high. This tipped the balance towards the Republicans. In 2000 George W. Bush openly proclaimed his personal relationship with Jesus Christ and made the "faith-based initiative" a centerpiece of his campaign. The war against terrorism seemed to take the steam out of his domestic faith-based initiatives. This past decade has witnessed a reevaluation of priorities of Christian conservatives, and the culture wars do not have the same resonance as before. Time will tell to what degree this narrative of "lost moral paradise" continues to hold purchase on conservative politics, but the absence of the traditional "wedge issues" of abortion, school prayer, and homosexuality from the inchoate tea party movement suggests that its relevance has waned.

These four concepts form the core of the theology of American civil religion, according to this interpretation. They are the beliefs which render that which is religious, political and what is political, religious. In this analysis, we have emphasized the means by which the religious right has developed particularly pointed and politically salient articulations of civil religious ideas in a way that has captured its normative center. By contrast, progressives have proven relatively impotent in aligning their policy positions with civil religious motifs.

French Interpretations

Generally speaking, the French, as is the case with many other Europeans, are struck by the degree to which Americans overtly express religion within political contexts. Given the bloody religious wars that have characterized Europe's history, it is unsurprising that the separation of church and state there is more absolute. So the American president's taking an oath of office on the Bible raises questions in Europe about America's commitment to secularism. It is through this prism that the French view American civil religion: as a symbolic political expression of a profound religiosity that expresses itself through broad policy orientations. French academics studying American civil religion interpret it from a perspective that idealizes secularism and regards religious politics as a deviation from that ideal. As outsiders from the American political arena, moreover, they are susceptible to conflating Christian conservative beliefs and attitudes with American identity. Below, we survey the analyses of four French observers of American civil religion before drawing some broader lessons about how their external vantage point generates distinctive insights into that subject.

Although he does not directly address the notion of civil religion per se, Denis Lacorne, one of the foremost Americanists in France, views the American credo, which comprises American civil religion, as indissociably linked to Anglo-Protestantism:

> American democracy, in spite of its republican architecture and contrary to great European democracies, has not succeeded in secularizing. Its "political credo," unchanged for three centuries, remains fundamentally Anglo-Protestant, marked by the myth of its Puritan origins. This is despite the increased presence of Irish, Italian, Polish, Hispanic and Asian immigrants, of which the culture of origin by definition escapes the grasp of Protestant values.[67]

In these remarks, Lacorne effectively discerns the origins of civil religion but seems to view the "culture of origin" as unrelated to the fundamentally Protestant "political credo" as if the two are mutually exclusive. Lacorne seems to underestimate the malleability, not the exclusivity, of American civil religion. The fact that Irish, Italian, Polish, Hispanic, and Asian immigrants can wholeheartedly embrace this credo and even serve in the military and die for it attests to civil religion's capacity to transcend religious and cultural differences. Far from "escaping" from it, cultural heterogeneity is an integral element. It is the inclusion of the "culture of origin" within American civil religion—diversity within unity—that renders it so effective and unquestioned.

In his book *Dieu bénisse l'Amérique: La religion de la Maison-Blanche*, meanwhile, Sébastien Fath finds the chief significance of American civil religion to lie in the perceived messianism that it contributes to America's international relations (the missionary spirit evoked in the previous section). Though he views the American president as the high priest of American civil religion, Fath agrees with John F. Wilson that relatively few parallels exist between American civil religion and traditional religion:

> The [American] civil religion is not in itself a "religion" in the complete and strict sense of the term. It appears more as an ideal construction, an ideal type in the meaning provided by Max Weber, than a religion analogous to Islam, Buddhism, or Christianity. Through several rites, events, and charismatic leaders, it crystallizes the evolutions of an "imagined community," without necessarily presenting something comparable to that which a religion can offer to its members. . . . Although insufficient to qualify [as?] the emergence of a new religion as such, on the other hand [multiple indications] furnish enough elements to confirm the hypothesis of a significant reorientation of the American civil religion in the beginning of the nineteenth century.[68]

Fath views American civil religion as consisting of three historical phases. The first, "mainline," period lasted from the founding to the 1950s, during which time American civil religion emphasized the hope for a better world, a healthy humanism, and self-limitation founded by a transcendent God. The second, "evangelical," period began in the early 1960s, emphasizing the individual over the institution, the local group over the infrastructure, and concrete engagement over theology. Inspired by the frontier spirit and evangelical Christianity, "rebirth" and "born again" became central concepts, and civil religion became more moralistic.[69] Finally, the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 (9/11) triggered the beginning of a "secular

neomessianic" stage, which Fath argues is less closely tied with Christianity. Uncle Sam rather than God would solve the problem of evil. Neoconservatives and Rambo are held to be "anxious metaphysicists" of this faith. This phase emphasizes a "contemporary utopia of an American model intrinsically invested with attributes of the supreme power. As if the American society became its own absolute."[70]

Fath is able to detect elements of civil religion hitherto unobserved. In addition to the standard emphasis on messianism in American foreign policy, his historiography seems to trace the influence of Christian leaders/ideas on presidents and public policy, but the nexus between the two is not precisely defined. It is not entirely clear from his writings what exactly he is observing that leads to these stages. For example, in the "evangelical" period of the 1960s, what led him to generalize about the supremacy of the individual over the institution and engagement over theology? What led him to quantify them as such? His post-9/11 secular neomessianic stage is held to be less religious than the preceding stage, but George W. Bush's distinctly religious rhetoric argues the contrary. Rambo's place in the pantheon of civil religious metaphysicists is also open to question. More intricate, exact definitions of the key concepts he employs would allow one to better appreciate the truly innovative and valuable outside perspective he brings.

In her book *Etats-Unis: Imposture messianique? Genèse et sources*, Nicole Guétin also views American civil religion through a messianic lens. She reiterates the Puritan origins of the founding and its profound effect on religious expression in American politics. Guétin detects within the American psyche a "spiritual arrogance" that has fuelled manifest destiny and its foreign policy outgrowths. She views Thanksgiving Day and especially the elocutions on Memorial Day as reminders that America must continue its divine mission in the name of liberty.[71] Though she is effective in broadly summarizing many of the beliefs held within American civil religion with some degree of accuracy, the very title of her book, *The United States: Messianic Impostor*, suggests that it's just a "sham." Even if the mythical origins of the American missionary spirit are a valid subject of debate, it seems foolhardy to dismiss this messianic spirit as fraudulent. It is at the root of too many real foreign policy decisions, wars, and truly altruistic foreign aid to be negated in that manner.

Camille Froidevaux-Metterie, in her book *Politique et religion aux Etats-Unis*, sees American civil religion as a solution to what she calls the theocratic-secular enigma.[72] Recognizing that civil religion goes beyond a catalog of habits, she considers it the "national spiritual pedestal." According to this conception, God presides over the destiny of the nation, and the republican model offers an example to the world, the values of which are worthy of defense at home and abroad. According to Froidevaux-Metterie,

> The expression of the "civil religion" is in fact rather misleading: it does not consist of a religion in the strict sense of the word, because it does not furnish the ultimate justification of human finitude, any more than it pretends to put the here and now in relation with the beyond. The American civil religion simply designates the phenomenon of minimal religiosity which characterizes the United States and which makes this country so different in appearance from other Western nations. Theism, exemplary nature, and messianism together form the spiritual pedestal without which the vast majority of Americans would consider their national destiny to be void of meaning. As a system of values and ensemble of rites, the civil religion achieves the combination, fragile but sufficient, of the spirit of religion and of secularism, and public religiosity through which the principal aspiration is expressed. Adhesion to the national model and its constitutional corps fulfills the second.[73]

Like her compatriots viewing US civil religion from abroad, Froidevaux-Metterie captures what could be characterized as a "cloudy-but-accurate" vision of the American credo. For example, she paraphrases the narrative of Americans as a "chosen people" chased from Europe to the "promised land" and holds that contemporary Americans want to "keep the flame."[74] Her analysis holds in a very broad sense, but she fails to go beyond generalizations to discern what different groups of Americans believe and why. This is by no means to dispute the coherent frames of reference established by Froidevaux-Metterie and others, but to emphasize the importance of *how* these views are held because they are not always believed in the terms they are portrayed. If one asked the average American, "Do you believe that the Pilgrim fathers who came over on the *Mayflower* were a divinely chosen people who came to the promised land of the New World?" one could expect a baffled stare in reply. If one asked, "Do you believe that the Pilgrims who came to America to escape persecution were blessed with the land they received?" one would probably get more coherent assent. An exploration of the contemporary expression of these beliefs, unclad in specific religious-national rhetoric, would have been useful to better discern the character of American civil religion.

Taking these conceptions together, one can deduce that the French view the *nature* of American civil religion as a set of rituals and beliefs linking God with the national destiny. They largely cite the work of Robert Bellah as a basis and add their own perspective. The rituals include the president swearing the oath of office, "in God we trust" on the currency, "under God" in the pledge of allegiance, Thanksgiving, and so on. The emphasis on Thanksgiving as an important ritual seems somewhat out of place, in that for many Americans it is more a celebration of family and cuisine than religion and Pilgrim fathers. French authors cite the president's Thanksgiving declaration as an important expression of civil religion, but it is arguable how many Americans even know that it exists or pay any attention to it.[75] French analysts seem to miss the fact that the original meaning of many rituals has been transformed, secularized, or simply ignored. Furthermore, they seem to see notions such as exceptionalism or messianism as encompassing the totality of civil religion's beliefs, which they then identify with American identity as a whole. In this way they accord greater significance to minor rituals and sectarian notions than the broader culture would support. This skewed emphasis is unsurprising in that they are on the outside looking in.

On the other hand, French authors are very perceptive concerning the *meaning* that civil religion contributes to American identity. They understand that civil religion gives transcendental status to being American, as expressed, for example, by the concept of Americans being "elect." As George H. W. Bush opined, "I believe America will always have a special place in God's heart, as long as He has a special place in ours."[76] Of course the French tend to view this negatively, seeing it as an expression of "spiritual arrogance," in the words of Guétin.[77] French authors also discern civil religion's conservative tethering of American identity to its cultural roots. For a country composed of so many peoples, religions, and cultures, civil religion lends continuity. They correctly see civil religion as providing an explanation for national origins, the present, and eschatology. It asserts an unbroken chain between the Pilgrim fathers and modern American society, making sense of history, establishing a metaphysical connection between the past and the present, and furnishing the ultimate national destiny as a beacon of liberty and free markets for the world to emulate. It is thereby America's destiny to change the world for the better.

French authors have incisively discerned the *functions* of civil religion. The first is to promote national cohesion through Fath's notion of an "imagined community." One could interpret this as inferring that America is not a "real" community, but it could also mean that the basis for the community is an artificial construct that is nevertheless shared among Americans. Furthermore, civil religion is considered an "element of stability which allows the understanding of the nature of the American political ethos beyond the diversity of those who embody power," thus serving as a key to understanding the American political psyche.[78] In addition, civil religion becomes a public religiosity through which national aspirations are expressed. Finally, it is a mechanism that justifies imperial undertakings. From manifest destiny to the war in Iraq, the belief among Americans that they have a God-given mission to spread their values has proven very effective in garnering public support for such enterprises.

Conclusion

Identities are not problems to solve but expressions of becoming. They are always works in progress and only partially susceptible to conscious manipulation. Americans today struggle to define their country, as they have since they first gathered in Philadelphia to explicate who collectively they wished to be. The debates change, overlap, and recur, but they always take place wherever societies are comprised of real people and not clones. Religion has never been absent from these debates, and civil religion has never been a feature of American public life that politicians of national aspiration could safely ignore. The debate over American civil religion has thus centered on its salience to actual policy making. What does it mean, practically speaking, to claim that America is a Christian nation? Does it require imposition of the Christian equivalent of Sharia, as argued by those who believe that the Ten Commandments have a place in American courts as guides to judicial interpretation of the Constitution? Or is civil religion empty window dressing, signifying nothing? The answer, now as always, lies somewhere in between. There is no definitive answer, only the constant struggle to impart meaning to the national project and define who Americans are and why they should pursue the goals that they do. At the moment, though, it seems that Christian conservatives have gained the upper hand

in appropriating civil religion's legitimating force for their political projects, and it seems likely to remain this way for the foreseeable future.

French authors depict American culture and American civil religion as having a distinctively conservative cast. To be sure, the impressionistic history of the intersection between religion and politics in the United States provided here, which itself reflects a perspective partially developed in the French Academy, supports that view. As Morone would note, the abolitionist and civil rights movements, among others, harnessed a decidedly more liberal religious spirit to achieve political ends than those surveyed here, but the dominance of conservative voices in civil religious discourse today makes it difficult for outsiders to recognize the relevance of any others.[79] In 1988 Robert Wuthnow wrote about the fragmentation of American civil religion into liberal and conservative versions. His observations on liberal civil religion support our claim that religious conservatives have proven more adept in recent years at appropriating religious nationalism's power to lend legitimacy to concrete political programs insofar as the civil religious ideas surveyed in the literatures above correspond to the conservative view almost perfectly:

> Few spokespersons for the liberal version of American civil religion make reference to the religious views of the Founding Fathers or suggest that America is God's chosen nation. References to America's wealth or power being God's means of evangelizing the world are also rare and religious apologetics for capitalism seem to be virtually taboo. . . .
>
> . . . Liberal religious leaders offer little that specifically legitimates America as a nation. Instead, they appeal to broader values that transcend American culture and, indeed, challenge some of the more nationalistic assumptions it incorporates.[80]

The conservative version seems clearly ascendant, capturing the moral vocabulary that we most frequently hear today to describe American history, purpose, and destiny. The dominance of conservatism in American civil religion, however, in combination with the unshakable place of civil religion at the heart of American national identity, strongly suggests that French and other analysts will continue to have good reason to suspect that "European-style" notions of progressive biblical justice are unlikely to characterize American policy in the near future. The cultural divide between the continents is not closing anytime soon.

Notes

1. "Christian" is a broad[illegible] ossibly overly broad[illegible] erm, but the conscious ecumenism of civil religion allows it to be consonant with most varieties of that tradition. In its origins, civil religion had a more clearly Protestant flavor, with special accents on millennial versions of Protestantism of the sort espoused by modern evangelicals.

2. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (Norfolk, CT: Thetford Press, 1986); Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); and Anthony W. Marx, *Faith in Nation: Exclusionary Origins of Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

3. Michael Lienesch, *Redeeming America: Piety and Politics in the New Christian Right* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1993); Geiko Müller-Fahrenholz, *America's Battle for God: A European Christian Looks at Civil Religion* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2007); Wade Clark Roof, "American Presidential Rhetoric from Ronald Reagan to George W. Bush: Another Look at Civil Religion," *Social Compass* 56, no. 2 (June 2009): 286[illegible]301; and Rhys A. Williams and Susan M. Alexander, "Religious Rhetoric in American Populism: Civil Religion as Movement Ideology," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 33 (March 1994): 1[illegible]5.

4. As we will see below, evangelicals and conservative Catholics have all but monopolized what counts as "Christian" values today, but in earlier decades mainline Protestant sects had greater influence on the national mores and vocabulary.

5. Conrad Cherry, ed., *God's New Israel: Religious Interpretations of American Destiny*, rev. and updated ed. (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); and Thomas M. McFadden, ed., *America in Theological Perspective* (New York: Seabury Press, 1976).

6. Hugh Heclo, "Is America a Christian Nation?," *Political Science Quarterly* 122, no. 1 (Spring 2007): 59[illegible]8; James A. Morone, *Hellfire Nation: The Politics of Sin in American History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003); and Walter A. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World since 1776* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997).

7. Robert N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," *Dædalus: Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 96, no. 1 (Winter 1967): 1[illegible]21, http://www.robertbellah.com/articles_5.htm.

8. Conor Cruise O'Brien, *God Land: Reflections on Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988); see also Anderson, *Imagined Communities*; and Cherry, *God's New Israel*.

9. Marx, *Faith in Nation*, 38.

10. Cherry, *God's New Israel*; Winthrop S. Hudson, ed., *Nationalism and Religion in America: Concepts of American Identity and Mission* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970); Seymour Martin Lipset, *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996); Sidney E. Mead, *The Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963); and Arthur M. Schlesinger, "America: Experiment or Destiny?," *American Historical Review* 82, no. 3 (June 1977): 505[illegible]22.

11. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America."

12. Kenneth D. Wald, *Religion and Politics in the United States*, 3rd ed. (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1997); and Müller-Fahrenholz, *America's Battle for God*.

13. Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967); and McFadden, *America in Theological Perspective*, vii.

14. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America."

15. Edmund S. Morgan, *Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea* (New York: New York University Press,1963); Daniel J. Elazar, *Covenant and Constitutionalism: The Great Frontier and the Matrix of Federal Democracy* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1998); Mead, *Lively Experiment*; Bellah, "Civil Religion in America"; and Cherry, *God's New Israel*.

16. Francis J. Bremer, *The Puritan Experiment: New England Society from Bradford to Edwards* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1995); and Ernest Lee Tuveson, *Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millennial Role* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968).

17. Hudson, *Nationalism and Religion in America*.
18. Ibid., xxxii; and Heclo, "Is America a Christian Nation?"
19. John F. Wilson, *Public Religion in American Culture* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1979).
20. Ibid., 24–25; Berger, *Sacred Canopy*; and Roderick P. Hart, *The Political Pulpit* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1977), 28.
21. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 126–27.
22. Müller-Fahrenholz, *America's Battle for God*.
23. Morone, *Hellfire Nation*, 3.
24. Bremer, *Puritan Experiment*; Hudson, *Nationalism and Religion in America*; and Tuveson, *Redeemer Nation.*
25. Mead, *Lively Experiment*; and Hudson, *Nationalism and Religion in America*.
26. William R. Hutchison and Hartmut Lehmann, eds., *Many Are Chosen: Divine Election and Western Nationalism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994); H. W. Brands, *What America Owes the World: The Struggle for the Soul of Foreign Policy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State*; Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansionism and the Empire of Right* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1995); and Albert K. Weinberg, *Manifest Destiny: A Study of Nationalist Expansion in American History* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1935).
27. Walter Brueggemann, "Patriotism for Citizens of the Penultimate Superpower," *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 42, no. 4 (Winter 2003): 336–43; and Lipset, *American Exceptionalism.*
28. Martin Marty, "Two Kinds of Civil Religion," in *American Civil Religion*, ed. Russell E. Richey and Donald G. Jones (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 139–57.
29. Cherry, *God's New Israel*; and Marty, "Two Kinds of Civil Religion," 144–46.
30. Wald, *Religion and Politics*, 63.
31. Brueggemann, "Patriotism for Citizens"; and Earl Zimmerman, "Church and Empire: Free-Church Ecclesiology in a Global Era," *Political Theology* 10, no. 3 (Fall 2009): 471–95.
32. See, for example, Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny*; Tuveson, *Redeemer Nation*; Cherry, *God's New Israel*; and Weinberg, *Manifest Destiny*.
33. Marty, "Two Kinds of Civil Religion"; and Wald, *Religion and Politics*.
34. Bremer, *Puritan Experiment*; Perry Miller, *The American Puritans: Their Prose and Poetry* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1956); and Morgan, *Visible Saints*.
35. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America"; Hudson, *Nationalism and Religion in America*; and Cherry, *God's New Israel*.
36. Morone, *Hellfire Nation*.
37. Roof, "American Presidential Rhetoric," 294.
38. Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion, and Nationalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press 1997); Marx, *Faith in Nation*; Lienesch, *Redeeming America*; and William Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America* (New York: Broadway Books, 1996).
39. Martin, *With God on Our Side*; Lienesch, *Redeeming America*; Wald, *Religion and Politics*; Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith since World War II* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988); Martin E. Marty, *The One and the Many: America's Struggle for the Common Good* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); and James Davison Hunter, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* (New York: Basic Books, 1991).
40. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America." See also Hart, *Political Pulpit*; and Wilson, *Public Religion in American Culture*.
41. Morone, *Hellfire Nation*; Elazar, *Covenant and Constitutionalism*; and Wald, *Religion and Politics*.
42. Cherry, *God's New Israel*.
43. R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism: A Historical Study* (London: Murray, 1926), 84.
44. Miller, *American Puritans*, ix.
45. Weinberg, *Manifest Destiny*; Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny*; and McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State*.
46. Cherry, *God's New Israel*; Miller, *American Puritans*; Mark McNaught, *La religion civile américaine: De Reagan à Obama* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2009).

47. Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny*.
48. Lienesch, *Redeeming America*.
49. Cherry, *God's New Israel*.
50. McNaught, *La religion civile américaine*.
51. Tuveson, *Redeemer Nation*.
52. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State*; and Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny*.
53. Brands, *What America Owes the World*.
54. Roof, "American Presidential Rhetoric."
55. Brands, *What America Owes the World*; and Morone, *Hellfire Nation*.
56. Roof, "American Presidential Rhetoric"; and Lienesch, *Redeeming America*.
57. Max Weber, trans. Talcott Parsons, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2003), 79.
58. Lienesch, *Redeeming America*, 95.
59. Quoted in Cherry, *God's New Israel*, 236.
60. Lipset, *American Exceptionalism*, 83; and Lienesch, *Redeeming America*, 98–100. See also Wuthnow, *Restructuring of American Religion*, 249.
61. Harvey Cox, "The Market as God: Living in the New Dispensation," *Atlantic Monthly* 283, no. 3 (March 1999): 18–23, http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/99mar/marketgod.htm.
62. Lienesch, *Redeeming America*.
63. Quoted in Wuthnow, *Restructuring of American Religion*, 248.
64. Lipset, *American Exceptionalism*.
65. Michael Kramer, "Are You Running with Me, Jesus?: Televangelist Pat Robertson Goes for the White House," *New York Magazine*, 18 August 1986, 22–29, 24.
66. Richard J. Neuhaus, *The Naked Public Square: Religion and Democracy in America*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1986), 45.
67. Denis Lacorne, *De la religion en Amérique: Essai d'histoire politique* (Paris: Gallimard, 2007), 9–10.
68. Sébastien Fath, *Dieu bénisse l'Amérique: La religion de la Maison-Blanche* (Paris: Seuil, 2004), 227.
69. Ibid., 63–67.
70. Ibid., 195–97.
71. Nicole Guétin, *Etats-Unis: Imposture messianique? Genèse et sources* (Paris: Harmattan, 2008), 104.
72. Camille Froidevaux-Metterie, *Politique et religion aux Etats-Unis* (Paris: La decouverte, 2009), 106.
73. Ibid., 110.
74. Ibid., 107.
75. Ibid., 111.
76. George H. W. Bush, "Transcript of Bush Speech Accepting the Nomination for Another Four Years," *New York Times*, 21 October 1992, sec. A., col. 1, p. 14.
77. Guétin, *Etats-Unis: Imposture messianique?,* 106.
78. Froidevaux-Metterie, *Politique et religion*, 113.
79. Morone, *Hellfire Nation*.
80. Wuthnow, *Restructuring of American Religion*, 250, 253.