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AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM AS HISTORY, MYTH, AND IDEOLOGY

RELIGIOUS RHETORIC IN AMERICAN POLITICAL SPEECHES

A Dissertation Submitted in partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the degree of Doctorate in American Civilization

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Amel LAHLOUH

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ABSTRACT

While some scholars are questioning the concept of American exceptionalism, this belief nonetheless holds a powerful position in the nature of American political tradition. The theme of American exceptionalism has been used in political speeches from the inception of the United States as an independent nation. It is almost impossible to overstate the power and seduction that American exceptionalism holds in U.S. politics and culture.

The presence of religious rhetoric and the belief in American exceptionalism in American political tradition have been constant throughout history, becoming even more visible in the post-war period. This dissertation greatly furthers our understanding of this important subject. It is valuable for anyone interested in the study of American exceptionalism as history, myth, and ideology and the challenges of using civil religion in American politics.

This study contributes to the scholarship on American political and religious history by deriving from key theoretical works of Bellah's civil religion. Developing an argument about the manner in which changing religious identification in American exceptionalism might influence presidential rhetoric. Through examining speeches of various American presidents both Democratic and Republican who have indeed referred to the nation's religious traditions and more often to specifically providential accounts of America's place and special role in world history. Their rhetoric is shown to be a re-combination of some of the central symbols of the tradition of the nation's sense of a mission.

This research falls in the realm of interdisciplinary approach of cultural studies . By qualitatively analyzing the speeches and studying them within the theoretical framework of Bellah's civil religion, it is shown that invoking American exceptionalism rhetorically was a useful tool for most American presidents when they encountered political problems with regards to domestic or foreign policy crises.

The organisation of the study follows both a chronological and thematic order to show that the concept of American exceptionalism has gone through variations in meaning challenged by the realities of American history, such as the American Civil War, the Cold War and the War on Terror . They have therfore proved to be remarkably resilient.

DECLARATION

I declare hereby that the substance of this dissertation is entirely the result of my investigation and that due reference or acknowledgement is made, whenever necessary to the work of other researchers.

Signature

DEDICATION

To my dear loving husband, to my son Chamseddine, to my daughters Malak and Sonia; a truly exceptional family

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A budding scholar is so often aware that he stands on the shoulders of giants that mentioning it is a cliché. Yet the gratitude inspired by the cheerfulness and generosity of friends and colleagues can only be repaid in honor, and so I repay here what little I can. I am thankful to my supervisor: Professor Nadjia. AMRANE her cheer, guidance, prudence, and wisdom have taught me what it means to be a good researcher; I am thankful for the trust and her thoughts on my work. For all my teachers at Bouzareah University of Algiers; their work as scholars and teachers inspired me to try to follow in their footsteps; for my fellow graduate students at Ali Lounici University of Blida, I am grateful for the spirited discussions, tips, and camaraderie over my years of teaching, your encouragement and enthusiasm for my work was sometimes the only fuel that kept me going.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....i

DECLARATION iii

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS iv

DEDICATION.....v

INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPETR ONE: AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM: A HEAVY RELIGIOUS PRESENCE.. 20

I- American Exceptionalism and the Protestant Quest for a Holy Christian Commonwealth

1- The Kingdom of God in the Bible.....22

2- Saint Augustine's Ecclesiastical History 25

3-Millenial Protestant History 27

4- The Kingdom of God in the New World 30

II- Puritan Religious Exceptionalism as Providential Historical Narrative 33

1 – Providential History: The Central Role of Typology and Migration.....34

2- William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation:* The Pilgrim's Providential Vision of history : A Redemptive Migration.....38

3 –John Winthrop's *A Model of Christian Charity:* The City Upon Hill as Renewal of God's Promise.....50

CHAPTER TWO: THE SECULARIZATION OF PROVIDENTIAL HISTORY: AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM AS CIVIL RELIGION 65

I- Civil Religion and American Political Tradition 68

1- History and Prevalence of Civil Religion 69

2- Shifting interpretations of 'a City Upon a Hill': Birth of a Civil Religion 71

3-American Political Tradition 73

II- Eisenhower's "In God We Trust" 79

1 - Eisenhower's Faith :A Deep Spiritual Awakening 79

2- Eisenhower's Civil Religion: A Spiritual Crusade against Communism.....82

3- Eisenhower's Millennial Beliefs: Demonizing Atheist Communism.....84

III- Ronald Reagan's Armageddon and the Evil Empire 88

1- Reagan as a Man of Evangelical Faith.....88

2- Reagan's Civil Religion : American as the Greatest Bastion of Freedom.....92

3- Reagan's Apocalyptic Beliefs: Fear of a Nuclear Armageddon.....96

CHAPTER THREE : AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM AS MYTH OF UNION.....107

I- American Exceptionalism as Myth : The Importance of the Jeremiad 110

1- Myth as Cultural Cohesion 110

2- The American Jeremiad 112

3- The American Jeremiad and Civil Religion.....114

II- Abraham Lincoln's Secular Jeremiad on the Civil War 119

1- Abraham Lincoln's Faith: A Skeptical Spirituality 119

2- The First Inaugural Address: The Jeremiad at the Service of a Just War.....125

3- The Gettysburg Address: The Jeremiad at the Service of America's Union.....129

4- The Second Inaugural Address: The Jeremiad at the service of Reconciliation.....133

III- Johnson's Jeremiad on Civil Rights 139

1- Johnson's Faith: A Baptist Upbringing.....139

2- The Inaugural Address: The Jeremiad at Times of Crisis.....142

3- We Shall Overcome Address: The Jeremiad as Crusade for Civil Rights 147

CHAPTER FOUR: AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM AS IMPERIAL IDEOLOGY 161

I- American Exceptionalism and Foreign Policy 165

1- Manifest Destiny as a Democratic Expansionist Ideology.....165

2- Ideology , Interests, and American Foreign Policy.....168

II- Woodrow Wilson's Crusade for Democracy 172

2- Wilson' Calvinist Presbyterianism 172

3- Wilson's Civil Religion: The U.S as a Redeemer Nation.....174

4-Wilson's Idealistic justification of Redemptive War Intervention.....179

III- George H.W. Bush's Exceptionalist Rhetoric on the Persian Gulf War 185

1- George Bush's Faith: Exceptionlism in a Skeptical America.....185

2- The Persian Gulf War as a Just War..... 187

3- Exceptionalism and operation Desert Storm : America as the Guardian of a millennial New World Order.....191

IV- George W Bush's exceptionalist Rhetoric on the War on Terror.....198

1- George.W. Bush Evangelical Faith.....198

2- The Bush Doctrine: Legitimizing Democracy Promotion 201

3- American Exceptionalism and the War on Terror: Battling the Forces of Evil.....207

CONCLUSION 228

APPENDIX 235

BIBLIOGRAPHY 244

ABSTRACT IN ARABIC 262

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is about the historical, mythical, and ideological dimensions of American exceptionalism through a comprehensive study of religious rhetoric in American presidential discourse. By American exceptionalism I mean the Americans shared conception of themselves as elect and their representation of America as the chosen nation destined by providence to fulfil the process of history and redeem the world. Such a belief in American exceptionalism has been widespread in the political culture and among the general American population. It is a belief articulated by every American president and held on to by every American citizen. This expression of American exceptionalism has been formulated and re-formulated throughout American history, from John Winthrop's "City upon a Hill" sermon to Abraham Lincolns "last best hope on earth" to Woodrow Wilsons mission to spread democracy to Ronald Reagan' s "shining city on a hill" to nearly every post-September 11 speech of George W. Bush.

Statement of the Problematic:

Puritan Exceptionalism stressed the religious foundation of the United States of America and the importance, not to say, the monopoly, of Puritan New England's ideals and values in the rendering of a specifically American identity that is national character and culture. Accordingly an outcome of this belief is the continuity of Puritan religious influence in the United States history throughout the nineteenth and well into the twentieth and twenty first century political discourse.

Puritan exceptionalism has ever since held a firm place in the American collective memory, exemplified by its more contemporary resurrection in presidential speeches. Eventually to recount the evolution of the concept of American exceptionalism and to give a comprehensive account of the presence of such a theme in American presidential speeches is beyond the scope of this dissertation. The guiding question behind this dissertation is:

How do American presidents employ civil religion when endeavoring to identify with the American public? Such a research question also prompts me to investigate the presence of civil religious themes and references to American exceptionalism in the speeches selected. I posit that American presidents do indeed use religious rhetoric in a different manner and that these variations will illuminate the main tenants of American exceptionalism, highlighting the influential correlation between history, myth, and ideology within the rhetorical nexus of religion and politics.

Purpose of the Study:

The study of religion in political speeches has been inspired by a number of factors. The popular interest in apocalyptic prophecies surrounding the year 2000, the rhetorical responses to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the increasingly prominent role of religious rhetoric in the political campaigns, and the manifestly religious rhetoric of President George W. Bush have all conspired to reignite scholarly interest in the topic.[1]

In their text "Agendas, Rhetoric, and Social Change: State of the Union Addresses from Eisenhower to Clinton," Donna Hoffman and Alison Howard say that their analysis revealed "a striking increase in religious references in the last two decades of our time series, beginning with Reagan".[2] This is important because it shows how the rhetorical execution of civil religion changes with each incoming president. Each president sets the tone and precedent for his successor to some degree. This dissertation seeks to contribute to this important discussion by exploring the ways in which American presidents use religious rhetorical forms — passwords designed to help them accomplish rhetorical and political objectives and to create a sense of American exceptionalism.

Outline of the Research:

This dissertation is divided into four main chapters. The first chapter entitled ***American Exceptionalism: A Heavy Religious Presence*** stresses the religious interpretation of the United States as a nation chosen by God, a New Israel destined for a providential mission of world redemption, has been a near-constant element in American exceptionalism. The persistence of such a notion is a clear indication of the nation's deep roots in Protestant theology and practices. The Reformation, in stressing the authority of the Scriptures, drew renewed attention to the biblical idea of the millennium, the thousand-year earthly reign of Christ that was to come at the conclusion of human history, as foretold in the Book of Revelation. Those biblical passages are, of course, notoriously difficult to interpret. But their practical effects were worth analyzing to depict the roots of American religious exceptionalism, indeed, down to the Bible and the early years of Christianity.

This chapter involves a careful analysis of William Bradford's history *Of Plymouth Plantation* reveals the early Pilgrims vision of the role in their nation's history and John Winthrop's *A Model of Christian Charity*. The latter is said to be the father of American exceptionalism because of his famous simile that the Massachusetts Bay Colony will be as a "city on a hill." Winthrop is, however no imperial exceptionalist, though aspects of his ideas prepare the way for others' imperialism.

Chapter two, which starts my proper study, explores ***The Secularization of Providential History : American Exceptionalism as Civil Religion.*** The way American exceptionalism received a secular connotation by moving from a more sacred interpretation of providential exceptionalim to a more secular version of a civil religion. After a brief discussion of civil religion and its presence in the American political tradition, I will consider some of the public critiques of American presidents' use of religious rhetoric. Indeed American presidents have articulated a strongly messianic vision of the American role in promoting rights abroad. This messianic cultural tradition has been present during the Cold War in Eisenhowers's and Reagan's millennial beliefs. Their tough rhetorical stance against the Soviet Union- which in stark exceptionalist terms condemned as the

‘evil empire’ leading the United States to witness Armageddon- is going to be examined to illustrate most clearly Eisenhower’s and Reagan’s providential vision of their nation’s history.

My third chapter covers ***American Exceptionalism as Myth***. It shows how the American conception of their nation as providentially exceptional was refashioned into a powerful myth that of their providential national mission. In this way the jeremiad is attached to the myth of chosenness which signals that the covenant of God with people in order to bring them to salvation. It indicates that the chosen people may undergo the afflictions or crises in the journey of their existence. The emergence of these perils could have come from the acts of people which are no longer in the frame of obedience as prescribed in the covenantal relationship. In other words, the jeremiad appears to function in enforcing the covenant for the goodness of a nation within which the chosen people exist. In response to a “falling away,” the jeremiad issues a call to the community to return home to idealized foundational principles. More than just a tool to unite the public. Lincoln used the jeremiad to justify the civil war, much as did Johnson using themes of unity and faith to bolster his American audience during times of trial i.e. Kennedy’s assassination and the Civil Rights Act. The speeches selected illuminate the importance of the Jeremiad as a communal ritual. Just like Lincoln, Johnson finds a parallel between these times of trial and Judeo-Christian tradition that provides an enduring base for U.S. civil religion. The traces of the Puritan jeremiad frame in Lincoln’s and Johnson’s political rhetoric can be elaborated into three structural elements namely, lamenting the present condition, evoking the past and calling for renewal .

The final chapter illuminates ***American Exceptionalism as Ideology***. It shows how foreign policy is legitimized through American exceptionalism in Woodrow Wilson’s, G.H Bush’s and G.W Bush’s discourses. American exceptionalism profoundly affects how the United States acts and justifies its behavior in the world. American exceptionalism had dangerous and at times violent ideological hidden intentions for the sake of holding a dominant position in the world. As the political scientist Seymour Martin Lipset has noticed, Americans have been unique in their

unwillingness to “recognize” evil regimes, to require “unconditional” surrender of their enemies, and to believe that victory will bring with it a last and final order’’.[3] All of Wilson, G.H Bush, and G.W Bush did use religious language to communicate American ideals and beliefs. While their language is religious, and they do cite Biblical passages, they are rather benign in nature and, again, revived the exceptionalist rhetoric to justify extreme military actions during the WWI and in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

There has been a careful selection of case studies for every chapter. Both presidential administrations and the speeches appropriated were chosen for analysis based on the following criteria: The speech strongly related to American exceptionalism. The speech contained civil-religious themes as defined by Bellah. Together, the selected speeches serve as strong examples of the presence of American exceptionalist rhetoric within history, myth, and ideological dimensions. All of the selected case studies insisted that the United States was the greatest nation on earth and that so long as Americans maintained that belief, they would be able to overcome any crises they faced.

Research Methodology and Approach:

Studying American exceptionalism can not be done within one discipline using one distinct method . Since this research is not merely political or sociological, it should be included in the realm of interdisciplinary approach of cultural studies.

Interdisciplinary research (IDR) has become an increasingly common method of study. It is a type research that draws from two or more disciplines in order to gain a more well developed perspective, or discover something new. For instance America Studies involves a considerable amount of interdisciplinary research in fields such as sociology, history, anthropology and political science.

Interdisciplinary research often requires more resources, time, effort, than single discipline research but the rewards can be considerable, in terms of

advancing the knowledge base and helping to solve complex societal problems. According to Joyce Tait and Catherine Lyall, interdisciplinary research is defined as

> research as occurring where the contributions of the various disciplines are integrated to provide holistic or systemic outcomes. Interdisciplinary research can be within the social sciences or between the social, natural and life sciences.[4]

In this way interdisciplinary research can be more productive and creative because of its unique potential for sustainable inquiry at the interfaces of academic domains. According to Dalke, the very nature of interdisciplinarity "requires that those who engage in it will always be working beyond the edges of what they know how to do well; in conception and methodology, such work can not become conventional." [5] Indeed while writing this dissertation, we had to read about history, religion, political science, and sociology to cover the many intertwined fields – history, myth, and ideology –that American exceptionalism encompasses.

Depending on the subject being researched, interdisciplinary research can either be easily applied or difficult to process. For example, a research project on the development of American identity in the nineteenth century would require looking at American history as well as concepts and theories from sociology, anthropology, and political science. Because something like identity is a fairly complex thing, there was no way to develop a strong thesis by operating from a single discipline . In this case , interdisciplinary research was easy to apply because these fields have natural overlap and many things in common.

Infact one of the difficulties encountered in this dissertation is the ambiguity surrounding the concept of American exceptionalism, ambiguity illustrated by the varied uses of it. Much of the disagreement about American exceptionalism originates in the different understandings of it invoked by many scholars. For the purpose at hand, I want to distinguish among two different exceptionalist theses, theses that are reasonably distinct and have quite distinctive implications. I shall refer to these theses as *historical* exceptionalism and *behavioral* exceptionalism. *Historical* exceptionalism refers to claims about America's unique historical origins

and development. It is primarily associated with arguments about the absence of socialism in America, arguments citing the lack of a feudal past, abundant land, diversity among the working classes owing to immigration, and a variety of other factors. [6] More generally, historical exceptionalism looks for explanations of differences between America and the rest of the world (typically, Europe); in the constellation of facts and attributes that mark what Tocqueville, who first referred to America as exceptional, called the "point of departure". [7]

Shafer writes that "American exceptionalism is the notion that the United States was created differently, developed differently, and thus has to be *understood* differently – essentially on its own terms and within its own context." [8] Numerous analytic difficulties beset scholarly efforts to assess America's historical exceptionalism. The claim is trivial because practically no one disagrees. Besides, there is nothing distinctively American about it: all nations are in this respect "exceptional." Noticing this point, Kammen, has called for "comparative exceptionalism" as a historical approach. [9]

A second claim found frequently in the literature refers to *behavioral* exceptionalism, the thesis that America's actions, policies, and endeavors in international affairs are unique or distinctive. Ignatieff identifies three types of exceptionalist behavior in the arena of human rights. *Exemptionalism* refers to the American habit of negotiating multilateral agreements and regimes only if they allow exemptions for American citizens and practices; of attaching reservations to treaties and conventions; of delaying or refusing to ratify conventions at all; and, of refusing to provide for the implementation of those agreements it does sign and ratify in domestic law. [10] Ignatieff *refers* to America's habit "of [judging] itself by different standards than it uses to judge other countries and [judging] its friends by standards different than those it uses for its enemies". [11] Each of these claims concerns how US policies and actions are unique or different from those of other countries.

It is this version of exceptionalism, that is behavioral exceptionalism, that I shall be concerned with here – or at least, with one interpretation of it in the

American context, which I call *providential or Religious exceptionalism*. Providential exceptionalism refers to a commonplace American belief that theirs is a chosen nation, one upon which Providence has bestowed special blessings and which has been charged with a special world-historical mission to cultivate and promote its values. Providential exceptionalism is frequently conflated with both of the other kinds of exceptionalism. It has an obvious historical dimension: originating with the earliest British settlers in North America, its evolution can be traced through several centuries of American religious and later political rhetoric. If, as Kammen suggests, every country is different, America's difference might consist in this distinctive belief in its own difference; such a belief is itself a crucial fact of American history.[12] Providential exceptionalism attempts to understand what motivates or shapes or informs America's exceptionalist behavior; it emphasizes the reasons animating American actions and attitudes rather than their uniqueness. In particular, I am interested in how America's self-understanding as a chosen nation – a "city upon a hill" in Winthrop's famous phrase – influences its policy and attitudes

Accordingly, by applying interdisciplinary approach, this dissertation demands different research methodologies and techniques . We thoroughly referred to discourse and rhetoric. As the terms 'discourse' and 'rhetoric' are often fairly loosely used, I thought I might quickly clarify some relevant theoretical points underpinning their meaning, even if very simply. The term discourse was given a more particular and precise meaning in the works of the French philosopher and social theorist, Michel Foucault (1926-1984) who argued that our communication (spoken, written, visual) is mediated through the knowledge and power – or discourse -- of various social institutions (such as family, political systems, markets, religion) and individual capacity and ability to act.[13] Thus how we communicate and interpret events is shaped by the historical, political, economic 'discourse' we are living in at the time. In turn, this also mediates and limits our own understanding of the world and the 'truth' and 'knowledge' we seek.

Debates on ‘discourse’ and a ‘discourse’ analysis have generated much interest over the decades and have become critical of several subject disciplines, for example, anthropology, cultural studies, sociology, women’s studies and psychology. In this, a big challenge has been has been around the topic of research. This includes questions of what has been investigated, how this investigation has been influenced by disciplinary discourses and underlying assumptions and what this has meant for subject ‘truth’ and ‘knowledge’.

Take for instance the argument that anthropological and ethnographical studies set in the colonial era were bounded within a colonial discourse of power, domination and racism. Thus for instance, some anthropological studies which set out to ‘represent’ the tribal ‘other’ to the world during the colonial era, were in fact based on much untruth, fallacious ‘knowledge’ and misrepresentation. It is therefore important to question the questions to which we seek answers - how, why, or whether we should ask them at all - within the context of dominant discourses of the time to make for “better” research.

Despite the complex nature of discourse as a concept, most approaches to the study of discourse share a set of common theoretical commitments and characteristics.[14] *Firstly*: the notion that language and the use of language are not viewed as neutral instruments of communication. Language is formed in a social context, and social phenomena such as identities and relations are constructed by language. *Second*: the notion that one often seeks to reconstruct social identities through discourse analysis. Identities are flexible, and the formation of identities is done through and inside the discourse. Identities are only possible in placing them in opposition to something else, something they are not.[15] *Third*: the analysis of discourse is often concerned with power relations. Discourses define what can be said, and by who, and can be viewed as a struggle for definitional power . [16] Discourses thus define who is authorized to speak and to act with legitimacy: enabling certain individuals and groups while restricting others. [17]

The term “rhetoric” is also an important tool for the construction of discourse in political speeches. Aristotle defined rhetoric as “the faculty of

observing in any given case the available means of persuasion".[18] Proficiency in rhetoric is based on the extent to which one can organize the perceptions of the real world and experiences of those being persuaded, so that what is communicated appears to be self-evident and natural . [19]

However, in the 20th century, the evolution of rhetorical studies has led to the concept of "new rhetoric" in contrast to the "old" one conceived in classical sense. This new rhetoric is an interdisciplinary field of study, and heavily based on the works of Kenneth Burke (*A Rhetoric of Motives*, 1950) and Chaïm Perelman (*Traité de l'argumentation – la nouvelle rhétorique* 1958) . [20] The new rhetoric can be conceived even wider: as a type of instrumental discourse which responds to, reinforces, or alters the understandings of an audience or a social community.[21] Even Aristotle had origins of "new rhetoric" in his thinking, although for him it was more of "dialectic", a theory concerning the logic of argumentation.[22]

According to Perelman, "new rhetoric" is somewhat a combination of Aristotle's rhetoric and dialectic: it is concerned with discourse addressed to any sort of audience, even examining arguments addressed to oneself in private deliberation. The new rhetoric is persuasion in the sense that it accommodates actively to different audiences. Central to Perelman's thinking are the so-called "premises", which are, strictly speaking, mutually negotiated agreements between the speaker and the audience.[23] This agreement comes from an "argumentation" between the two. Since the speaker must adapt his or her speech to a given and particular audience, the premises the speaker provides must be accepted by the audience through the process of argumentation in order for the speech to succeed in the first place.

In this study, the most apparent premise is naturally the notion of American exceptionalism. The premise has value since the notion of exceptionalism seems to be easily accepted by the (mainly American) audience in the era of the nation state and in the context of the historical construction of the United States being "a moral beacon".

When analyzing any political argument in this research, there have been numerous conflicting factual claims. To understand an argument we had to analyze how certain facts and notions are illuminated to confirm certain interests and to promote certain solutions to conflicts, whereas others are repressed. The use of such selective historical narratives function as origin myths which, whether based on historical facts or not, serve as a guarantee for the current social order or for an alternative social order. [24] In political rhetoric it is often useful to use historical inventions or particular perceptions of historic events in order to legitimize policy. These historical inventions must seem credible and ring true to the target audience. This ring of truth is often no more than a ring of familiarity, something the audience has heard before and accepts at face value .[25] When legitimating foreign policy it can thus be useful for policy makers to contextualize events in the frame of something familiar. Consequently "rivals will draw on the same rhetorical frame – the same fundamental, easily graspable 'truths'—to advance their contending views of past and future" .[26]

The study of political rhetoric entails seeing how different myths are activated and unveiling the different metaphors used to legitimate power. The struggle for power entails winning credibility for your way of perceiving the world .

Anderson advocates the virtues of studying what is articulated by statesmen.[27] He states that "Arguments are the basis for all government action". He continues: "Advocates of new actions, of continuing an existing policy, or of inaction must support their cases with arguments. Regardless of what is being proposed or opposed, supporting arguments are required".[28] Legitimacy and rhetoric are thus basically connected and the acquisition and maintenance of rule is as much dependent on legitimacy as on physical coercion. Legitimacy must thus be established through rhetorical action.[29]

Literature Review

There are many works to be found within the discipline that share the same underlying theoretical approach towards the presidency and religious rhetoric and thus deserve extended comments. American civil religion has become the dominant theoretical explanation of the intersection of religion and politics. In Bellah's home discipline of sociology, the concept has generated interest and contentious debate among an entire generation of sociologists. Civil religion has become the dominant descriptive term for occasions upon which religious rhetoric is incorporated into political discourse. Robert N. Bellah's conception of *civil religion* developed in his books *Beyond Belief* and *Broken Covenant.*[30] After analyzing a series of presidential inaugurals, Bellah concluded that a civil religion existed in America. As he put it:

> Although matters of personal religious belief, worship, and association are considered to be strictly private affairs, there are, at the same time, certain common elements of religious orientation that the great majority of Americans share. These have played a crucial role in the development of American institutions and still provide a religious dimension to the whole fabric of American life, including the political sphere. This public religious dimension is expressed in a set of beliefs, symbols, and rituals, that I am calling American civil religion.[31]

Therefore American civil religion consists of references to God or divine providence present in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the content of inaugural speeches delivered by American Presidents. American civil religion, inaugurates thus a state of religious and political exceptionalism. This was reflected in the inaugural speeches delivered by every American president. Every four years the inauguration is reenacted as a ritual of democracy. The phrase " civil religion" was intended "to describe the religious dimension of American political life that has characterized our Republic since its foundation and whose most central tenet is that the nation . . . stands under . . . a 'higher law." [32]

Respected authors followed with books bearing titles such as Toolin,'s *American civil religion from* 1789 to 1981: A *content analysis* of *Presidential Inaugural Addresses*.[33] Toolin recognized the prevalence of references to God in Presidential Inaugural addresses and sought to content analyze forty-nine addresses from George Washington (Inaugurated in 1789) to Ronald Reagan (Inaugurated in 1981). He chose inaugural addresses because it was an under-researched area in the genre of Religion and politics. The basic issue she addressed is whether or not religious references could be found in these addresses. The unit of analysis was a specific reference to a deity and particular Judeo-Christian religious content (e.g., references to the Old or New testament prophesies or stories). Secondly, Toolin addressed the nature and characteristics of these references as what she calls "civil religion" defined as, a self congratulatory relationship between politics and religion.[34] Her findings confirmed the presence of references to a Deity as evidence for the existence of this civil religion, or particular relationship between politics and God. The characteristics of this civil religion involve culture building, culture affirmation, and legitimation, and they are interwoven with themes of destiny, freedom, and sacrifice . Toolin specifically declares the inaugural address as "a very particular picture of American civil religion" as it is the place for a president to appeal to, comfort, and encourage the nation in a highly ritualized manner.[35]

Coe and Domke further the critical look at presidential rhetoric by specifically examining U.S. presidential religious language and patterns.[36] In their book :*The God Strategy: How Religion Became a Political Weapon in America* , the authors, similar to Toolin , reference Bellah as a seminal scholar in the genre of religion and politics who discussed the extent to which Religion related sociologically with individuals by appealing to their perception of the world. The specific trend Coe and Domke attend to is the rise of Christian conservatives into the political domain as powerful voters moving from a marginal to an ascendant role. Positing Reagan as the clear spearhead of the trend toward new religious patterns in public address, Coe and Domke further hypothesize that George W. Bush elevated the trend again in 2005.

Methodologically, Coe and Domke content analyzed the State of the Union and Inaugural addresses of Franklin Roosevelt through George W. Bush. The unit of analysis was the single word and coding involved seeking references to God, freedom/liberty, and the linking of God to freedom and liberty . The results revealed two noteworthy trends; first, "references to a higher power increased beginning with the Reagan presidency" and second, "the usage of freedom and liberty shows two distinct peak periods…first, Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy…and the second, during the presidencies of Reagan and Bush" . [37] As a concluding statement, Coe and Domke assert, "the contemporary ascendancy of religious conservatives in the United States political sphere all but guarantees that political leaders will make it a point to speak their language" .[38]

Domke and Coe's book, *The God Strategy: How Religion Became a Political Weapon in America*, maintains that references to God have intentional purposes within Presidential public address. Marking Reagan as the onset of religious and political connection in United States presidential rhetoric, Domke and Coe first acknowledge that modern political communication is "carefully scripted and rehearsed, with meticulous management of every detail" .[39]

The God Strategy cites specific instances when candidates incorporated religious language into their formal engagements. Specifically, Domke and Coe quote George W. Bush at the Republican Primary Debate in 1999 as responding to the question, "Which political philosopher or thinker do you identify with and why" with "Christ, because he changed my heart" . [40] The applause of the audience at this response, Domke and Coe assert, shifted the nature of that particular debate from then on, to follow suit as identifying Jesus as their motivating force. This, the authors claim, is the power of the God strategy.

My main focus in this research then will be on the rhetorical side, although the public papers and the speeches of the presidents also delineate policy goals of the presidents reasonably well. They also suggest that their use of civil religion fulfills their policy formulations, but rather, to find out what these rhetorical formulations were, and how they were linked to the notion of the United States being "exceptional".

The fact that makes this dissertation even more interesting and original is the difference of party affiliations that American presidents under study represented. How did the Republicans the Democrats express their views on American exceptionalism in their rhetoric if they did, and how did this manifest itself? the rhetoric of America presidents may have differed from each other in their content, even radically, but nonetheless represented, by their "core", the underlying tradition of American exceptionalism, and the notion that the United States was morally or spiritually a nation that other nations should have been modeled upon.

This study differs from previous researches in important and significant ways since it melds together the positive attributes of both religious rhetoric and American exceptionalism within the historical, mythical and ideological dimensions.

One of the great advantages this dissertation promises is that I pay an unusual amount of attention to what the president says in minor speeches. Most work on presidential rhetoric, whether qualitative or quantitative, concentrates on major speeches. I focus on major speeches, too. Indeed, I consider them essential. But I do not ignore the presence of religious aspects in minor speeches as well.

This dissertation also mixes methods, combining detailed historical inquiry about America exceptionalism with the experiment which is built on the case studies. The case studies are used in order to properly design the experiment so that it best mirrors how religious rhetoric has been employed and changes throughout history. The issues where religious rhetoric is tested are both domestic and foreign issues on which presidents have actually made religious appeals. The two elements of the thesis are thus critically interrelated.

NOTES

[1] This renewed interest in religious form in contemporary presidential rhetoric can be seen in Denise M. Bostdorff, "George W. Bush's Post-September 11 Rhetoric of Covenant Renewal: Upholding the Faith of the Greatest Generation," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 89 (2003): 293; John M. Murphy, "'Our Mission and Our Moment': George W. Bush and September 11th," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 6 (2003): 611. For more on the use of religious rhetoric in recent political campaigns see Martin J. Medhurst, "Religious Rhetoric and the Ethos of Democracy: A Case Study of the 2000 Presidential Campaign," in *The Ethos of Rhetoric* ed. Michael J. Hyde (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004), 114-135. A recent spate of popular books exploring the role of religion and faith in American politics attests to a growing public fascination with such topic as well. Some examples include: David Aikman, *A Man of Faith: The Spiritual Journey of George W. Bush* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2004); Madeline Albright, *The Mighty and the Almighty: Reflections on America, God, and World Affairs* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2006); Stephen Mansfield, *The Faith of George W. Bush*, (New York: Penguin Group USA, 2003); Jon Meacham, *American Gospel: God, The Founding Fathers, and the Making of a Nation* (New York: Random House, 2006); Jim Wallis, *God's Politics: Why the Right Gets it Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get it* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers. 2005).

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[13] Foucault

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[16] Ibid,p.329

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CHAPTER ONE

AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM: A HEAVY RELIGIOUS PRESENCE

This chapter deals with the historic roots of American exceptionalism. The term American exceptionalism has heavy religious connotations. I will trace the popular tradition of American exceptionalism to its European Protestant roots . Infact it can be traced to the early Puritan conception of themselves as God's elect and their representation of America as the chosen nation destined by providence to fulfil the process of history and redeem the world. This chapter, which explains the religious foundations of America is divided into two main sections. The first entitled ***American Exceptionalism and the Protestant Quest for a Holly Christian Commonwealth***, takes us back as early as the Christian vision of the Kingdom of God which inspired Protestant millennial expectations .

The conception of the nation as a sacred place and the feverish expectations of establishing a holy Christian commonwealth existed long before the United States was ever created. Therefore, in order to understand the roots of American religious exceptionalism, down to the Bible and the early years of Christianity, I will first explore the origins and development of the Christian idea of the Kingdom of God which inspired later millennial visions about the New World.[1] In a second step, I show how this Christian tradition took up and deepened in Saint Augustine's *City of God.*[2] In a third step, I will point at the significance of the Protestant Reformation which revived the millennial expectations of the Kingdom of God which meant so much to the Puritans. This will allow me to look at some of those European visions of the New World as a Christian commonwealth, especially during the Age of Discovery which anticipated the Puritan idea of the city upon a hill. Such a historical background will enable us to assess more precisely the importance of the search for the Kingdom of God in the European imagination and how far the American Puritans interpreted and fulfilled its expectation.

The second entitled ***Puritan Religious Exceptionalism* as *Providential Historical Narrative*** covers Puritan providential exceptionalism which had a tremendous impact on the development of the American experience. To achieve my purpose, I have studied two popular works widely read and acknowledged as canonical texts in American literary history as a whole, and Puritan New England's religious exceptionalism in particular. William Bradford's ***Of Plymouth Plantation***

reveals the early Founding Fathers vision of America as historically providential. It has been the chief means by which America has imagined itself as living out an epic narrative of a providentially appointed nation established by God to bring ideals of liberty and democracy to the world. This sense of historical destiny as "American Providence"—namely that "God is using America to achieve something special in the world." is a core element in American exceptionalism. I turn to John Winthrop, said to be the father of American exceptionalism because of his famous simile of Massachusetts Bay colony as a "city on a hill" in his ***A Model of Christian Charity***. This sermon introduced the basic tenets of American exceptionalism . Many have held John Winthrop as the first American exceptionalist, his sermon giving rise to the widespread belief that the United States of America is *God's country* because metaphorically it is a ***Shining City upon a Hill***.

After a consideration of these documents and their relevance to the present dissertation, I will conclude that their bearing on the idea of American exceptionalism can only be fully apprehended when the character of early Puritan exceptionalism is well understood.

I - AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM AND THE PROTESTANT QUEST FOR A HOLLY CHRISTIAN COMMONWEALTH

1-THE KINGDON OF GOD IN THE BIBLE

The idea of a sacred Kingdom of God was an old tradition that has been held for centuries in Europe. It actually goes back to the early Christian expectations of the millennium.[3] .The concept of the millennium was already present in the Old Testament: the prophets Ezekiel and Joel foresaw this happy, destructive time whereas Daniel predicted the resurrection of saints to reign in an "everlasting kingdom" (Daniel 12:2).[4] The millennium prophesied by Saint John in the New Testament played the most influential role: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and tee was no more

sea" (Revelation:21:1). Also in : " And I john saw a the holly city New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." (Revelation 21:2)[5]

The Book of Revelation, unlike many other parts of the Bible, is not a story of past historical events. It is rather a record of prophetic, revelatory visions which will take place in the future. It describes the final cosmic struggle between the forces of God and the Antichrist. Revelation gives voice to aspirations for a better tomorrow, realized through human progress aligned with a providential arrangement of history. Revelation's vision of the millennial reign of Christ, as well as its representation of a heavenly Jerusalem descended to earth to inaugurate an eternal day free from suffering and death.

According to the Gospel, the Kingdom of God (or the Kingdom of Heaven) was Jesus' primary concern. He Warned that: The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: "repent ye, and believe the Gospel"(Mark 1:15). In the *Sermon on the Mount* , he exhorted his disciples to look for the Kingdom of God : "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you". (Matthew 6:33) The central prayer in Christianity is :"And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, our father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in Haven, so in earth" (Luke 11:2). The Kingdom of God was likened by Christ to a hidden treasure: "the Kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field" (Matthew13:44), and a pearl of great price: " the Kingdom of heaven is like unto merchant man, seeking goodly pearls." (Matthew 13:45)[6]

In this image, "Christ appears as a mighty warrior engaged in a holly war on earth". Alongside Christ in this battle stand his saints as active participants in the struggle . Christ leads his troops into the final battle, and his army wins the first battle against Satan, who is bound for a thousand years. Those who fought and gave their lives for god and his Son- his saints; his chosen people- will live and reign

with Christ's Second Coming on Earth. This is the millennium, the thousand year rule of Christ and his kingdom on earth. [7]

Yet the cosmic war is still not over. At the end of the thousand years " Satan shall be loosed out of his prison" and make a final attack against Christ and his saints. This is the ultimate battle: the Antichrist and his army will be destroyed once and for all and "a New Heaven and a New Earth come into being" where there shall be "no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying and the holly city, a New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven."[8]

According to millennial expectations, the fulfillment of God's will on Earth will be fully realized only after the end of the world and the accompanying Last Judgment. Then the apocalyptic transformations of the world into the Kingdom of God would take into consideration the crucial role of the saints whose duty is to help Christ transform the world into the perfect Kingdom of God. It is worth stressing that the two battles are mentioned in the *Book of Revelation*; that is "Satan shall go out to receive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog , to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea".[9] After the first defeat of the Antichrist comes the millennium. It means that the thousand years reign of Christ and his saints will occur on this earth and not in another world or heaven.

We can interpret this passage of the Book of Revelation as the millennium belonging to human history and constituting its last stage. After the second and final defeat of Satan , there comes into being a "New Heaven and a New Earth", and in this new world coming down from God out of Heaven a New Jerusalem. It is only at the end of history and after the millennium that heaven and earth merge. Accordingly, the early Christian community believed that the advent of the millennium was shortly imminent. Later on in, the Middle Ages, as we shall see in the coming point, the interpretation of Saint Augustine assumed that the millennial predictions about the Book are allegorical. He turned Revelation's elliptical plot into a linear, progressive, and universal narrative of human destiny. As such he founded Christian history.

2- SAINT AUGUSTINE'S ECCESIASTICAL HISTORY

According to Ernest Lee Tuveson: "The expectation of an earthly millennium never completely died out, it was actually, the motivating force in local movements and uprisings during the Middle Ages."[10] The interpretation of St. Augustine(354-430) represented the official opinion of the church about the *Book of Revelation* . In his *City of God* (425) ,Augustine provided a highly ethical meaning to Christianity.[11] He made a clear distinction between the kingdom of the earth and that of heaven which are both in this world and will be separated only by the Day of Judgement. Augustine presents the four essential elements of his philosophy in *The City of God*: the church, the state, the City of Heaven, and the City of the World. The church is divinely established and leads mankind to eternal goodness, which is God. The state adheres to the virtues of politics and of the mind, formulating a political community. Both of these societies are visible and seek to do good. Mirroring these are two invisible societies: the City of Heaven, for those predestined for salvation, and the City of the World, for those given eternal damnation. This grand design allows Augustine to elaborate his theory of justice, which he says issues from the proper and just sharing of those things necessary for life, just as God freely distributes air, water, and light. Mankind must therefore pursue the City of Heaven to maintain a proper sense of order, which in turn leads to true peace:

> The city of the earth represents the existing temporal social system to which people belong. The kingdom of heaven, which St. Augustine calls the City of God, is that world of moral perfection.[12]

This world is only reached by the just and the good after a long series of struggle. Augustine carefully describes the nature of the heavenly city as opposed to the earthly city:

> The former in a world glorifies in itself, the latter in the lord. For the one seeks glory from men;but the greatest glory of the other is God,the witness of conscience. The one lifts up its head in its own glory; the other says in its God, Thou art my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.[13]

In this context , Saint Augustine viewed the world as eternally divided between the City of the World and the City of God. All men belong to either one or the other of these two cities and will ultimately share the fate of that community.

The City of the World is ruled by Satan, the prince of this world . He and all who belong to this city will suffer eternal punishment. But the City of God is represented by the church , and for the church God has ordained salvation from the persecution of the City of the World and eternal bliss in the courts of heaven. The social structure in the city of God is definitely new; there is no need for justice and there will be no oppressed people and no authority but that of God . All that is related to the kingdom of the earth is just ephemeral and passing.

Saint Augustine had a tremendous influence on the Christian view of history.[14] The struggle between the heavenly and profane cities would be sorted out only beyond time and history. History and historical process are determined by these two cities. History is the arena in which the crucial struggle between the two cities take place, and only on "the eschatological Day of Judgment is that struggle resolved".[15] His conception of the *saeculum*-secular history- and man's existence can be explained as follows:

> The most obvious feature of man's life in this saeculum is that it is doomed to remain incomplete. No human potentiality can ever reach its fulfillment in it; no human tension can ever be resolved. The fulfillment of human personality lies beyond it; it is infinitely postponed to the end of time; to the Last Day and the glorious resurrection [16]

Christians in the world were "resident strangers" , or "resident aliens" , and their situation determined the Christian view of history.[17] "Citizens of Jerusalem", Augustine preached to his fellow Christians. "God's own people, O Body of Christ , O high-born race of foreigners on earth…you not belong here, you belong somewhere else". Therefore, for Augustine, profane history was devoid of any meaning:

> Since the coming of Christ, until the end of the world, all history is homogeneous, that it can not be mapped out in terms of a pattern drawn from sacred history, that it can no longer contain decisive turning points endowed with a significance in the ultimate divine tableau of men's doings and sufferings; but it is a significance to which God's revelation does not supply the clue.[18]

By incorporating "saeculum" that is secular history into sacred or providential history, Protestant historiography put an end to the dualistic vision of history, as upheld in Augustine's conception of history.

3- MILLENNIAL PROTESTANT HISTORY

In their attacks against Rome, Protestant Reformers were initially far more interested in proving their position through the Scripture than they were in appealing to historical arguments. In order to find meaning for the Reformation in sacred and providential history , Protestants extensively used history and analyzed past events. A different mode of historical thought emerged with their desire for religious reformation. Protestants developed a millennial interpretation of history . Their millennial tradition came to be associated with the Reformation in Europe.

Originally, Martin Luther, his preface to the Book of Revelation in 1522 declared that "I think that this book is neither apostolic nor prophetic ". However, as the struggle between the forces of the Reformation and Counter -Reformation intensified during the course of the 16th century, Protestants gradually changed their attitude and came to appreciate the study of history and its possible uses in refuting the historical foundations of the papacy. Eight years later, another preface to the *Book of Revelation,* identified for the first time the different sections of the Book with concrete events of human history . In this preface, he identified the appearance of the people of Gog and Magog with the rise of the Ottoman Turkish Empire. According to Luther, the Turks were sent by the Antichrist after his liberation from his one thousand years of captivity after the millennium and before the Last Judgment at the very end of human history.[19]

In the view of Tuveson, the Protestant interpretation of the Book of Revelation "was substantially new, and by the end of the 17th century the novel idea that history is moving toward a millennial regeneration of mankind became not only respectable but almost canonical".[20] Protestant reformers all over Europe interpreted the visions and symbols of the *Book of Revelation* in such a way as to situate the Reformation in an apocalyptic historical context. They clearly identified the historical events of their lifetimes with the different sections of the *Book of Revelation.* It became clear to them that they were living in the last days of human history. The struggle between the Reformed Churches and the Catholic Church represented the final war between the troops of God and those of Antichrist. One of the most powerful arguments of the Protestant authors was the Turkish occupation of Europe as a punishment of God for the sins of mankind and especially for those of the Roman Catholic Church.

Infact Protestant historiography can be interpreted as a millennial mode of historical thought that envisioned history as a dimension of time realizing biblical prophecies.[21] Hence history coincided with the word of God:

> Divine prophecies as recorded in Scripture were subject to historical interpretation. And as direct consequence of the association, secular, profane history- as the domain within which God's providence revealed itself through the fulfillment of prophecies- became integrally linked to sacred, ecclesiastical history. Regarded now as the ground on which the Apocalyptic struggle between Christ and Antichrist takes place, secular history was projected by Protestant historiography to the dimension of sacred, prophecy-fulfilling history.[22]

English Protestants took a leading role in establishing the above mentioned historiography . Queen Mary of England(1553-58), the eldest daughter of Henry VIII(1509-47) who herself was a Catholic, tried to recatholize the Church of England founded by her father. During the Marian period , many reformers fled into exile on the continent to the centers of Protestantism. In Geneva, Strasburg, Frankfurt, and Basel, while in contact with the radical teachings of John Calvin (1509-64), they also studied and accepted the Protestant interpretation of history to

which they attributed a new, special English meaning. After the death of "Bloody Mary", they returned to England with these new ideas in mind. For John Foxe, the Catholic reaction under "bloody Mary" symbolized the battle between the forces of God and the Antichrist before the bounding of Satan. In his opinion, the accession to the throne of Elizabeth I (1558-1603) signified not only the triumph of the Protestant religion, but also the coming of the Millennium on Earth. He also assumed that English people had a special role to play in this apocalyptical drama, since the forces of the Reformation in the continent seemed to come close to a final defeat in the second half of the 16th century. In his eyes , the English emerged as the chosen nation of God to establish the millennium and true religion on earth. According to Fox, God had chosen England to occupy a position at the center of human history.[23]

English Protestants thought that John Wyclif and not Martin Luther had been the first prophet of the Reformation,[24] and Morgan notes that "[w]hen God raised a mighty storm to help Elizabeth's fleet throw back the armada of Antichristian invaders from Spain in 1588, some Englishmen could even read in the event a premonition of the millennium, when England would lead all nations to the Kingdom of God."[25] Anders Stephanson adds that "English Protestantism, early on, had developed a notion of England as not only spatially but also spiritually separate from the European continent, as the bastion of true religion and chief source of its expansion: a place divinely singled out for higher missions."[26] John Milton ultimately expressed the English Puritan vision in 1643 by describing England as "holding up, as from a Hill, the new Lampe of *saving light* to all Christendome."[27]

When King James I succeeded Queen Elizabeth on the English throne, however, many separatists and Puritans began to lose their faith in England as a redeemer nation. Thus, many immigrated to America and brought with them a very distinctive set of religious ideas.[28] "The settlers, in William Haller's words, felt they had inherited 'the mantle of Israel, lost by England's Stuart kings'; they also felt they were an exclusive band of saints, called by God into a church covenant that separated them from the mass of humanity."[29] Separatists and Puritans agreed that "[a] church must be formed out of visible saints, and it must sustain [its] sanctity by

the exercise of discipline, admonishing members who fell into wickedness and excommunicating those who proved incorrigible."[30]

Protestant historiography then based itself upon eschatology and apocalypse- and thus the millennium. These key concepts excluded from the pre- Reformation Church history, were eventually established within the parameters of sacred providential history. By now "men's existence in the world" and mainly the "saints' role in history" changed from that of alienation to that of active members. The saints, as "Christ's army, took their stand alongside Him, where they played a singular role in the unfolding drama of salvation".[31]

In what follows, I attempt to project these apocalyptic interpretations upon the discovery of the New World and stress the way Europeans made their decision to abandon the Old World totally against the forces of the Antichrist. As the chosen people of God, they transplanted apocalyptic meaning to this new found land and invented proactive task to themselves that is to build up the kingdom of Jesus Christ in the New World.

4- THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN THE NEW WORLD

Europeans saw the settlement of America as a prophetic, revelatory and migratory event.[32] It is clearly important that Columbus's exploration of the New World plays an important role in the history of millennial expectations. Columbus suggested that his geographical exploration of America corresponded to the prophetic revelation of the Bible. For him, geographical exploration was determined by an apocalyptic interpretation of history. Talking about the implication and significance of his discoveries, Columbus exclaimed:

> God made me the messenger of the new heaven and the new earth of which he spoke in the Apocalypse of St. John after having spoken of it through the mouth of Isaiah; and he showed me the spot where to find it.[33]

So to him Apocalypse and discovery are inseparable if only the term "Revelation" suggests discovery which is revelation in itself. Columbus therefore made the first step in the process of viewing the New World along Apocalyptic terms within the

parameters of sacred, providential history. Since prophecy and discovery were joined together, the "Apocalypse shifted to the other side of the Atlantic Ocean with the first act of the discovery of the New World."[34]

Columbus asserted that he had found "the location of the terrestrial paradise, as approved by the Holy Church". In terms of Church history, as revealed in the Book of Prophecies, Columbus had "a virtual obsession with the recovery of Mount Zion, the symbol of the Holy Land," and was most occupied with the issue of "the conquering and conversion of the heathen" .[35] Thus the enterprise of the Indies, according to Columbus, symbolized the complete course of sacred providential history:

> In this voyage to the Indies Our Lord wished to perform a very evident miracle in order to consol me and the others in the matter of this other voyage to the Holy Spulchre.[36]

Columbus's vision of apocalypse, prophecy and discovery constituted a pilgrimage to the Holy Land as announced in the *Book of Revelation.* It was a new earthly paradise, the Kingdom of God. He was convinced he had reached India and not America and to have found the terrestrial paradise as mentioned in the Scripture: "And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden and there he set the man he had formed." (Gen.2:8)

If the spiritual conquest of the New World began with Columbus, apocalyptic considerations of the New World discovery played an equally important role in its continuing colonization . To most Europeans, the discovery of America was undoubtedly connected with apocalyptic visions and millennial expectations. It was the last act of providential history with "the long day of mankind drawing fast towards an evening, and the worlds Tragedie and time neare at an end." This is what Zakai terms the "Apocalypse of the Age of Discovery":

> The Apocalypse of the Age of Discovery refers to the discovery of the Apocalypse of the New World. For as prophetic imagination led to the discovery of the apocalyptic significance and meaning of America or, in sum, to the incorporation of the New World within the confines of sacred, providential history. [37]

During the Age of Discovery then, explorers and later Spanish and Portuguese colonial empires interpreted "the events of geographical exploration and colonization as the fulfillment of the prophecies of the apocalypse." [38] Zakai concluded that Spain and Portugal as God's elect nations, viewed colonial enterprise in providential terms, and considered the New World as the long awaited new heaven within which they would fulfill their divine election in ecclesiastical history. And it is in this sense that we may rightly speak of "the apocalypse of the Age of Discovery."[39] That is to say the spiritual imaginative conquest of the New World was primarily defined by the incorporation of the New World within the confines of sacred, providential history.

The European conception of America as an exceptional place had a special resonance for Englishmen because, as Edmund S. Morgan writes, Englishmen possessed :

> a special set of ideas about England and England's place in the history of the world. . . . As the glory of Elizabeth's reign mounted and her seamen defied the cohorts of [the papal] Antichrist all over the world, Englishmen persuaded themselves that they were a favored people, a people whom God had cast in a role paralleled only by that of the Jews before the coming of Christ. They believed they were the successors of Israel, an elect nation destined to lead the world back to God's true religion and end the tyranny of [the papal] Antichrist.[40]

Religion and the Bible, therefore, have played a basic if not predominant role in shaping ideas of religious exceptionalism of early New World's settlers, ever since they conceived their migration- as the fulfillment of prophetic and millennial visions- of the Bible. The imminent expectation of the coming Kingdom of God awakened concrete, substantial ideas that led ever closer to the early European millennial hopes and religious conceptions of the New World. We shall see in the coming section, how these hopes were projected on the New World by the Pilgrim Fathers. For the Pilgrim Fathers' millennial excpectations of America as the Promised Land and of the American people as God's chosen agents destined to

fulfill God's divine mission constituted the spirit of a puritan vision of providential history.

II- PURITAN RELIGIOUS EXCEPTIONALISM AS PROVIDENTIAL HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

This section deals with history as developed by the Puritans. Their conception of history was based upon a well defined apocalyptic and eschatological interpretation of history. It was a Christian philosophy of providential history according to which the Puritans viewed themselves as religiously exceptional, as God's elect nation favored by his Almighty providence and destined to complete the process of history. The present section aims to shed light on the meaning and significance which the Puritans assigned to their action within the frame of providential history. My analysis of the Puritan view of providential history will take into consideration the significance of typological readings of scriptures in this kind of history as they occur in the famous Puritan historical texts. The implications of the key terms of "wilderness" and "errand into the wilderness" in sacred providential history, will equally be stressed. Finally I will look at the importance of religious migration as pilgrimage from an old profane place to a new sacred place. After such a theoretical analysis, I will move to study William Bradford's text *Of Plymouth Plantation* and show how it stands as a clear example of the pilgrim's view of providential history. In *A Model of Christian Charity* (1630), Winthrop sets down ideas for the new community that was to be formed upon religious views, and in it one can see how these views are not separate but instead intertwined. *A Model of Christian Charity* is Winthrop's vision for the ideal community or the" shining city upon a hill" he hoped to establish .

1- PROVIDENTIAL HISTORY: THE CENTRAL ROLE OF TYPOLOGY AND MIGRATION

The Puritan providential conception of history dates back to *church history* or *ecclesiastical history* as conceived by the early Puritan founding fathers, eager to justify their migration to the New World.[1] In this context, it has been asserted that:

> Throughout history religious movements have constructed new modes of historical thought and presented their own vision of history in order to explain and justify their rise and appearance upon the stage of history.[2]

The Puritans actually used this mode of thinking "to define their own sense of time" and vision of history. Indeed the Puritans did not invent ecclesiastical history as an approach of historical thought. For the Puritans saw all of "human time or history as a series of events" toward the fulfillment of God's design of earth.[3] They needed to justify their removal to New England and identify themselves to that prophetic vision of the errand into the American wilderness. For this reason, typology is at the center of their history.

Typology as defined by Emory Elliot is the practice of "explicating signs in the Old Testament as foreshadowing events in the New Testament."[4] The Puritan historians, such as Cotton Mather and Edward Johnson "compared current events directly with Old and New Testament types, discovering parallels that elucidated how the scriptures were being fulfilled daily."[5] Their interpretation of history followed the archetypes of sacred typology. Following the typological logic, The Old Testament signs or "types" prefigure their fulfillment in Christ. For instance, Jonah's three days in the whale typologically parallels Christ's three days in the tomb, and Job's patience prefigures, or is a *figura*, of Christ's forbearance on the cross.[6]

The Puritans infact read biblical types to predict not just the events of the New Testament but also their own experience. In this way , individual Puritans could make sense of their own spiritual struggles and achievements by identifying themselves with biblical characters like Christ, Jonah, Job. In Cotton Mather's vision of history of the Puritan settlement of New England of New England,

Magnalia Christi Americana, William Bradford himself is singled out as a biblical figure of Moses, the "leader of People in a Wilderness."[7]

Yet this broad understanding of typology was not restricted to individual types. Identifying their community as the New Israel, The Puritans interpreted their group identity as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Thus, the Atlantic journey of the Puritans could be the antitype of the Exodus of the Israelites. For its part, " the New England colony, a new Zion, to which Christ may return to usher the millennium."[8]

Besides identifying their community as New Israel, the Puritans further adopted the American landscape as the antitype to the type of the Biblical Wilderness to the south east of Palestine- that is those barren, desolate areas in which the Israelites wandered before entering the Promised Land. Edward Johnson (1598-1672) writes of the immigration of "the seed of man and beast to saw this yet untilled wilderness." [9]

In Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana* , the landscape is defined as the wilderness that his divine Providence has irradiated:

> Our Lord Jesus Christ carried some thousands of reformers into the retirements of an American desert on purpose that. . . he might there, to them first, and then by them, give a specimen of many good things which he would have his churches elsewhere aspire and arise unto.[10]

In Mather's typology, the pre-Puritan landscape is dark. It has been constructed as a "Heathen outer darkness" that the providence of God, in bringing his Pilgrims to America bearing "golden candlesticks", has irradiated in order to allow a new beginning- "here hath arisen light in darkness."[11]

The wilderness constitutes a significant dimension within the course of providential history: here existed the Church of the Wilderness, or the congregation of the Saints in the wilderness, wandering in its prophetic, revelatory pilgrimage from the bondage in Egypt on her road to the land of Promise; "that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spoke to him in mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us"(Acts 7:38). The

wilderness of the Church is an essential stage in redemption. The saints fled from doomed Babylon and then came God's divine providence which would lead them to New Jerusalem:

> And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore.(Revelation 12:6)[12]

The wilderness as a concept is thus "one of the most critical concepts in sacred, ecclesiastical history".[13] The Puritans used wilderness to describe their mission and pilgrimage as a holy one and giving to their experiment a sacred dimension in providential history. The Puritan migration holds meaning within the parameters of providential history only when associated to the term wilderness.[14] In 1621, Robert Cushman, a leading figure of the Separatists in Leyden, preached that "if it should please God to punish his people in the Christian countries of Europe". Here is a way opened in New England "for such as have wings to flie into the wilderness". Symbolically, the New Englanders used *shelter, refuge, hiding place,* and *wilderness.* In like manner, Francis Higginson, on of the earliest Puritan ministers in Massachusetts, depicted Puritan migration to America in millennial terms stressing that: "New England might be designed by Heaven, as a refuge and shelter."[15]

Within this firmly established Protestant historiography, it is worth mentioning that migration holds a symbolic dimension. In fact religious migration acquires its meaning in sacred providential history mostly because it prefigures the whole course of the sacred journey of the pilgrims favored by God's divine providence. Thus the Puritans' view of providential history gives a special importance to religious migration as pilgrimage , to quote Robert Cushman:

> We are all, in all places, strangers and pilgrims, travelers and sojourners; most properly, having no dwelling but in this earthen tabernacle. Our dwelling is but a wandering: and our abiding, but as fleeting(a hastening away) and in a word, our home is nowhere but in the heavens; in that house not made with hands, whose maker and builder is God; and to which all ascend, that love the Coming of our Lord Jesus.[16]

Migration acts out the Pilgrims' progress. Pilgrimage reveals "separation" from a sinful place and "aggregation" to a holly one, detachment from corruption and attachment to a godly life. The pilgrimage "offers liberation from profane social structures". There is exile from Eden and predestination to return to New Jerusalem. Controlled and directed by the very providence of God, sacred history manifests a long and continuous series of migration "which mark the spread, advance and progress of the church, and the Gospel upon earth"[17]

Sacred history exposes a "pilgrimage between Babylon and Jerusalem or between Egypt and the Promised Land of Canaan". Moreover the pilgrimage takes place between two specific and distinct spaces in providential history: "Babel, Babylon, and Egypt on the one hand, and Jerusalem, Canaan and the Promised Land on the other." The first suggests entire alienation from God and the second the full reconciliation with him. Migration then symbolizes the "prophetic journey marking the end of alienation and the eternal reconciliation with God."[18] Religious migration, then, is a prophetic event both as far as time and space are concerned in providential history. In what follows, I will attempt to read William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation* from the perspective of Puritan time and history just presented above. Such a text has contributed in the definition of the United States as having a unique destiny and history, a history with highly distinctive features.

2- WILLIAM BRADFORD'S *OF PLYMOUTH PLANTATION* THE PILGRILMS' PROVIDENTIAL VISION OF HISTORY : A REDEMPTIVE MIGRATION

William Bradford's history *Of Plymouth Plantation* (1620-1647) constitutes a good example of the Puritan vision of providential history.[19] I will first concentrate on the importance of the belief in the Kingdom of God as a crucial aspect in providential history. The millennial expectations of the early Founding Fathers, indeed mark their ultimate role as God's saints, saved and granted with the Promised Land as an asylum thanks to his Almighty providence. The next point clarifies the way in which William Bradford's text reflects the Puritan interpretation of events in terms of God's protecting providence and reinforces Puritan typology. Then I will assess the value of religious migration in terms of the Founding Fathers' pilgrimage from an old profane world into a sacred New World. Yet it is religious migration as directed and controlled by the very hand of God or God's divine providence. As such it is a redemptive migration based upon the salvation of God's elect people. The way William Bradford views the wilderness as the Pilgrim's greatest challenge in providential history will equally be stressed. Lastly I will discuss Bradford's views about the Indians as Lost Tribes of Israel and instruments of anti-Christ and how they interfere with providential history.

2.1-THE PILGRIM'S MILLENNIAL VISIONS OF THE NEW WORLD

Providential history builds up as the biblical narratives of God's works among his Elect and the millennial promise of the Kingdom of God on Earth. Bradford's interpretation of the Reformation in England in his first chapter hints at this eschatological belief and the Founding Fathers' expectations of the Kingdom of God in the New World. In *Of Plymouth Plantation,* William Bradford declared:

> And God's blessing on their labors, as in other places of the land, so in the North parts.[1] . . His grace to reform their lives and make conscience of their ways; the work of God was no sooner manifest in them but presently they were both scoffed and scorned by the profane[2] multitude.[20]
> I.e. [1] England and Scotland . 2 Unholy.(Bradford's notes)

These lines make clear Bradford's belief that from the beginning of the Reformation in Europe and especially in England, "Satan hath raised, maintained and continued" to wage war "against the Saints". These people- the Separatists are forced to conform to the "unlawful and antichristian" religious practices by the "lordly and tyrannous power of the prelates." Therefore England is the nation in which the Saints are "scoffed and scorned by the profane multitude", instead of being the sacred place of God's elect in providential history.[21]

Hence Bradford, along with the Pilgrim Fathers, leaves England out of confines of sacred providential history. For them God "shook off this yoke of antichristian bondage" in England through fleeing first to Holland and later to Plymouth, New England, in 1620. The peak of the Puritans desacralization of England is their migration to America under God's divine grace. The New World and not England is their long awaited sacred place; the Promised Land.[22] Because of all its sins and degeneration and above all its reluctance and inability to reform religion and society, England no longer deserves its previously exceptional role in sacred, providential history. Bradford claimed that "ever since the breaking out of the light of the Gospel" in England, England became the stage of an apocalyptic struggle. By including America within this sacred history and by making of New England the very heart of redemption, William Bradford provided new meaning to sacred time and sacred space. Not only England but also Holland and therefore Europe are left out of promise. The Pilgrims' removal from Holland to America in 1620 was in accordance with "the divine proverb, that a wise man seeth the plague when it cometh, and hideth himself," (Proverbs: xxii,3) America became the focal point of the separatists' millennial vision and expectations.[23]

Bradford described the Separatists who lived in Holland, as men in exile and in a poor condition, who "could anticipate only that great miseries might possibly befall them in this place."He pictured them as those "skillful and beaten soldiers" who were fearful either to be "entrapped or surrounded by their enemies so that they should neither be able to fight nor fly". The Separatists are convinced that because God's divine providence has elected a special place to the special saints in the wilderness of America, they would be provided with a comfortable refuge far from the Old World's persecution. Believing that God would bring his divine wrath upon the sinful Old World, the Pilgrims, at last, hoped their migration to America would end their sufferings, since in the wilderness of America, as Bradford declared, the Lord "Us shelter still in the shadow of His wings," and "His great and marvelous works they here saw, and he them thought in his most holy law." [25]

Bradford's history puts much emphasis on "the light of the word of God" and his blessings. For despite being mocked and ridiculed by the profane people, the Separatists "are better prepared to bear them by assistance of God's grace and Spirit." Recognizing that neither England nor Holland was a rightful place for the propagating and advancing the gospel of the Kingdom of Christ, they turned their eyes now for "some other place".[26] This time with the hand of God, their voyage to America seemed to correspond all the dimensions of their providential mission.

Eventually such a concept of millennial expectations and apocalyptic visions of the New World constituted the main issue of the Pilgrims' migration to Plymouth. In so doing, the Pilgrims identified with the biblical types while interpreting every single event in the light of prophecy as we shall see in the coming point.

2.2- THE PILGRIMS' TYPOLOGICAL SYSTEM OF INTERPRETATION

The Puritans perceived in their own lives-both individual and collective- the narratives and figurative patterns of the Biblical scriptures. Following this method of historical typology, the Separatists saw their departure from England and Holland to a new Promised Land in America as yet another historical manifestation of this history. William Bradford viewed the rise of his colony as a divine repetition of the

trials of the children for Israel. For him the Separatists were God's elect beset by cruel conditions during their voyage and settlement. In the following passage from Of Plymouth Plantation, we notice Bradford's efforts to associate the Plymouth colonists with the Israelites of the Bible and himself with the Biblical figure of Moses:

> So they left that goodly and pleasant city which had been their resting place near twelve years; but they knew they were Pilgrims, and looked not much on those things, but lift up their eyes to the heavens, their dearest country, and quieted their spirits.(Hebrews 11:13-16) [27]

It was from this reference that the Plymouth Separatists later came to be associated with the term Pilgrims. Whatever they did, to their eyes, they were "agents" or "types" only insofar as they were agents of Providence.

In fact as mentioned previously, the Puritans saw human and social history as a cyclical succession of eras that lead toward a single, glorious design conceived in the mind of God. They saw historical progress as a repetition of types, spotting the Old Testament various foreshadowings of actions and events in the New Testament. For instance Bradford's referred to the Separatists as the men from Eschol:

> like the men from Eschol carried with them the fruits of the land and showed their brethren; of which, and their return, they were marvelously glad and their hearts encouraged.[27]

The Separatists prefigure the Biblical story of the Scouts who were sent by Moses to the Valley of Eschol and brought back a cluster of grapes so heavy that the two men were required to carry it.[28](Numbers 13:23-26):

> What could sustain them but the spirit of God and His grace? May not and ought not the children of these fathers rightly say: Our fathers were Englishmen which came over this great ocean, and were ready to perish in this wilderness, but they cried unto the Lord, and He heard their voice and looked on their adversity.[29]

Bradford refers to the biblical prophecy in *Deuteronomy* (26:6-8). That is "and the Egyptian evil entered us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage: And cried unto the Lord God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labor and our oppression: And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand."[30]

Despite the Separatists' heroism, they could not, unlike Moses, go up to the top of Mount Pisgah to glimpse the Promised Land lying in the distance; wherever they looked, there was no goodly country to feed their hopes. Yet, as Bradford maintained, they had at least the basis of the biblical narrative of the Israelites wandering in the desert. From there the plot finds its way. Through God's providence, Bradford gets into the very essence of typological discourse of sacred pilgrimage across the ocean into the Promised Land.

2.3- PROVIDENTIAL PILGRIMAGE THROUGH THE OCEAN

The Pilgrims' journey across the ocean turns out to be allegorical since it symbolizes their Exodus from the profane Old World. For Bradford, the ocean already has its biblical connotations. The Atlantic was compared to the Red Sea, the English immigrants to the Israelites in order to designate the deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage and their safe passage through the "Sea of Reeds". The sea breaks all kinds of connection to the Old World. It becomes a barrier between the Elect and their oppressors. In *Les Mythes Fondateurs de la Nation Américaine*, Elise Marienstrass stresses :

> Depuis les premiers Puritains, chez William Bradford déjà, L'océan a été le lieu ou l'histoire se perdait, ou les émigrants, traçant dans leurs chartes les traits de la société a venir, se construisaient une autre histoire, et échappaient aux mesures du temps Européennes.[31]

Indeed Bradford's history bears witness right from the beginning to a people of destiny. Their religious migration will take the form of pilgrimage into the holy lands of the New World's wilderness. The belief that they were fulfilling a sacred Pilgrimage and have been selected by God for a Promised Land is strengthened in

Bradford's use of many references to biblical imagery. Indeed throughout his narrative, Bradford quotes a lot from the Bible just like in this passage: "And there at the river, by Ahava, I proclaimed a fast, that we might humble ourselves before our God, and seek of him a right way for us, and for our children, and for all substance."[32] Therefore there exist numerous instances in which Bradford's biblical beliefs affect his interpretation of what happens.

Bradford's providential view of history strongly impacts his History of the colony. Being a man of deep religious faith, he sees God's hand in the current events. For instance, when "a proud and very profane young man" on the voyage, one of the sailors on board the Mayflower curses and torments the Puritans while they suffered terribly from sea sickness, he falls ill and dies, and his body is the first to be cast overboard. Bradford wrote this represented "the just hand of God upon him." Bradford believed that God himself made the man ill to punish him.[33]

When a main beam of the Mayflower was damaged, the Puritans sailed on: "So they committed themselves to the will of God and resolved to proceed." When John Howland was lost over the side, "it pleased God that he caught hold of the topsail halyards," was saved, and lived a long life as a "profitable member both in church and commonwealth."[34]

Another example of Bradford's providential view is the story of Samoset and Squanto, Indians who appeared out of the wilderness, spoke English, and befriended the Pilgrims. Squanto remained with the Pilgrims for the rest of his life, acting as their guide and interpreter, teaching them how to plant corn and find fish. Bradford considered Squanto "a special instrument sent of God for their good beyond their expectation."[35]

Within this highly redemptive narrative, the pilgrimage would be incomplete unless associated with wilderness. The saints will have to be tested once again but this time against the howling American wilderness.

2.4- THE WILDERNESS AND THE WANDERING IN THE DESERT

A famous passage from chapter nine explains quite well the hardships the Pilgrims encountered during their sacred mission:

> But here I cannot but stay and make a pause, and stand half amazed at this poor people's present condition. . . . . Being thus passed the vast ocean, and a sea of troubles before in their preparation. . . .they had no friends to welcome them nor inns to entertain or refresh their whether beaten bodies; no houses or much less town to repair to seek for succor. . . If they looked behind, there was the mighty ocean which they had passed and was now as a main bar and gulf to separate them from all the civil parts of the world. . . It is true, indeed, the affections and love of their brethren at Leyden was cordial and entire towards them, but they had little power to help them or themselves.[36]

Bradford here, views the Pilgrims' encounter with the American wilderness as their new home to dwell. The land is presented as if waiting for the chosen people of God to be taken hold of. The settlers are shown to be struggling but faithful Christians, facing exceptional dangers with unshakable determination. The biblical references are there to the Pilgrims to the heroes of the Old and New Testaments such as Moses. All these references and hardships make the Pilgrims deserve the Promised Land.

The time and the season of the Pilgrims' arrival is equally meaningful. The winter is "sharp and violent, and subject to cruel and fierce storms". The land is filled with "woods and thickets of a wild and savage hue" and "the mighty ocean. . . as a main bar and gulf to separate them from all civil parts of the world". The Pilgrims had nothing to them- no food, no shelter, no comfort, save the "blessed God of heaven who had brought them over the vast and furious ocean". For what could sustain them but the spirit of God and His Grace".[37] As the Pilgrims suffer more, they deserve more.

Bradford's portrayal of the American wilderness is equally significant because it answers the description of sacred providential history. Certainly one finds much Puritan fear loathing of the wilderness in William Bradford's Of *Plymouth*

Plantation. He heroically insists that the wilderness presents the greatest challenge in human history for God's chosen people. In his efforts to recall places in the Pilgrims' interaction with the American wilderness and the Indians as well, Bradford uses natural details such as topographical features of hills and the wilderness, both of which are troublesome and threatening. It is a "wilderness full of wild beasts and wild men. . . the whole country, full of woods and thickets, represented a wild and savage hue."[38] For Bradford, America appeared wild and overrun with the savagery of both nature, and man and beast upon it.

In order to assess the typological dimension of the American wilderness, let us consider Thomas Morton's differing views of the matter. It would be an exaggeration to claim that a celebration of the American wilderness and its indigenous people could be found in Thomas Morton's *New England Canaan*(1637). However, one does find there a much more sympathetic portrayal than in his contemporaries.

Indeed, the way Morton writes about the native people and natural environment of New England clearly shows how much he distanced himself from the Puritan view of history. Morton's friendly relations with the indigenous people basically contrasts with Bradford's controversy. The two also reveal contrasting attitudes toward the American natural environment. Because the American people and their natural environments were so closely connected, so are Bradford's and Morton's attitudes toward both. And though sharply different, Bradford's Indian nature attitudes and Morton's flow are at a deeper level, from a common source. They both subscribe to a sort of primitivism. Bradford considered the Indians to be part of the forbidding wilderness or the "lost tribe", while Morton considered them to be noble savages of a bountiful Promised Land.

Unsurprisingly, Morton satirizes the Puritans' habit of perceiving themselves and the New World in terms of the tribulations of the Israelites in the Old Testament. However in his work describing New England, Morton concedes that:

> Appeals to any men of judgment, whether it be not a Land that for her excellent endowments of Nature may pass for a plain parallel to Canaan of Israel, being in a more temperate climate, this being in 40 degrees and that in 30.[40]

Therefore Bradford's account of the Plymouth group's conflicts with Thomas Morton's and Morton's involvement at Merrymount is worth careful analysis and discussion, because it provides insight into how the Puritans dealt with people who did not share their values and beliefs (both native Americans and the English , in this case) . Not only does Morton ridicule the Pilgrims and engage in what they considered immoral Anglican practices, but even worse, he increased threat to their well-being by trading with the Indians. Morton was stepping outside the boundaries of good communal moral conduct of the pilgrims. So from the Pilgrims' own perspective, he "was wicked and debauched. . . so high as he scorned all advice." [41] This shows that every nonconformist was completely excluded from the community of the so called elect people of God.

Indeed, Bradford seems to look beyond his natural surroundings to Paradise in Heaven. As a separatist Puritan, his millennial faith did in fact dictate that the Promised Land would not be earthly. On the other hand Cotton Mather, for instance and others believed that they were working towards a Heaven on Earth. For his part Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana* ignores the wilderness and the horror that Bradford observed some seventy years earlier. Nature in other words, concedes to the rule of the church. The "original savage", natural horror of the wilderness had been rendered rather as an evil biblical desert which the Puritan seed had begun to transform into a new Promised Land.

Yet the hardness, bleakness and savagery of the New England landscape picture that Bradford surveyed in his *Of Plymouth Plantation*, leaves room in Mourt's Relation for a "goodly", "pleasant" landscape with "the greatest store", and soil of excellent black mould.[42] Bradford's portrayal of the American landscape remains insufficient without the Indians. For the way he depicted them increasingly reflects the relationship and the interaction of the Separatists with both the landscape and the natives as is stressed in the following point.

2.5-THE INDIANS AS HEATHENISH CANAANITES

The Indians have no counterparts in the Bible but the Puritans equated them with the Canaanites or the Lost Tribes of the scripture. Shifting the biblical context through which they understood the Native Americans, the Puritans likened them to the Canaanites or Amalekites, heathen peoples whom God sent as a scourge to test the nation of Israel and whose extermination was necessary for the fulfillment of hid divine plan.

Bradford called the Indians "savage" and "Brutish men" who "range up and down, little otherwise than the wild beasts" and who are eager to fill the Pilgrims sides with arrows.[43] He adds that God smote the Indians wonderfully. A clear evidence is the Separatists' interpretation of the small pox epidemic which they attributed to a special grace from God.[44] To them it seemed clear enough that the Almighty cleared the land of the natives to welcome His chosen people.

At best Squanto's invaluable help is described by Bradford just as "a special instrument sent from God for their good beyond their expectation".[45] Bradford's views about the Indians are made clearer when he tells us about an Indian attack on his people. Some explorers went out to explore the area around Cape Cod. As they were resting, the Indians attacked. "And withal, their arrows came flying amongst them". He continues: "their men run with all their speed to recover their arms, as by the good province of God they did."[46] Bradford's belief in his writing and the Pilgrims exceptionalism both affect his narration of the story. After telling us of the attack, he specifies that, by the grace of God, no separatist was wounded:

> Thus it pleased God to vanquish their enemies, and give them deliverance; and by his special providence so to dispose that not any one of them were either hurt or hit, though their arrows came close by them, and on every side of them; and sundry of their coats, which hung up in the barricade, were shot through and through.[47]

Bradford's hostility about the Indians again is reinforced by a brutal account of the Plymouth group's genocidal war against the Pequots in chapter XXVIII . For Bradford the bloodiness and horror of the war seemed "a sweet sacrifice and they - the Puritans- gave praise thereof to God, who had wrought so wonderfully for them,

thus to enclose their enemies to their hands and give them so speedy a victory over so proud and insulting enemy".[48]

Bradford moreover depicted them as evil. The Indians were hence manipulated and massacred- a deed sanctioned by the Pilgrims as privilege of being God's new elect in a new Promised Land. Therefore it is easy to understand how the Pilgrims could justify the theft of the natives' winter cashe of corn by believing that God led them to that corn in order to support their mission:

> And here is to be noted a special providence of God, and a great mercy to this poor people, that they got seed to plant them corn the next year, or else they might have starved.[49]

Bradford's description of the discovery of the natives' supply of corn, in the tenth chapter, illustrates how his Biblical rhetoric obscures the role played by the natives in the survival of the colony. So even if there is reference to God's providence in the fortunate discovery of the Indian corn and in the Pilgrims' success in their encounter with the Indians, these suggestions are brief and secondary to the flow of the narrative. For events as such are various and heightened to become major evidence to the Pilgrims' prevailing attitude, by Lord's grace, towards the natives:

> The pursuit of a small group of natives by an early exploratory party leads to the discovery of a number of resources essential to the struggling colony: a source of fresh water, a safe harbor, and baskets of dried corn and beans. These last are a particularly lucky find, as they will serve as both an immediate source of food and as a stock of seeds to be planted the following year. The explorers find these baskets "wher latly a [native] house had been," buried under "heaps of sand newly padled," and it seems clear that the fleeing natives had hoped to keep them hidden from the Europeans. The explorers take the corn back to the main body of the colonists, at which point they are described as being "like your men from Eshcoll"[50]

In this description of the discovery of the corn, the products of native work and effort become simply "your fruits of your land"[51]. This Biblical phrasing draws readers' attention away from the context of discovery (the abandoned house and

fields, the apparent attempt to hide the provisions. All of the complexity of a cultural encounter in which one party flees before a show of force and the other pillages a storehouse is collapsed into the simple Scriptural situation in which "they also took some of the fruit of the land in their hands and brought it down to us" (Deuteronomy 1:25). Passing reference is made to compensating the natives, but the overall effect of the Biblical language here is to write the natives out of the situation. The settlers are shown interacting abstractly or metaphorically with their own religious tradition, rather than directly with the natives; the discovery of the corn becomes "a spetiall providence of God . . . let his holy name have all y^{e} praise" . Bradford's account of a moment of uneven but by no means one-sided cultural contact thereby becomes a story of providential discovery in a "desolate wilderness".[52]

Bradford's history then foreshadows this sense of providential mission with its union of providential view of history and the Pilgrims' religious exceptionalism:

> Every part of God's providential proceedings justifies the thought. . . God does the work, but not without his instruments, and they who are employed are denominated his servants. . . We may affect humility in refusing to be made the servants of Divine vengeance, but the good servant will execute the will of the master.[53]

Part of this mission (always tainted by a hint of white supremacy) was to 'improve' the wilderness and civilise the savage, and there was never any recognition that they had set up camp in a land already governed by several Native American nations.

Infact as we shall see in the upcoming section, from the moment Winthrop wrote that sermon to encourage the Puritans setting off in the *Arbella* ten years after the Mayflower with its Pilgrim Fathers, it was inevitable for America to see itself as 'exceptional', a nation above and beyond any other, above all others in its 'moral' righteousness, and beyond the laws and sanctions that govern other peoples. Escaping from a Europe ruled through 'divine right' by monarchs, they took upon themselves the divine right to claim the new land as their own, a land they thought of peopled only by beasts; as the "vast and unpeopled countries of America, which are fruitful and fit for living. There are only savages and brutish men, just like wild beasts". [54]

3- JOHN WINTHROP'S A MODEL OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY: THE CITY UPON A HILL AS RENEWAL OF GOD'S PROMISE

Another comprehensive example of the Puritan's vision of providential exceptionalism is John Winthrop's sermon *A Model of Christian Charity*.[55] John Winthrop stands with the other leaders of the *Arbella* fleet as the representative of the whole people to themselves and to God. He articulates who the Massachusetts Bay colonists are as a people, what they aim to do, and where they fit in the sweep of history. Thus, an examination of Winthrop's writings may stand in for the truth of the way of life at Massachusetts Bay. First I will consider at length the reasons behind the Puritan venture into the New World which can be found in " Reasons to be Considered, And Objections With Answers," that was circulated in the late summer and fall of 1629 in England as Winthrop made preparations to join the new colony, and then to head it up.[56] Then, I take up Winthrop's departure sermon, *A Model of Christian Charity*, which, as will be seen, can be treated as a foundational document through the exceptionalist quality of his phrase "shining city upon a hill."

The Puritan project has always been a staple in the American imagination, generally; understanding it is indispensable for apprehending fully the idea of American exceptionalism. *A Model of Christian Charity* is indeed a document that seeks to persuade peers to undertake a common task. It is an argument both justifying a venture and recruiting others to join in it.

For several reasons it might be said that the first document we are considering can by no means serve as an American symbol. First, it was written by Englishmen, in England, for an English audience. The men of the colonies at Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay were Englishmen, too. Though in a strange land, they came to it with their English thoughts, habits, expectations, and goals. They saw themselves as Englishmen, as many in the colonies would for the next century and a half. Yet just as much, or perhaps even more so, the colonists at Massachusetts Bay saw themselves as Christians; they embarked upon a Christian

mission, not an English one. We may call the "Reasons" a symbol of American exceptionalism because of what it represents.

Before understanding these accounts, however, several points about the difference between the colonies of Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay should be brought out in order to make clearer the nature of the Massachusetts Bay project.

3.1 SEPARATIST AND NON-SEPARATIST PURITANS: MASSACHUSETTS BAY AS A UNIVERSAL CHRISTIAN MISSION

The key difference between the Pilgrims of Plymouth and the Puritans of Bay is in their different practical approach to a problem perceived in common. Though both saw the English Protestant church as increasingly corrupt, the Pilgrims argued that only separation from that body would allow for a truly Christian life, while the Puritans were decidedly and emphatically Non-Separatist. The groups' own experiences help account for this difference in character. The Pilgrims fled to Holland and then New England in search of a space in which to worship as they saw fit. They viewed the old political and religious order of England as corrupt beyond regeneration and, therefore, saw only the most drastic of remedies as adequate to addressing the illness. They would cut themselves off from their former head, and form their own pure, distinct, and separate society; thus, the corruption of the rest of the body would be unable to reach them. This meant that the Pilgrims viewed the interaction of religion and politics very differently from the Puritans at Massachusetts Bay.[57] The Puritans saw corruption in England, but thought it not beyond cure. Though they, too, left English shores, their aim in leaving was the regeneration of the Christian mode of living. They would seek refuge in the wilderness from the coming "calamity". When this happened, the Puritan colonists would be waiting to welcome their Christian brothers and sisters, already having made the wilderness more hospitable for them.

The key difference in religion led to a key difference in political thought and practice. Though Kendall and Carey are right to say that the Mayflower Compact is "in some sense" the articulation of a religious society,[58] they are also right to

comment that the Pilgrims' aims are somewhat amorphous. This lies in stark contrast to the explicit aims of the Puritans. God, for the Pilgrims, seems to be a *witness* to their political founding. But as Perry Miller has noted, the Puritans of Massachusetts Bay saw themselves not as *imitating* the covenant God first made with Abraham, but as *renewing* and *recasting* that same covenant according to the will of God *today*, just as Moses and others recast the initial Abrahamic covenant. This meant that the Pilgrims viewed their work as significant mainly, and perhaps exclusively, for themselves. The Puritans, however, viewed their work as significant for *all* Christians, even if it practically consisted of an intense *inward* focus. Keeping in mind these differences, we turn to the Puritans' own account.

3.2 THE REASONS BEHIND THE PURITAN VENTURE: SETTING UP THE CONDITIONS FOR THE RENEWAL

The 1620 founding of the Pilgrim colony at Plymouth was quite different in character from the colony at Massachusetts Bay. The aims of the Massachusetts Bay colony are on display in a document called "Reasons to be Considered, And Objections With Answers," which lists nine major reasons in favor of the Winthrop fleet's emigration. In understanding the arguments of this document, Winthrop's vision for the future of the colony may be glimpsed.

First among the reasons given to "justify" the settling of the colony at Massachusetts Bay is the benefit of carrying the "Gospel into those parts of the world, to help the coming of the fullness of the Gentiles." Their mission is missionary.

This missionary first reason is rounded out by saying that this spreading of the Gospel will have the effect, also, of raising "a bulwark against the kingdom of Antichrist which the Jesuits labor to rear up in those parts." The phrase connotes a Puritan participation in the ongoing global contest between Catholics and Protestants, marking out New England as a new front in the conflict. Loren Baritz notes: "The Puritan could not separate himself from sin because he had a commission similar to the Jesuits' to fight the good fight. According to the English Puritan preachers, the business of the Christian was relentless war against the forces

of evil."[59] Eager to dispel the appearance of retreat from sin, the Puritans of Massachusetts Bay argued that they would outflank it by establishing an extremely strong foothold in the new world.

The ongoing fight against the forces of the Antichrist, i.e. the Catholic Church, had, they thought, reached a turning point with the emigration of the *Arbella* fleet. This was the latest episode in both the Reformation and in salvation history. Though the Massachusetts Bay colonists did not go so far as to believe that separation from the English church was the only way to reform—they were decidedly against this—their strategy did involve a retreat from its midst. It was thought that a new land, isolated from the pernicious tendencies of the Anglican Church could provide shelter from the coming "general calamity".

Despite the military metaphors, however, the Puritans were not sailing to New England to engage in armed conflict with the Catholic missionaries there. Neither were they emigrating only for the purpose of conversion and the spread of the Gospel. They were setting up a point of resistance that is stationary by nature. They are setting up a colony that will run according to a new way of life, which will *in turn* serve as a protection. Sharing the Gospel in New England will come as an organic outgrowth of the life of the new community, rather than the other way around. Spreading the Gospel will be one with the maintenance of their community and the preservation of their main mission there: fulfilling the covenant with God upon which they are about to enter. Early on, then, the chief purpose of the new colony is the setting up of a new way of life. This new way of life has significance for all Christians, but it is an inwardly-focused project, both individually and corporately: the only avenue for its achievement is the living out of Christian virtues by every colonist; in this, the community will become an example to all.

The corruption of the churches of Europe, and the consequent "coming calamity" is the second of the Puritans' nine major reasons for emigration. To worship God in a purer church would be easier in the New England wilderness because of both the greater distance from insidious forces and the superior membership of the new church. This "church-founding and advancement into the wilderness would be of service to the church universal," since the church in New

England would be preparing a place to which future numbers might flee. Even in what they saw as a unique role for themselves in salvation history, then, the Puritans did not consider themselves a wholly independent church setting out on its own. Rather, they were the "vanguard of the whole Christian church clearing the path to make future emigrations easier for the rest." [60] This is very different from the Pilgrims at Plymouth, who sought to form their own separate church because of their views on the lack of potential for the church in England.

The third reason justifying emigration is the social conditions in England. The presence of too many people on too little land, Winthrop says, has caused a degradation of respect for human life and a decrease in the ability to care for the poor. This reason for emigration is important since it reminds us of the Puritans' "typological" view of history. God sometimes arranges circumstances in such a way as to goad men in one direction or another. Winthrop believed *just this* was happening in the clearing out and opening up of the New England wilderness. This, combined with the relative exhaustion of the English soil, the crowding of English land, and the relative poverty of respectable citizens in England was taken as a clue to the will of God. Though it does not seem that John Winthrop turned Biblical exegesis "inside out" by transferring the "source of meaning from scripture to secular history," as Sacvan Bercovitch has written of Cotton Mather, it could be said that Winthrop has opened the door to Mather's more extreme move. This seems to have been a fairly unique view even in Protestantism, as Bercovitch has noted:

> In this vision of the Theopolis Americana the idea of national election takes on a literalness undreamed of by Luther or Foxe. It is the kind of literalness, in fact, assumed by the colonists about themselves. Luther believed that the Germans might help create the first truly Christian kingdom; Foxe and Milton hoped that England would lead the world in the destruction of the Antichrist. The New England Puritans gave America the status of visible sainthood. The subsequent impact of their concept canno be overestimated. Whatever the extent of its influence, it contributes significantly to the link between the New England and the American Way, to the usurpation of American identity by the United States, and to the anthropomorphic nationalism that characterizes our literature—not

> the secular anthropomorphism of parenthood (British homeland, German fatherland), but the eschatological anthropomorphism of spiritual biography: American dream, manifest destiny, redeemer nation, and, fundamentally, the American self as representative of universal truth.[61]

Though Bercovitch's assertion might suggest otherwise, the notion that America is a "redeemer nation" need not mean that either the Massachusetts Bay Colony or the United States of America becomes an imperial power. That requires a corruption of the original Puritan understanding under discussion here. Yet the charge of imperialism is one Puritan scholarship has had to deal with, not least because of Winthrop's ideas about justice toward the Indians.

Winthrop's fifth "reason" concerns the extent to which the church members have grown "intemperate" in England. Luxuries have become near necessities, but this means that there are fewer resources with which a man might be generous toward his family and the local poor. Further, because of the luxuries, there is a greater temptation to cheat and deceive one's partners in business. All of this could be remedied, Winthrop implies, in the rougher environs of the New England wilderness; luxuries, not being present, would not be such a problem, and the membership of a close-knit Christian community would be less likely to cheat and deceive each other.

Sixth, Winthrop laments the corruption of the seminaries and schools, which give only "evil examples" to the students, who become, in turn, "perverted" and "corrupted." Reiterating his point about the high cost of living, Winthrop complains not only about the schools' corruption, but also about the heavy burden of their cost. Winthrop implies again, that opening new schools in another location, with different personnel and greater ease of oversight, could solve such a problem.

Winthrop argues, seventh, that it is an "honorable" and "worthy" thing for any Christian to help in the building up of a new local church. Eighth, Winthrop exhorts any "godly" Englishmen of "wealth and prosperity" to join the colonists, and, in so doing, to set an example of trust in God. Since it would mean emigration into a very uncertain territory and life, the prominent citizens would be hazarding much greater risks than if they remained in England. All the more, then, Winthrop

argues, will their example be noted, applauded, and effective. Winthrop also argues that the whole venture might be redeemed if more prominent Puritan citizens join him. The low character of the "adventurers" who usually populate such colonies is often a reason given for their wretchedness.

Ninth, and very important, Winthrop implies that this venture is itself a part of God's plan for the Christian church, giving the early commitment of so many prominent Puritans as evidence. Here again we see on display his reading of the vicissitudes of history as a clear signpost for the will of God.

The exceptionalist character of the new colony is confirmed by extended examination of Winthrop's most famous writing, his 1630 lay sermon, "A Model of Christian Charity," which is now taken up.

3.3 WINTHROP'S "CITY UPON A HILL": AMERICAN IMPERIAL EXCEPTIONALISM AS A MISSING EPISODE

When asserted that Winthrop was the first American exceptionalist, the claim almost invariably rests on the self-evidently exceptionalist quality of his phrase "city on a hill." In an extended consideration of the sermon, I will show that the phrase, "city on a hill," far from making a claim to exceptionalism, makes the opposite claim that the new colony—if it lives according to its initial mandate, or if it transgresses that mandate—will yield foreseeable, not exceptional, results. Winthrop's exceptionalism is exemplary, not imperial. The work the colonists undertake is not private; yet it does exclusively belong to them, at least at this early stage. This is tied to the Puritan theory of history, which is tied to Winthrop's articulation of the covenant and its function in history. Hence, the claim that Winthrop's "city on a hill" phrase has *something* to do with American exceptionalism is right.

A plausible first-blush reading of Winthrop's phrase "city on a hill" has been enough to make plausible the claim that he is the first American imperial exceptionalist.[62] After an in depth examination of the context of the term—both in the document and in the context of Winthrop's larger vision for the colony at Massachusetts Bay—it is clearer than ever that this claim is misguided. Winthrop

could not possibly be an American imperial exceptionalist as such. The United States of America—doubtless the referent in discussions of American exceptionalism—does not exist when Winthrop founds the colony that will precede it by a century and a half. Yet it could perhaps be argued that he is a "Massachusetts Bay Colony exceptionalist," seeing his own colony as special in the world and in human history.

The context of the phrase "city on a hill" makes Winthrop's meaning fairly clear. It falls in the middle of his three rounds of blessing and cursing at the end of the enactment and divine ratification of the covenant. Rather than a statement, then, that some set of rules applies to some nations or churches but not to Massachusetts Bay— rather than a "comparative" sense of exceptionalism—it states something entirely different: the world is watching us and waiting to evaluate until we succeed or fail. It is a statement not of any radical freedom from the rules and constraints that apply to other peoples, but of the radical boundedness and circumscription of the colonists' lives that was just effected by the covenant. The phrase, rather than a license for the colony to tell the world how to live, is a dire warning of the terrible consequences that the *colonists* will face if they fail to live lives of complete Christian virtue. The passage is inwardly focused, a warning for the Puritans to live up to their agreement with God, not an outwardly focused justification for double standards or imperialism The phrase is actually an allusion to scripture and its context there sheds further light on Winthrop's meaning. The reference is to Matthew 5:14, which is a verse from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. In preaching to those present Christ says:

> Blessed are ye when men revile you, and persecute *you*, and say all manner of evil against you for my sake, falsely. Rejoice and be glad, for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you. Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill, cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven[63]

Tradition has long interpreted this passage as speaking to preachers— which Winthrop and most Puritans would have known well, does not depart from that tradition. Those who are reviled and persecuted on Jesus' account are those who, by the nature of their office, would be constantly out in plain view. The words here are a recognition of that, and an exhortation not to shrink from their public ministry in the face of being reviled and persecuted. "A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid;" just so, a preacher is by definition a public person. His witness is out in the open, necessarily, and it is not incongruous with the role that Winthrop foresaw for the new colony.

Massachusetts Bay would be a light to the world. It was going to show the world, in the flesh, the perfect Christian commonwealth. But this community "cannot be hid," and *this* is why the phrase is found at the end of the text and as part of the covenant section on blessing and cursing. The failure of so public a venture, of so ambitious an effort, would be as widely noticed as it was disastrous. It would bring scandal to Puritans and ministers everywhere. A city on a hill cannot be hid, so their very public mission will meet with either a very public success or a very public failure.

The full context of the phrase, thus, makes clear that the Puritan project at Massachusetts Bay was not a design on worldly power. Winthrop is keenly aware of the cost and very real possibility of failure. But these do not convince him to refrain from entering into the effort. If this *phrase's* direct connection to the idea of American exceptionalism as imperial is denied, then the connection to the idea of the Puritans to that the idea of American exceptionalism is called into question. Despite the fact that the superficial connection *is* properly denied, however, a deeper connection may be affirmed.

John Winthrop and the colonists were not making claims to American exceptionalism in founding their colony. Neither were they making claims to the exception of their colony to any kind of rules of history. The rules of history, in their mind, were written by the Ruler of history, and though its course might perhaps be discerned partially, the purposes behind it were surely not knowable in

any finality. But their faith and their knowledge of history led them to believe that the setting up of the colony was a project willed by God. They were to be an example to behold, an example to be imitated—an exemplar to history and to the world. But being hailed as an exemplar is fundamentally different from conquering and ruling an empire.[64] The difference is as wide as the character of submission that attends each: submission in one is voluntary, and in the other it is not. The Puritans were exemplary, not imperial exceptionalists.

We can now begin to see that the contemporary idea of American exceptionalism would not have been possible except for its germination from the seed of the early Puritan synthesis. But it has also been made clear that contemporary imperialistic conceptions of American exceptionalism have not come directly from Winthrop and the Puritans. The idea has undergone major alterations and we are now prepared, after the completion of this initial account, to understand the nature of those changes over the course of American history.

The notion of American exceptionalism has changed from being a central element in an American sacral religious tradition to a central tenet of America's civil religion. These two forms of exceptionalism have existed side-by-side and continue to blur the message behind the same metaphor of being 'a city upon a hill'.

ENDNOTES

I-

[1] Kingdom of God : also called Kingdom of Heaven, in Christianity, the spiritual realm over which God reigns as King, or the fulfillment on Earth of God's will. The phrase occurs frequently in the New Testament, primarily used by Jesus Christ in the first three Gospels. Encyclopedia Britannica- Multimedia Edition, 1999.

[2] Augustine, *City of God*. Tran. John O'Merara. New York,1984.

[3] Millenarianism in the strict sense is the belief that before the final judgment of all mankind, Christ will return to the earth and together with resurrected saints, will reign over a glorious kingdom which will last a thousand years. The authority for this belief is Revelation (20:1-5).Encyclopedia Britannica.

[4] The Gideon's International.1983.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] "The Elect Nations of God: Religion, Citizenship and Empire" ,http://www .stm.unipi.it/ clioh/ lib/levai.pdf. (May, 2012)

[8] St.John's *Revelation*,20:7,21:2.

[9] Ibid;20:8.

[10] On the views of St.Augustine see Tuveson. *Redeemer Nation*, pp.13-17

[11] Amrane Nadjia. "The Ideal Society in the Modern Anglo-American Novel". Doctorate Dissertation. Dept of English. University of Algiers, 1981, p.34.

[12] Ibid;p.35.

[13] Augustine, *City of God*(14:28).

[14] By the Reformation I am referring to the religious revolution that took place in the Western church in the 16th century; its greatest leaders were Martin Luther(1483-1546) and John Calvin(1509-1564). Their views changed western European societal attitudes about the nature of religion and work .Luther broke with the medieval conception of labor, which involved a hierarchy of professions, by stressing that all work was of equal spiritual dignity. Calvin's doctrines stressed predestination which stated that a person could not know for certain if they were God's elect or the damned. These theological ideal's about work were stressed in the various religious utopian societies. Certainly the Reformation is a larger movement then the one described, but my point is to demonstrate how it revived millennial expectations about the Kingdom of God.

[15] Zakai, Avihu. *Exile and Kingdom*,p.23.

[16] Brown,P. *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*. Quoted in Zakai, Avihu. *Exile and Kingdom;*p.24.

[17] Ibid;p.24.

[18] Ibid;p.25.

[19] Miller, Perry. *The American Puritans: Their Prose and Poetry*. Garden City,1956,p.83.

[20] Tuveson. *Redeemer Nation*,pp,12-13.

[21] Zakai, Avihu. *Exile and Kingdom;*p,11.

[22] Ibid;p,18.

[23] On the formation of this English Protestant interpretation of history see Zakai, Avihu. *Exile and Kingdom*.pp,24-55.

[24] Ibid;p.8.

[25] Ibid;p.9.

[26]Anders, Stephanson. *Manifest Destiny: American Exceptionalism and Empire of Right*, pp 34.

[27] Bercovitch, Sacvan. *The American Jeremiad*, 1978. pp; 18, 39.

[28] See Edmund, Morgan. *Roger Williams: The Church and the State,1*967,pp,79,19.
[29]Madsen, Deborah L. *American Exceptionalism*(1998).pp;1-2. Madsen goes on to explain that in this view, the New World is the last and best chance offered by God to a fallen humanity that has only to look to His exceptional new church for redemption. Thus, America and Americans are special, exceptional, because they are charged with saving the world from itself and, at the same time, America and Americans must sustain a high level of spiritual, political and moral commitment to this exceptional destiny – America must be as "a city upon a hill" exposed to the eyes of the world.
[30]Ibid;pp,79,81.
[31] Zakai, Avihu. *Exile and Kingdom;*pp;74-75.
[32] Amrane Nadjia. "The Ideal Society in the Modern Anglo-American Novel". Doctorate Dissertation. Dept of English. University of Algiers, 1981, p.34.
[33] Columbus, cited in Moffitt Watts, Pauline. "*Prophecy and Discovery: On the Spiritual Origins of Christopher Columbus's Enterprise of the Indies,*" America Historical Review 91(1985), p.73.
[34]Ibid,p.74.
[35] Ibid;pp.75.
[36] Ibid; pp.92, 85, 96.
[37] Sir Walter Raleigh. The History of the World(1614). In Zakai, Avihu. *Exile and Kingdom ;* p ,84.
[38] Ibid;p.85.
[39] Ibid
[40] Edmund, Morgan. *Roger Williams: The Church and the State,1*967,pp,6-7.

II –
[1] By "ecclesiastical history" I am referring to what Zakai defined in his Exile and Kingdom as a well defined Christian philosophy of history and a unique mode of historical thought, or a unique Christian conception of providential history. It dates back to the Fourth century; the time of the Church fathers such as Eusebius Pamphili, "the father of Church History". This type of historiography prevailed for centuries as a salient Christian view of history. Therefore I have included for the purpose of my study the Puritan ecclesiastical historian Cotton Mather. Zakai, Exile and Kingdom, p.1.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid;p.1,3.
[4] Eliott, Emory. *New England Puritan Literature, in Cambridge History of American Literature* , Volume 1,p.215-216.
[5] Ibid;p.188.
[6] Ibid.
[7]Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*,p.177.
[8] Ibid;p,215-216.
[9]Johnson, Edward. *Wonder Working Providence of Sion's Savior*, Clarke, Graham(ed), *The American Landscape : Library Sources and Documents*, (Mountfield:Helm Information Ltd,1993.p,167.
[10] Ibid,p.173-176.
[11] Ibid,p.177.
[12] The Gideons International.
[13] Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom*,p.121.
[14] It is worth mentioning Perry Miller's outstanding essay, "Errand into the Wilderness",(1952) in which the writer called into attention the importance of the concept wilderness . He stressed the Puritan migration into the New World:

> Was an organized task force of Christians, executing a flank attack on the corruption of Christendom. These Puritans did not flee to America, they went in order to work out that complete Reformation which was not yet accomplished in England and Europe, but which would quickly be accomplished if only the saints back there had a working model to guide them.(Miller. *Errand into the Wilderness.*Cambridge,Mass;1979,p.11.)

[15] Cushman, Robert. "A Sermon Preached at Plymouth in New England, Dec 9,1621: Francis Higginson, Farewell Sermon" (1629).Quoted in Zakai's Exile and Kingdom,p.124.
[16] Ibid,pp;2,4,9.
[17] Ibid, p.75.
[18] Turner and Turner. Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture,pp.2,4,9.
[19] William Bradford is the first of the New England historians and the leader of the Mayflower Separatists. They were called so because unlike most Puritan congregations, they rejected the Church of England entirely instead of attempting to reform it from within. As a member of the Scrooby Separatists, he spent 12 years in Holland with the community and was a Mayflower passenger. After the death of the Plymouth's first governor, John Carver, in 1621,Wiliam Bradford was elected Governor.
[20] William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation,*1620-1647,ed.S.E.Morison. New York, 1967, Book I, chap,I.p,3. In citing Bradford, I have used readily different available editions *Of Plymouth Plantation.*
[21] Ibid,pp;3,8.
[22] Ibid,p.9.
[23] Ibid, p.27.
[24] Ibid,
[25] Ibid.
[26] William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation,*1620-1647,chap.VII, in *American Poetry an Prose*, ed. Foerster Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957,p.28.
[27] Ibid.chap.X.p.33.
[28]Ibid.chapIX,p.30
[29] Ibid.
[30]Ibid.
[31] Marienstras, Elise. *Les Mythes Fondateurs de la Nation Américaine.* François Maspero, Paris, 1976,p.76.
[32] William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation,*1620-1647,chap.IX, in *American Poetry an Prose,* ed. Foerster Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957.P?28.
[33]Ibid;p.3.
[34]Ibid.
[35] Ibid;chap.IX.p.31.
[36]Ibid,chap.IV,p.29.
[37] Ibid;pp.24,27.
[38] Ibid;pp.160-161.
[39]Thomas Morton's *New English Canaan*(1637).Morton, Thomas. *New English Canaan.* In *American Literature Survey*, ed. Milton R. Stern and Seymour L.Gross. The Viking Portable Library: The Viking Press, New York.1985.
[40] Ibid;pp.36-40.
[41] Ibid;p.29.
[42] William Bradford, *Mourt's Relation*. New World, New Earth: Environmental Reform in American Literature from the Puritans through Whitman (New Haven and London: Yale uni press,1979,p.22.

[43] William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation,*1620-1647,chap.IX, in *American Poetry an Prose,* ed. Foerster Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957.P,28.
[44] In 1616, a small pox epidemic had almost wiped out the tribes living in the surrounding area of Plymouth leaving the land for the Pilgrims. For the colony of Plymouth was built on the site of a deserted Indian town.
[45] William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation,*1620-1647,chap.IX, in *American Poetry an Prose,*p,81.
[46] Ibid,p.39.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid..
[49] Slotkin, Richard. *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization,1800-1890*. New York: Atheneum, 1985, p. 59.
[50] William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation,*1620-1647,chap.IX, in *American Poetry an Prose,*p.99-100.
[51] Ibid;p.110.
[52] Ibid;p.101.
[53] Ibid;p.96.
[54] John Tirnan .*The Death of Others*, p,46.
[55] John Winthrop (1588-1649) was a governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony- a group of entrepreneurs who left Europe in search of trade opportunities in the New World. His *Model of Christian Charity*- delivered on board the *Arbella* as members of the Massachusetts Bay Colony sailed toward the New World.
[56] Winthrop, John, et al. *Winthrop Papers*. Six Volumes. Edited by Worthington C. Ford, Stewart Mitchell, Allyn Bailey Forbes, and Malcolm Freiberg. Boston, Mass.: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1929-1992
[57] Kendall and Carey argue that the Mayflower Compact connotes no notion of "chosenness"— which differs widely from Winthrop's writings. Neither is there even an inkling that the Pilgrims stand as the vanguard of human history, unlike the Puritans. See Kendall and Carey, *The Basic Symbols of American Political Tradition* ,pp.40-41
[58] Ibid,p. 36.
[59] Loren Baritz, *City on a Hill*, (New York, London, and Sydney: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1964), 6. Summerfield Baldwin also picks up on the parallel between the Massachusetts Puritans and the Jesuits. See his "God and the Secular Power," in *Essays in History and Political Theory: In Honor of Charles Howard McIlwain*, (New York: Russell and Russell, 1936), 35-36.
[60] *Winthrop Papers*. II, 139.
[61] Sacvan Bercovitch, *Puritan Origins*, 109
[62] A recent and typical example is sufficient. In his book *Americanism: The Fourth Great Western Religion*, (New York: Doubleday, 2007), David Gelernter unproblematically asserts that Winthrop "foresaw" the city on a hill that American would become (17), Gelernter says that Winthrop senses he is "onto something big" (23) and that Winthrop was the first to begin "weaving the American creed," though it was the "revolutionary generation that finished it" (40). In the concluding pages of the book, Gelernter makes plain the chief source of his interpretation: "In one of his favorite, best-remembered phrases, [President Ronald Reagan] told the world that America was and must always be the 'shining city upon a hill.' 'The phrase comes from John Winthrop,' he explained, 'who wrote it to describe the America he imagined.'" Offered virtually without comment, the reader is left to conclude that Gelernter is following Reagan's interpretation of Winthrop's words. Yet as has been shown, Reagan's common understanding of the phrase is distant even from a plain reading of the document from which it is drawn.

[63] Matthew 5:11-16.
[64] James Ceaser recognizes this when he notes that the Puritans were "concerned with achieving sanctity and not worldly power." See his *Nature and History in American Political Development: A Debate*, (Cambridge, Mass. and London, U.K.: Harvard University Press, 2006), 17.

CHAPTER II

THE SECULARIZATION OF PROVIDENTIAL HISTORY: AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM AS CIVIL RELIGION

The present chapter deals with the shift of American exceptionalism from providential history to civil religion. Providential history- as defined previously- refers to the American belief that theirs is a chosen nation, one upon which Providence has bestowed special blessings; it has been charged with a special world-historical mission to cultivate and promote its values. Throughout American history there have been repeated claims that the United States is the Promised Land and its citizens are the chosen people, divinely ordained to lead the world to betterment. This element from a sacral religion shifted during the founding of the United Stated into an element of civil religion, and as such the metaphor and concept of American exceptionalism received a secular connotation. This secular tradition emphasising unity and America's unique providential role backed up the rise of America's political power.

Infact as this chapter shows, the United States of America is a country with an exceptional political tradition. It is of interest for that study to know where that tradition come from. For the purpose at hand , this chapter will be divided into three main sections. The first section entitled ***Civil Religion and American Political Tradition*** aims at analyzing Civil Religion as applied in the American context by sociologist Robert N. Bellah. This idea has become the dominant theoretical conceptualization of the American political tradition . Describing civil religion as "the idea that a nation tries to understand its historical experience and national purpose in religious terms," in the words of Kenneth Wald , this part will shed light to the way American presidents viewed their nation's providential history as exceptional.

In this first section I will proceed as follows: first I will point at ***History and the Prevalence of Civil Religion,*** I shall provide a background to the idea of civil religion from Socrates to Jean-Jack Rousseau down to Robert .N. Bellah's own interpretation. Then to ***Shifting Interpretations of 'A City Upon a Hill': The Birth of a Civil Religion in America,*** I will stress the symbolic transformation of the religious conception of the 'city upon a hill' that has later given rise to civil

religion. At last in ***The American Political Tradition ,*** I will provide a comprehensive analysis of American presidents use of elements of providential history in their speeches .. I will focus on the Cold War during which many Americans perceived as a conflict of both political and religious significance, in which the United States, champion of religion, confronted "godless communism." America thus stood not just for democratic capitalism but also for religious freedom. The fact that America's defense policy was based on nuclear deterrence added a destructive apocalyptic dimension to the Cold War. Eisenhower's and Reagan's administrations are often interpreted as heavily influenced by apocalyptic beliefs associated with to the Cold War as part of a historical design leading to Armageddon. For the purpose at hand, the analytical part considers both Eisenhower's and Reagan's millennial visions about the Cold War that is Godless communism.

In ***Eisenhower's "In God We Trust***", I shall start with ***Eisenhower's Faith: A Deep Spiritual Awakening*** . Eisenhower has regularly spoken of a higher power , sought divine favor for the nation and expressed gratitude for providential outcomes, this personal faith inspired most of his speeches during his presidency. Then in Eisenhower's ***Civil Religion: A Spiritual Crusade against Communism,*** I will stress how Eisenhower's use of religious references constituted significant source in promoting religious sentiment about the United States role as a redeemer nation during the early Cold War years. ***Eisenhower's Millennial Beliefs: Demonizing Atheist Communism*** highlights the president's own interpretation of the Cold War as a historical design leading to Armageddon. Describing America as having been called by God, Eisenhower defined this framework in explicitly religious terms rooted in Protestant millennialism.

The final section entitled ***Ronald Reagan's Armageddon and Evil Empire*** in which I look at Reagan's interpretation of the Cold War as a battle between good and evil, as religious America overcoming evil, atheist Russia waging a "savage, brutal war on religion." I start my analysis with ***Reagan as a Man of Evangelical Faith .*** Reagan's spirituality guided him throughout his presidency—he not only

used his faith as a way to garner personal strength, but, more significantly, he believed that such faith played a crucial role in the continued success of the United States. In ***Reagan's Civil Religion: America as the Greatest Bastion of Freedom,*** Reagan had a penchant for employing religious rhetoric throughout his presidential and pre-presidential rhetorical career, stressing Reagan's belief in the nation's religious election.[1] In ***Reagan's Apocalyptic Beliefs: Fear of a Nuclear Armageddon*** I shall demonstrate the way Reagan interpreted history as quickly winding down to an imminent showdown between God and Satan :his political ideology can be read as fulfillment of prophecies recorded in the book of Revelation, signs of a divinely orchestrated plan to bring about the end of the world.

I - CIVIL RELIGION AND AMERICAN POLITICAL TRADITION

Every time a US president makes a speech, it ends with "God Bless America"! Contrary to popular assumption, this is due to the United States being one of the most religious countries on earth. Several researchers have highlighted that the United States possesses its own particular type of "civil religion", that is, a religion of the state, separate and distinct from traditional religions such as Judaism and Christianity, but nonetheless relying heavily on these for images, narratives, rituals and rhetoric. As part of this civil religion, the US President assumes the role of both prophet and priest. This section suggests that the significance of religion in US presidential politics is related to the broader institution of American Civil Religion, with the US president being seen as prophet or priest. As such the concept of American exceptionalism received a political connotation. Accordingly no President can get elected without making some sort of reference to Winthrop's speech. Infact the speech can be labelled the founding text of American political tradition. This first section highlights then how elements from a sacral religion, in this case 17th century Puritanism, remains current in the modern political discourse.

1- HISTORY AND PREVALENCE OF CIVIL RELIGION

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (the first to coin the term civil religion) acknowledged in *The Social Contract*, in Chapter Eight of Book IV that "no state has ever been founded without religion serving as its base. . . ."[1] A few lines later Rousseau explains that the religion to which he refers is not any particular spiritual religion, but "that of the Citizen."[2] Throughout the chapter Rousseau extols the virtues of this citizen's religion; the chief aims of which are the promotion of political stability and good citizenship via agreement on what he calls the "dogmas of civil religion". These dogmas included: "The existence of the powerful, intelligent and beneficent, prescient, and provident Divinity, the life to come, the happiness of the just, the punishment of the wicked, the sanctity of the social contract and the laws . . ."[3] In writing these words Rousseau not only coined the phrase civil religion but offered the germ of a new theoretical perspective from which to study how the state and religion interact. At its core, Rousseau's concept consists of three elements:

The first element maintains that every political society has as its foundation an extant civil religion which promotes good citizenship at the individual level and political stability for the ruling regime. The second stresses the fact that civil religion entails the veneration of the values, laws and institutions of the state. The last element shows that an explicit rejection of any actual religion as an adequate basis for a civil society.[4]

In a sense, Rousseau's observation about religious component in political society was nothing new. Scholars from Plato to the contemporary era have recognized important connections between religion and politics. Indeed, the idea of civil religion has a long history. In 399B.C, Socrates was brought to trial in Athens on charges of impiety toward the Gods and corruption of the city's youth. Although his true crime was philosophy by way of dialectic, Socrates' accusers were able to convince the assembly of jurors that his teachings were injurious to their religion—and therefore the state.[5] The practice of a civil religion was even more influential in ancient Rome. Roman religion was corporate, communal, and above all political. Roman religion afforded the political value of stability thanks in

no small part to its malleability—a trait it shared with modern conceptions of civil religion.[6] For both of these powerful ancient cultures such loosely-defined, but strictly-enforced, civic creeds were not just attractive ideas, but "the social glue of [the] ideal state."[7] Religious historian Sydney Ahlstrom writes that the worldview of America's early colonists was profoundly shaped by what he considers to be civil religious rhetorical themes of "mission, an abundant land, a noble hero, and a favoring Providnece."[8] While the themes Ahlstrom highlights may be more accurately termed instances of religious rhetorical form rather than civil religion, his assertion illustrates the degree to which the civil religion has permeated the interpretation of American rhetorical history.

In 1967 sociologist Robert N. Bellah revived Rousseau's terminology in an oftcited article entitle "Civil Religion in America" published in *Daedalus*. Bellah posits that the appearance of religious themes such as "Exodus, Chosen People, Promised Land, New Jerusalem, and Sacrificial Death and Rebirth" in rhetorical sites such as presidential inaugurals and founding documents such as the *Declaration of Independence* point to the existence of a distinctive "national cult" which he called "civil religion."[9] As Bellah famously insisted: "The existence of this highest level of religious symbolism in the political life of the republic justifies the assertion that there is a civil religion in America"[10] Bellah's famous 1967 article was part of a larger theory-building dialogue among historians and sociologists concerning religion in public life—a discussion which reached its zenith in the 1960s and 70s, his approach is most typically applied to presidential rhetoric.

Robert Bellah argues that the US civil religion contains the following elements:

- "Religious" rituals and memorials, such as national days of remembrance, prayer services, presidential inaugurations and (I would add), State of the Union addresses.
- A body of "sacred" national documents, such as the US Constitution, the Declaration of Independence and the Pledge of Allegiance

- The casting of significant figures in US history (particularly, but not solely, presidents) as prophets and martyrs for the nation. Abraham Lincoln, for example, has been portrayed as paying the ultimate price for the unity of the American nation, similar to Christ paying the ultimate price for unity between God and humanity .Other martyrs for the nation have included John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr.[11]

This typology has strong resonances in both Judaic and Christian traditions. As the High Priest of the American Civil Religion, the President is held to a higher standard. Just like the High Priests of ancient Israel, who were held to a higher standard than the rest of the population, the US president is also upheld as moral and spiritual guide of the nation, as well as its military and political leader. Jesus is described throughout the New Testament as Prophet, Priest, King and Martyr for the cause of reconciling humanity to God, strengthening the correlations between Judeo-Christian religious rituals and narratives and that of US civil religion. These similarities give us some insight as to why it is so important for presidential candidates to provide evidence of robust faith, or, at the very least, of strong moral and ethical code.

2- SHIFTING INTERPRETATIONS OF 'A CITY UPON A HILL' : THE BIRTH OF CIVIL RELIGION IN AMERICA

The main shift in the interpretation of the metaphor of America as a shining model for the rest of the world came with the construction of a civil religion following the Declaration of Independence at the end of the 18th century. The Founding Fathers merged the ideas of American exceptionalism with civil religion by using the metaphors and ideas of being a moral example and fit them into the secular context of the enlightenment. Whereas John Winthrop saw his city on a hill as a moral example that was constantly threatened by a Christian God, the Founding Fathers were faced with a more delicate balancing act. They had to create a system that checked and balanced many political and religious concerns: not only did the power of the various states and interest groups have to be balanced, but the influence of different religious denominations had to be weighed .[12] By introducing

the concept of separation of Church and State, the Founding Fathers made sure that no one denomination could gain the upper hand.

A religious dimension was still felt as necessary, however, hence the concept of a civil religion proved valuable. By opting for an overarching civil religion that was broad enough to cover all existing denominations and that required no specific rites nor reference to doctrinal texts, separation of Church and State was maintained and a moral foundation could be secured .[13] The first sentence of the Declaration of Independence gives us a telling example of the balancing of different religious views. Thomas Jefferson first wrote: *We hold these truths to be sacred*, but later changed *sacred* to *self-evident* in an attempt to keep the declaration denomination-neutral.[14] The influence of moral arguments cannot be underestimated as Smith claims that the people were more easily persuaded to rise against the British throne by religious than by political arguments.[15]

As such, a political compromise was reached that limited the direct influence of a specific God, and imposed the indirect function of a Creator, who had created mankind to his image and had endowed man with unalienable rights. The denomination-neutral character of the Creator enabled the Founding Fathers to keep the preceding sources of American political tradition and thought intact, while allowing for enough flexibility to accommodate differing views. By not referring to names such as 'Jesus' or 'Christ' and by not imposing doctrinal texts or rites, a civil religion was invented that could easily be transferred upon different denominations .[16] The founding political texts –the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights- and semi-rites and commemorative events, such as the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, Memorial Day, the 4th of July, can, however, function as expressions of this civil religion.[17]

Civil religion is a means of investing a particular set of political and social arrangements with an aura of the sacred, thereby elevating their stature and enhancing their stability. It can serve as a point of reference for the shared faith of an entire nation. As such, it provides much of the social glue that binds together a society through well-established symbols, rituals, celebrations, places, and values, supplying the society with an overarching sense of spiritual unity—a "sacred

canopy", in Peter Berger's words—and a focal point for shared memories of struggle and survival. Although it borrows extensively from the society's dominant religious tradition, civil religion is not itself highly particularized but instead is somewhat more blandly inclusive: People of various faiths can read and project what they wish into its highly general stories and propositions. It is, so to speak, a highest common denominator.[18]

The rhetoric of a civil religion and its use for ceremonial functions strengthens a feeling of national unity. The emphasis on a common cause with ancestors is not unique for American society, but a trait of any form of nationalistic rhetoric.[19] For American exceptionalism and its civil religion, the emphasis on continuity shows both in the explicit mentioning of American political heroes, and in the rewording of their famous sayings. President George W. Bush mentioned Thomas Jefferson 37 times, George Washington 32 times and Abraham Lincoln 116 times in official speeches in the period from 20 July 2001 until 31 December 2004.[20] As for rephrasing famous quotes by American political heroes, President Bush said in his Second Inaugural Speech that "freedom is the permanent hope of mankind", paraphrasing Abraham Lincoln's famous quote: "America is the last best hope of mankind".

An Analysis of most political discourse over time suggests that most Americans presidents embrace the concept of civil religion; many do indeed view their country as both blessed by God and held responsible to a divine authority.In what follows, I will stress the presence of civil religion in American presidential discourse and the way it helps strengthen their belief in their nation's exceptionalism.

3- AMERICAN POLITICAL TRADITION

Both Democratic and Republican Presidents have indeed often referred to the nation's civil religion traditions. Though Democratic Presidents, Roosevelt, Harry Truman, John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Jimmy Carter, and Bill Clinton, have, referred to religion less frequently than the Republican Presidents, Dwight Eisenhower, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Ronald Reagan, George H. W. Bush, and George W. Bush; more openly, they have done so more often via specific scriptural

references.[21] Republicans have referred more often to specifically providential accounts of America's place and special role in world history.

These differences are due to foreign and domestic policy issues. Weak correlations observed in studies may demonstrate that presidential rhetoric carries differences weight in regard to foreign matters more than in domestic matters. This is supported by the literature's heavy emphasis on a president's role as leader during times of war and crisis.[22] This so-called prophetic president attempts to line Americans up under a banner of a common heritage, leading the nation to confront threats or crises. One need not look too far into history to find times where the president fulfilled precisely this role. Franklin D. Roosevelt led the nation headlong into World War II after Pearl Harbor; Lyndon B. Johnson used the Gulf of Tonkin incident to justify escalating the War in Vietnam; and George W. Bush used the terrorist attacks of September 11 to initiate the now-familiar War on Terror. Each one of these presidents whether a Democrat or a Republican addressed the nation in dark times and asked for sacrifices, mostly in the form of sending troops into harm's way. Each one of these presidents was careful to emphasize American virtue as well as greatness.

Research on American presidential rhetoric in public messages about foreign crises has shown that presidents often shift the public's attention to the issue of American exceptionalism and typically portray the United States as taking action against others only in retaliation or "for the defense of other goodwilled nations that are under siege".[23] Presidential rhetoric offers numerous examples of the President acting in this capacity, particularly during times of crisis. Consider, for example, these words from the opening of Obama's *2010 State of the Union*, in the midst of the worst financial crisis since the 1930s:

> It's tempting to look back on these moments and assume that our progress was inevitable, that America was always destined to succeed. But when the Union was turned back at Bull Run and the Allies first landed at Omaha Beach, victory was very much in doubt. When the market crashed on Black Tuesday and civil rights marchers were beaten on Bloody Sunday, the future was anything but certain. These were the times that tested the courage of our convictions and the strength of our Union. And despite all our

> divisions and disagreements, our hesitations and our fears, America prevailed because we chose to move forward as one Nation, as one people. Again, we are tested. And again, we must answer history's call.[24]

Obama uses "Christian" and "American" as synonymous by interweaving claims about the current state of the nation in crisis with images of and references to God. Through the quoting of the Psalms, Obama aligns the circumstances of the United States with those referred to in these scriptures and uses the analogies of the Judeo-Christian Bible to support his efforts to calm the nation in time of crisis. This example is cause to suggest that the intentional use of God in presidential rhetoric remains significant today because when facing a crisis, President Obama chose to invoke words of spiritual strength and refuge in God as encouragement to the nation.

During the Great Depression, Franklin D. Roosevelt delivered a speech boasting both direct exclamations, pleas, and praise to God as well as embedded biblical references. He briefly offers thanks to God that the challenges and difficulties the nation is facing at the time are "only material things," concerning means and finances rather than perhaps a distress of health concerns. "We are stricken by no plague of locusts" Roosevelt claims, referencing specifically the Judeo-Christian story of God delivering his people out of slavery in Egypt, only after a series of plagues. The third series of plagues God unleashed upon Egypt when the Pharaoh would not agree to release the Jewish slaves involved a plague of locusts. "For tomorrow I will bring a swarm of locusts on your country. They will cover the land so that you won't be able to see the ground. They will devour what little is left of your crops after the hailstorm, including all the trees growing in the fields. They will overrun your palaces and the homes of your officials and all the houses in Egypt. Never in the history of Egypt have your ancestors seen a plague like this one!". [25] Through the incorporation of this biblical reference, Roosevelt juxtaposed the state of the nation's economy with vile plagues of death and therefore positioned the economic situation faced by the United States as a lesser struggle.

Or this from Franklin Roosevelt in his 1942 State of the Union, barely a month after the Japanese attack on Pearl Habor:

> Our enemies are guided by brutal cynicism, by unholy contempt for the human race. We are inspired by a faith that goes back through all the years to the first chapter of the Book of Genesis: "God created man in His own image. We on our side are striving to be true to that divine heritage. We are fighting, as our fathers have fought, to uphold the doctrine that all men are equal in the sight of God. Those on the other side are striving to destroy this deep belief and to create a world in their own image—a world of tyranny and cruelty and serfdom.[26]

Both statements are rich with religious imagery and rhetoric in particular the idea of being tested as well as being called to a higher purpose. Yet it is perhaps in the concluding remarks of the State of the Union addresses that the likeness of the US president to a priest becomes clearest:

> Today we still welcome those winds of change–and we have every reason to believe that our tide is running strong. With thanks to Almighty God for seeing us through a perilous passage, we ask His help anew in guiding the "Good Ship Union."[27]

The same particular claim was also stressed in Truman's speeches. Following series of parallel declarative statements about the nature of democracy and communism his speeches appeal to the democratic identity as having well-being, dignity, and the right to worship God. Therefore, the appeal to the American political right to worship God calls forth the conceptualization of the United States having been built upon religion and freedom. Recovering from World War II and with the Cold War on the horizon, Truman positioned the American freedom of religion as a dominant virtue. "From this faith we will not be moved," Truman proclaims, which rings of wherein the Psalmist David wrote, "He is my rock and my salvation, I shall not be moved". [28] This improves Truman's perceived power because his strength comes from God and God's power cannot be moved. The proclamation however, uses the term "we" when Truman speaks of faith as opposed

to the Psalmist use of the term "I". Thus, he not only made a statement about his own faith, power, and strength having come from God, but that all Americans have that same strong faith, power, and strength from God that the Psalmist David referenced in the Old Testament. This use of specific biblical language served the purpose of supporting his argument, that all men are created equal in the image of God. This claim of equality having stemmed from creation brings a need of belief in God as Creator, or else the equality does not exist in the form Truman described. Moreover, having followed this statement with the claim of solid faith, from which we will not be moved, Truman provides the necessary support for his equality plea, that the United States was built upon faith in God and that faith will never be shaken. This statement of strong stability serves to confirm the strength of the United States as a nation that will not be damaged by the threat of communism or war.

A comprehensive study carried within the theoretical framework of communication theory provides the following synthetic account of a common messianic feature in several previous presidents' crisis communication style:

> Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Reagan and Bush especially incorporated the myths of mission and manifest destiny in their stylistic depictions of "we" and the United States. According to Kennedy, for example, Americans willingly sacrificed whenever freedom was at stake. Likewise, Johnson portrayed the nation as the protector of global freedom, and Nixon described the United States as the country that must act to prevent "the forces of totalitarianism and anarchy" from threatening "free nations and free institutions throughout the world." In his discourse about Panama, Bush spoke of "the mission of our nation" and how the "sacrifice" of servicemen who had been wounded or killed had been for "a noble cause and will never be forgotten. A free and prosperous Panama will be an enduring tribute." None of these presidents, however, described the nation more romantically than Ronald Reagan, who claimed the United States was the world's "force for freedom" and its "most brilliant star of hope." He said that America had no other goal than to rescue others from oppression and pointed to Grenada as evidence that "the quest for freedom continues to build.[29]

The benefit of looking into presidential rhetoric for a glimpse into this relationship between God and politics is in what Domke and Coe call "The God Strategy" . [30] This God strategy is defined through their assertion that political leaders have taken advantage of rhetorical use of God "through calculated, deliberate, and partisan use of fait". The authors suggest that the manipulation of faith has been employed by politicians to connect with religiously inclined voters. This strategy appeals intentionally to Christian conservatives; Domke and Coe further argue that it was used specifically during the Reagan administration to rally Christians from all varieties of denominations from a shared morality, faith, and national politics. This strategy has not gone unnoticed by the Christians it hopes to rally; Domke and Coe discuss fundamentalist preacher Jerry Falwell and his charge against Bill Clinton's 1992 national convention acceptance speech reference to "The New Covenant" as "misquoting and manipulating the holy scriptures for political purposes" .[31]

The above analysis gives us a concise overview of the trajectory of key meanings across decades of presidential rhetoric. American exceptionalism nonetheless holds a powerful place in the nature of political discourse. Such a tradition has been used in political speech from the inception of the United States as an independent nation. As Edwards notes, it is almost impossible to overstate "the power and seduction that American exceptionalism … holds in U.S. politics and culture". American exceptionalism has been the justification for great goods and great ills. [32]

On the one hand, there is the legacy of the sacral interpretation, which prompts Americans to be a passive model and give the moral example to the rest of the world. On the other, America acts as a guarantor for freedom and in doing so it can engage in active policies abroad that are automatically vindicated by its self-appointed role of the champion of freedom. External influences that could check this supremacy are discarded because these influences have no sovereignty over the American people. The rising number of events in which the lines between civil and sacral religion are blurred in domestic affairs, and the pressure to acknowledge external sovereignty are testing the flexibility of America's founding concepts and the rhetoric that embodies them.

The following section will continue to demonstrate the presence of civil religion and American exceptionalism with reference to Eisenhower's and Reagan's millennial visions about the Cold War which we take as a war against communism. The discourse used is not a new phenomenon but merely an adaptation of existing rhetoric to changing conditions. The presence of ideas of exceptionalism provide a fertile soil for both Eisenhower and Reagan belief in their nation's providential role in history and their supremacist thinking about the US being the beacon of democracy during the fight against communism.

II- DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER'S "IN GOD WE TRUST"

1- EISENHOWER'S FAITH: A DEEP SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

President Dwight Eisenhower inspired some observers and amused others by declaring that America itself made no sense without "a deeply held religious faith—and I don't care what it is!" This was a way of affirming a point that America has a civil religion in addition to its citizens' many particular religions. Eisenhower also authorized the inclusion of the phrase "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance and the stamping of "In God We Trust" on currency. As this section will attempt to show Eisenhower's interpretation of the Cold War as a fundamentally religious conflict where the United States plays a leading role by framing the nature of the tensions as such, Ike hoped to strengthen his call for aid to countries fighting the Red Menace .

No one can doubt Eisenhower's personal faith. The Eisenhower home in Abilene, Kansas was a very religious place. Eisenhower's parents attended church regularly. Eisenhower thus grew up in a family where the Bible was read together, where prayers were said before every meal and where certain activities like drinking and gambling were discouraged.

When Dwight D. Eisenhower entered the political arena in 1952 he had never belonged to any organized church. One reason he gave for this was the fact that he was subject to constant relocation during his military career. However, he

believed himself to be a "deeply religious" man. After his election as President he was baptized and joined the National Presbyterian Church. The Eisenhowers frequently attended this church during the eight years of his administration.

Suddenly, while campaigning for presidency, Eisenhower's interest in religion was stirred; his brother Milton explained this as not only a search for personal inner peace, but also as an effort to give "spiritual stimulation to the rest of the country".[1] He still waited to join the church until February 1953, shortly after his inauguration.[2] After he became a member, Eisenhower attended church frequently and continued to do so even after his presidency, indicating that his faith was genuine, or at least that he or Mamie was attached to the tradition.[3]

After being sworn in as President on January 20, 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower began his first Inaugural Address with a prayer he had personally composed. During his administration, the phrase "under God" was added to the Pledge of Allegiance and Congress adopted "In God We Trust" as America's national motto. As president Eisenhower spoke many times about the importance of religious faith as an "essential foundation stone" for democracy, and he supported such programs as the American Legion's "Back to God" campaign. He expressed the belief that man was a spiritual being and that God was "the author of individual rights." Cabinet meetings began with a moment of silent prayer, and he had frequent meetings with religious leaders, such as Rev. Edward Elson, Francis Cardinal Spellman, and Billy Graham. [4]

Eisenhower did not always seem to take his faith that seriously, however. Off the record, he spoke carelessly and even slightly scornful of religion. In his political memoir, Hughes states that Ike's personal concern with either religion or philosophy appeared casual at best. "He enrolled in the Presbyterian church in Washington after his election in a spirit suggesting merely that he viewed the act as appropriate to the presidential office. And the ritual of the Cabinet prayer was performed with the same perfunctory air", writes Hughes.[5] In addition, Eisenhower mocked Ezra Benson's faith during a Cabinet meeting, where he said, irritated with Benson's slowness: "I really think Ezra is less concerned with his Department than with making sure I open every session with a prayer."[6] Another day, Hughes

reports, Eisenhower made a characteristically casual remark about a film on Luther he had watched the previous night: "I suppose some Catholics might resent it, but – what the devil – it was all four hundred years ago anyway, wasn't it?"[7]

The fact that Eisenhower started his inaugural address with a prayer and extensively used religious rhetoric throughout the speech, characterized Eisenhower's presidency. His speeches, especially his inaugural address, were interspersed with pastoral language. During the course of his inaugural address, Eisenhower used the word "faith" fourteen times and "God" seven times. Considering that an inaugural address is always thoroughly thought through, one can conclude that the religious rhetoric was not coincidental. Behind Eisenhower's rhetoric and the White House's measures, discussed above, there were clear motives.

During the Eisenhower presidency, the administration seemed more religious than ever with the implementation of many measures that seemingly increased the religiosity of the White House. Eisenhower proclaimed national days of prayer and often attended religious ceremonies himself.[8]The executive office carried out highly publicized prayer breakfasts and prayer preceded every Cabinet session.[9] The president helped create the Foundation for Religious Action and met frequently with religious delegations.[10]The mandatory appearance of this motto on all coins and paper currency is still seen today. In 1956, an office for religious activities was created and Frederic Fox was appointed as "The Pastor in the White House". Eisenhower's administrative team contained several religious players: Ezra Taft Benson, the Secretary of Agriculture was a Mormon apostle, the Secretaries of Health, Education and Welfare were active Methodists and John Foster Dulles was a Protestant layman. [11]

2- EISENHOWER'S CIVIL RELIGION: A SPIRITUAL CRUSADE AGAINST COMMUNISM

Eisenhower repeatedly pointed out in public that the United States had three pillars of strength- military, economic and moral/spiritual. As President, he felt that part of his job description was providing spiritual leadership. As his speechwriter Stanley High admitted, Eisenhower hoped "to inspire a spiritual reawakening in America" .[12] To Eisenhower, American entire political system was founded on the age-old ideals of faith and religion. He once told a national radio and television audience in 1954:

> Now I don't think it amiss... that we call attention to this fact: that in conception, our Nation had a spiritual foundation, so announced by the men who wrote the Declaration of Independence. You remember what they said? 'We hold that all men are endowed by their Creator with certain rights.' That is very definitely a spiritual conception".[13]

More famously, perhaps, Eisenhower told a campaign audience in 1952, "Our government makes no sense unless it is founded on a deeply felt religious faith- and I don't care what it is." Eisenhower's feelings on the subject did not go much deeper than that. A short anecdote proves the point. When asked about his religion by a friend, Eisenhower dug into his pocket and produced a coin. One side was inscribed with the word "Freedom," the other with the word "God." "That coin," Eisenhower claimed, "represents my religion".[14]

This heavy religious policy helped in the creation of unity among the American people who had faith. "The strength of all free peoples lies in unity; their danger in discord," expressed Eisenhower in his inauguration speech. He wanted to create a unified "moral community," which could be founded by providing the people ultimate visions, fear and hope.[15] His moral community consisted of people of all faiths, no matter which one. Dwight Eisenhower used therefore the gathering power of Civil Religion. "Whatever our individual church, whatever our personal creed, our common faith in God is a common bond among us," he said.[16] On a different occasion, he made the remark that "the government makes no sense unless it is founded in a deeply felt religious faith – and I don't care what it is".[17] He was

careful not to exclude anyone, with the exception of one group: the atheists. But those were, in his eyes, communists, or more susceptible to communism at the very least, thus should be isolated in order not to "contaminate" his conformist unity. "There's a battle between those people who believe man is nothing more than just an educated animal and those who believe that he is something else. […] It is atheism against some kind of religion, " he stated.[18] From this perspective, Eisenhower's religious rhetoric was a weapon against dissent and created conformism. Whether or not it was his *intention* to get a firmer grip on his population via religion – the Marxist idea of "religion is the opium of the masses" – can be discussed.

On the one hand, Eisenhower wanted to diminish the Cold War panic among the population, and he believed this could be achieved through faith.[19] On the other hand, he wanted to replace the military warfare with ideological warfare. Eisenhower was annoyed with the definitions of American strength in terms of military power or simple anti-soviet truculence.[20] "He groped for a higher kind of power – and the spiritual values that inspired all civilizations based upon a religious faith," Hughes' memoir tells us.[21] In consequence, his rhetoric describing the communists, was quite dramatic. "The enemies of this faith know no god but force, no devotion but its use," Eisenhower stressed in his inaugural address.

In the State of Union of 1955 he sneered at the communists calling them "soulless, animated machines to be enslaved and consumed by the state for its own glorification". "The reactionaries of communist materialism, violent antagonists of any form of religion, would return man to a horrible bondage," he asserted in the "New Look" speech on 25 August 1952. Ike constantly used biblical rhetoric in talking about the Cold War, which he presented as a diabolical conflict between a principled, spiritual America and a materialistic, atheistic communis.[21] It strikes a bit odd that a consumerist country such as the United States in the 1950s condemned the Soviet-Union for being materialistic, but Eisenhower's attack compensated for the United States' technological arrears, particularly in space.[22] He did so by calling the Soviet Union materialistic and emphasizing the United states' religiosity in contrast.

Another example of biblical rhetoric talking about the Cold War conflict is the image of the *Exodus* he invoked in numerous of speeches. This is particularly obvious in his State of the Union speech of 1954 where he claimed: "There is no obstacle on [America's forward road] she [America] will not surmount in her march toward a lasting peace in a free and prosperous world." This imagery was also adopted in the inauguration speech, amongst others, where Eisenhower mentioned "the crusade" of the people against "the evil force," being the Soviet Union. These feelings are going to be deeply analyzed in Eisenhower's millennial interpretations of the Cold War.

3- EISENHOWER'S MILLENIAL BELIEFS : DEMONIZING ATHEIST COMMUNISM

In his inaugural address, Eisenhower like the presidents before him, calls upon God's guidance in the days to come as he reflects upon man's journey from darkness toward light. Like his predecessor Harry Truman, in the days to come, Eisenhower also faced the daunting task of uniting the Nation in the face of the Cold War that continued to take hold of the United States. Therefore, Eisenhower's inaugural speech required elements of strength, optimism, and positioning the United Stated as good and righteous actors in the Cold War.[23] He uses rhetoric revolving around darkness and light when he spoke about what is on the horizon for the United States; the literal and metaphorical uses of darkness and light are present in the Bible from the first book, Genesis, to the last, Revelation. When God creates the world in Genesis 1, he saw goodness in light and separated the light from the darkness (Genesis 1:4 & Genesis 1:18). In Exodus, the armies of Egypt and Israel, of evil and of good, were separated by darkness and light (Exodus 14:20), and the great, faithful, Job speaks of darkness and light six times throughout his trials. The prophet Isaiah speaks of a journey out of darkness and toward light (Isaiah 59:9), and Jesus himself spoke, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12) .[24]

This association supports the reinforcement of the relationship between American identity and Judeo- Christian identity as their journeys and purposes are laid parallel in the darkness and light metaphors. The most common way that

Eisenhower utilized this religious rhetoric was by demonizing the atheistic communist Soviets. For instance, Eisenhower opened his 1955 State of the Union by presenting his take on the basis for the Cold War. He told the American public:

> At the outset, I believe it would be well to remind ourselves of this great fundamental in our national life: our common belief that every human being is divinely endowed with dignity and worth and inalienable rights. This faith, with its corollary- that to grow and flourish people must be free- shapes the interests and aspirations of every American… It is of the utmost importance, that each of us understand the true nature of the struggle now taking place in the world. It is not a struggle merely of economic theories, or of forms of government, or of military power. At issue is the true nature of man. Either man is the creature whom the Psalmist described as 'a little lower than the angels,' crowned with glory and honor, holding 'dominion over the works' of his Creator; or man is a soulless, animated machine to be enslaved, used and consumed by the state for its own glorification. It is, therefore, a struggle which goes to the roots of the human spirit, and its shadow falls across the long sweep of man's destiny. This prize, so precious, so fraught with ultimate meaning, is the true object of the contending forces in the world. [25]

In this speech, Eisenhower very coherently argues that the Cold War is at its heart a religious struggle, and not a political or economic one. The way that this statement is constructed, to argue that Eisenhower was wrong would be to argue that the Bible itself, that that description by the Psalmist, was wrong. That would be a difficult case to make today, no less so than in the 1950s.

In a little plainer language, Eisenhower made this same point in a press conference held in March of 1956: "I have in public talks pointed out that this is, underneath it all, a battle between those people who believe that man is something more than just an educated animal and those who believe he is nothing else. That is exactly what it is. It is atheism against some kind of religion" . [26] This opinion was one Eisenhower would often express.

Depicting the Cold War as a battle between atheism and religion allowed Eisenhower to further express confidence in its eventual outcome. One side was on

the side of God, the other was not. The winner was obvious, as Eisenhower told the graduates of Baylor in 1956:

> Communism denies the spiritual premises on which your education has been based. According to that doctrine, there is no God; there is no soul in man; there is no reward beyond the satisfaction of daily needs. Consequently, toward the human being, Communism is cruel, intolerant, materialistic. This doctrine, committed to conquest by lure, by intimidation and by force, seeks to destroy the political concepts and institutions that we hold to be dearer than life itself. Thus Communism poses a threat from which even this mighty nation is not wholly immune. Yet, my friends, Communism is, in deepest sense, a gigantic failure. Even in the countries it dominates, hundreds of millions who dwell there still cling to their religious faith; still are moved by aspirations for justice and freedom that cannot be answered merely by more steel or by bigger bombers; still seek a reward that is beyond money or place or power; still dream of the day that they may walk fearlessly in the fullness of human freedom. The destiny of man is freedom and justice under his Creator. Any ideology that denies this universal faith will ultimately perish or be recast. This is the first great truth that must underlie all our thinking, all our striving in this struggling world. [27]

Eisenhower's broad religious comments on the Cold War were linked to a much more targeted and precise policy campaign. All the negative religious rhetoric aimed at the Soviets set the stage for Eisenhower to extensively use overt religious themes and arguments to drum up support for his controversial program of foreign assistance. This aid would be going, naturally, to those countries that opposed the Godless communists. Every speech in which Eisenhower criticized the Soviets for their atheism must be seen as helping to create a context in which he could make a faith based argument for helping other countries who *did* share our religious beliefs. Sometimes, he would make this connection explicit.

Part of Eisenhower's stated rationale for aiding the countries of the Middle East was, as he said, "The Middle East is the birthplace of three great religions-Moslem, Christian and Hebrew. Mecca and Jerusalem are more than places on the map. They symbolize religions which teach that the spirit has supremacy over matter and that the individual has a dignity and rights of which no despotic

government can rightfully deprive him. It would be intolerable if the holy places of the Middle East should be subjected to a rule that glorifies atheistic materialism". [28]

Finally, the President also made extensive use of light/dark imagery in this address in order to impress upon his listeners the fundamental goodness and morality of America exceptionalism as opposed to the evil designs of the USSR. The Soviets are described as "dark in purpose." The countries under Communist control are living through "the night of their bondage" and are depicted as "darkened lands." In contrast, the U.S. represents "the light of freedom" that will "flame brightly." This duality is a fairly common feature of much of Eisenhower's anti-communist rhetoric. The conflict between light and darkness is an easily recognizable Biblical theme in providential Christian conception of history. It is always God who conquers the darkness. As the apostle Paul wrote, "For it is God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God…". [29] Therefore, in a way, by associating the U.S. with light, Eisenhower is also implicitly connecting it within God's providence.

When it comes to the rhetoric of American exceptionalism , the same Cold War atmosphere with its semantics, symbols, and metaphors of light and darkness were used by the president Ronald Reagan to distinguish United States from the Soviet Union. He proved most adept at galvanizing the legacy of the religious Cold War as developed in the upcoming section.

III- RONALD REAGAN'S ARMAGEDDON AND EVIL EMPIRE

1-RONALD REAGAN AS A MAN OF EVANGILICAL FAITH

No theme was dearer to Ronald Reagan than the view that America was destined by "Divine Providence" to be the shining "city on a hill" that John Winthrop spoke of to the Pilgrims. Reagan invoked that image when he announced his candidacy for the Presidency in 1979, in his 1984 nomination acceptance speech, and in his final State of the Union address, as well as many other occasions. In his Inaugural addresses, he repeatedly made clear that he understood this to mean that America should be an "exemplar of freedom and a beacon of hope" to all the world, and that God "intended" and "called" the American people to play this role, so that God was the true "author" of America's "dream of freedom."

This section then will first shed light on Ronald Reagan's belief in American exceptionalism as providential. Undoubtedly, Reagan made effective use of the nature of America as a millennial nation and, again, did so with words and symbols meaningful to ordinary people. Because the country and its way of life, including democracy and capitalism, were rooted in the design of nature, then it was unique among countries by being above the plane of ordinary history.

During a speech given in the later days of his presidency to students at Georgetown University, Reagan quotes from Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*: "Our faith is what supports us. Tocqueville said it in 1835, and it's as true today is it was then: 'Despotism may govern without faith, but liberty cannot. Religion is more needed in democratic societies than in any other'". [1] Reagan uses this position to not only justify his emphasis on religious faith, but also his insistence on its importance in government actions. Yet in this speech, Reagan succeeds in taking Tocqueville's words out of context by using them to support the combination of church and state, when in actuality, Tocqueville declares that the separation of church and state keeps a democracy healthy.

Like most of the men who have reached the pinnacle of power, Reagan grew up in a religious household . It was Reagan's mother who introduced him to organized religion. Nelle Reagan was baptized into the Disciples of Christ church in

1910. [2] For the remainder of her life, she would be an active member of the Disciples, leading Bible study groups and writing for the church's newspaper. Nelle encouraged her son to follow her example and, in his early years, Reagan did. As a teenager, he, too, taught Sunday school and led Bible study. When time came to attend college, Reagan chose a small school, Eureka, that was affiliated with the Disciples.

Yet Reagan's childhood habits did not persist into adulthood. Reagan was at best only an infrequent attendee at church services over the course of his life. In an article he wrote for *Modern Screen* in 1950, Reagan openly admitted that his participation in organized religion was limited and his beliefs were vague. Reagan defended his absence on Sundays by arguing that his presence in church could distract or even jeopardize the security of other worshippers. However, this excuse seems to be a patent rationalization. Safety concerns never stopped other presidents, including his own vice president, George H.W. Bush, attending services .

In terms of personal conduct, although Reagan was faithful and devoted to his wife, Nancy, the fact remains that he had divorced and remarried. However, Reagan's divorce was not the only potential black mark in his biography. Reagan was also a former liberal Hollywood actor, a prominent member of a community that Christian conservatives typically regard with suspicion and hostility. Further, Reagan could hardly be accused of selflessness; he gave less than 2% of his sizable annual income to charity .[3] Finally, Reagan had an estranged relationship with his son, Michael. Michael was Reagan's adopted son from his first marriage to actress Jane Wyman. In a wounded memoir published in 1987, Michael revealed that his father had never even bothered to come see him play football when in high school .[4] All of these complications did not exactly square with ideal Christian ethics.

Given this background, the question must be posed as to exactly how sincere Reagan's efforts at religious outreach were? Indeed, Reagan delivered little importance to Christian conservatives, despite publicly pledging himself to their goals during the 1980 campaign. In August 1980 Reagan told a Christian rally in Dallas, "I know you can't endorse me. But I want you to know that I endorse you and what you are doing" .[5]

As Governor of California, Reagan had signed into law the most liberal abortion bill in the nation. That law, the Therapeutic Abortion Act of 1967, facilitated more than one million abortions. Similarly, by the end of his presidency, almost all of the evangelical agenda remained unfulfilled. Abortion was still legal. School prayer was not compulsory. Reagan's actual legislative accomplishments, like the Adolescent Family Life Act, which provided federal funding for abstinence-based sex education, were relatively "small ball" .[6]

This material hints at what was meant earlier about what one believes about Reagan and his faith often being what one wants to believe. If you are a Reagan supporter, then you probably agree with Meese, who claimed, "He (Reagan) had a very strong personal faith, which came up as a natural thing in private conversation. The president was able to talk about religion in a comfortable way, better than almost any person I've ever met. He did not want to parade it before the public" [7].

Reagan certainly seemed to genuinely believe that America had a divine mission in the world. He was voicing a "sacramental vision" of American history well before he became a politician.[8] Yet Reagan also seemed more than capable of being quite strategic when it came to the political use of religion. The manner in which he navigated the controversies over school prayer and abortion proves as much.

Reagan had a gift that allowed him to translate complex ideas into simple points that the great majority of Americans could understand. He was always pushing his speechwriters to shorten their sentences, to condense paragraphs, to use more common words.[9] Often in practice that guidance meant framing those ideas with religious words or symbols. Billy Graham once told Reagan "I would think that you have talked about God more than any other president since Abraham Lincoln" .[10]

Some questioned how someone so publicly devout could at the same time be so outwardly antagonistic towards U.S. adversaries. Nevertheless, despite what his critics may have said, Reagan was no warmonger. He regularly told his public audiences that he had already seen four wars in his lifetime and that he could not

bear the thought of another. As he saw it, a nuclear war could never be won and hence must never be fought. He made this point constantly in his speeches.

In fact, in private Reagan was known to fret that someday a simple misunderstanding between his country and Russia might precipitate a nuclear Armageddon- as in the end of the world as foretold by the Bible. Reagan had first expressed an interest in the contents of the Book of Revelation in the late 60s and he quickly became "hooked" on it .[11] As understood by Reagan , certain events in Revelation, like a plague, could be interpreted as a prophecy of nuclear war. As his political strategist Stuart Spencer remembered, "He (Reagan) was absolutely obsessed with the threat from Russia; the whole nuclear picture revolved around that threat. He used to talk about Armageddon. To my mind, Armageddon tied into his concern about the nuclear chaos that he knew about as president, from the information he would get in his national security and other briefings. These were the things he worried about. He had a vision about them; he read about them, thought about them, and talked to a lot of people about them" .[12]

In the face of adversary and calm the American people's fears of nuclear war. His strategy, though, continued to attract the group of supporters he had found the most success with in the past: the Evangelicals. Reagan frequently evokes Evangelical principles in his speeches, and also chooses to address several religious organizations during his first term as president; but one of his most famous speeches, one that illustrates just how seriously he took his faith as well as the support of the Evangelical movement, was given two and a half years after his speech at Liberty Baptist College.

Several prominent evangelicals seemed to have some influence on his religious beliefs and practice. One of these was Billy Graham who apparently intrigued Reagan while mentioning biblical prophecies related to the second coming of Christ in his sermons, and apparently Reagan was impressive in some of his knowledge on the matter. Reagan's long-time fascination with Armageddon was again reinforced in 1969, while he was listening to one of Graham's evangelistic crusades, and Reagan asked to look into getting a printed transcript of the sermon., he obtained a tape of the sermon, and Reagans staff transcribed .

Reagan spoke to those in attendance at the Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals in Orlando, Florida, on March 8, 1983, during Cold War tensions. With the nuclear arms race at a high point, Reagan was weeks away from proposing the Strategic Defense Initiative, dubbed "Star Wars" by the mainstream media.[20] It is no surprise, then, that Reagan's speech addresses the dangers of communism: yet he veils the issue of the nuclear arms freeze movement behind remarks about the abortion debate, the restoration of prayer to public schools, and a general spiritual awakening in America that was, in Reagan's eyes, "a renewal of the traditional values that have been the bedrock of America's goodness and greatness."

In the coming point, I will stress the way Reagan's presidential discourse was filled with examples of civil religion, such as discussion of sacred origins and sacred destinies for America, reminding the people of their "divine legacy" and calling the people to fulfill their "divine destiny."

2-REAGAN'S CIVIL RELIGION: AMERICA AS THE GREATEST BASTION OF FREEDOM

Allan Fotheringham writes that "God never strays very far from Reagan's speeches, and in fact manages to make an appearance in almost every one of them"; therefore, he may be thought of as "the high priest of civil religion"[21]. Many constituents held the belief that "the Republicans in 1980 found an ideal person in Ronald Reagan who could match religious faith to political works" and that "he successfully fused the fundamentalist idiom with the political issues" most relevant to the religious constituency.[22]

An article entitled "Mr. Reagan's Civil Religion," published in 1984, provides a summary of Reagan's personal approach to civil religion, where he:

> first links politics, morality, religion, and government's need for the church, then warns against intolerance and celebrates the fact that there is a wall between church and state guaranteeing all Americans' rights to their own religious beliefs or to no belief at all, he is not acting the political hypocrite, as his critics aver. . . . he is not promoting religion in the sense of

> the many particular faiths that we know in America. He is preaching something else, and that something is *civil religion.*

Reagan's civil religion is described as being anchored in "'bedrock values'," which include "'hard work' and 'family' and 'strength and purposefulness in our foreign relations'" [23]. Calling for the best effort of the American public is standard in presidential expressions of civil religion, and Reagan was certainly no exception. Kevin Coe and David Domke assert that "Ronald Reagan's presidency was a watershed moment for the confluence of religion and American politics" .Whether or not his application of civil religion breached the contract can be found in his speeches.[24]

In the very first moment of his presidency, in the opening passage of his First Inaugural, Reagan noted that the origins of an orderly transfer of power was "nothing less than a miracle." The term is a recurrent one in Reagan's rhetoric . In his Farewell Address, eight years later, he would comment on "the American miracle" and its impact on other world leaders. For Reagan, the origins of the country and its liberty and freedom were indeed miraculous and divinely inspired. In his Second Inaugural, he explained:

> We raise our voices to the God who is the Author of this most tender music [of freedom].And may He continue to hold us close as we fill the world with our sound...one people under God, dedicated to the dream of freedom that He has placed in the human heart, called upon now to pass that dream on to a waiting and hopeful world.[25]

For Reagan, the origins of the country naturally lead to its destiny. According to the president, God called America to be "the last and greatest bastion of freedom," a place for the "last best hope" of liberty, and a "blessed land." From such divine origins, America has as its destiny an evangelical obligation to share these blessings with the rest of the world. Using a metaphor which he repeatedly relies upon, Reagan suggested in his First Inaugural that such a destiny will make America "the exemplar of freedom and a beacon of hope for those who do not now have freedom."[26]

Reagan's predecessors often use their inaugural addresses to promote certain acts with the end goal of securing a better future. The emphasis on future promise dominates his hopes for today: "We must act today in order to preserve tomorrow. And let there be no misunderstanding: We are going to begin to act, beginning today" . Reagan does not promise salvation for his audience, instead he relays the hope of a better future—made possible by the hard work of many different kinds of Americans and in many different fields of work.

In his Farewell Address, he closed his Administration with a strong reference to this unique American destiny:

> [A]fter 200 years, two centuries, [America] still stands strong and true on the granite ridge, and hez glow has held steady no matter what storm. And she's still a beacon, still a magnet for all who must have freedom, for all the pilgrims, from all the lost places who are hurtling through the darkness, toward home. [27]

Reagan was quite clear about the sacred origins of the country. He strongly suggested that such origins demanded a unique destiny: that of evangelizing the rest of the world to the benefits of freedom. Ultimately for Reagan, America was a divinely provided sanctuary for those early Pilgrims and America must serve as a continuing sanctuary for freedom-seekers in the late 20th century. To do less would be to deny the country's origins and destiny.

An important aspect of civil religion are the heroic figures which serve as saints in the theology of Americanism. No people, as Stephen Ausand noted, are very comfortable without legendary figures who battle and eventually overcome some form of evil and chaos. The heart of the First Inaugural was Reagan's declaration that Americans "have every right to dream heroic dreams. Those who say that we're in a time when there are no heroes, they just don't know where to look." The new president then pointed his listeners toward such places as the factory, the farm, the lunch counter, concluding " W heir values sustain our national life. Reagan made effective use of a variety of heroic figures in his discourse, often placing these people in the gallery for his State of the Union addresses and then recounting their deeds near the conclusions of his speeches.[28]

The First Inaugural was practically a roll call of legendary Amreican figures. He mentioned Dr. Joseph Warren, president of the Massachusetts Congress, a "man who might have been one of the greatest among the Founding Fathers." Reagan also directed the audience's attention to three key figures in American mythology: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Abraham Lincoln. Washington he described as a "man of humility who came to greatness reluctantly. He led America out of revolutionary victory into infant nationhood."Of Jefferson, he noted, "The Declaration of Independence flames with his eloquence."And finally, "Whoever would understand in his heart the meaning of America will find it in the life of Abraham Lincoln."As he mentioned each of these latter trio, he pointed his audience toward each of their respective monuments, "shrines to the giants on whose shoulders westand." In the Second Inaugural, Reagan returned again to Washington and Jefferson as well as John Adams, persons "who dared to think they could start the world over again."[29]

In his remarks at the opening ceremonies of the Statue of Liberty Centennial, Reagan made use of Lincoln, the Pilgrims, and Harry Truman, all within the first few moments of his speech. At the memorial service for the Challenger astronauts, Reagan again quoted Lincoln on America as "the last ,best hope of man on Earth...built on heroism and noble sacrifice."He chose as well to discuss frontier pioneers and not unexpectedly linked these historical figures to seven astronauts.

In sum, Reagan made consistent and unabashed use of heroic figures; his discourse as president was a rhetoric of heroism. Many of these figures were national saints for America's civil religion, particularly Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln .Reagan repeatedly returns to this trio; scholars agree that in the panthenon of American saints, these three are likely the strongest. They are America's archangels' .Reagan's use of heroic figures served several purposes. These heroes, especially the national saints, reminded the audience of the origins of the country, thus reinforcing another aspect of America's civil religion. These heroes, especially the more recent and more common ones, represented America's destiny. Finally, these figures were useful for highlighting important cultural values, such as sacrifice and duty, which Reagan could mobilize for his immediate political needs.

Reagan made frequent use of the concepts of freedom and democracy, which would not be particularly unusual for a presidential rhetoric, especially one who built his rhetoric on a mythology of the country. These conditions of freedom and democratic government are perhaps the most ultimate of terms for Americans. What made them especially important in Reagan's civil religion rhetoric were the ways in which he attributed supernatural origins and power to these terms. These concepts, which are critical to the country's self- definition, were not tat political conditions. They were not merely an American thesis to the Soviet's antithesis of communism . Rather, for Reagan, freedom and democracy were far more powerful and good than any other existing political structure. What John Winthrop's "shining city upon a hill" came full circle with Reagan's explanation of the attractive and redemptive power of freedom. Because of its freedom, America could not only save itself, but those around it.

3-REAGAN'S APOCALYPTIC BELIEFS: FEAR OF A NUCLEAR ARMAGEDDON

Reagan staffers worried about how the public would react if they knew of this presidential obsession. However, despite being explicitly questioned on the connection between his beliefs about Armageddon and U.S. defense policy in his second debate with Walter Mondale in 1984, the issue never really materialized. That does not mean that Reagan kept these thoughts entirely to himself, though. On some occasions, Reagan did explain his apocalyptic visions to the public, one example being a December 1983 interview he did with *People* magazine .[30] The reporters asked Reagan about a curious quote, attributed to him by the *Jerusalem Post*, suggesting that this generation might well witness the end of times. Reagan explained his comments to *People* as such:

> I've never done that publicly. I have talked here, and then I wrote people, because some theologians quite some time ago were telling me, calling attention to the fact that theologians have been studying the ancient prophecies- What would portend the coming of Armageddon? - and have said that never, in the time between the prophecies up until now has

> there ever been a time in which so many of the prophecies are coming together. There have been times in the past when people thought the end of the world was coming, and so forth, but never anything like this.
> And one of them, the first one who ever broached this to me- and I won't use his name; I don't have permission to. He probably would give it, but I'm not going to ask- had held a meeting with the then head of the German Government, years ago when the war was over, and did not know that his hobby was theology. And he asked this theologian what did he think was the next great news event, worldwide. And the theologian, very wisely, said, "Well, I think that you're asking that question in a case that you've had a thought along that line." And he did. It was about the prophecies and so forth. So, no. I've talked conversationally about that.

With these fears in the back of his mind, Reagan aggressively sought arms reductions, more so in his second term. Showing his resolve, he ignored substantial resistance from conservative hardliners. Reagan had no desire to be the one that triggered an age of darkness.

His aides considered this to be one of his "loopier" notions but it probably, like so many of Reagan's ideas, had grounding in a classic movie, 1951's *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. In that film an alien threatens to destroy the world if nuclear weapons are not eliminated. Reagan spoke quite often about the movie's enduring impact on him . And, again, like his thoughts about Armageddon, sometimes Reagan would articulate this vision to a wider public as well; for instance, consider his December 1985 visit to Fallston High School in Maryland:

> I couldn't help but- one point in our discussions privately with General Secretary Gorbachev- when you stop to think that we're all God's children, wherever we may live in the world, I couldn't help but say to him, just think how easy his task and mine might be in these meetings that we held if suddenly there was a threat to this world from some other species, from another planet, outside in the universe. We'd forget all the little local differences that we have between our countries, and we would find out once and for all that we really are all human beings here on this Earth together. Well,

> I don't suppose we can wait for some alien race to come down and threaten us, but I think that between us we can bring about that realization. [31]

Despite Reagan's concerns about Armageddon, and despite his belief that Cold War adversities could be done away with, Reagan nevertheless passionately believed it was imperative for the United States to upgrade its defenses . Like so many observers, Reagan concluded that U.S. strength and security had dangerously eroded during the 1970s. By the early part of the decade, the Soviets had reached strategic parity with the U.S. The U.S.S.R. had dramatically enhanced their naval strength and tactical air force and had even gained numerical superiority in certain weapons like intercontinental ballistic missiles. Over the years the Soviets had been spending considerably more on defense than the U.S., despite their much smaller economy.

It is another of those Reagan paradoxes that a man so concerned about the onset of Armageddon would at the same time be so committed to providing the supplies that might make it happen. Yet this duality was merely another manifestation of Reagan's supreme self-confidence. Even if Armageddon was imminent, Reagan thought that he had the personal capacity to avoid it. "This was one of the intellectual contradictions in Reagan's thinking. He sees himself as a romantic, heroic figure who believes in the power of a hero to overcome even Armageddon," his security advisor Bud McFarlane said. "I think it may come from Hollywood. Wherever it came from, he believes that the power of a person and an idea could change the outcome of something even as terrible as Armageddon. This was the greatest challenge of all… He didn't see himself as God, but he saw himself as a heroic figure on earth".[32] So, Reagan would try to preserve the peace, and thereby the world, through strength. No war ever started, Reagan reasoned, because a country was too strong.

Hence, Reagan had actually expanded on his earlier comments by offering a causal explanation for *why* the communists lie and cheat and steal- that being because "their ideology is without God, without our idea of morality in the religious sense." This, of course, was a very 'Eisenhowerish' perspective on the nature of the

difference between the two ideologies. Or, as Reagan said to a conference on religious liberty in 1985:

> But as all of you know only too well, there are many political regimes today that completely reject the notion that a man or a woman can have a greater loyalty to God than to the state. Marx's central insight when he was creating his political system was that religious belief would subvert his intentions. Under the Communist system, the ruling party would claim for itself the attributes which religious faith ascribes to God alone, and the state would be final arbiter of …And Lenin said: 'Religion and communism are incompatible in theory as well as in practice… We must fight religion.' All of this illustrates a truth that, I believe, must be understood. Atheism is not an incidental element of communism, not just part of the package; it is the package. [33]

On many occasions, Reagan would contextualize concrete foreign policy disputes as a battle between these two dichotomous perspectives on God. Essentially, Reagan posited that the entire cold war was at heart a religious question. The first goal that he attributes to the Soviet leaders is that they "not to believe in God." He quotes John Paul II as he suggests that U.S. policy is based on "the strong foundation of moral and spiritual values." By extension, as America supports freedom, the cause of America is also the cause of God.

Similarly, Reagan told an audience of Cuban Americans in 1983 that the "greatest tie" between Cuba and America "can be seen in the incredible number of cathedrals and churches found throughout the hemisphere." "Our forefathers," Reagan reminded them, "took the worship of God seriously." But Reagan warned that the Americas were threatened by "a philosophy that holds truth and liberty in contempt and is a self-declared enemy of the worship of God." Reagan's point was that we, meaning regular Cubans and Americans, love God, while they, meaning the Soviets, are his enemy. The Great Communicator punctuated this vision of a battle between religion and atheism by means of some of his trademark humor: "You know, they say there are only two places where communism works: in heaven, where they don't need it- and in hell, where they've already got it". [34]

Reagan speechwriter Peggy Noonan argues that Reagan spoke in this manner because he felt it was imperative to tell the "truth" about the Soviets. Reagan believed that past U.S. administrations had been overly diplomatic out of fear that they might offend the Communist leadership. Reagan, on the other hand, thought his moralistic rhetoric was "uniquely constructive." People had to know what they were up against.[35] As Ed Meese put it, Reagan's anti-Soviet rhetoric was part of the "essence" of his Cold War strategy, it was part of his "game plan." Hence, we should not make the mistake of thinking that there was no purpose behind these words.[36]

Reagan imbued his public pronouncements with exceptionalist symbolism and imagery, describing the United States as "a land of hope, a light unto nations, a shining city on a hill." He was a true believer in the exceptional nature of his country. Eisenhower's leadership meshed well with worries about the country's diminished power abroad and fear that the Soviet Union had achieved military superiority over the United States. His use of sacred symbols of civil religious themes was reassuring and hopeful for the future: "America was weak and freedom everywhere was under siege."

Crusade rhetoric was a key feature of both Eisenhower's and Reagan's Cold War discourse, enabling what was in essence a traditional struggle for power and influence to be portrayed as Manichean conflict in which battled evil. The strategic use of religion to legitimate American policies while demonizing those of the Soviet Union. Eisenhower increasingly emphasized civil religion appropriating the spiritual authority of the United States.

Ronald Reagan, to a lesser degree Eisenhower have repeatedly made clear that their political worldviews have rested far more on religious providential concepts of America than any other foundation. No theme was dearer to Ronald Reagan than the notion that America was destined by "Divine Providence" to be the shining "city on a hill" that John Winthrop spoke of to the Pilgrims. Reagan invoked that image when he announced his candidacy for the Presidency in 1979, in his 1984 nomination acceptance speech, and in his final State of the Union address, as well as many other occasions. In his Inaugural addresses, he repeatedly made

clear that he understood this to mean that America should be an “exemplar of freedom and a beacon of hope” to all the world, and that God “intended” and “called” the American people to play this role, so that God was the true “author” of America’s “dream of freedom.” One of Reagan’s most eloquent expressions of this view came in a speech , at the 1986 Statue of Liberty commemoration, where the President celebrated the nation’s history of welcoming immigrants by saying, “I have always believed there was some divine providence that placed this great land here between the two great oceans, to be found by a special kind of people from every corner of the world, who had a special love for freedom.”

ENDNOTES

I

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[2] Rousseau, "The Social Contract," 146.

[3] Rousseau, "The Social Contract," 150.

[4] Ibid.

[5] This theme is further expounded in Book II of Plato's *Republic* and Book X of *Laws*. Plato explained the necessity for certain core theological beliefs: primacy of the soul over the body, belief in and proper veneration of the gods, and belief in their justice and general benevolence (at least toward Athenian Greeks). Such articles of faith were not only beneficial, but vital to both the state and the individual. So pressing was the state's interest in religion, that he suggested those convicted of impiety be imprisoned for five years upon the first offense, and put to death upon the second. See Alan Bloom, The Republic of Plato 2nd ed . (New York: Basic Books 1991), pp. 35-61. See also Thomas L. Pangle, The Laws of Plato. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1988), pp. 280-311.

[6] When the Roman legions conquered new territories they brought their state religion, but often permitted the locals to continue worshiping their deities so long as they were worshipped in addition to the Roman pantheon. See Chapter XXIII of Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* . Edited by David Womersley (New York: Penguin Books 2000), pp. 230-275.

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[17] Ibid.

[18] McClay, Wilfred M. (2004) "The Soul of a Nation" *The Public Interest.* No. 155.

[19] Bishop, Hywel and Jaworski, Adam (2003) "'We beat'em': nationalism and the hegemony of homogeneity in the British press reportage of Germany versus England during Euro 2000". *Discourse & Society*. 14:3. 243-271.

[20] According to the online collection of speeches and public statements by George W. Bush on www.vote-smart.org.

[21] Here are the numbers of religious references per speech in the nomination acceptance, Inaugural, and State of the Union speeches from FDR to George W. Bush:

Democrats Republicans

FDR: 1.6 Eisenhower: 2.8

Truman: 2.4 Nixon: 1.7

Kennedy: 2 Ford: 2.75

Johnson: 1.4 Reagan: 4.1

Carter: 0.7 George H. W. Bush: 2.8

Clinton: 2.6 George W. Bush: 4.3

All the Republicans except Nixon make more religious references than all the Democrats, including Clinton, who used religious references as much as a typical Republican President. Strikingly, Carter used religious references the least, perhaps because he feared being perceived as unduly pious and fundamentalist. Reagan and George W. Bush clearly have used religious references the most, two to three times as often as most Democrats. They also use them most often in contexts where they support specific policies, as argued in the text.(Retrieved from the iPOLL Databank, Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut, 2005.)

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II

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[3] Gary Scott Smith, *Faith and the presidency*, 222.

[4] Rev. Edward Elson(a Presbyterian church leader who baptized and confirmed President Eisenhower), Francis Cardinal Spellman (Archbishop of New York), and Billy Graham.(a prominent evangelical Christian preacher)

[5] Emmet John Hughes, *The Ordeal of power; a political memoir of the Eisenhower years*, New York Atheneum.p,150.
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[9] Gary Scott Smith, *Faith and the presidency*, 224.
[10] Ibid.

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[12] Ibid,p.265
[13] Eisenhower, 1954. "Radio and Television Address to the American People on the State of the Nation." April 5. http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.
[14] Perret 1999, 428
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[16] Gary Scott Smith, *Faith and the presidency*, 233.
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[18] Ibid.
[19] Ned O'Gorman, "Eisenhower and the American Sublime," 66.
[20] Emmet John Hughes, *The ordeal of power*, 330.
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III

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[17]Pemberton, *Exit With Honor,pp.*159-160.

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[28] Reagan, "Inaugural Address, January 21, 1985," 55.

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CHAPTER THREE

AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM AS A MYTH OF UNION

In this part of my dissertation I will show how American exceptionalism acts as myth, I will attempt to stress that some grasp of America's national myths is essential to understand not just the resurgence of nationalistic religious rhetoric but also the country's sense of exceptionalism. Infact the Americans most important explanation of their exceptionalism is the myth of their providential mission. I will focus on the use of Puritan lamentations i.e. The significance of the election sermons as Jeremiad that stresses the decline of a community. Yet I will extend the Jeremiad beyond its religious context and view it as a ritual through which the myth of American exceptionalism was expressed. Accordingly I will approach myth through the jeremiad to show how such a ritual attempts to unify people or brought the community together during times of crisis.

Indeed the American jeremiad has long been an established rhetorical form that operates as "a corrective to conditions gone awry". In response to a "falling away," the jeremiad issues a call to the community to return home to idealized foundational principles. For the purpose at hand, the first section is entitled: ***American Exceptionalism as Myth: The Importance of the Jeremiad***. In this section, I briefly illustrate how the American jeremiad gives shape to the cultural myth of American exceptionalism. I will clarify the American jeremiad, following it from its Puritan parentage and its theological roots to its secular dimensions in the formation of civil religion, including its enduring use in American and presidential discourse.

In the second section entitled: ***Abraham Lincoln's Secular Jeremiad on the Civil War,*** I look at how Abraham Lincoln's reflections on the Civil War's meaning and its connection with God's purposes provided an eloquent contrast to the Puritan "model". Lincoln marks an important moment in the history of the American jeremiad. To accurately understand his use of the jeremiad, we must briefly consider his religious views in ***Lincoln's Faith: A Skeptical Spirituality***. Given his unconventional religious life, it is unsurprising that his approach to the American jeremiad deepened. His speeches painted America as the slave holding Egyptians who would be smitten by God's wrath unless they purified themselves and returned to the covenantal equality enshrined in the Declaration. It was Lincoln, perhaps

more than anyone else, who recognized the power of the Biblical narrative as a metaphor for America. In this section, three speeches will be examined in chronological order: The ***First Inaugural Address, The Gettysburg Address, and the Second Inaugural***. The First Inaugural is important for the understanding it gives of the nature of the American union. The Gettysburg Address, the most reverent, yet quick, address ,Abraham Lincoln not only honorably bestows a Farewell to the soldiers who gave their lives for the livelihood of their country, but through his rhetorical usage of the jeremiad, Lincoln sends a central message of unity for the nation in the midst of a war. The Second Inaugural is said by some to be an emendation of the Gettysburg Address. It shows Lincoln's growing providentialism and calls America to account for the suffering for the slaves and what slavery brought in a civil war that was but one measure of an angry God , demanding that America as a chosen nation, must confess its sins and pay for them. Only then might America have peace with itself and realize its promise.

The third and final section is entitled: ***Johnson's Secular Jeremiad on Civil Rights.*** When president Johnson came to office, his administration was under a tremendous amount of pressure. While the country was grieving a slain president, Johnson was uncertain of his own ability to do the job and civil rights loomed as a crucial problem for both the country and his own political future. And so in this uncertain time, Johnson turned to myth as a means for selling the country on the need for legislation. Through a close reading of the speeches, contextualized by the lamentation following Kennedy's assassination, I argue that Johnson's jeremiad operates, in part, as a rhetorically skillful response to the post-Kennedy's crisis of national identity. I further argue that Johnson both acknowledges and appropriates the crisis, offering Americans a "way home" to mythic America and explain the unification of the American populace in a time of strife .

Johnson's addresses used the jeremiad frames namely the lamentation of the present, the evocation of the past and the calling for renewal. By using these frames in combinations with the context of the addresses- Kennedy's assassination and civil rights movement- Johnson presents American perspective and hopes for their situation and future. The section begins with Johnson's ***Inaugural Address*** (20

January 1965) in an effort to ensure a tranquil transition after the Kennedy assassination and his efforts to realize Kennedy's agenda. Then I proceed with the "***We Shall* Overcome *Address*** (15 March 1965. Exhibiting uncharacteristic eloquence, Johnson made the principle of equal voting rights meaningful through a vocabulary of shared interests and aspirations (what he called "the American Promise") in order to secure passage of America's most important civil rights law—the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Moreover, the speech has had a lasting influence on the meaning of civil rights in the United States.

I- AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM AS MYTH : THE IMPORTANCE OF THE JEREMIAD

1- MYTH AS CULTURAL COHESION

Myths are the means by which a nation affirms its deepest identities and frames its rationale for political action; they are the elementary, yet profound, stories giving meaning and purpose to the collective life of a people; they evoke the imagination, so crucial to national self-understanding. Yet myths are communal because they secure the existence of the group and define its origins and its *raison d'être*. In this view myth bring a sense of wholeness and togetherness to social life. This also means that myths are intended to have a cohesive function, while simultaneously serving to exclude those who are not defined, or do not choose to define themselves, as part of tribal community. This functionalism approach to myth study is primarily associated with the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinovski who described myths as:

> A story which is told to establish a belief, to serve as a precedent in ceremony or ritual, or to rank as a pattern of moral or religious conduct. Mythology, therefore, or the sacred tradition of a society, is a body of narratives woven into their culture, dictating their belief, defining their ritual, acting as the chart of their social order and the pattern of their moral behavior.[1]

The Functionalist theory proposed by Bronislaw Malinowski Emphasizes the social function of myth. According to Malinowski, myth emerges in order to support and reinforce the social order of a culture. In particular, it reinforces and supports the power structure of a society as well as the roles that are appropriate for each member of the society. In addition, myths are meant to express, enhance and codify beliefs. [2]

In this context, myths assume the character of a ritual which gives a sense of security when faithfully carried out. Myths may also be confirmed through ceremonies that are repeated. They regulate and reinforce the obligations of social intercourse, and strengthen the community spirit.

Malinowski adds that a myth is a narrative about the past whose function is to justify the present and thereby of contributing to social stability. This socio-functionalist approach to myth recognizes the fact that myth conveys social and moral values. The great contribution of the socio-functionalists established a clear connection between the social order and the myths that sustain it.[3]

In applying the functionalist methods to the analysis of symbolic phenomena, Malinowski claims that the primary function of myth is to act as a foundational charter that provides legitimacy to social institutions by relating them to a divine past which sanctions their authority as a fact of nature. As he puts it : "Myth is not only looked upon as a commentary of additional information, but is a warrant, a charter, and often even a practical guide to the activities with which it is concerned."[4]

Functioning largely at the unconscious level in the minds of citizens, myths then are activated though ritual, and particularly during times of national threat—indeed, as historian Richard T. Hughes has pointed out, in such moments myths are easily absolutized, or turned into hardened, reified realities taken to be literally true. [5] Because myths give direction and legitimacy to political action, they are the foundations upon which national ideologies take shape. For this reason, my analysis of the way in which American exceptionalism functions as myth draws upon the American Jeremiad. Indeed as the coming point will stress, the jeremiad is part of a longstanding American rhetorical tradition, one that understands the nation as

existing in a special, covenanted relationship with God, with special purposes to accomplish in the world. I examine the particular myths resurfacing in this rhetoric and what they reveal about American identity, themes that are discernible in statements by most American presidents .

2-THE AMERICAN JEREMIAD

The American jeremiad gives shape and contour to the cultural myth and identity of America and, consistent with its early Puritan roots, establishes American values and ideals that are the basis of traditional and contemporary American life and community.

Ritter and Harlow defined that originally "the jeremiad was a religious sermon in which the preacher took the role of a scolding prophet like Jeremiah, warning the people that their sins violated their covenant with God."[6] The jeremiad was initially popular with Puritan preachers in colonial New England, and Sacvan Bercovitch argues that over time the jeremiad became an important expression of American identity.[7] Eventually the jeremiad was transformed from an epideictic religious role to a legislative one, entering the nation's political discourse as a meaningful form .[8]

Infact the roots of American exceptionalism begin with the American jeremiad. The American jeremiad can be defined as is:

> A mode of public exhortation that originated in the European pulpit, was transformed in both form and content by the New England Puritans, persisted through the eighteenth century, and helped sustain a national dream through two hundred years of turbulence and change.[9]

During the 1630s, New England Puritans interpreted the judgment of the European jeremiad as indicative of God's irrevocable wrath, and therefore, the inevitable, certain, and soon coming destruction of Europe. They believed that judgment was upon Europe, and based upon their covenant relationship with God, God had given America to them as the "new promised land." These seventeenth-century New England Puritans identified themselves as the "New Israel" and the "chosen people of God." Europe had forfeited its right to chosen-nation status, and

many Puritans were fleeing to America to escape the upcoming and literal destruction of Europe. Upon their arrival, America was to be a "city set upon a hill." And when America strayed from the covenant, the American jeremiad was constructed to speak the judgment of God and call the people back to covenant with God.[10]

The American jeremiad was a public ritual designed to join social criticism to spiritual renewal, intertwining practical spiritual guidance with advice on public affairs. The jeremiad was the "state-of the-covenant address, tendered at every public occasion (on days of fasting and prayer, humiliation and thanksgiving, at covenant renewal and artillery company ceremonies, and most elaborately and solemnly, at Election Day gatherings) observed by the Puritan colonist." [11]

The Puritan jeremiad reminded America of its divine mission as established by John Winthrop in 1630. Winthrop, in a sermon at sea aboard the *Arabella*, paraphrased Matthew 5:14 to crystallize New England's mission: "we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us." Given sacred history and a theocratic universe as the theatre for God's judgment, the Puritan migration to American was the "desacralization" of England and "the sacralization of the wilderness in America as a shelter and place for the Nonconformist Puritans."[12] The Puritans believed that their pilgrimage to America fulfilled prophetic apocalyptic and eschatological visions:

> the Old and the New World were totally antagonistic and mutually exclusive entities. So, according to Puritan ideology of the migration to New England, the "discovery" of America was a great revelatory and prophetic event in the course of progress of the church upon the earth in which God's divine providence transformed the locus of the history of redemption and salvation from the corrupted Old World to the New World.[13]

Following this sense of divine mission, "the purpose of the jeremiads was to direct an imperiled people to God in order to fulfill their destiny, to guide them individually toward salvation, and collectively toward the American city of God."[14]

Unshakeable optimism is the essential characteristic of the American jeremiad. Any looming challenge is only a test of character and not a fatal error or

structural flaw in the American system. Any crisis may be overcome by a return to the optimism of traditional American ideals rather than the identification of fundamental and structural flaws in American values. If there are concerns of subjugated groups over access to freedom, liberty, justice, citizenship, economic participation, equality, voting rights, and so on, it is a matter of unfulfilled values, that is, Americans not living up to their professed values, rather than fundamental and structural flaws in the nation.

Based in optimism rather than judgment, over a period of time, the American jeremiad provided a conceptual framework that defined and embraced acceptable dissent, or dissent that could gain a hearing in American culture. The result was that acceptable dissent functioned within the optimism of the American jeremiad and left fundamental and structural flaws in American values unchallenged.

3- THE AMERICAN JEREMIAD AND CIVIL RELIGION

A key function of civil religion, unification of the people, is enabled by the national spokesperson for the civil religion, the president. Ronald Wimberly writes that "the presidency is an integral part of American civil religion and the presidency is "a prime social structure in which the phenomenon [of civil religion] is readily observable" .[15] The president is the leader of "public faith".[16] At the same time, the president is expected to maintain a clear division between church and state. Derek Davis explains that "while a president can be expected to be religious, and occasionally even rely upon his faith in performing his office, he must still respect the fundamental American commitment to church-state separation".[17] The president should use the civil religion to bind together an ideologically diverse public, while still maintaining the separation of powers. The key is maintaining the balance between the sacred and secular language.

Unification between an American president and the American people may be most evident in the inaugural address delivered by each incoming president. The presidential inaugural address is particularly useful as a tool to unify the American people, say Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson .[18] Specifically, the inaugural, in the aftermath of a divisive election battle, "unifies the audience by

reconstituting its members as the people, who can witness and ratify the ceremony".[19] Thus, from the start, an incoming president's role is that of a unifier of the people under a new administration—potentially an administration with radically different goals than the one that preceded it. Campbell and Jamieson further assert that a president's inaugural address is "an essential element in a ritual transition in which the covenant between the citizenry and their leaders is renewed".[20] The term "covenant" is important because it adds a religious dimension to the relationship between the president and the people he symbolically represents. The fact that this covenant is both established and enacted with the inaugural address of an incoming president indissolubly links the president with the people in a sacred bond. Vanessa Beasley analyzes inaugural addresses to show that "presidents have not only urged the American people to think of themselves as sharing certain ideals, but also as sharing a particular attitudinal dispositions".[21] Sharing core beliefs is critical to successful unification.

Civil religion is a vehicle whereby the president may foster that solidarity. The principles of civil religion, exercised correctly, are examples of how presidents foster unity and "identity in terms of certain constitutive principles".[22] Ideological unification is key, and civil religion provides a broad and encompassing ideology for the public to espouse. Quoting Rogers Smith, Beasley writes that political leaders need the public to consider themselves a people in order to execute their official duties and give credence to their decisions. There is difficulty in that the people are decidedly diverse, which in turn fosters the need to create some sort of unifying idea—civil religion.[23] Civil religious ideas and the rhetorical execution thereof by the president "affirm idealized cultural norms" . Furthermore, "presidential discourse teaches American culture to its listeners, consistently reminding them how they *ought* to know or believe. Beasley asserts that unification is achieved, in part, because "presidents routinely describe American ideals in terms of civil religious themes". [24] Part of the unification process also includes the establishment of an American identity.

The jeremiad is a civil framework used by many political leaders in the United States to give meaning to their civil religious discourse. Shaped by the Puritans, the

jeremiad, or the "political sermon," is a key rhetorical component in the shaping of the cultural myth of America. Puritan ideology shaped the cultural myth of America because it "represented the movement to modernity, and the myth they invented to express that aspects of their venture had provided the culture with a useful, flexible, durable and compelling fantasy of American identity."[25] In other words, Puritan theology and ideology shaped the idea that we have come to know as *America*. According to Sacvan Bercovitch, "the jeremiad is a central component in the development of America from colonies to nationhood and in the steady (if often violent) growth of middle-class culture."[26]

The myth of America became entrenched in New England and spread across the western territories and the South. American exceptionalism is a belief system and a way of life spun out in "webs of significance" by successive generations of Americans to justify their way of life to themselves and the world.[27] Despite its rootage in religion and the jeremiad, this exceptionalim assumed national and secular dimensions as American civil religion.

Based upon its establishment as part of American civil religion, the jeremiad has a quasi-religious secular form. David Howard-Pitney has identified three themes which are interwoven through the American jeremiad. The *promise* identifies America as a special people in a special land. God has identified this people for an extraordinary purpose, and Americans in essence have a special arrangement with the Almighty. The *declension* argues that America has failed to fulfill the terms of its special arrangement. If something is not quickly done to once more get right with God, His vengeance will surely be visited upon the unjust. Finally, *prophecy* predicts that all hope is not lost and that America can once more fulfill her contract with God. The speaker will almost always identify a way to restore the national purpose, and that path frequently centers around a political prerogative important to the rhetor.[28]

The secular form of the jeremiad can be used by those of all political persuasions, including both Republicans and Democrats, liberals and conservatives. The secular jeremiadic form has been analyzed in speeches by Abraham Lincoln, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George W.

Bush, and Barack Obama.[29] Kurt W. Ritter, studying the rhetoric of presidential nomination acceptance addresses, identifies the basic form of the secular jeremiad employed by many politicians:

> Each challenging candidate ultimately asks: "What made America great?" Posing this question allows the presidential aspirant to identify a single ideal (or a cluster of values) from our past which is missing in the present and whose absence accounts for our difficulties.[30]

Both the incumbent and the challenger identify from the ensemble of traditional American values, one or several ideals or values. Then, the incumbent or challenger explains what he or she has done or will do to keep America strong according to the chosen ideals within the set of traditional values. At the same time, the candidate draws sharp distinctions from his or her opponent by demonstrating how the opponent has strayed from the chosen traditional values and therefore has made or will make America weak. The candidate will then claim that no matter the crisis or difficulty America can return to its traditional greatness.

The classic example of the utilization of the secular jeremiad is the 1984 U.S. presidential campaign ad of Republican Party candidate Ronald Reagan, known as "Morning in America." The ad featured a montage of images of Americans going back to work and overcoming the difficulties of the late 1970s economy under then-president Jimmy Carter. In his first inaugural address, Reagan exhibited a jeremiad element by saying:

> The business of our nation goes forward. These United States are confronted with an economic affliction of great proportions. We suffer from the longest and one of the worst sustained inflations in our national history. It distorts our economic decisions, Penalizes thrift and crushes the struggling young, and the fixed-income elderly alike. It threatens to shatter the lives of millions of our people.

A calm, optimistic narration suggested that it was morning again in America, based on the policies of Ronald Reagan's first term as president, and asked the question who would ever want to go back to the policies of the Democrats like his opponent, Walter Mondale, who had served as Carter's vice president. Reagan effectively

employed the characteristic feature of the American jeremiad—its unassailable optimism. He adeptly illustrated that the economic was only a test of American character and not a fatal error or structural flaw in the American system. Despite the economic difficulties, it was morning in America. Many say that this optimism won the 1984 election, and has become, for some, the enduring legacy of Reagan's presidency.

In *Defining Americans: The Presidency and National Identity,* Mary Stuckey writes that American presidents "articulate national identity" and that "enough of us must recognize ourselves in presidential formulations of national identity to legitimate and sustain the process of national leadership" .[31] The president, to the extent he is able, strives to include the ever disparate American public in one collective group. Stuckey further points to "how the differing elements of discourse and constitutive claims come together to forge our national identities," and that identities necessarily change as history progresses. This is important because of the discursive element: through language, the president creates community and unifies the American populace. "Rather than merely speaking to the people," writes Stuckey, American presidents "claim to become something of a surrogate of 'the people,' simultaneously enacting and enunciating our national values and national identity". [32] The president unifies and defines us, as Americans, through his rhetoric. Such unification is critical to the health of a nation composed of people with varying ethnic backgrounds, lifestyles, and beliefs.

In *You, the People,* Beasley looks at "how U.S. presidents have used language to try to develop and maintain feelings of shared national identity within a wildly diverse democracy" [33]. She points to times of crisis, such as the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, as instances when the American people need "a message of reassurance, resolve, and unity that only a president of the United States could provide", while also acknowledging that a president must foster accord in times of peace, as well. Like Stuckey, Beasley evaluates presidential address to explore the "rhetorical construction of 'the people'.[34] She acknowledges that such a unification is critical to a president's being able to enact policy on a national ground. While the president does use occasion-specific address to foster a sense of cohesion among the

American public- the case with Abraham Lincoln in the upcoming chapter- historically he has incorporated civil religion as a prime and reliable means of fostering a united republic. Key to the concept of civil religion is that the equilibrium between political and religious interests be maintained.

II- ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S SECULAR JERAMIAD ON THE CIVL WAR

1- LINLOLN'S FAITH: A SKEPTICAL SPIRITUALITY

During the Civil War Lincoln found beliefs about American union sharply challenged and at the same time gave them their most eloquent and powerful jeremiadic expression. In most of his speeches. Lincoln had always kept his questing and often skeptical spirituality closely guarded, but as the war ground relentlessly on, his beliefs and speeches took on not a sectarian but a deeply Old Testament tone. The cadence and words of his speeches accentuate his message: the Union, "the last best hope of earth," was fighting for the sacred cause of liberty.

In response to being presented a Bible on September 7, 1864, Abraham Lincoln said: " In regard to this Great Book, I have but to say, it is the best gift God has given to man. All the good Saviour gave to the world was communicated through this book. But for it we could not know right from wrong. All things most desirable for man's welfare, here and hereafter, are to be found portrayed in it." [1]

This is the view many would have of Lincoln's faith, but some people have presented Lincoln in a different light, including some who knew him well. William Herndon, Lincoln's law partner for about 18 years, said of him: "As to Mr. Lincoln's religious views, he was, in short, an infidel. . . . Mr. Lincoln told me a thousand times that he did not believe the Bible was the revelation of God as the Christian world contends."[2]

The religious views of Abraham Lincoln are a matter of interest among scholars. Lincoln grew up in a highly religious Baptist family. He never joined any church, and was a skeptic as a young man. He frequently referred to God and had a

deep knowledge of the Bible, often quoting it. Lincoln attended Protestant church services with his wife and children, and after two of them died he became more intensely concerned with religion. During his 1846 run for the House of Representatives, in order to dispel accusations concerning his religious beliefs, Lincoln issued a handbill stating that he had "never denied the truth of the Scriptures".[3] He seemed to believe in an all-powerful God, who shaped events and, by 1865, was expressing those beliefs in major speeches.[4]

Lincoln's parents were Baptists, joining the Little Pigeon Baptist Church near Lincoln City, Indiana, in 1823.[5] In 1831, Lincoln moved to New Salem, which had no churches.[6] However, historian Mark Noll states that "Lincoln never joined a church nor ever made a clear profession of standard Christian belief."[7] Noll quotes Lincoln's friend Jesse Fell:

> that the president "seldom communicated to anyone his views" on religion, and he went on to suggest that those views were not orthodox: "on the innate depravity of man, the character and office of the great head of the Church, the Atonement, the infallibility of the written revelation, the performance of miracles, the nature and design of...future rewards and punishments...and many other subjects, he held opinions utterly at variance with what are usually taught in the church."[8]

Noll argues Lincoln was turned against organized Christianity by his experiences as a young man witnessing how excessive emotion and bitter sectarian quarrels marked yearly camp meetings and the ministry of traveling preachers.[9] As a young man, Lincoln enjoyed reading the works of deists such as Thomas Paine. He drafted a pamphlet incorporating such ideas but did not publish it. After charges of hostility to Christianity almost cost him a congressional bid, he kept his unorthodox beliefs private.[10] The one aspect of his parents' Calvinist religion that Lincoln apparently embraced wholeheartedly throughout his life was the doctrine of predestination . It was almost always through these lenses that Lincoln assessed the meaning of the Civil War.

Though, Abraham Lincoln was not officially affiliated with any particular church, there is no doubt that he was a sincere and devoted Christian. He trusted

God for wisdom and guidance for the many decisions which he was called on to make during the terrible struggle. He is reputed to have said one time: “I do not know where the ship of life will finally take me, but there is one thing that I do know—I know the Pilot of that ship and I have been assured all along the way by the gentle touch of His hand upon mine.”

As against all these harsh certainties, there were the doubts, the puzzlings, and the agonizing efforts of Abraham Lincoln to rationalize God’s purposes. To anyone who reads his letters and speeches, and the records of his private conversations, it is hard not to believe that, whatever his religious state of mind before the war again, he acquired faith of a kind before it ended. His evident and total sincerity shines through all his words as the war took its terrible toll. He certainly felt the spirit of guidance. `I am satisfied,’ he wrote, `that when the Almighty wants me to do or not to do a particular thing, he finds a way of letting me know it.’ He thus waited, as the Cabinet papers show, for providential guidance at certain critical points of the war. He never claimed to be the personal agent of God’s will, as everybody else seemed to be doing. But he wrote: `If it were not for my firm belief in an overriding providence it would be difficult for me, in the midst of such complications of affairs, to keep my reason in its seat. But I am confident that the Almighty has his plans and will work them out; and ... they will be the wisest and the best for us.’ When asked if God was on the side of the North, he replied: `I am not at all concerned about that, for I know the Lord is always on the side of the right. But it is my constant anxiety and prayer that I and this nation should be on the Lord’s side.’ As he put it, `I am not bound to win but I am bound to be true. I am not bound to succeed, but I am bound to live up to the light I have.’

Early in the war, a delegation of Baltimore blacks presented him with a finely bound Bible, in appreciation of his work for the negroes. He took to reading it more and more as the war proceeded, especially the Prophets and the Psalms. An old friend, Joshua Speed, found him reading it and said: `I am glad to see you so profitably engaged.’ Lincoln: `Yes. I *am* profitably engaged.’ Speed: `Well, I see you have recovered from your skepticism [about religion and the progress of the

war]. I am sorry to say that I have not.' Lincoln: `You are wrong, Speed. Take all of this book upon reason that you can, and the balance on faith, and you will live and die a happier and a better man.' As he told the Baltimore blacks: `This Great Book ... is the best gift God gave to man.' After reading the Bible, Lincoln argued within himself as to what was the best course to pursue, often calling in an old friend like Leonard Swett, to rehearse pros and cons before a sympathetic listener.

A visitor once told Mr. Lincoln: "I'm glad, Mr. President, that God is on our side in this war." Mr. Lincoln's quick reply was: "What I'm concerned about is—are we on God's side?" In his great inaugural address on March 4, 1861, President Lincoln said:

> "Intelligence, patriotism, Christianity, and a firm reliance upon Him who has never yet forsaken this favored land are still competent to adjust, in the best way, all our present difficulties…We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic cord of memories, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone, all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."[11]

Lincoln echoed again this assurance in his great address on the battlefield at Gettysburg: "this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom." In his Emancipation Proclamation (1863), he wrote that he invoked the "judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God" upon his action. Also in 1863, he issued the first Presidential Thanksgiving Day Proclamation. It is a masterpiece on the hand of God in the destiny and leadership of our country, it is still pertinent today. Since that time, every President of the United States has issued an annual Thanksgiving Day Proclamation.

In his second historic inaugural address, March 4, 1865, Lincoln eloquently expressed his political philosophy and Christian-like program for the nation in these beautiful words:

> With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

Following Lincoln's assassination a memory book, *The Lincoln Memorial Album—Immortelles*, in which people could write their thoughts includes some comments on Lincoln's religion. One entry, written by a well-known Presbyterian minister, the Rev. John H. Barrows, claimed that Lincoln had become a Christian in 1863 but provided no evidence. He said:

> In the anxious uncertainties of the great war, he gradually rose to the heights where Jehovah became to him the sublimest of realities, the ruler of nations....When darkness gathered over the brave armies fighting for the nation's life, this strong man in the early morning knelt and wrestled in prayer with Him who holds the fate of empires. When the clouds lifted above the carnage of Gettysburg, he gave his heart to the Lord Jesus Christ.[12]

The pastor of a church in Freeport, Illinois, in November 1864, said that a man from Illinois visited Lincoln in the White House and, after conducting other business, asked the president if he loved Jesus. The pastor said that Lincoln buried his face in his handkerchief as tears came to his eyes and then answered:

> "When I left home to take this chair of state, I requested my countrymen to pray for me. I was not then a Christian. When my son died, the severest trial of my life, I was not a Christian. But, when I went to Gettysburg and looked upon the graves of our dead heroes who had fallen in defense of their country, I then and there consecrated myself to Christ. Yes, *I do love Jesus*." This has been portrayed to have been Lincoln's "reply" to this unnamed Illinois minister when asked if he loved Jesus. Some versions of this have Lincoln using the word "crosses" instead of "graves", and some have him saying "Christ" instead of "Jesus".

After his death, there were competing biographies, some claiming Lincoln had been a Christian and others that he had been a non-believer. In *Lincoln: A Life of*

Purpose and Power , Richard Carwardine highlights Lincoln's considerable ability to rally evangelical Northern Protestants to the flag by nourishing the millennial belief that they were God's chosen people.[13] Historian Allen C. Guelzo notes: "This was no mean feat, coming from a man who had been suspected of agnosticism or atheism for most of his life. Yet by the end, while still a religious skeptic, Lincoln, too, seemed to equate the preservation of the Union and the freeing of the slaves with some higher, mystical purpose."[14] Guelzo, director of Civil War Era Studies at Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania, published *Abraham Lincoln: Redeemer President* in 1999. Guelzo argues that Lincoln's boyhood inculcation of Calvinism was the dominant thread running through his adult life.

When elected President, Lincoln promised to depend on an "unshaken faith in the Supreme Ruler of the nations."[15] When he received the news that he had won the election, Lincoln assured that his faith would be ever present, even if it were quiet. In what follows, I will stress the way Lincoln's rhetoric finds its eloquence in drawing its content from the Bible. In his speech writing, Lincoln alludes to the jeremiad so frequently in the First Inaugural, the Gettysburg Address, and the Second Inaugural.

1- THE FIRST INAUGURAL ADDRESS(March 4th 1861): THE JEREMIAD AT THE SERVICE OF A JUST WAR

Just war theory traditionally has two basic components; *jus ad bellum* (the rightness of starting a war) and *jus in bello* (the ethics that govern how the war is fought).[16] In appearance, the just war theory is a secular device, a way in which a determination can be made about the morality of a war without reference to a higher power. For some scholars, it is certainly treated as such. Historically, however, the just war theory is associated closely with Christianity and more specifically with Roman Catholicism.

Although meaningful contributions were made by early Greco-Roman thinkers like Aristotle and Cicero, St. Augustine had a singular impact on the development of just war theory. Augustine argued that a just war was one fought with the right intentions. Cruelty, a love of violence, a lust for power- these were the true evils of war to Augustine. A just war, he maintained, was one which was very reluctantly embarked upon, motivated instead by love and a desire to protect innocents.

Augustine's writings were one of several major religious sources used to create a coherent set of rules for the prosecution of a just war towards the end of the first millennium AD. It also helped to specify things like protected noncombatants (i.e. women and children) and prohibited the use of certain weapons and actions (i.e. attacking food sources or a church). Later, Catholic theologian St. Thomas Aquinas would contribute important new ideas to the evolving theory; one such idea being the crucial role of proportionality- a war can only be an answer to the most intractable and serious problems. Therefore, just war theory has very specific Christian origins and religious thinkers continue to occupy a large space in the debate, even if they have gradually assumed a secondary role.[17]

There is not necessarily an agreed upon set of *jus ad bellum* conditions for a conflict to be considered a just war. Still, some points in the various formulations significantly overlap. For a war to be just, it must involve a *just cause* such as a direct response to aggression or the protection of human rights. It must be motivated by Augustine's *right intent*, meaning the war's aims should be in accord with the just cause and not be a product of vengeance or a desire to dominate. The war must also be *proportionate* to the cause; countries should not fight over small issues. It must be an instrument of a *legitimate authority* like a state and not a private actor such as a terrorist. The war must have a *reasonable prospect of success*. If a war is doomed to fail, it should not be undertaken since the damage or suffering would lack purpose. And finally a war must be an option of *last resort* only. Peaceful alternatives should be first sought before combat is reluctantly entered into.[18]

As in prophetic warnings to the ancient Israelites, America's Jeremiahs would continue to lament the inability or unwillingness of American Israelites to live up to their covenantal obligations. We can follow this distinction between suffering sacred violence and inflicting it down through one of the most traumatic episodes of American history: the American Civil War.

With the outbreak of the Civil War, many Northern thinkers and critics came to see the Union army as the instrument of God's holy vengeance— and purging justice— on the South, for the sin of slavery and rebellion. In 1864, looking back over three years of war and carnage, clergyman S. A. Hodgman explained the tragedy of the war by linking the suffering of God's chosen people with God's judgments:

> It was not because the Lord abhorred us as a people, but because of his great favor towards us, that he hath purged us, as gold is purified in a furnace. We have a great mission to perform, and there is a bright destiny before us, in the future; and it was necessary that we should receive a discipline to prepare us for both. . . . It is to be our destiny, to teach all tyrants and oppressors, that their days are numbered. We are to be a city set on a hill, whose light can not be hid.[19]

As in early New England, jeremiadic thinking—chosen people, covenanted with God, with an exceptional mission to fulfill, judged by God and found to be wanting— provided a meaningful guide for interpreting battlefield results. Victory proved God's favor. Defeat represented a sign of an everlasting sin in need of purgation. In their efforts to understand the reasons for the triumphs and terrible sufferings of the war, Southerners, too, drew on jeremiadic language. Preaching in 1862, Confederate supporter J. W. Tucker argued that "God is on our side— is with us in this conflict— because we have had reverses. 'Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.' . . . God sent our reverses for our good. They were necessary to humble our pride; to stop our foolish and absurd boasting, and to make us feel the importance of the conflict in which we are engaged."[20]

Not surprisingly, however, it remained for Abraham Lincoln to provide the most complex but nonetheless clear statement of the idea that America has a sacred duty to itself and to the world to preserve and protect liberty and democracy. In 1837, as a young man of 28, Lincoln gave an address to the Springfield, Illinois Lyceum. It was a time of great social and political turmoil. Illinois was riven with violence over the question of the abolition of slavery. In Alton, Illinois an anti-abolitionist mob recently had murdered the abolitionist editor, Elijah Lovejoy, destroyed his printing press and burned his office and house. In this atmosphere of intense political strife, Lincoln used his Lyceum address to call his fellow Illinoisans (and Americans) to turn to the basic democratic and liberal tenets the American national creed—the American Civil Religion—and embrace them and hold them as deeply as they held their private religious beliefs. Only such a common national faith, he argued, could provide the real and lasting foundation that would hold the sprawling, diverse, and conflict-ridden nation together.

Upon reading Lincoln's First Inaugural Address, we are struck, first, that there is much of profit to be found. As Lincoln indicates early in the speech, his chief concern is to soothe the anxieties of those who had worked strenuously against his election because of their fear of losing their property or way of life. After assuring his hearers that he was elected by law and intended to execute the law as it stood—referring to the fugitive slave clause of the Constitution, etc.—he moved on to the imminent "solution" already undertaken by several states before he took office: secession. He rejects secession as a "legal impossibility." Lincoln then gives a thorough account of the nature of the American political order in light of these considerations.

Relying primarily on a consideration of the nature of all governments, Lincoln argues that it could not be lawful for any one member state of the United States to disconnect itself from the others. Such a disconnection would amount to a toppling of the American political order, and it would be achieved by a vast minority power. This scenario is especially disturbing, Lincoln argues, in light of the importance that the American order accords to the rule of the majority. Therefore, "the Union of

these states is perpetual."[21] Thus far, Lincoln's considerations have been more general than particular.

Lincoln speaks of the manner in which the American people brought forth their government. "The Union is much older than the Constitution," Lincoln says.

> It was formed in fact, by the Articles of Association in 1774. It was matured and continued by the Declaration of Independence in 1776. It was further matured and the faith of all the then thirteen States expressly plighted and engaged that it should be perpetual, by the Articles of Confederation in 1778. And finally, in 1787, one of the declared objects for ordaining and establishing the Constitution, was "*to form a more perfect Union*."[22]

Lincoln goes on to argue that if the Union could indeed be unmade "by one, or by a part only, of the States," it would be "*less* perfect than before the Constitution, having lost the vital element of perpetuity." If the perpetuity of the union was shortened with the adoption of the Constitution, Lincoln argues, then one of the Constitution's aims is subverted in its very adoption, which is absurd. Those who argue for the legality and propriety of secession, then, are inconsistent because they accept this inconsistent conception of the union. But this raises the question of whether Lincoln's own corresponding view—that the "union" can be properly said to begin in 1774—is sound. Many have remarked on the somewhat "mystical" quality Lincoln attaches to the union. Yet in taking Lincoln at his word we see what he considers the nature of the union in "legal contemplation," i.e. by law. He seeks to uncover the legal origins of the country in history and pinpoints the Articles of Confederation of 1774—one of the early acts of the First Continental Congress—as the moment of origin.

In the First Inaugural, Lincoln supposed that 1774 marked the advent of the union. His purposes there were clear upon: he wanted to establish the constitutional impossibility of secession. Here, too, Lincoln's aim is clear. In framing the Declaration as *the* founding moment in American history, America can be given an original and abiding mission that culminates in the war he is currently waging. In saying that the nation was begun with the Declaration, Lincoln can also say that the nation has been and ever shall be "dedicated to the proposition that all men are

created equal." He again echoed this assurance and belief in the exceptional origins of his nation in his great address on the battlefield at Gettysburg: "this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom" .

3 -THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS(November 19th 1963): The JEREMIAD AT THE SERVICE OF AMERICA'S UNION

In the best-known piece in all of American oratory Lincoln captured a particular vision of America's origin and future, and how these two were linked in the war he was then prosecuting. In considering what has been called "the American manifesto," we see that Lincoln speaks at once to who Americans *are* as a people and who *ought to be*.[23] While volumes have been written on the Gettysburg Address, I confine myself to the role this speech has in the development of the American jeremiad tradition.

Lincoln begins the Gettysburg Address by calling the audience's attention to the beginning—not of the Battle of Gettysburg or of the Civil War—but of America herself. In beginning with the words, *Four score and seven years ago*, Lincoln deliberately places his speech in the broader context of the American experiment. These remarks are not simply a eulogy for those soldiers who died on this battleground, appropriate as that would be. It is more. It is a comment on the nature of America. The opening lines serve not only to situate this speech in American history, but also to frame and interpret American history altogether. In saying that, "Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation," Lincoln points to the adoption of the Declaration of Independence as the moment of birth, the moment of union for "the Union." There can be little doubt that Lincoln means to argue just this: the Declaration of Independence was *the* defining point of origin for the United States, and that moment gives the union its course in subsequent history.[24]

Though the Gettysburg Address was not the first time Lincoln broached the founding of the nation, the phrasing at the beginning of the Gettysburg Address has a sort of solemnity that is unmatched his other speeches. The cadence is different;

the phrasing and subtle rhyming is beautiful. Unlike these other speeches, Lincoln begins by alluding to Scripture. According to William J. Wolf, a twentieth-century theologian, the phrase *four score and seven years ago* is "an inspired adaptation of Old Testament counting," particularly Psalm chapter 90.72 Imitating the form of counting used in Scripture seems to have elevated the significance of the subject of the speech to make it worthy of the moment. Lincoln matched the weight of the speech with the gravity of the hour.[25]

Again borrowing a phrase from the King James Bible, Lincoln uses the phrase *brought forth* to claim that America is something new. The Bible uses the expression on multiple occasions to describe a variety of different beginnings, including the creation of the earth, the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, and the birth of Christ Jesus. Genesis 1 asserts that "the earth *brought forth* grass and herb yielding seed after his kind" (1:12). Psalm 90 states that "before the mountains were *brought forth,* or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God" (90:2). Exodus states that it was "the strength of the hand of the Lord *brought* us *forth* out of Egypt" (13:16).83 Luke states that the virgin Mary "*brought forth* her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger" (2:7). Job, in the midst of his suffering, asks the Lord, "Wherefore then hast thou *brought* me *forth* out of the womb?" (10:18).

In the second paragraph of the Gettysburg Address, a mere four sentences, Lincoln transitions from the past to the present, beginning with a short word denoting the immediate present—*now*. Like the many biblical stories of a person's trust or a people's faith being tested, the Civil War is a test, an immense test, claims Lincoln. The struggle between brother and brother is a trial by fire as to whether or not America, or any nation *conceived in liberty* and born to the idea of human equality, can survive. The nation was born. It *lives*. It can also die. The Civil War, according to Guelzo, was "a kind of pass/fail examination to determine once and for all whether the American Founding had indeed been misbegotten," and it was a terrible test.[26]

For Lincoln and his listeners, the most immediate and impressionable part of the test was the *great battlefield* on which they were standing. Even for those not in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania in early July, the calamities of the war could not be ignored. According to White, it was :

> …not a serene cemetery with rows of white crosses on manicured lawns. Gettysburg on that day was still an unfinished burial site. Barely a third of the bodies had been buried. Confederate skeletons lay unburied beneath stones and vegetation dying with the onset of winter.[27]

Even as Lincoln arrived by train the day before the ceremony, he saw "hundreds of coffins on the station platform." The cost of the test was high, and everyone who *met* at Gettysburg that day saw it. Hence Lincoln's reference to jeremiad conjoined lamentation over the present conditions at Gettysburg.

Lincoln alludes to Scripture in the Gettysburg Address to communicate his ideas with a biblical cadence but also, and most importantly, to infuse the speech with the deep theological content of Scripture. In a subtle way, Lincoln claims that the nation *lives* like the church. America is God's "almost chosen people," as he says in 1861, a clear reference to Paul's claim that the church is "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people." The order of Lincoln's words is important. It is not that America is almost God's chosen people. Lincoln does not claim that the nation *is* the church … and then pull the statement back a little. Lincoln does not use the word "almost" to avoid blaspheming. The thought of idolatry probably never crossed his mind. Instead, the adjective "almost" modifies "chosen people." America is, like the church, *under God*. In fact, she is *of God*, but she does not hold that spot of God's chosen people and does fight the church over that position. Rather, she works *under God* in a way similar to the church. In other words, Lincoln's analogy is a simile, not a metaphor. A proper translation of Lincoln's phrase is, America is God's *like* chosen people. She *lives* like the church lives—only with the continual rededication of her people to that *life-giving* principle of human equality and only with the assistance of a benevolent God.

That the nation was *brought forth* by our founding *fathers* some *four score and seven years ago* means that the nation *lives*. Though it is not of heaven, it has lasted longer than the lifespan of human beings. Because its *conception* and *bringing forth* was a philosophical one, the nation's stipulations for membership function like the church's do. The people of God and the people of the Declaration belong to their respective communities in similar ways: any person of any ethnicity, gender, height, or weight can join, for attachment to the community depends on a sort of faith. Like the biblical stories of men and women being tested, the Civil War is a test to see if America would keep the faith in her Founding principles. Like Christ gave Himself for His people, the church, the men who died at Gettysburg gave their lives *that that nation might live*, and *from* that wellspring. Through using this jeremiadic frame i.e. calling for renewal , Lincoln encourages the people *increase* their *devotion* to the cause for which these men sacrificially died. At Gettysburg Lincoln asks the people to fight for *a new birth of freedom*, a sort of political salvation, so that the American regime would *not perish from the earth*. In the coming address-the Second Inaugural- Lincoln again asks America to *rededicate* herself to the principle of human equality, *that that nation might live*.

4 - LINCOLN'S SECOND INAUGURAL ADDRESS (March 4th 1865): THE JEREMIAD AT THE SERVICE OF RECONCILIATION

Two and a half years of war and controversy separate Lincoln's First Inaugural from the Gettysburg Address. Eighteen more months elapse before the delivery of his last major speech and the third under consideration here. Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address is the only speech ever to challenge the Gettysburg Address for the foremost spot in the American imagination, though the former cannot be said to overtake the latter in influence. With a bloody victory all but assured, Lincoln speaks mostly of the future reconciliation of the two warring sides. Highlighting the

third element in the jeremiad tradition, that is calling for a brighter future; this address is a structured in a Puritan framework.

One of the chief themes of the Second Inaugural is the reconciliation of North and South, though even in his consideration of this theme, a more fundamental theme lies in the background: "The Almighty has his own purposes." Up to the point in the speech when he utters that sentence, Lincoln has concentrated on treating the South with forbearance and a degree of generosity; the rest of the speech after that sentence indicates that a particular view of history, specifically God's role in history, is the principle that allows for this generous treatment. God, Lincoln affirms, is in charge of even terrible events like the war that North and South are passing through. This fact makes the war no less terrible, but it does render the two sides more equal in the wake of the war than a victor would typically concede or allow. Though Lincoln himself said early in the speech that one side "would *make* war rather than let the nation survive; and the other would *accept* war rather than let it perish," he immediately follows this juxtaposition with a passive construction: "And the war came." The war, terrible as it is and had been, was more an act of God than an event in purely human history. The terribleness of the war, even the occurrence of the war itself, falls equally on the shoulders of both sides because it is, simultaneously, equally the fault of both sides and neither side.

In explaining how God is in control of these events, the guilt of the participants is reduced. Lincoln need not have been so generous toward the South in this speech. He was, in fact, vilified for it in his time. And the policies put in place after his death fell far short of the standard he offers in the Second Inaugural. But it cannot be denied that the speech itself is shot through with a surprising amount of humility. Lincoln is humble in regard to the North's actions and motivations in the war, as has just been seen. He is humble in the face of the South's positions and institutions: "let us judge not…" And he is humble in regard to whether man can ever know God's purposes in this life: "*If* we shall suppose…"[28] Lincoln is again humble in not claiming for his side the righteousness and vindication that a victor might be tempted to claim: "Both [North and South] read the same Bible, and pray

to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other…the prayers of both could not be answered; that of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has his own purposes."[29] God's will in history is, for Lincoln, a fairly inscrutable thing. We may speculate on it, but certain knowledge is not for us to have.[30] This does not mean, however, that we are left without direction.

In Lincoln's chastened or qualified view of what God allows us to see, there seems to be a glimmer of true light: "with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right…" We should have "malice toward none" and "charity for all" because God does, in perhaps limited and indefinite ways, give us some knowledge of what is right. This is the ground upon which Lincoln can show the way forward out of the human-created terribleness that was the Civil War. We must "bind up the nation's wounds," "care for him who shall have born the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan." God gives us our direction here: charity and reconciliation.[31]

It has been supposed that the somber, backward-looking Second Inaugural in some sense contradicts the Gettysburg Address's forward-looking focus on the mission of the country. The circumstances of the two speeches are very different and this gives to each a very different aim. In the midst of war, a commander-in-chief gives ultimate meaning to the sacrifices just made, and the others that are sure to follow. Though at the Second Inaugural Lincoln had not seen the last deaths of the war, he could see they were on the horizon. Now was not the time to rally the troops for more. Now was the time to "bind up the nation's wounds," which could only be done as *one*. The oneness of the two sides had been torn, and healing this rift was only possible with a superabundance of the qualities and virtues Lincoln extols. It is vital that this happen, even on the standard and with the concerns of his earlier speeches. The separateness that was the conviction and aim of the secessionists, Lincoln seems to say, should not be allowed finally to triumph because the partisans of "union" refused to humble themselves back into unity with their former enemies. And so we see in the three major speeches of Lincoln's presidency an enduring theme: the union is paramount and should be preserved at even a very dear price—in blood and in the humility of a victor.

The Second Inaugural shows Lincoln "propound[ing] a thick, complex view of God's rule over the world and a morally nuanced picture of America's destiny."[32] Of course, Lincoln did suggest in the Second Inaugural that the war might be God's punishment for American slavery, and he certainly did not shrink from sanctioning violence in pursuit of his own war aims.

Yet he did so hypothetically: "*If* we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through his appointed time, he now wills to remove . . . shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God ascribe to Him?"[33] Such a theologically tentative formulation mirrors that of the "Meditation on the Divine Will," and reinforces Mark Noll's view of Lincoln as a "holdout" from the more popular understandings of providential certainty common among his contemporaries[34] In other words, compared with his more triumphalist fellow Americans— Northerners eager to see divine blessing in the Union's military triumph and Southerners consoled by a "Lost Cause" mythology, in which God allowed the Confederacy to be defeated in order to humble it for its own sins—"Lincoln . . . bowed to a different God."[35]

In his brief second inaugural address, delivered only six weeks before his assassination, Lincoln explored the relationship between American freedom and Divine Will. He knew that nations often, if not always, claimed God or the Gods for their side. So, acknowledging that "neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained," Lincoln addressed the fact that both North and South invoked God as their partisan: "Both read the same Bible and Pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other." But he made it unmistakably clear that though he did not and could not really know God's Will, he did know that God intended to end slavery, no matter what it took. Lincoln powerfully invoked a Jeremiad like vision of an all powerful and deeply offended God that would reign "woe" down upon those by peoples through 'whom the offense cometh.' "If we suppose that American slavery is one of those offences," he declared, "which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having

continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God ascribe to Him?" "Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray," Lincoln continued, "that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away.

Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled up by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said, . . . so still it must be said 'the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'" Here it all is: the idea that the United States represents "the last best hope" that—the belief that an all powerful, not fully comprehendible God, governs the affairs of humankind, and that this God held the whole nation, not just the South, accountable for the existence of slavery in its midst, for the violation of its appointed mission. Finally, unlike most proponents of the idea that "America is a nation called to a special destiny by God," he refrains from claiming God as the agent of Northern victory, even though as the second inaugural makes clear he had come to believe the Almighty was the ultimate agent of "the mighty scourge of war" that He had visited upon the nation for the sin of slavery.

At least 620,000 Americans died in the Civil War—and both Union and Confederate partisans believed that they were doing the Lord's work. Harry S. Stout's *Upon the Altar of the Nation: A Moral History of the Civil War* explores the paradox that Abraham Lincoln identified in his second inaugural address: "Both [sides] read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other"[36]

Stout argues that the Civil War's unprecedented casualties were enabled and justified by a burgeoning civil religion that depicted the war as a holy sacrifice that would purify and strengthen the American nation. Both the Union and the Confederacy created ritual structures to strengthen their side's moral vision and sense of divine calling. They celebrated fallen soldiers as martyrs, designated special days of prayer and fasting, and preached in sermons and speeches that God

was on their side. Though Stout searched for dissenting voices among the clergy, he found that religious leaders on both sides were "virtually cheerleaders all" for the righteousness of their side's cause and the sureness of their side's victory . Abraham Lincoln was one of the few public voices that approached the conflict from a more nuanced perspective. In the war's later years, he increasingly invoked divine Providence, but "without the self-righteous evangelical piety that went along with so much patriotism in the North and the South" .[37]

Although Lincoln refused to adhere to the religious models of those around him, he still oversaw the Union's escalation from limited to total war. Lincoln's grim calculation, according to Stout, was that the Union would eventually win a war of attrition due to its larger population. The goal of emancipation provided moral justification for the Union's shifts, first, toward a war of attrition, and second, to a war that targeted civilians' homes, food supplies, and property. After the war, theU.S. army applied these tactics in a new setting—against Plains Indians defending their homelands . [38] While recognizing emancipation as an unequivocal moral good, Stout encourages us to contemplate how even moral causes can be used to justify immoral activities. He also asks us to contend with the profound confidence that Christians felt toward their own side's cause, even when it necessitated killing fellow Christians or flouting typical war practices. When it comes to war, American civil religion, Stout suggests, has often trumped confessional religions

A few more words might be said of Lincoln and the American Jeremiad. If the Jeremiad contained both blessings and curses, and if the founding generation was supposed to have dropped God's curses out from the political realm, it might be supposed that Lincoln takes a combination of both approaches. It would be easy to mistake the mission of the Gettysburg Address or the woe of the Second Inaugural as similar to the Puritans' covenantal blessings and curses, respectively, but each lacks a necessary quality. In the Gettysburg Address, Lincoln seems to have given America a transcendent mission, though without being either charged with its execution by God or becoming beholden to God for any failure in it. In the Second

Inaugural, Lincoln speaks of curses, of punishment, of woe; but none of these are delivered intelligibly, according to the terms of any covenant or any conceivable reason. Far from a previously agreed-upon consequence of the covenant's breach, the woe of the Second Inaugural comes from beyond the veil of human ignorance. "The Almighty has his own purposes," and these are inscrutable to man. Thus, while some elements of Lincoln's speeches roughly appear to correspond to the old Puritan framework, they are very different in character, and this affects what they say about mid-nineteenth century America's sense of the role of exceptionalism , history, and God in the life of their country.

America's sense of exceptionalism was shaken again by another racial issue in the twentieth century . Lyndon Johnson had to meet the challenge of racial segregation , he insisted that the United States could no longer remain divided " if we cannot permit each man and woman to find their rightful place in a free society to which they are entitled by merit," and that the Americans , "cannot preserve a free society itself."[39] In what follows ,we are going to stress Johnson's use of the jeremiad to define civil rights as a moral issue, and to wield the nation's self-professed Judeo-Christian ethic as a sword in its behalf, constituting something of a watershed in twentieth century American political history.

II-JOHNSON'S SECULAR JEREMIAD ON CIVIL RIGHTS

1- JOHNSON'S FAITH : A BAPTIST UPBRINGING

President Johnson was a member of the Christian Church, also called the " Disciples of Christ". He was baptized in 1923, in the Pedernales River at a site approximately seven miles downstream from LBJ Ranch, while attending a summer time revival meeting service of the First Christian Church of Johnson City. Johnson had been exposed to the preaching and teaching of his mother's Baptist congregation; however, he independently decided that the beliefs of the Disciples were in accord with his own views, and, on that basis, he became, and remained, a member of the Disciples of Christ. The president considered the First Christian Church in Johnson City as his "home church". In Washington D.C; he regarded the National City Christian Church as his "home church", and he frequently attended service there.[1]

President Johnson would frequently attend services at churches of different denominations. He would accompany Mrs. Johnson who was Episcopalian , often worshiping at St. Mark's Episcopalian Church in Washington, D.C. He would also attend the Mass at Catholic churches with his daughter Luci. While often going to his own church, he also attended Trinity Lutheran Church and Saint Francis Xavier Church, both in Stonewall, Texas.

Rebecah Baines Johnson, the President's mother, was a Baptist, as were most of her ancestors for several generations. She once expressed the view that she was " grateful for ...my Baptist upbringing, sermons, prayer-meeting Sunday School". She described her father – a leading member of the Baptist Church in Blanco- as a Baptist " strict in doctrine, broad in charity, large in enterprise", who was frequently heard to say proudly, " I am a Baptist and a Democrat".[2]

President Johnson's great-grandfather, George Washington Baines, Sr; was one of the best-known Baptist leaders in the early history of Texas. Reverend Baines accepted a Baptist pastorate in Texas at Huntsville where, incidentally, he was pastor for the Texas hero, General Sam Houston. He was chosen in 1861, to be

President of Baylor University, then and now the leading Baptist institution for higher education in Texas and the Southwest.

The President's grandfather, Sam Ealy Johnson, Sr; was raised as a Baptist. Subsequently, in his early manhood, he became a member of the Christian Church, in his later years, he affiliated with the Christadelphian Church toward the end of his life. President Johnson frequently quoted the Bible to illustrate points that he wanted to make . His favorite quotation was from Isaiah 1:18," come now, and let us reason together."[3]

During his run for the presidency in 1964, Lyndon Johnson addressed a group of southern Baptists:

> In more than three decades of public life, I have seen first-hand how basic spiritual beliefs and deeds can shatter barriers of politics and bigotry. I have seen those barriers crumble in the presence of faith and hope, and from this experience I have drawn new hope that the seemingly insurmountable moral issues that we face at home and abroad today can be resolved by men of strong faith and men of brave deeds. . . . Great questions of war and peace, of civil rights and education, the elimination of poverty at home and abroad, are the concern of millions who see no difference in this regard between their beliefs and their social obligations. This principle, the identity of private morality and public conscience, is as deeply rooted in our tradition and Constitution as the principle of legal separation.[4]

This speech encompassed the range of domestic- and foreign-policy issues that confronted Johnson just as he took over the presidency, and it revealed much about his faith and the way he was going to handle these issues. He viewed all of these challenges as a piece, bound together by the commitments of " private morality and public conscience".

LBJ came to believe that first and foremost on Christian America's agenda should be racial justice. Johnson first came to understand the civil rights movement as a moral and even spiritual phenomenon during the 1950s. In the wake of the Montgomery bus boycott was obvious that the country was undergoing one of its most serious internal clashes since the Civil War. Johnson agreed and took sides. In January 1963, in a speech at Wayne State University in Detroit, LBJ, by then vice

president, exclaimed: “To strike the chains of a slave is noble. To leave him the captive of the color of his skin is hypocrisy.”[5] Later, in a commencement address at Tufts University, he insisted that the United States could not long remain divided. “If we cannot permit each man and woman to find their rightful place in a free society to which they are entitled by merit,” he said, “we cannot preserve a free society itself.”[6] These were not insignificant words from a Texan who had drawn much of his political strength from the segregationist South. Preparing for his first state of the union address, aides advised Johnson to de-emphasize civil rights. It was a divisive, contentious issue which could well destroy his southern support and thus his presidency at the outset. Johnson demurred. “What the hell is the presidency for, then,” he said.[7]

Growing up in this general religious milieu and being a member of a family that was highly religious shaped Johnson’s religious views. In later years Johnson recalled that his earliest impressions of spiritual and moral forces carry a Baptist identification and that Baptists have a special place in his affections.

Johnson believed in the brotherhood of all mankind, in racial and religious tolerance, and in the integrity and dignity of the individual. He once said that “man is not just an atom, a random piece of matter living in a mechanical , purposeless universe. “Rather each person has as inner compass, a spark of divinity, which sets him apart from the rest of creation. He believed that humanity was born to overcome evil with good and that the Christian’s duty is to serve God , people, and his or her country. [8]

The traces of Johnson’s baptist upbringing is clearly witnessed in most of his speeches. In his inaugural address he used the jeremiad frame with its three structural elements namely lamenting the present condition, evoking the past and calling for renewal .

1- INAUGURAL ADDRESS(20 JANUARY 1965) : THE JEREMIAD AT TIMES OF CRISIS

In the wake of the Kennedy assassination, President Johnson was left with the task of reconstituting the public after a major national crisis. It is at just such times that civil religion in general and jeremiad in particular are most useful .[9] Johnson's speech to Congress five days after Kennedy's death calls mourning Americans to come together in a trying time: "We will serve all the Nation, not one section or one sector, or one group, but all Americans. These are the United States—a united people with a united purpose". President Johnson closed his speech with the following:

> I profoundly hope that the tragedy and the torment of these terrible days will bind us together in new fellowship, making us one people in our hour of sorrow. So let us here highly resolve that John Fitzgerald Kennedy did not live—or die—in vain. And on this Thanksgiving eve, as we gather together to ask the Lord's blessing, and give Him our thanks, let us unite in those familiar and cherished words: America, America, God shed His grace on thee, And crown thy good With brotherhood, From sea to shining sea. [11]

In this quotation, Johnson uses themes of unity and faith to bolster his American audience during a trying time. Johnson asserts that, by working together with faith in the nation, the American people could overcome the tragedy of Kennedy's death and continue the social reforms he started. Johnson's appeals to the Lord are made on behalf of the entire country, and the public is reminded to be thankful for the blessings it has received, even during its time of grief. Johnson's words were absolutely appropriate for the occasion, and exemplify the rhetorical execution of civil religion. Johnson makes a point to mention the holiday, Thanksgiving, a decidedly American tradition, as an appropriate time to celebrate national unity. Closing with words from "America the Beautiful," Johnson incorporates the nondenominational God and, again, reasserts the unification of the country—prime aspects of civil religion. Johnson was similarly successful in articulating the civil religion in his inaugural address of 1965.

In Johnson's only actual inaugural address, he again incorporates the unity theme so essential to civil religious rhetoric, stating in the very first paragraph of that address:

> My fellow countrymen, on this occasion, the oath I have taken before you and before God is not mine alone, but ours together. We are one nation and one people. Our fate as a nation and our future as a people rest not upon one citizen, but upon all citizens.[12]

As Hart suggests, unification is a primary goal and result of the successful application of jeremiad . By starting his inaugural with reference to that unification, Johnson set the tone for the remainder of the speech. The covenant Johnson established in this address is between Americans and the land, that it was "[c]onceived in justice, written in liberty, bound in union, it was meant one day to inspire the hopes of all mankind; and it binds us still. If we keep its terms, we shall flourish" . Johnson himself also covenants with his constituents, pledging to work together in executing the country's business. His language reflects the religious makeup of the country at the time (mostly Jewish and Christian people), and thus manages to include all Americans engaged in this agreement. In the remainder of the speech, Johnson expands on the terms justice, liberty, and union with the end result of verbalizing key components of traditional civil religion. The secular words "justice," "liberty," and "union" are sacred to the American public, and Johnson's using them is a means to enact civil religion through discourse. Furthermore, these words are representative of ideals and values already held by his American audience. Using such terms in this context reinforces their meaning and reminds the players in the covenant to strive to uphold these American ideals.

In addition to the unity theme, Johnson also appeals to the transcendent nature of his and his constituents' mission on earth: "Men want to be a part of a common enterprise—a cause greater than themselves. Each of us must find a way to advance the purpose of the Nation, thus finding new purpose for ourselves. Without this, we shall become a nation of strangers".[13] Here, Johnson performs a rhetorical balance between the national purpose and the individual purpose. This notion of balance is critical to the execution of civil religion through language. Like other presidents, Johnson does make reference to God in the opening and closing paragraphs of the

inaugural address. This is an example of the frame Bellah refers to: references to the divine are strategically placed in an address for structural purposes.[14] In sum, Johnson's inaugural address is a prime example of the rhetorical execution of civil religion with its calls for unity, emphasis on transcendent goals, and invocation of the divine for strength and assistance. He makes a covenant with the people and provides the history of the country as an example to inspire them to action.

With regard to the rhetorical covenant- a significant element in the jeremiad- Johnson's performance is within the norms established by his predecessors and articulated by Hart. For example, the first covenant term is that there must be a guise of separation between church and state. In his appealing to his audience to work together, Johnson tells his audience: "Let us now join reason to faith and action to experience, to transform our unity of interest into a unity of purpose".[15] This statement is an example of how sacred "faith" and secular "reason" are conceptualized as two different, yet related and important, means to solidify the nation. Johnson maintains the guise of equality by successfully balancing sacred and secular in his speech. For example, Johnson says of the American covenant that "justice was the promise that all who made the journey would share in the fruits of the land". [16]

Johnson does use religious language to make various points in his inaugural address. However, while President Johnson does make references to God, they are in the context of God's not assuring a smooth and trouble-free future. Instead, the people have to work hard together to assure the common good: "Under this covenant of justice, liberty, and union we have become a nation—prosperous, great, and mighty. And we have kept our freedom. But we have no promise from God that our greatness will endure. We have been allowed by Him to seek greatness with the sweat of our hands and the strength of our spirit".[17] Here, Johnson is invoking God in His role as the Witnessing Author. Hart says that this role is the one whereby God has given license, and then "watches his creations from afar" .[18] This is consistent with the jeremiad's invocation of a divine being and within the bounds of the rhetorical contract.

The last element of the covenant, the safeguarding of the covenant terms, is similarly upheld by Johnson. He tells his audience: "Justice requires us to remember: when any citizen denies his fellow, saying: 'His color is not mine or his beliefs are strange and different,' in that moment he betrays America, though his forebears created this Nation". [19] Here, Johnson keeps the covenant terms safe by promoting the acceptance of each person's views, however different from one's own. In general, Johnson maintains the covenant terms by also maintaining the balance between sacred and secular in his address as, for example, when he encourages his audience members to "join reason to faith."

The first element of pastoral power is that there is an assurance of salvation in this world as opposed to the afterlife. Johnson does allude to conditions and the means by which they can be improved, but he certainly does not offer any promises. For example, Johnson says: "The American covenant called on us to help show the way for the liberation of man" . While this statement promotes the idea that there can be personal freedom during a person's lifetime, note that it is not guaranteed. Instead, we can "help show the way," which emphasizes the majority of the responsibility rests with the individual. As spokesman for the nation, Johnson says: We believe that every man must someday be free" . The key, of course, is "some day." Conversely, pastoral power suggests that salvation can be found on earth in an individual's lifetime.[20]

In this address, Johnson does not make reference to increasing the number of people who exercise pastoral power. Instead, he focuses on the role of his assembled audience in managing change so that people benefit from it. He makes reference to his partners in the ongoing business of America: "And to these trusted public servants and to my family, and those close friends of mine who have followed me down a long winding road, and to all the people of this Union and the world, I will repeat today what I said on that sorrowful day in November last year: I will lead and I will do the best I can" . He thereby unites all of the existing players in the goal of improving the lot of America, the "Union," and, indeed, the "world" without the need of new agencies or public servants.[21]

The third element of pastoral power, where the statesman has knowledge of the individual in particular and that individual's reference to community is similarly lacking in this address. Johnson says: "We must work to provide the knowledge and the surroundings which can enlarge the possibilities of every citizen". His focus is on "every" citizen instead of "a" citizen or "the" citizen. Also, Johnson articulates humanity's precarious position as a great community, saying "Think of our world as it looks from that rocket that is heading toward Mars. It is like a child's globe, hanging in space, the continent stuck to its side like colored maps. We are all fellow passengers on a dot of earth. And each of us, in the span of time, has really only a moment among our companions". This quotation demonstrates Johnson's understanding of a very large, world community, and removes individual emphasis. Johnson's message is that "By working shoulder to shoulder together we can increase the bounty of all".[22] His sustained emphasis on the community means that Johnson is not rhetorically applying this aspect of pastoral power.

Johnson closes his inaugural address with a Biblical quotation attributed to Solomon: "'Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great". Such appeals for wisdom are common in the rhetorical execution of jeremiad, particularly at the end of a speech. The idea that the people have gone astray and as a result will be punished. The specific line Johnson chose to use is, indeed, the lament of those facing God's wrath as a consequence of their actions which, again, ends with people consigned to torment for their failures, this part of Johnson's inaugural speech reads as a stark warning that God will be displeased with America should it fail to act on civil rights. Yet a call for renewal and a better promising future in the next address in which president Johnson stressed that America shall overcome her moral crisis in a deep religious oratory that sounds like a crusade.

2- WE SHALL OVERCOME ADDRESS (15 MARCH 1965): THE JEREMIAD AS A CRUSADE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

President Lyndon Johnson's voting rights speech of March 15, 1965, is considered a landmark of U.S. oratory. It is reprinted or excerpted in nearly every anthology that chronicles the "great moments" or "great issues" of American history. Leading scholars of American oratory have ranked Johnson's speech as one of the top ten American speeches of the twentieth century.[23] Even so, it is not unreasonable to ask, "Is the speech really that outstanding?" Johnson hardly can be counted among the nation's great orators. And some consider the civil rights campaign in Selma, Alabama, to have done more to ensure the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 than Johnson's speech.[24]

Johnson began his religious campaign for civil rights with his first national address, given to a joint session of Congress on the night of November 27, 1963. The very occasion of the speech was tinged with religious symbolism because it shared certain aspects in common with funeral ceremonies. We have to recall that this address was taking place just four days after the assassination of Kennedy. The country had not yet finished mourning. As such, the public would obviously expect Johnson to praise Kennedy's life and accomplishments and, indeed, Johnson did open his speech with a deep jeremiadic framework; with a eulogy of sorts for the fallen president: "The greatest leader of our time has been struck down by the foulest deed of our time."[25]

But this was also to be a policy address, a chance for Johnson to chart the course that he now intended to lead the nation on. As he began to do so, the new President emphasized that kind words for his predecessor would not be enough of a tribute. Civil rights legislation, however, would be. "First, no memorial oration or eulogy could more eloquently honor President Kennedy's memory than the earliest possible passage of the civil rights bill for which he fought so long," Johnson said. "We have talked long enough in this country about equal rights. We have talked for one hundred years or more. It is time now to write the next chapter, and to write it in the books of law. I urge you again, as I did in 1957 and again in 1960, to enact a civil rights law so that we can move forward to eliminate from this Nation every

trace of discrimination and oppression that is based upon race or color. There could be no greater source of strength to this Nation both at home and abroad." Johnson made a direct appeal for Kennedy's tax bill, as well It would not be until the inspiring conclusion to the address that Johnson would closely link civil rights with religion via his rhetorical choices:

> We meet in grief, but let us also meet in renewed dedication and renewed vigor. Let us meet in action, in tolerance, and in mutual understanding. John Kennedy's death commands what his life conveyed- that America must move forward. The time has come for Americans of all races and creeds and political beliefs to understand and to respect one another. So let us put an end to the teaching and the preaching of hate and evil and violence. Let us turn away from the fanatics of the far left and the far right, from the apostles of bitterness and bigotry, from those defiant of law, and those who pour venom into our Nation's bloodstream.
>
> I profoundly hope that the tragedy and the torment of these terrible days will bind us together in new fellowship, making us one people in our hour of sorrow. So let us here highly resolve that John Fitzgerald Kennedy did not live- or die- in vain. And on this Thanksgiving eve, as we gather together to ask the Lord's blessing, and give Him our thanks, let us unite in those familiar and cherished words:
>
> America, America, God shed His grace on thee, And crown thy good With brotherhood From sea to shining sea.[26]

A lot of interesting things are happening in these lines. For one, Johnson makes a second call for progress on civil rights ("The time has come for Americans of all races and creeds and political beliefs to understand to respect one another") but this time he does so with the aid of a host of words with religious significance, words such as "preaching," "evil," "apostles," and "fellowship."

The sentence on "fellowship" ("I profoundly hope that the tragedy and the torment of these terrible days will bind us together in new fellowship, making us one people in our hour of sorrow") requires some additional comment. In the New Testament, fellowship is a description of the communal bond between Christians who have chosen to accept Christ as their savior. For instance, in the first letter of John (1: 6-7) it is written, "If we say we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; but if we walk in the light as

he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin." The existence of this fellowship indicates that believers share common experiences and a common hope for eternal life. In some sense, fellowship is the Christian equivalent of the Jewish "covenant" that bound the Israelites together both with each other and with God .[27] Becoming "one people," as Johnson wants, requires action on civil rights. It is only if such action is forthcoming that the country could be bound "together in a new fellowship.

From a broader perspective, though, Johnson was positioning Kennedy as a martyr for civil rights. The final paragraphs are about hatred and in them Johnson asks that the country resolve that Kennedy "did not live- or die- in vain." The suggestion- which, as I explained above, was already a powerful thought in the country- is that Kennedy's death was in some way connected to the battle over civil rights. Making Kennedy a martyr for the cause would be a very potent image for Johnson to have at his disposal.

Martyrs have a long history in Christian tradition. By definition, a martyr is typically understood to be someone who died for their religious beliefs. Historically, Saints Paul, Peter and many other influential early Christians died as victims of Roman persecution. Although the veneration of martyrs is something that mostly occurred in later years, the Bible does contain several examples of martyrs as well. Jesus himself would be the most notable example, but also there are the cases of Stephen (Acts 22: 20) and James (Acts 12: 1-2) in addition to several other references to martyrdom found in the Book of Revelation. [28]

The truth is that this address would not be the only time that Johnson would create the impression that Kennedy had been martyred for civil rights. In fact, he would do so with some regularity, often by paralleling Kennedy's death to Lincoln, a president who most certainly *did* die for the cause of racial justice.[29]

Johnson actually gave another national address on November 28, the day after his appearance before Congress. It was Thanksgiving Day. Some of the religious content of this speech certainly fell into the standard ceremonial type language we would expect to find in early Puritan jeremiads. Yet Johnson also made another

eloquent statement about the need for racial progress. In the middle of the speech, Johnson remarked:

> In each administration the greatest burden that the President had to bear had been the burden of his own countrymen's unthinking and unreasoning hate and division.
> So, in these days, the fate of this office is the fate of us all. I would ask all Americans on this day of prayer and reverence to think on these things.
> Let all who speak and all who teach and all who preach and all who publish and all who broadcast and all who read or listen- let them reflect upon their responsibilities to bind our wounds, to heal our sores, to make our society well and whole for the tasks ahead of us.
> It is this work that I most want us to do: to banish rancor from our words and malice from our hearts; to close down the poison spring of hatred and intolerance and fanaticism; to perfect our unity north and south, east and west; to hasten the day when bias of race, religion, and region is no more; and to bring the day when our great energies and decencies and spirit will be free of the burdens that we have borne too long.[30]

Johnson had thus made a strong religious argument about the need for equality ("God made all of us, not some of us, in His image") and he had announced it as the "work that I most want us to do." He had done these things on a day, as he called it, "of prayer and reverence." He asked that the country "pray for His divine wisdom" about how best to eradicate prejudice. The last paragraph of this speech might as well have come from a minister.

When combined with his speech from a day earlier, Johnson's religious rhetorical campaign for civil rights was now well underway. In addition to the theme of martyrdom for race , Johnson's language would feature several recurring religious arguments for civil rights that bear individual discussions.

One such like motif would be the importance of the Golden Rule i.e. the ethical conduct in Christianity about treating others as one would wish to be treated referring to Matthew : "In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets." (Mt 7: 12). Johnson would repeatedly call for civil rights by reference to this important dictate. He would tell

his audience to place themselves in the shoes of a black American and then consider how they would want to be treated if they were in his or her position.

Towards the latter half of his speech, Johnson transitioned from a discussion of economic policy and into a discussion of civil rights policy. Johnson first updated his listeners on the progress of his bill. "We put a petition on the Speaker's desk and started petitioning out with the help of the United Steelworkers and others the civil rights bill that was before the Rules Committee, and we got 180-odd signatures," Johnson said. "They agreed to report the bill because we were in sight of the promised land." These short lines contain significant Biblical reference to the Promised Land.

"Promised land" is a very well recognized piece of Biblical imagery. When God calls Abraham early in the book of Genesis, he does so with a promise that "To your offspring I will give this land" (Gen 12: 7), meaning Canaan. That promise is at various points renewed to Abraham's descendants Isaac (Gen 26: 3) and Jacob (Gen 35: 12), among others. The idea of a promised land is also very important for Moses. At the burning bush, God tells Moses, "I declare that I will bring you up out of the misery of Egypt, to… a land flowing with milk and honey" (Ex 3: 17). The Israelites undertake a forty year journey in search of this land.

The Promised Land is depicted as fertile and abundant, a beautiful land of "milk and honey." By claiming that passage of a civil rights law would be the equivalent of the Promised Land, Johnson is using a religious metaphor with very positive connotations pointing thus at the third element in the jeremiadic frame; that is a hope for a better future.

The second Biblical quote Johnson uses here was another of his favorites. "Well done, thou faithful servant" is a line taken from Jesus' parable of the talents (Mt 25: 14-30), a passage I have already discussed earlier in the Carter case (see chapter five). The parable's point is that believers are required to be true in performing the work they have been asked to do. Although the parable is a piece of New Testament wisdom, it includes the harsh consequences of failure found more commonly in the Old Testament; for his poor management, one servant is thrown out into the dark upon the master's return where "there will be weeping

and gnashing of teeth" (Mt 25: 30). This is a clear symbol of damnation. And it is in this context that Johnson would more often use the quote as he warned people of what might happen were they *not* to support civil rights. Indeed, warnings of punishment or eternal judgment were a third prominent aspect of LBJ's religious rhetoric on civil rights.

While it is true that Johnson was not a gifted public speaker in general and that the Selma protests elicited support for voting rights legislation, the voting rights speech is indeed an exceptional instance of political oratory. In an uncharacteristically eloquent way, the president interpreted the meaning of the Selma demonstrations for a nation awakened to the problem of voter discrimination: His interpretation focused on the very meaning of the nation, what he called "the American Promise." Out of that interpretation, he crafted a compelling rationale for immediate passage of a strong federal voting rights law. His language effectively framed public and congressional deliberations. His appeals helped cement equal voting rights as a fundamental American principle. And at a moment marked by urgency and chaos, his message provided focus and clarity. In short, President Johnson's speech is remarkable because it made the principle of equal voting rights meaningful and compelling through a public vocabulary of shared interests, motives, and aspirations in order to secure quick passage of the country's most important civil rights law.

Johnson began his "***We Shall Overcome Address*****"** by asserting that he spoke for "the destiny of democracy" .[31] Indeed, the current crisis was critical, he claimed, because it constituted a "turning point in man's unending search for freedom" and "equal rights" . It was an episode in the story of the American Promise, Johnson reasoned, which was a guarantee of freedom and equality—and the potential to be "the greatest nation on Earth" . Johnson suggested that denying equal rights to African Americans, exemplified by the violence in Selma, represented a threat to "the values and the purposes and the meaning of (the) beloved nation" . He claimed that to keep African Americans from enjoying the freedom and equality assured by the Declaration of Independence and the battle

cries of the Revolution would be to break our nation's promise and neglect our potential to “fail as a people and as a nation” . Of course, none of the dictums quoted by the president ("All men are created equal”; “Government by consent of the governed”; “Give me liberty or give me death”) constituted a direct promise to African Americans regarding political freedom or equality. Yet Johnson interpreted them to have an expansive meaning that applied to the present problem. And since the story of the forward march of freedom and equality is perhaps the United States' "master narrative," his proposed political reform is made to seem a natural progression in American history. In short, he seized the rhetoric of democratic freedom and equality—transforming the meaning of the two principles in the process—to help guarantee equal voting rights to African Americans.[32]

At the same moment President Johnson argued that the issue confronting the county was of historic significance, he also emphasized the importance of time. He suggested that although the United States long had kept African Americans from enjoying the benefits of freedom and equality, it had not broken its promise—yet. But since destiny had crossed Americans’ path at this particular time, he claimed, the decisive point in time had arrived. The president asserted that as such a moment came along “rarely in any time,” the nation must seize the opportunity. Articulating a similar theme about midway through the speech, he described the country's promise as “unkept,” not broken, and urged immediate action by stressing that the "time of justice has now come” . Johnson claimed, “This time, on this issue, there must be no delay or no hesitation or no compromise with our purpose,” adding that “the time for waiting has gone”.

The themes of promise and urgency established in the beginning of Johnson's speech were central to the message's overall rhetorical power, as they transformed the political problem of voter discrimination into something even grander: a threat to America itself. And the effort to solve that problem took on a grand, almost religious imperative—as described by the president—since it implicated America's destiny, faith, and mission. He suggested the United States represented a chosen nation, “the first . . . in the history of the world to be founded with a purpose” .

Invoking a passage from the Bible, Luke 9:25, he claimed the nation would lose its very soul if it failed to achieve its purpose of upholding the democratic model of government, its promise to ensure freedom and equality. President Johnson took on the role of prophet in his speech, recalling the nation to its original task. As the gift of the prophet is vision, he suggested that by taking a penetrating look at current events to see their underlying meaning, one could truly understand what was at stake: the heart and soul of the nation.

By filling his narrative of the American Promise with a religious dimension, Johnson tapped into the cultural tradition of civil religion. His message articulated three key myths in American civil religion: that the United States has a covenant that makes its citizens a chosen people, that it has a special purpose, and that its founding was a consecrated act that defined the meaning of the nation.[33] In doing so, the president encouraged his audience to experience current events as part of a transcendent reality. As the nation's prophet, he called to mind its purpose, pointed out its sins and the wages of sin, and identified the path to redemption.

To a great extent, Johnson's speech is persuasive to the extent it invested events with deep meaning for its listeners. His story of the American Promise aimed to help his audience make sense of a disturbing crisis in a particular way, to see it as part of a larger context of events. By emphasizing the idea of a promise, he provided a logic that framed his listeners' decision-making: they should act to keep their promise. His story reinforced the values to which the nation must recommit itself through action. It reaffirmed America's national identity and identified citizens with their government.

When listeners found Johnson's speech compelling, it was likely because he induced them to guarantee voting rights in order to honor their status as a chosen people and to live out the nation's sacred purpose. He effectively appealed to their patriotic duty, infused with a religious imperative. Moreover, for those listeners who felt shame following Bloody Sunday, Johnson provided a way to purge their guilt. The violence in Selma was horrific, but the president suggested it may serve a significant purpose, since it has “summoned into convocation all the majesty of

this great government." The violence in Selma can be made meaningful, he implied, by enacting voting rights legislation.

Regardless, such a lengthy thought places a jeremiad frame around all of the content in the speech, whether intentionally or not. Again, what is important to note is that Johnson was issuing a warning. He depicts a God who will judge America. "God is not mocked." "We reap as we sow" Johnson "trembles" for the nation. The implication is that the passage of the civil rights bill was crucial if the country hoped to avoid a terrible fate.

Pauley writes that " in this civil religious view of the world, Lyndon Johnson plays the role of the nation's prophet/priest" and calls Americans to action.[34] Johnson used civil religion to appeal to distinctly American ideals such as justice, liberty, and union, not any specific religion in particular. His brand of civil religion can be called traditional—he uses it in an attempt to bring the populace together, not to advance any particular denominational belief. Johnson "kept the line between church and state reasonably clear, if not the line between religion and politics".[35] He both enacted and understood the traits of civil religion, and, based on this small sample, applied them traditionally. He maintains the transcendent unifying ideals of civil religion by being nondenominationally devout, even given his location at a synagogue.

The jeremiad theme thus provided the basic structure of both Lincoln and Johnson's speeches to overcome challenging moments in the history of the United States. Developed in terms of America's obligation to remain faithful to liberty, justice, and union. Lyndon Johnson eclipsed the memory of Kennedy's inauguration with a speech that reached far back into the American experience. It drew on America's oldest rhetorical form to unite national values with LBJ's national policies. His addresses can be read as secular jeremiad that provided a moral justification for his Great Society domestic policies. In like manner, Lincoln's addresses followed the pattern of the jeremiad in which union required that Americans achieve a sense of national community and urged Americans to rely on old principles of democracy and union.

ENDNOTES

I

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[3] Ibid.
[4].Malinowski, Myth in Primitive Psychology,p.19.

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[16]Linder, Robert D. "Universal Pastor: President Bill Clinton's Civil Religion." Journal of Church& State 38.4 (01 September 1996): 733-749.
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[18]Campbell, Karlyn Kohrs, and Kathleen Hall Jamieson. Deeds Done in Words: Presidential
Rhetoric and the Genres of Governance. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990.p,15.
[19] Ibid
[20] Ibid
[21]Beasley, Vanessa B. "The Rhetoric of Ideological Consensus in the United States: American
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[22] Ibid, p.170.
[23]Ibid,p.174.
[24] Ibid,p.175.
[25] Bercovitch, S. (1978). *The American jeremiad*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid
[28]Howard-Pitney, D. (1990). *The Afro-American jeremiad: Appeals for justice in America*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
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[30] Ibid
[31] Stuckey, Mary E., *The President as Interpreter-In-Chief*. Chatham, NJ: Chatham House Publishers, 1991.
[32] Ibid
[33] Beasley, Vanessa B., *You, the People: American National Identity in Presidential Rhetoric*. College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2004,p.3-4.
[34] Ibid,9-10.

II

[1]*Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln: Speeches, Letters, and State Papers*, edited by John G. Nicolay and John Hay, 1905. Quoted in William J. Johnson, *Abraham Lincoln the Christian*, 1913, reprinted by Mott Media, 1976, pp. 157-158.

[2] Ward H. Lamon, *The Life of Abraham Lincoln from His Birth to His Inauguration a President*, Boston: James R. Osgood & Co., 1872, p. 489, in William E. Barton, *The Soul of Abraham Lincoln*, New York: George H. Doran Co., 1920, p. 20.

[3] Mark A. Noll (1992). A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada. Wm. B. Eerdmans. pp. 321–22. ISBN 9780802806512.

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[7] Mark A. Noll (1992). *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*. Wm. B. Eerdmans. p. 322.

[8] Ibid.

[9] *Radicals in Their Own Time,* Michael Anthony Lawrence - 2010

[10] "Lincoln Memorial Album". p. 508. Archived from the original on 2010-02-10.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Abraham Lincoln, "First Inaugural Address," in R.Heffner and A .Heffner *A Documentary History of the United States*, New York, Signet,2009 , p,82.

[13]Carwardine, Richard .*A Life of Purpose and Power* (2006),

[15] Abraham Lincoln, "Reply to Committee of Congress Reporting the Electoral Count," 26 February 1861. Basler, *Collected Works*, 4:246.

[16] Just war theory (*jus bellum iustum*) is a doctrine, also referred to as a tradition, of military ethics studied by theologians, ethicists, policy makers, and military leaders. The purpose of the doctrine is to ensure war is morally justifiable through a series of criteria, all of which must be met for a war to be considered just. The criteria are split into two groups:

'the right to go to war' (*jus ad bellum*) and 'right conduct in war' (*jus in bello*). The first concerns the morality of going to war and the second with moral conduct within war. Recently there have been calls for the inclusion of a third category of just war theory—jus post bellum—dealing with the morality of post-war settlement and reconstruction.

[17] Orend, Brian. 2006. *The Morality of War*. Ontario, Canada: Broadview Press. pp, 9-27.
[18] See Brown, Davis. 2008. *The Sword, the Cross, and the Eagle: The American Christian Just War Tradition*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 46-47; Cook, Martin L. 2004. *The Moral Warrior: Ethics and Service in the U.S. Military*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press. 27-32; Johnson, James Turner. 1999. *Morality and Contemporary Warfare*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press., 27-38

[19] S. A. Hodgman, *Th e Great Republic Judged, but Not Destroyed*, 2d ed. (New York, 1865).
[20] J. W. Tucker, "God's Providence in War" (1862). In *"God Ordained this War":Sermons on the Sectional Crisis, 1830– 1865*, ed. David B. Chesebrough (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 229, 233– 234
[21] Abraham Lincoln, "First Inaugural Address," *P*,82.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Allen Jayne, *Lincoln and the American Manifesto*, (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 2007).
[24] Kendall and Carey, "Appendix I," 156.
[25] William J Wolf,
[26] Guelzo, Allen *C*.1999. *Abraham Lincoln: Redeemer President*, p 56.
[27] Lincoln, The Gettysburg Address", November 19,1863, in R.Heffner and A .Heffner *A Documentary History of the United States*, New York, Signet,2009. cit;p.20.
[28] *HSW*, 793. Emphasis added.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Winger's *Lincoln, Religion, and Romantic Cultural Politics*, (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 2003), 208.
[31] Grant N. Havers has written a wonderful book on the place of charity in politics and political theory, with Lincoln as its organizing touchstone. See his *Lincoln and the Politics of Christian Love*, (Columbia, Mo. And London, U.K.: University of Missouri Press, 2009).

[32] Mark A. Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 434.

[33] Abraham Lincoln, "Second Inaugural Address" (March 4, 1865), in *Collected Works*, 8: 333 (emphasis added). On the scale of violence, see Harry S. Stout, *Upon the Altar of the Nation: A Moral History of the Civil War* (New York: Viking, 2006).

[34] Stout, *Upon the Altar of the Nation*, P.86.

[35] Ibid., 426; also 145– 146.

[36] Ibid;426.

[37] I bid;145

[38] Ibid;325

[39]. Remarks by Vice President," Tufts University, June 9, 1963, LBJ Handwriting File, Box2, LBJL.

III-

[1] " Religion and President Johnson", Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library 2313 Red River Street, Austin, Texas. www.LBJ library.net

[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.
4. "Remarks to a Group of Civil Rights Leaders," April 29, 1964, *Public Papers of the*1. *Presidents: Lyndon B. Johnson* (Washington, DC), I: 588–89.

[5]. "Remarks of Vice President," Wayne State University, January 6, 1963, VP Files of G. Reedy, Box 8, LBJL.

[6]. Remarks by Vice President," Tufts University, June 9, 1963, LBJ Handwriting File, Box 2, LBJL.

[7]. Abe Fortas, "Portrait of a Friend," in Thompson, ed., *The Johnson Presidency*, 7.
[8] Remarks at the presidential Prayer Breakfast, Feb.1.1968. Public Papers of Presidents Johnson,1968-69,1:22.

[9] Hart, Roderick P., and John L. Pauley II, *The Political Pulpit Revisited*,p.47.
[10] Johnson's"InauguralAddress".Available at http://www.historyplace.com/speeches/johnson.htm)
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Johnson's "Inaugural".
[14] Bellah's "Civil Religion," p; 2
[15] Johnson's "Inaugural"
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid
[18] Hart, Roderick P., and John L. Pauley II, *The Political Pulpit Revisited*,p.71.
[19] Johnson "Inaugural".
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[23] Stephen E. Lucas and Martin J. Medhurst.2007. *Words of a Century: The Top 100 American Speeches, 1900-1999* . New York: Oxford University Press,p,42.
[24] David Zarefsky, "Lyndon B. Johnson," in *American Orators of the Twentieth Century: Critical Studies and Sources*, ed., Bernard K. Duffy and Halford R. Ryan (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1987), 224; Harvard Sitkoff, *The Struggle for Black Equality, 1954-1992*, rev. ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), 182-183.
[25] Johnson, Lyndon B. 1963a. "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress." November 27. http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=25988&st=&st1=#axzz1QftZt1Rz {accessed June 29, 2011}
[25] Ibid.
[26] Powell, Mark Allan, ed. 2011. *The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary*. New York: HarperOne.p.285.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Interestingly, Johnson also appeared to view himself as somewhat of a martyr. In his interviews with Doris Kearns, Johnson frequently lamented the fact that he had to sacrifice his presidency for Vietnam- and that he received no credit for doing so. "I knew from the start that I was bound to be crucified either way I moved. If I left the woman I really loved- the Great Society- in order to get involved with that bitch of a war on the other side of the world, then I would lose everything at home. All my programs. All my hopes to feed the hungry and shelter the homeless. All my dreams to provide education and medical care to the browns and the blacks and the lame and the poor. But if I left that war and let the Communists take over South Vietnam, then I would be seen as a coward and my nation would be seen as an appeaser and we would find it impossible to accomplish anything for anybody anywhere on the entire globe" (Kearns 1976, 251-252). Genuinely believing these things, Johnson confessed in the dark days of the war, "It's hard to sleep these days. I'm beginning to feel like a martyr; misunderstood, misjudged by friends at home and abroad". Dallek 1998, 259.

[30] "The President's Thanksgiving Day Address to the Nation." November 28. http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=25999&st=&st1=#axzz1QftZt1Rz {accessed June 29, 2011}

[31] Lyndon B. Johnson, President Johnson's Voting Rights Address, March 15, 1965, WHCA 269/70, Audio Collection, Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library.

[32] Eric Foner, *The Story of American Freedom* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998), xvi.

[33] See Robert N. Bellah, *Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in a Time of Trial*, 2nd ed. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 3; Roderick P. Hart, *The Political Pulpit* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1977), 12; and Russell B. Nye, *This Almost Chosen People: Essays in the History of American Ideas* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1966), 165.

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CHAPTER FOUR

AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM AS IMPERIAL IDEOLOGY

Amy Kaplan's *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* demonstrates that imperialism is not accidental in the creation of the U.S but rather at the very core of it.[1] Despite American exceptionalism's blind assertion that America distinguishes itself through its opposition to European imperialism, America constitutes itself through imperialist ventures, whether it be in the Mexican-American War, the Spanish-American War, the Vietnam War, the two Gulf Wars and the so-called War on Terror. Imperialism as ideology is therefore central to U.S existence.

In this final chapter entitled ***American Exceptionalism as Imperial Ideology***, I am interested in how America's self-understanding as a chosen nation functions as ideology justifying its foreign policy and attitudes. The term, which began as a beacon of light and democracy as envisioned in John Winthrop's "a City upon a Hill" in 1630 has undergone significant changes over the last four centuries. In other words, I look at how American exceptionalism from a beacon of freedom has evolved into an ideology to justify a variety of imperialist purposes, from territorial expansion, to crusade against "Evil Empires" to a preemptive strategy, and even as a political weapon for punishing opponents especially in view of the ongoing war on terrorism.

The first section entitled **: *American Exceptionalism and Foreign* Policy** explores the relationship between ideology , interests ,and American foreign policy, most notably in relation to the way American exceptionalism shaped foreign policy in discursively affirming a specific national identity.

This first section starts with Sullivan's political writings- as the founder of Manifest Destiny- which characterizes America as a sinless agent of God's will, possessing a messianic destiny to initiate a global democratic government and redeem the world from tyranny. [2] Manifest Destiny remains resilient and robust narrative useful for justifying war, intervening on behalf of a ubiquitous national interest, and restoring America's self-image of exceptionalism. O'Sullivan's millenarian thought identifies democracy with American power, framing politics as a conflict between democratic good and despotic evil. These ideas have been frequently evoked in Woodrow Wilson's and Bush's speeches. The discourses of

Presidents Wilson , George H Bush, and George W Bush as they approached and implemented their military interventions.

Then I attempt to shed light on the processes through which dominant discourses such as America's sense of uniqueness can hold deep ideological intentions; attempt to create order, write identity, reflexively construct external threats and enemies, produce consent, and discipline behavior within the domestic body after a social crisis. Then I will show how the presence of the discourse of American exceptionalism justifies and supports American foreign policy practices.

The second section entitled ***Woodrow Wilson's Crusade for Democracy*** stresses the way Woodrow Wilson's belief in American exceptionalism legitimized the United States intervention in the First World War. Wilson, stands first among those American leaders who inherited transformed the imperial American ideal of divine mission and Manifest Destiny. As the leader who took America back to Europe, he was transfixed by the notion of a national mission, and variations on this theme dominate his speeches. Woodrow Wilson's sense of divine calling has generally been attributed to his Puritan and Calvinist upbringing, For the purpose at hand, this chapter proceeds by giving Wilson's religious affiliation in ***Wilson' Calvinist Presbyterianism*** **.** In his presidential discourse, he used his Calvinist Presbyterian denominational theology that had been in his family for generations. Then in ***Woodrow Wilson's Civil Religion*****:** ***The U*****.S** ***as a Redeemer Nation*** I stress Wilson's belief in America as a redeemer nation, a belief that runs in almost all of his speeches . Our analysis of Wilson's civil religion would not be complete without referring to ***Wilson's Idealistic Justification of Redemptive War Intervention*** in which I shall discuss the long tradition about America's exceptionalist foreign policy, basically the country's view of its moral and physical uniqueness among nations, and a certain invulnerability. On these feelings Woodrow Wilson had been able to base his universalist creed of the United States' "self-possession," whereby everything America touched - justice, democracy, self-government – was "made holy," because it operated out of a sense of disinterest and universal service to the world.

The third section is devoted to: ***George H.W. Bush's Exceptionalist Rhetoric on the Persian Gulf War*.** It deals with the discourse of President George Bush as he prepared for and executed the 1991 Persian Gulf War. I will focus on the rhetoric of president George Bush and in particular on his reliance on the use of the narrative of America's civil religion and American exceptionalism to conduct war and gain support. I use this case study to discuss two main issues : First Bush justifies the US intervention in the Persian Gulf War and defends the war on the "just cause" criteria using the just war theory in ***The Persian Gulf War as a Just War***. Then I argue that Bush presented a largely priestly mode relying more on the expansionist mode of Manifest Destiny and this was clear in his exceptionalist rhetoric in ***Exceptionalism and Operation Desert Storm: America as the Guardian of a Millennial New World Order*** Bush had a very strong faith, which significantly shaped his policies as president. Being a devout Episcopalian is a critical component of his policymaking.

The last section entitled: ***George* W *Bush's Exceptionalist rhetoric on* the *War* on *Terror*** makes the ideology behind American exceptionalism even plainer. Although most presidents appeal to civil religion and American exceptionalism in public speeches, some commentators argue that George W. Bush's use of American exceptionalist rhetoric is more pronounced and more political than that of perhaps any modern president. Bush's public speeches routinely weave ideological principles with biblical references and religious images. I start my argument with elaborating Bush's public faith. Indeed his presidential style and foreign policies cannot be fully understood unless the personal religious dimension has been taken into account. Specifically, the way ***Bush's Evangelical Faith*** enhanced his political actions. Then I shall proceed by establishing the connection lying between the core tenets of neoconservatism and the arguments for war against terror that were put forth by Bush administration officials. These links are most apparent when we turn our attention to the neoconservative ***The Bush Doctrine: Legitimizing Democracy Promotion*** that served as the primary justification for the war against terror. After an analysis of the Bush Doctrine, I stress the importance of American exceptionalist rhetoric in the policymaking process of the Bush administration in

American Exceptionalism and the War on Terror. The Bush administration needed to legitimize the American presence in Iraq and to convince the American public that the Iraq War was a cause worth fighting for and continued to be so. Since missionary American exceptionalism leads to an internationalist foreign policy, this increased emphasis on the US as an exceptional nation can explain why the American government remained involved in military actions in Iraq until 2010. It will help illustrate why the war against terror continued until 2010, even after the primary justification of war became invalid i.e. the presence of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

I-AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM AND FOREIGN POLICY

The belief in American exceptionalism forms a core element of American national identity and its foreign policy practices as well. As anyone who studies U.S. foreign policy knows well, American exceptionalism and U.S.foreign policy have been intimately connected in the literature on U.S. foreign policy to such a degree that this connection is often simply assumed or taken for granted.

1- MANIFEST DESTINY AS A DEMOCRATIC EXPANSIONIST IDEOLOGY

The term manifest destiny refers to a political program, popularized from the 1830s through the 1850s, to acquire more territory on the American continent on which to implant the blessing of democracy and open the door for massive European immigration. What might sound like a mere land grab was in fact ideologically justified by the great idea of progress. Manifest destiny was championed by a group of intellectuals and political leaders, mostly Democrats, in a movement known as Young America. Among its leading figures were John L. O'Sullivan, editor of the Democratic Review who apparently coined this term "manifest destiny"; Stephen Douglas; and Walt Whitman. over them all, as the intellectual godfather of the movement, was George Bancroft, America's premier historian and author of the 12-volume classic *History of the United States*. [2] With

his History's epigraph, Bancroft was first to articulate the basic theory of progress for the Democratic Party.

The historian's task, as Bancroft explained it, is to discern the place events "occupy in the progress of humanity, … and when history is viewed from this point, it is found that humanism is steadily advancing, that the advance of liberty and justice is certain".[3] In Bancroft's adaptation of this thesis, the next— and perhaps final—chapter in the movement of world history was the age of democracy. America was the nation commissioned to bring democracy to the world.

O'Sullivan echoed these same ideas in the movement's journal, the *Democratic Review*: "The expansive future is our arena, and for our history. … We are the nation of human progress, and who will, what can, set limits to our onward march?" .[4] Walt Whitman was also a participant in the movement. Long before his great "exceptionalist" essay Democratic Vistas (1871), he was invoking the idea of the mission in support of American expansionism. He did so in the context of the Mexican-American War, using the category of "race": "What has miserable, inefficient Mexico—with her superstition, her burlesque upon freedom, her actual tyranny by the few over the many— what has she to do with the great mission of peopling the world with a noble race? Be it ours, to achieve that mission!"[5]

The progenitors' idea of progress at the heart of manifest destiny made use of religious language. O'Sullivan, for example, knew well that "the reminiscence of Puritanism was the most powerful element of that spirit which produced the Revolution"; his God talk seemed clearly to have been deployed mostly as a rhetorical strategy.[6] More significant was the blending of philosophy and religion that became the hallmark of this era. It is likely that O'Sullivan, himself intended such a fusion of the two realms, arguing that his system provided a rational account of God's providential plan. In more general terms, philosophy and religion become one: "Philosophy, in explaining religion, is only explaining itself, and in explaining itself it explains religion. … Thus religion and philosophy coincide."[7] Following this general idea, one finds in Bancroft's work the themes of progress, reason, election, democracy, and divine will merge together into the same rhetorical package. As Bancroft wrote:

> Thus it is that the voice of the people is the voice of pure Reason. … Give power to the whole people and you get the nearest expression of the law of God, the voice of conscience, the oracle of universal reason.[8]

In a like manner, he stated that : "The tendency of democratic truth is to inspire not only a confidence in itself, but a confidence in its success. We believe in democratic truth, and we believe in the overruling providence of God."[9] O'Sullivan, who was known as a freethinker in religion, wrote regularly in the same vein: "The source of the democratic principle is essential love and essential truth. … It is not therefore man in which democracy puts their trust, for this does aristocracy, but God". [10]

In the 19th century, therefore, the American errand was translated into the ideology of manifest destiny .[11] Herman Melville, himself skeptical of America's direction, wrote that "we Americans are the peculiar, chosen people – the Israel of our time; we bear the ark of the liberties of the world"[12] As argued by John O'Sullivan:

> The far-reaching, the boundless future will be the era of American greatness. In its magnificent domain of space and time, the nation of many nations is destined to manifest to mankind the excellence of divine principles; to establish on earth the noblest temple ever dedicated to the worship of the Most High – the Sacred and the True. [13]

Rabbi Isaac Wise's speech honoring Washington and his contemporaries as "the chosen instruments in the hands of Providence, to turn the wheel of events in favor of liberty forever…" makes the transition from chosen people on a noble errand to manifest destiny apparent. Rabbi Wise argues that "nothing can arrest our progress, nothing drag our country down from her high place in history, except our own wickedness working a willful desertion of our destiny, the desertion from the ideal of liberty". [14] His words show how easily the idea of a special role in securing liberty slides over into an entitlement to "progress" and a "destiny" of expanding liberty. It also shows the enduring strength of the idea that only deviation from the path of Providence, only abuse of liberty, can displace America from its special historical role.

Finally, it illustrates that providential exceptionalism, while rooted in a particular Puritan understanding, had become a secular imperialist ideology. That belief finds expression in the words of Walt Whitman, whose celebration of America as "a great test or trial case for all the promises and speculations of humanity and of the past and present" exudes the boundless confidence, optimism, and exceptionalism that characterized the national creed in the 19th century.[15]

While some scholars argue that Manifest Destiny was supplanted by imperialism at the turn of the century, the distinctions between imperialism and Manifest Destiny are often nebulous. In this case, the argument is that imperialism, with its emphasis on economic resources, reliance on trade and other non-coercive forms of intervention to spread American influence, was a departure from Manifest Destiny. To respond to this misleading usage of Manifest Destiny and imperialism we will bring to debate the issue of ideology, interest and American foreign policy in the up coming point.

2- IDEOLOGY, INTERESTS, AND AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

American foreign policy and interests have always been closely intererlated. This leads us to conceive foreign policy as a discursive practice that constitutes both the State and its identity as Hansen explains:

> Foreign policies are legitimized as necessary, as in the national interest, or in the defense of human rights, through reference to identities, yet identities are simultaneously constituted and reproduced through formulations of foreign policy. Policies require identities, but identities do not exist as objective accounts of what people and places "really are", but as continuously restated, negotiated, and reshaped subjects and objects. To theorize foreign policy as discourse is to argue that identity and policy are constituted through a process of narrative adjustment, that they stand, in social science terminology, in a constitutive, rather than causal, relationship.[16]

Foreign policy depends on representations, narratives, symbols and meanings that are attributed to the nation, the people or the interest that is to be protected from danger or peril, and to be defended at a time of crisis. In order to make a legitimate

claim about protecting interests from a threatening situation that one seeks to eliminate, one needs to give meaning to reality and populate it with objects and with relations among them. The State, through its foreign policy discursive practices, articulates and gives specific identities to other States, regions, peoples and institutions at the same time it creates an identity for itself. Meanings related to "America" – and of "not-America" – create the discursive boundaries between domestic and foreign, order and anarchy, good and evil.

If foreign policy depends on representations, and if such a process is made possible through foreign policy, then one should accept the notion that policy and identities are ontologically linked: only through the implementation of foreign policy – or its performance, as posited elsewhere by Judith Butler – will identity come to life.[17] At the same time, said identity is constructed so to legitimize and to naturalize the political option it proposes . As Hansen says, identities are "articulated as the reason why policies should be enacted, but they are also (re)produced through these very policy discourses: they are simultaneously (discursive) foundation and product".[18]

Ideology plays two roles in the foreign policy process. On the one hand, mass ideologies must exist to legitimize the roles played by foreign-policy-makers; ideologies help constitute decision-makers as separate actors. On the other hand the ideologies of foreign-policy-makers themselves let them apprehend the world and ideologies act as guides to policy. The Gramscian perspective suggests two important things in regard to ideology in these roles. First, the ideologies that legitimize decision-makers,-the ideas that the mass public of a nation refers to explain why a special elite does and should make policy for them-are unlikely to be coherent within any group in society and they are unlikely to be exactly the same for all groups in society will be legitimized by common sense, by the contradictory consciousness of the public. Second, we have no particular reason to believe that the operational ideologies followed by foreign-policy-makers will directly reflect the contradictory consciousness of the mass public more than minimally, that is, at the level needed to maintain the foreign-policy-makers' independent role.

Hansen's view is shared by David Campbell, for whom the ideological relation between identity and foreign policy results from the very notion of "feeling secure", since "danger is not an objective condition" but "an interpretation effect" [19] If the risks are not the same, and not all of them are interpreted as danger, he argues, one should then take into account the role of subjectivity in the articulation of danger. This begs the important question of understanding how meanings are produced as to reflexively construct threats, (re)produce collective identities, and to privilege the State as the single space capable of creating security and collective belonging.

By rejecting a relationship of causality and materiality between identity and foreign policy, we are then able to conceive them as a discursive, relational, political, and social practice. They are discursive because objects cannot be conceived outside language; they are relational because one can only speak of the 'Self' ; they are ideological because opposing discourses struggle between themselves for domination in order to impose their own regime of truth; and they are social because meanings are disseminated through cultural codes which are collectively articulated and propagated in the social realm.

Such an understanding has led Campbell to posit foreign policy as a central practice for the constitution, production and maintenance of identity and of the state itself. According to Campbell, foreign policy is then revealed as a political practice for constructing borders, since it discursively produces differences based in dichotomies such as inside/outside, domestic/foreign, friend/foe and Self/Other sustained by identity markers of specific ideological content.[20] The function of those markers is to establish the horizon of "Self" in regards to the "Other": what may be included and what should be excluded. In other words, foreign policy is a social practice that converts difference in "Otherness" by constructing and naturalizing a privileged "Self".

To illustrate, during the War on Terror, most Americans believed that 9/11 marked the collapse of the dominant discourse about America and Americans being exceptional, the situation provoked a crisis of meaning. The dominant meanings, representations, symbols, and myths, which allowed individuals to make sense of reality and of themselves, were abruptly disrupted. The grids of intelligibility that

gave sense to “America” collapsed, thus igniting a collective trauma in national imaginaries. Notions such as “Who are we?”, “What world is this?” and “Where are we going?” seemed to be lost as the Twin Towers collapsed. In order to overcome trauma, and to reestablish order, and power the dominant discourse has to be reconstituted, rearranged and re-stabilized. The “void of meaning“ had to be filled, the “broken time“ had to be mended, the events had to be domesticated. [21]

The events of 9/11 had broken down the dominant discourses about America and the Americans. The broken meanings had to be rearticulated and written, so that Americans could make sense of reality once again. The War on Terror that followed the terrorist attacks could be interpreted as an attempt to recompose the broken meanings of American exceptionalism , which would then explain why its discursive articulations were dominated by self-references. The following point will better stress the link between American foreign policy practices and the nation’s sense of exceptionalism.

In what follows, we are going to stress the way the ideology of American exceptionalism reflects , legitimizes and perpetuates a national identity based on a sense of uniqueness and a right to leadership , a belief in the moral superiority and the good motifs of the United States, in the discourses of Woodrow Wilson, G. H. Bush, and G.W. Bush . A concern for order and stability in the world, a desire to manage international affairs and to universalize American values. The chief significance of the presence of the rhetoric of American exceptionalism in US public diplomacy lies in how it can be both value and strategy at once and what this illustrates about the dynamic between normative and interest-based concerns in US foreign policy. Yet we will start with Wilson since he was the first to make the idea of Manifest Destiny cross beyond America and the Atlantic by leading the U.S in a first imperialist experience ever outside the Western hemisphere.

II- WOODROW WILSON 'S CRUSADE FOR DEMOCRACY

This section entitled ***Woodrow Wilson's Crusade for Democracy*** takes the discourse of President Woodrow Wilson during the First World War . I identify the themes of mission and manifest destiny to indicate Woodrow Wilson's millennial convictions about America's crusade for freedom to legitimize US intervention in the First World War. Indeed Wilson left a deep impression on twentieth century American political tradition. His impact on presidents that followed him is well recognized by historians like Lioyd Ambrosius, who argues that "his [Wilson's] legacy continued to shape U.S. involvement in international affairs throughout the American Century."[1] As Magee persuasively argues," Ultimately, Wilson's religion gave impulse to the image of the United States as a 'redeemer nation."[2]

1-WILSON'S CALVINIST PRESBITARIANISM

To begin thinking about Wilson's theological orientation and how it contributed to the U.S. involvement in the WWI, it is necessary to consider his family history and the theological legacy Wilson inherited from them. Wilson's descendents had been Presbyterians since they converted from Catholicism during the Protestant Reformation.[3] They continued from there in a tradition of preaching and leading Presbyterian institutions. This included Wilson's own life where he preached sermons at the one-time Presbyterian school, Princeton University. It is worth noticing that his theology differed from that of other members of his family. Wilson's Calvinist Presbyterianism, however, differed significantly from his father's due to his adoption of the modernist Biblical interpretive methods that were gaining popularity in the United States in the late nineteenth century.[4] Wilson was a historicist and a Calvinist Presbyterian and as I will show in the forthcoming readings of Wilson speeches, he brought both beliefs with him to his presidential discourse.

In addition to his proper theological history, Wilson used theological rhetoric dear to the American electorate. This was particularly the case as he sought to persuade the electorate to support U.S. entrance into WWI. Wilson's second

presidential bid succeeded on a non-interventionist platform. But soon after election, he changed his tune on the war. Wilson's second Inaugural Address set the stage for intervention in Europe by making appeals that sought to convince the public to support the war. To do this, Wilson altered his theological rhetoric from his Calvinist Presbyterian orientation to appeal to a segment of the electorate that had resisted the war on theological grounds.

The Social Gospel movement had an ideology similar to the Socialist Party which ran against Wilson in the 1912 campaign. In line with the Socialist Party's emphasis on alleviating real economic inequality, both the Party and theology had a similar vision of what a moral world looked like. As concerns prominent Social Gospel theologian Walter Rauschenbusch, the fight for economic justice led him to become increasingly pacifist. He disapproved of government funding of the machines of war as a misuse of financial resources. His voice was a major public opposition to entrance into WWI. While Rauschenbusch had supported Wilson's leadership when he was elected, by 1915 he stood against what seemed to others to be an ever more inevitable American intervention. Rauschenbusch saw the war as fought on behalf of "vindictive vengeance," a nod to his theologically-rooted rejection ofviolence.[5]

In adopting Social Gospel rhetoric into presidential rhetoric, Wilson attempted to present the U.S. intervention in Europe as the working of Jesus in the world that the Social Gospel movement supported, while sacrificing the content of the pacifist Social Gospel movement. As we shall see in the following point, Wilson nonetheless used Social Gospel rhetoric to construct a providential U.S. as a redeemer nation sent by God to perfect the world from the sins it committed in WWI

In the following section, we are going to stress the way Wilson's faith shaped his time in office. Raised in a devout southern Presbyterian home, Woodrow Wilson attended a Presbyterian-affiliated college, Yale University, and remained a member of Presbyterian churches his entire life. When Wilson campaigned for the presidency in 1912, his platform, "The New Freedom," earned the support of American Protestants for its ambitious reform agenda. And when the United States

entered World War I and Wilson proclaimed Americans would help "make the world safe for democracy," American churches supported the war effort by hosting war bond drives and encouraging male members to enlist in the war.

2-WOODROW WILSON'S CIVIL RELIGION: THE U.S. AS A REDEEMER NATION

In his public speeches, and in particular in his First Inaugural Address, Wilson uses a providential reading of Biblical stories to interpret American history as continuing the truth of the Bible. History, Wilson believed, moves according to a plan in which America plays a major role. His view of history is one of a progressive development, moving slowly but inexorably to a condition of reconstituted reality. In an address in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, celebration on October 24, 1914, he said:

> . . . no man can look at the past of the history of this world without seeing a vision of the future of the history of this world; and when you think of the accumulated moral forces that have made one age better than another age in the progress of mankind, then you can open your eyes to the vision. You can see that age by age, though with a blind struggle in the dust of the road, though often mistaking the path and losing its way in the mire, mankind is yet-sometimes bloody hands and battered knees-nevertheless struggling step after step up the slow stages to the day when he shall live in the full light which shines upon the up lands, where all the light that illumines mankind shines direct from the face of God.[6]

The role of America in this plan of history, Wilson was persuaded, was shaped and directed by God from the beginning. This, he declared on one occasion, is a nation God built with our hands. To what end, we might ask? In an address before Confederate veterans of the Civil War on June 5, 1917, Wilson declared that "we are to be an instrument in the hands of God to see that liberty is made secure for mankind."[7]

Wilson's view of history in which America and mankind were moving to a world immanent transfiguration of the human condition was not an isolated facet of the thought of an otherwise pragmatic man of affairs. Instead it was an integral

aspect of his attitude towards life and the skills required if political life was to be governed rightly. Politics, for Wilson, required "vision," and vision for Wilson meant knowledge of God's purpose in history. In his First Inaugural, Wilson was speaking of his own visionary politics when he described his task as "no mere task of politics." Wilson's politics was not "mere politics," but a special capacity to announce the immanence of a new age certified by the political leader who experienced a special revelation.[8]

Woodrow Wilson's vision of America was one of a nation ordained to play a mighty role in history; it was only fitting, therefore, that Americans should be perceived as different from the rest of the peoples of the world. The Americans, for example, entered World War I "for no selfish advantage." The American troops were "the armies of God." Accordingly, America undertook missions of redemption. At St. Louis, Missouri, September 5, 1919, Wilson observed that:

> (America) . . . has said to mankind at her birth: "We have come to ***redeem*** the world by giving it liberty and justice." Now we are called upon before the tribunal of mankind to redeem that immortal pledge.[9]

Wilson was an idealist in the sense that T. H. Green defined an idealist as one who seeks to "enact God in the world" by the pursuit of ideals not given in experience.[10] Wilson was committed to the ideal of a world without war, a world he believed to be within the grasp of a civilized world. And America's entry into World War I was largely motivated by the desire to attain such an ideal. That it was to be accomplished by violence did not dismay Wilson. It is important to understand that Wilson's desire to involve America in World War I was grounded in his will to destroy the system of balance-of-power politics. Wilson's oft repeated assertion that America had no selfish interest to be satisfied by her entry into the war, that we sought no territory, no concessions, was his way of expressing utter contempt for balance-of-power politics.

Wilson's speeches often attempted to interpret the meaning of historical characters, documents, and symbols particularly on ritualized national events. Wilson has the purpose of explaining meaning and using that meaning to direct the nation to its future. Such is the case with his 1913 address *Hard Tasks Ahead of the*

Nation speech, spoken at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.[11] This speech which drew on the rhetorical legacy of Abraham Lincoln, yet produced a remarkably different interpretive approach for dealing with his audience. Instead of Lincoln's allegorical interpretive method which situated the battlefield as a site in a divine drama, Wilson's address at Gettysburg described how the truth, or spirit, of American history had to be translated into a language that was culturally specific to his audience. Since that language was the progressive call to social change, Wilson used that language to interpret the truth of the American experience to his audience in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

Although Wilson's message is like Lincoln's, one of unity, he evokes the modernist focus on translating the *spirit* of America into the future. Speaking about American history, Wilson argued, "Their work is handed on to us, to be done in another way, but not in another spirit."[12]

> Our constitutions are their [the American people's] articles of enlistment. The orders of the day are the laws upon our statute books. What we strive for is their freedom, their right to lift themselves from day to day and behold the things they have hoped for, and so make way for still better days for those whom they love who are to come after them. The recruits are the *little children crowding in*. Every day something must be done to push the campaign forward; and it must be done by plan and with an eye to some great destiny.[13] (emphasis mine)

Not to simply repeat the meaning of the past, the *spirit* of that meaning needs to be oriented toward the future. And this can happen if America takes a lesson from the Bible and makes policy while keeping in mind the "little children crowding in," a line borrowed by Wilson from Jesus to refer to future American generations to come.

This phrase comes from Matthew 19:14. Jesus, when met with theological questions posed to him by the religious leaders of the day, disregarded the holy men: "But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."[14] In Wilson's reading, Jesus put children first thereby favoring their future over present theological discussion. This

continues Wilson's higher critical rhetoric as it focuses on the future. In this case, the truth of American history requires that the focus of policy be on the future of the nation rather than business interests. In the Biblical story alluded to here by Wilson, Jesus chose to engage children over questions posed to him by Pharisees on the legality of divorce. Just as Jesus rebuked the elites of Jewish legal thought, so too is the United States called to rebuke the elites of business who care more about their interests than the future of the nation. As incorporated into the address, this story provides an example from Jesus of the importance of policy with the future in mind. Wilson's use of this Biblical passage was part of his appeal to the progressive movement.

Invoking a large gap between a previous historical moment and the current one, Wilson's address at Gettysburg builds on the work of previous American generations: "Their work is handed on to us, to be done in another way, but not in another spirit."[15] Although in an verifiably concerned with the reuniting of the nation, the present task of the United States is to,

> . . . work out in days of peace and settled order the life of a great Nation . . . . the people themselves, the great and the small, without class or difference of kind or race origin; and undivided in interest, if we have but the vision to guide and direct them and order their lives aright in what we do.[16]

Let the future generations, the "little children crowding in," who will inherit the Reign of God inaugurated by Wilson's America, come to the forefront of Wilsonian policy. Higher criticism seeks to translate the essential truth of history into a language that people in the present cultural moment can understand. Wilson followed this by trying to continue the American spirit, but apply it to a new historical situation. Lincoln's *Gettysburg Address* also interpreted the battlefield at Gettysburg. Lincoln did so through a series of redescriptions that ascended upward from the present moment in which he spoke toward God. Lincoln's address removed the agency from human actors at Gettysburg—from the ability for humans to add or detract meaning from the situation—and put agency on God. Wilson's

progressive higher critical rhetoric took all agency from God by positioning himself as the academic who went to history to find God's truth. As he translated that truth into the idiom of progressivism he positioned the American people as the agents that would align the current moment with God's spirit. This difference between Lincoln's and Wilson's speeches at Gettysburg highlights the changes that progressive inquiry brought to the presidency. When progressivism was introduced to the presidency with Wilson's public address, God's role in American public life changed. America was no longer simply part of a pre-modernist divine drama, but was attempting to discover how it could align itself with God's spirit in history.

Nearly as important as the ideal of providentialism to Wilson's conception of national mission was his interpretation of American history, especially the Founding, the Civil War, and, in general, the transcendent "meaning" of America in the unfolding of the divine plan. The fact that America's mission was written into history by the hand of Providence and could be plainly read in its national history meant for Wilson and many of his generation that America was accountable for the revelation of history. As Anders Stephanson concluded, Wilson believed that "certain individuals and nations are bound to lead because they have been privy to, or are embodiments of, the deeper providential purposes of history."[17]

In the next section, we are going to stress the way Wilson took great care in his speeches to present a particular version of the American past, one that was useful in explaining why America had to be the servant of all humanity, why it had to purge itself of all base motives, why America had to enter the European war, and why it had to participate in the League of Nations. In a language filled with religious rhetoric he aimed to justify America's first venture outside its terretories.

3-WILSON'S IDEALISTIC JUSTIFICATION OF A REDEMPTIVE WAR INTERVENTION: A PROGRESSIVE IDEOLOGY OF EXPANSIONISM

Before making the decision to enter the war, Wilson spoke to an elite group of Washington journalists in February 1913. He clarified his position on the U.S. involvement in WWI. He described his foreign policy in moralized terms borrowed from the Bible as he rejected military action on the "sandy land" of expediency rather than the "solid rock" of principle.[18]

> The point in national affairs, gentlemen, never lies along the lines of expediency. It always rests in the field of principle. The United States was not founded upon any principle of expediency; it was founded upon a profound principle of human liberty and of humanity, and whenever it bases its policy upon any other foundations than those it builds on the sand and not upon solid rock.[19]

Borrowing from Luke and Matthew,[20] Wilson's rhetoric is not only invested in the morality of American principles, but finds American morality to be in the spirit of Biblical truth. It is the principles of "human liberty and . . . humanity," values more American than Biblical, on which the house of American foreign policy should rest. As this was a campaign-time speech—a campaign run on a non-interventionist platform[21]—it concludes with the stance, "America ought to keep out of this war." But the solid rock of U.S. foreign policy was an exception to that rule: "She ought to keep out of this war at the sacrifice of everything except this single thing upon which her character and history are founded, her sense of humanity and justice."[22] Wilson concluded his speech by making clear the providential character of the American foreign policy: "Valor withholds itself from all small implications and entanglements and waits for the great opportunity when the sword will flash as if it carried the light of heaven upon its blade." [23]

As the U.S. eventually entered WWI in 1917 it would do so on the same principled grounds as justified Wilson's isolationist rhetoric:

> Vessels of every kind, whatever their flag, their character, their cargo, their destination, their errand, have been ruthlessly sent to the bottom without warning. . . . have been sunk with . . . reckless lack of *compassion* or of *principle*.[24] (emphasis mine)

"Compassion" and "principle" were part of the same moralized language as had earlier justified neutrality. This shift from isolationist foreign policy that sought to represent the "principles of human liberty and of humanity" to interventionist policy that spread those values to the world can be seen as a shift from the Calvinism of John Winthrop who called his colony a city upon a hill, to an enlightened progressive protestant belief that America was a redeemer nation. To persuade the public of the divine nature of America's intervention in WWI, Wilson adopted the Social Gospel language of his biggest detractors, folks like Rauschenbusch, who became more pacifist as intervention grew imminent. The tensions between the postmillennialist theological language that Wilson adopted and his Calvinist theology of limited atonement rests on an assumption about the capacity for human action to redeem those who have not been saved by God.[25] To be a city upon a hill is to stand as a moral community as a sign of God's blessing. To be an expansionist is to attempt to redeem the world.

Wilson's 1917 Second Inaugural Address rhetorically prepared the way to WWI by describing the last four years of his Presidency as "set[ting] our house in order":

> We have sought very thoughtfully to set our house in order, correct the grosser errors and abuses of our industrial life, liberate and quicken the processes of our national genius and energy, and lift our politics to a broader view of the people's essential interests.[26]

Wilson here uses a reference from a Biblical passage in which King Hezekiah is instructed to make changes to his kingdom before his death. As Hezekiah was a king of the Israelites the spirit of this passage corresponds to the covenanted theology of Calvinist Presbyterians. Hezekiah was tasked, as was Wilson, with moralizing his polity.

> In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to him and said, "This is what the Lord says: Put your house in order, because you are going to die; you will not recover.[27]

The "spirit" of this passage situates the present moment as one that makes America more Godly.[28] Wilson did this throughout his campaign as he changed domestic policy to control anti-competitive business practices. He also made small changes to U.S. foreign policy by, for instance, making sure that U.S. ambassadors positions were filled by "men with good Christian character. This speech continues Wilson's Calvinist Presbyterian denominational theology insofar as it positioned him as leading God's covenanted people to re-covenant the American people with God, but makes a theological shift as Wilson grew anxious about taking the nation to war. Wilson states reluctantly the inevitability of entering the war: "I pray God I may be given the wisdom and the prudence to do my duty in the true spirit of this great people." Although Wilson's style is reluctant, he continues by describing the new America :

> We are being forged into a new unity amidst the fires that blaze throughout the world. In their ardent heat we shall, in God's providence, let us hope, be purged of faction and division, purified of the errant humors of party and of private interest, and shall stand forth in the days to come with a new dignity of national pride and spirit.[29]

The global conflict, in Wilson's rhetoric, aimed to renew the unity of the spirit of covenant with God. What begins changing in his rhetoric is the recognition that the nation needs a *renewed* spirit. In practical terms this is a conversion to unprecedented interventionism in U.S. history.[30]

The United States entered WWI, Wilson changed the theology of his description of American mission from a Calvinist Presbyterian covenant that was a beacon of light to the world to a redeemer nation that is along the lines of the postmillennialism of the Social Gospel. This was the case in *America was Born to Serve Mankind*.[31] In postmillennialist style, America was born to make Godly changes in the world. At the ritual celebration of Memorial Day at Arlington

National Cemetery, Wilson called the Nation to extend to the globe its "struggle" for "the cause of human liberty":

> We did not set this Government up in order that we might have a selfish and separate liberty, for we are now ready to come to your assistance and fight out upon the field of the world the cause of human liberty.[32]

As a concluding sentence, the speech ends with a call to American service: "In the providence of God America will once more have an opportunity to show to the world that she was born to serve mankind."[33] From the religious perspective of this chapter, Wilson's entrance into WWI to save Europe is a violation of his emphasis on limited atonement. Limited atonement posits that Jesus' death and resurrection saved the souls of a limited group of elect. No human action could make those who weren't already saved reach salvation. This attitude of American service was compatible with limited atonement because it sought to help only those Americans that were already redeemed. But, as Wilson sought to redeem the world outside of God's city upon a hill, Wilson shifted from serving those who were presumably already saved to redeeming those not-yet saved. What resulted from this shift from a rhetoric of American limited atonement to a rhetoric of universal salvation was Bryan's resignation from office. When Wilson responded to the Lusitania incident by taking a side in the conflict, Bryan submitted his resignation from his post:

> It is with sincere regret that I have reached the conclusion that I should return to you the commission of Secretary of State. . . . I can not join without violating what I deem to be an obligation to my country, and the issue involved is of such moment that to remain a member of the cabinet would be . . . unfair . . . to the cause which is nearest to my heart, namely the prevention of war.[34]

Wilson had chosen the postmillennialist language and its eschatological attempt which sought to perfect the world in preparation for Christ's return. In Wilsonian civil religion, Providence and American action cannot be distinguished. No longer a beacon of light to the world, Wilson's nation could not be confined to state boundaries. Wilson's redeemer nation entered WWI to save the world from its ills.

This shift in foreign policy and national identity is, in part, a theological shift that marks Wilson's move away from a Calvinist limited salvation to the universal salvation of the Social Gospel. Wilson's denominational theology made him God's covenanted people closer to perfection, but centered more on political than social perfection. Wilson did this by adjusting domestic policy to align more closely the U.S. with what he took to be God's will. This included adjustments to Taft's Dollar Diplomacy that reflected badly upon a nation seeking domestic purity. Wilson described this in his Second Inaugural Address, but in the same breath started to prepare the nation for a new public theology:

> Although we have centered counsel and action with such unusual concentration and success upon the great problems of domestic legislation to which we addressed ourselves four years ago, other matters have more and more forced themselves upon our attention—matters lying outside our own life as a nation and over which we had no control, but which, despite our wish to keep free of them, have drawn us more and more irresistibly into their own current and influence.[35]

It no longer worked for Wilson's America to perfect itself along the lines of progressive domestic reform; Wilson turned America to "make the world safe for democracy."

When Wilson finally made the decision to enter World War I in April 1917, he justified his action in highly idealistic terms that made the American people look at the war as a crusade. Most famously, the determination to "make the world safe for democracy" was proclaimed by President Wilson as he asked Congress for a declaration of war against Germany. The United States, in keeping with its traditions, joined the hostilities, according to Wilson, with nothing but the most benign intentions and a sense of a higher purpose. Portraying involvement in the conflict as a just cause in terms consistent with the belief in American exceptionalism was a direct and deliberate appeal to the public and a way to help silence opposition. It was also the only way in which Wilson could assuage his own doubts about American involvement in the war. The rhetoric that accompanied intervention made it clear that the United States, in keeping with its strongest

principles, was taking a stand against autocratic tyranny. Wilson argued that a peaceful and harmonious postwar international order based on the principle of universal freedom and democracy, as enshrined in the U.S. Constitution, could not be established while autocratic imperialism sought dominance in Europe. Although legitimate political, economic, and strategic justifications for intervention existed, American involvement in World War I was thus justified and conducted in terms consistent with the missionary belief in American exceptionalism.

Wilson declared that “the United States will never again seek one additional foot of territory by conquest.” Nevertheless, he frequently used military intervention in efforts to help other peoples become, in his opinion, more democratic and orderly. Wilson sent American troops into Mexico twice, to Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Cuba, as well as maintained the military "protection" of Nicaragua. He also intervened militarily twice in the Russian civil war. Wilson best expressed his attitude toward such interventions in 1914: “They say the Mexicans are not fitted for self-government and to this I reply that, when properly directed, there is no people not fitted for self-government.” Wilson was a clear advocate of the missionary strand of American exceptionalism. In what follows I am going to reinforce America’s sense of mission as framed by Wilson persisted in George H. W. Bush exceptional rhetoric about the Persian Gulf War . His imperialist involvement in the Gulf war aimed to complete redemption with justice while justifying such an intervention through the “just war” narrative. Posing exceptionalism and intervention as a responsibility, obligation, or duty of fortunate nations also frames Bush’s American military action as a moral imperative, narrows the range of alternatives, and pricks the conscience of the nation, rendering intervention a must.

III- GEORGE H.W. BUSH'S EXCEPTIONALIST RHETORIC ON THE PERSIAN GULF WAR

1- GEORGE H.W.BUSH'S FAITH: EXCEPTIONALISM IN A SKEPTICAL AMERICA

George H.W Bush was born in Milton, Massachusetts and grew up between Greenwich, Connecticut and Andover, Massachusetts. Bush was Episcopalian. [1] He wore his religious beliefs on his sleeve during his political career, often invoking God and faith as synonymous with American values. He said:

> Americans are the most religious people on Earth. And we have always instinctively sensed that God's purpose was bound up with the cause of liberty.[2]

Like Reagan and many other chief executives, George H. W. Bush argued that the founders' religious convictions helped shape the government they crafted. The American republic "was built on their faith in Almighty God" and "spiritual principles."[3] Convinced that all people "are equal in the sight of their Creator," the founders devised a system of government that protected "the God-given rights of every individual."[4] Like them, Bush believed "in separation of church and state, but not in the separation" of "moral values and state."[5] The First Amendment, he argued, protected "people against religious intrusions by the state," not "the state from [people's] voluntary religious activities."[6] Bush censured the "aggressive campaign" some waged "against religious belief itself." Children should have the right to pray voluntarily at school, and parents should have the right to choose which school, including religiously-based ones, their children attend.[7] Americans' "faith in God—unencumbered by legal restrictions" and "government interference—" he averred, had been crucial to "maintaining high standards of morality and justice in society."[8]

Freedom of worship, Bush contended, had enabled religion to play an essential role in American society.[9] The liberty Americans enjoyed, he proclaimed, "is clearly rooted in our Nation's Judeo-Christian moral heritage and in the timeless values that have united Americans of all religions," especially "love of God and

family, personal responsibility and virtue, respect for the law, and concern for others."[10]

Bush promoted religious liberty at home and abroad. He told B'nai B'rith in 1989 that "we must condemn all attacks on the Jewish religion, the Jewish heritage—clearly, unequivocally, and without exception. This Nation must stand for tolerance, for pluralism, and a healthy respect for the rights of all minorities." He deeply cherished the principle of religious freedom and promised "to uphold this principle as the very cornerstone of our freedom."[11]

Bush rejoiced that religious liberty was increasing around the world. Despite persecuting believers, destroying churches, and razing cemeteries, he observed, neither China nor the USSR had been able to stamp out religious faith or worship.[12] Attending Leonid Brezhnev's funeral in Moscow in 1982, Bush was amazed when his widow made the sign of the cross after taking her last look at her deceased husband. He thought: "All the barbed wire and indoctrination classes in the world can't keep Him [God] out." Prayer and worship services, Bush insisted, had helped topple communism in the Soviet Union.[13] The president was pleased that Soviet officials allowed a Christmas sermon of Robert Schuller, pastor of the famed Crystal Cathedral in California, to air on primetime television in December 1989, and that Gorbachev met with a group of North American evangelicals to discuss the role of religion and democracy in his nation in November 1991.[14] Gorbachev's acknowledgement that religious practice and values could help revitalize his country was a major breakthrough.[15] The victory of freedom, Bush insisted, was evident in Russia, where once oppressed citizens crowded into reopened churches and synagogues, and in Eastern Europe, where millions sang Christmas carols.[16] He rejoiced in 1992 that "the gigantic picture of Lenin" in Red Square had been replaced by "a massive icon of the Risen Lord, a powerful symbol of the new birth of freedom for believers all around the world."[17] Religious, political, and economic freedom in Eastern Europe, the Texan proclaimed, had come by "the hand of God."[18] Bush argued that religious liberty was an integral part of the "new world order" he sought to create as communism was abandoned in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.[19] The United States was committed to promoting a new political

structure based on “the rule of law and the guarantee of real economic,” political, and religious freedom.[20]

In the following section we are going to stress Bush’s Persian Gulf War rhetoric and the way he sought to justify and legitimize it by using the “just war” narrative. This section will explore to what extent G.H.W Bush’s imperialist Persian Gulf War meets the criteria of a just war theory. Bush discussed the just war principle on multiple occasions . It would not appear that was a coincidence as he constructed most of his speeches on “just war” cause.

2- THE PERSIAN GULF WAR AS A “ JUST WAR”

In August 1990, apparently heeding the above assessment of U.S. mood and capabilities, President Saddam Hussein of Iraq invaded its southerly neighbor Kuwait, a small but wealthy oil kingdom, and claimed ownership of disputed oil fields lying beneath the two countries' borders. During the next seven months President George Bush orchestrated the first large-scale war since Vietnam. This was more difficult in the Persian Gulf than it had been in the previous Central American interventions because the Gulf was farther from the United States, and the United States had few military bases in the region. Bush needed time to establish those bases and deploy the personnel and equipment to meet the military challenge. This lengthy military build-up meant there would be more potential for public awareness and debate of U.S. policy in the Gulf, so Bush's rhetorical strategy would require vigilance and transcendent emotional appeals. The six-week war finally started on January 16, 1991, and continued until February 27.

On January 28, Bush addressed the annual convention of the nation’s religious broadcasters. His speech received considerable media attention, persuading Americans skeptical about the necessity of war. The majority of the address was a precise and explicit argument about how Persian Gulf war, met the criteria of a just war.[21] This address provides proof that Bush was certainly aware of these benchmarks and without question suggests that his earlier just war statements were not made haphazardly:

> "There are two classes of the wise: the men who serve God because they have found Him, and the men who seek Him because they have not found Him yet." Abroad, as in America, our task is to serve and seek wisely through the policies we pursue.
> Nowhere is this more true than in the Persian Gulf where- despite protestations of Saddam Hussein- it is not Iraq against the United States, it's the regime of Saddam Hussein against the rest of the world. Saddam tried to cast this conflict as a religious war, but it has nothing to do with religion per se. It has, on the other hand, everything to do with what religion embodies: good versus evil, right versus wrong, human dignity and freedom versus tyranny and oppression. The war in the Gulf is not a Christian war, a Jewish war, or a Moslem war; it is a just war. And it is a war with which good will prevail.[22]

Next, Bush discussed the origins of the principles of a just war, making reference to many of the intellectual luminaries discussed above such as Cicero, Augustine and Aquinas. Then, Bush tested the conflict against several of the standards of a just war. To start, Bush said, "The first principle of a just war is that it support a just cause." And, as Bush continued, "Our cause could not be more noble. We seek Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait- completely, immediately, and without condition; the restoration of Kuwait's legitimate government; and the security and stability of the Gulf. We will see that Kuwait once again is free, that the nightmare of Iraq's occupation has ended, and that naked aggression will not be rewarded. We seek nothing for ourselves."[23]

Bush then turned to the criteria that "a just war must also be declared by legitimate authority" and noted that the coalition, composed of twenty eight nations from six continents, was backed by twelve UN Security Council resolutions. He added that a "just war must be a last resort" and proved that this had been so by citing James Baker's extensive diplomatic efforts, "more than 200 meetings with foreign dignitaries; 10 diplomatic missions; 6 congressional appearances; over 103,000 miles traveled to talk with, among others, members of the United Nations, the Arab League, and the European Community." He also made reference to the *jus in bello* dictate that noncombatants be protected, pointing out that the U.S. would "make every effort possible to keep causalities to a minimum."[24]

Bush's rhetoric during the Persian Gulf conflict did not address overtly the United States 'origin or raison d'etre: nevertheless, he establishes the country's providential origins by his references to God or other transcendent purposes. For instance, Bush states several times "You know, America is a nation founded under God. And from our very beginnings we have relied upon His strength and guidance in war and in peace. And this is something we must never forget."[25] Moreover, Bush thanks God for America, invokes God's blessings, and repeatedly states that Americans are part of "something larger than themselves." Bush defines the Persian Gulf War as a "just war" and quotes from Abraham Lincoln's speeches to the effect that "we are on God's side" in the war.[26]

Bush once more articulated the notion that God was on America's side: "My fellow Americans, I firmly believe in my heart of hearts that times will soon be on the side of peace because the world is overwhelmingly on the side of God." Admittedly, the high degree of religious rhetoric is unsurprising. Still, it has already been shown that Bush discussed the standoff in the context of just war principles on multiple previous occasions in front of broader publics.

In fact, Bush would use just war rhetoric before the entire country the following evening in his State of the Union address. The address was fixated on foreign policy. Bush was the first president to give a State of the Union address while the nation was at war since the end of Vietnam. As such, he displayed little appetite for bold new domestic initiatives. Iraq and the end of the Cold War were the topics. And Bush had put Iraq in a religious frame of reference by the eighth paragraph of the speech:

> The conviction and courage we see in the Persian Gulf today is simply the American character in action. The indomitable spirit that is contributing to this victory for world peace and justice is the same spirit that gives us the power and the potential to meet our toughest challenges at home. We are resolute and resourceful. If we can selflessly confront the evil for the sake of good in a land so far away, then surely we can make this land all that it should be.[27]

All three of Bush's major religious themes can be identified in these lines. First, Bush implies once more that God is on America's side. He says that it is up to

America "to preserve and extend the blessings of liberty." Bush calls liberty a "blessing," a literal gift from God. The inference is that by spreading liberty, as the U.S. was doing in Kuwait, America was helping to bring about God's plan for the world. Bush identified the enemy: "Well, today in the Persian Gulf, the world is once again faced with the challenge of perfect clarity. Saddam Hussein has given us a whole plateful of clarity, because today, in the Persian Gulf, what we are looking at is good and evil, right and wrong. And day after day, shocking new horrors reveal the true nature of the reign of terror in Kuwait." It was soon very common for Bush to cast the dispute as a matter of "good and evil," as he does here.[28]

Second, Bush also makes use of another of the themes, the opposition of good and evil. The United States, Bush said, was "selflessly confronting the evil for the sake of good in a land so far away." A short while later, Bush would build on this dichotomy with the use of some well-timed light and dark imagery: "As Americans, we know that there are times when we must step forward and accept our responsibility to lead the world away from the dark chaos of dictators, toward the brighter promise of a better day." Hussein represents evil and "dark chaos," America good and a "brighter promise of a better day."[29]

Third, the Commander-in-Chief used the just war theme in a passage towards the end of the speech:

> Each of us will measure within ourselves the value of this great struggle. Any cost in lives- any cost- is beyond our power to measure. But the cost of closing our eyes to aggression is beyond mankind's power to imagine. This we do know: Our cause is just; our cause is moral; our cause is right.
> Let future generations understand the burden and the blessings of freedom. Let them say we stood where duty required us to stand. Let them know that, together, we affirmed America and the world as a community of conscience.[30]

As is readily apparent, here Bush defends the war on the just cause criteria: "Our cause is just; our cause is moral; our cause is right." Further, for a second time, he calls freedom a "blessing," one that "duty required" us to defend. As a smaller point, he also refers to the coalition as a "community of conscience," again alluding to the religious motivations behind the U.S. offensive., Bush was thus obliquely

making the point that any war against Iraq would meet this criteria. As he said, the cause was just. Particularly so because "Iraq has waged a war of aggression, plundered a peaceful neighbor, held innocents hostage, and gassed its own people."[31]

Bush highlighted the just war aspects of the showdown instead . Bush admitted that "it is fair for Americans to say, why are we here?" He answered his own question by focusing on three different justifications for U.S. intervention-standing up to aggression, ensuring the U.S.'s energy security and protecting innocent life. This last point is an undeniably just cause for war.

Bush made the case that Kuwaiti civilians were imperiled, and that they must be saved, in the starkest of terms: "Number three, we're here because innocent lives are at stake. We've all heard of atrocities in Kuwait that would make the strongest among us weep. It turns your stomach when you listen to the tales of those that have escaped the brutality of Saddam, the invader. Mass hangings. Babies pulled from incubators and scattered like firewood across the floor. Kids shot for failing to display the photos of Saddam Hussein. And he has unleashed a horror on the people of Kuwait." The President also argued that the U.S. was approaching war as a last resort, another of the criteria for a war to be considered just: "We have been patient. We've gone to the United Nations time and time again. I'm prepared to go another time. We still hope for a peaceful settlement, but the world is a dangerous place. And we must make all of these options credible."[32]

3-EXCEPTIONALISM AND OPERATION DESERT STORM: AMERICA AS THE GUARDIAN OF A MILLENNIAL NEW WORLD ORDER

On August 2, 1990, 140,000 troops from the Iraqi army invaded Kuwait at the behest of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. Later that day President George Herbert Walker Bush publicly condemned the invasion as an unconscionable act of "naked aggression" and initiated an impressive campaign of international diplomacy that would eventually culminate five months later when Operation Desert Storm, the code-name for the military's offensive, began on January 16, 1991. Throughout the

build up to the war Bush spoke of the conflict in the stark good versus evil themes so common in presidential war discourse. Bush argued that Hussein's "brutal assault" of his tiny oil-rich neighbor had disrupted the balance of peace throughout the world, but that Hussein now stood alone against "a world united."[33]

As this section will attempt to stress that G.H.W Bush's rhetoric of a exceptionalism resides a national self-image that embodies only the highest character qualities. Most of Bush's speeches to the American public on the Gulf crisis epitomize his priestly quality of celebrating America's supposedly unique and exceptional qualities, which have made America a shining example to the rest of the world:

> Once again, our people, the people of our country, have come together to show the world our finest strengths: American optimism, unity, unselfishness, the wonderful values of family, and the will to stand up for what's right and good – strengths that form the very heart of America and that make possible the freedoms our brave service men and women are striving to defend … I know that every American looks forward to the day when our extraordinary young men and women will return home to a nation proud of its ideals of freedom, integrity, and honor; a nation committed to its tradition of preserving, protecting, and defending those precious beliefs which have always made America a beacon of hope and freedom to the entire world.[34]

The number of character qualities listed by Bush and exemplified in America seemed limitless. Bush's particular choice of virtues – "slow to raise our hand in anger and eager to explore every peaceful means of settling our disputes," loyal and principled ; brave; generous and optimistic – serve to define for individual Americans what it means to be American in an increasingly diverse nation where the idea of a peculiarly American culture is in doubt.[35] At the same time those particular virtues portray his policy toward Iraq as well considered, consistent, and one of last resort, but nevertheless mandated by loyalty to friends and values.

The President justified his response to the attack by focusing on points such as "a puppet regime imposed from the outside is unacceptable," "the acquisition of territory by force is unacceptable," and "if history teaches us anything, it is that we must resist aggression or it will destroy our freedoms." Bush emphasized that it was

important for America to "stand by her friends." Bush did ask that prayers be said for the soldiers headed to the Middle East, but it was a single line, uttered in closing, and unconnected to the objectives of the policy. [36]

Bush's second major address fell on September 11. [37] Bush did, however, throw a few new rationales for U.S. involvement into the mix. One was an old Bush favorite- America's responsibility to craft a "new world order" out of the wreckage of the end of the Cold War. Bush argued that what was happening in the Gulf "offers a rare opportunity to move toward an historic period of cooperation." This new era would be one where "the nations of the world, East and West, North and South, can prosper and live in harmony" and one where "the rule of law supplants the rule of the jungle." Bush also specifically made mention of the important role that oil played in America's national interests: "Vital economic interests are at risk as well. Iraq itself controls some 10 percent of the world's proven oil reserves. Iraq plus Kuwait controls twice that. An Iraq permitted to swallow Kuwait would have the economic and military power, as well as the arrogance, to intimidate and coerce its neighbors- neighbors who control the lion's share of the world's remaining oil reserves. We cannot permit a resource so vital to be dominated by one so ruthless" Bush said.

Indeed, oil had heretofore been very prominent in Bush's comments on the Gulf. In an exchange with reporters on the day of the invasion, Bush acknowledged the role oil would play in motivating a U.S. response, "You've heard me say over and over again, however, that we are dependent for close to 50 percent of our energy requirements on the Middle East. And this is one of the reasons I felt that we have to not let our guard down around the world" .[38] In an exchange the next day, Bush returned to the same point: "The economic aspects of this are well-known to the American people. And fortunately, right now there's a bit of an overhang of surplus crude, but that's short-run. And long-run economic effects on the free world could be devastating, and that's one of the reasons I'm as concerned as I am" .[39]

Another theme that can be located in Bush's remarks on October 28 is the suggestion that the U.S. has the power of God behind them. In concluding his

address, Bush eloquently spoke of the prayers of the country and how they would "reach down to carry the light of a new day" to the soldiers at rest in the Gulf.

> As we meet, it is midday in Hawaii. And soon the Sun will be setting across much of America. An hour of prayer, a day of rest, a nation at peace. And soon many of those prayers will follow the Sun westward across the Pacific and Asia. And soon, like the rays of the Sun itself, those prayers will reach down to carry the light of a new day to the brave men and women standing watch over the sands and shores of the Gulf. Not an hour passes that they are not on my mind. And so, we've come here to thank you for the important work that you- all of you- do in defending our nation's freedom, in keeping our nation strong, and holding high the banner of freedom.[40]

The image of prayers washing over the troops is a very powerful image of spiritual support. In sum, on October 28 we see evidence of Bush describing the conflict in the terms of good and evil, using the concept of American exceptionalism and proclaiming spiritual backing for the U.S. mission. These themes came to mark Bush's Persian Gulf rhetoric, often, , being used in conjunction with one another.

Bush's suggestion of God's sanction was much more overt on November 2 than it had been the previous week. On the 2nd, Bush issued a proclamation calling for a national day of prayer .[41] Typically such proclamations are routine, their messages unspecifically religious. But this time Bush focused his call for prayers entirely on events in the Gulf. In his message preceding the proclamation, Bush began by noting that "Throughout American history, the people of this Nation have depended on Almighty God for guidance and wisdom. Both Scripture and experience confirm that the Lord hears the prayers of those who place their trust in Him. Time and again, in peril and uncertainty, doubt and decision, we Americans have turned to God in prayer and, in so doing, found strength and direction." The President then described the situation in the Middle East. Although he expressed gratitude "for the loyalty, devotion to duty, and sacrifices of the members of our Armed Forces," he nonetheless concluded that "military strength alone cannot save a nation or bring it prosperity and peace; as the Scripture speaks, 'Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.' With these grave concerns before us, we do well to recall as a Nation the power of faith and the efficacy of prayer." With this

realization in mind, Bush asked the country to "turn to Him, both as individuals and as a Nation," and to ask "the Lord to grant all leaders of nations involved in this crisis the wisdom and courage to work towards its just and speedy resolution." In the text of the proclamation, Bush urged the country to "give thanks to God for His mercy and goodness and humbly ask for His continued help and guidance in all our endeavors."

The way Bush uses Scripture in this speech leads to the conclusion that America is one of those blessed peacemakers. In the previous line Bush asked God to help the country in its search for peace. Thus the message of these passages is implicitly that America, noble in purpose, a peacemaker, has God behind them.

Preserving and/or extending freedom is the rationale often put forward for America's need to be militarily strong and maintain a powerful role in a world threatened by tyranny. In 1991, President George Herbert Walker Bush announced the National Day of Prayer for Operation Desert Storm as follows:

> As one nation under God, we Americans are deeply mindful of both our dependence on the Almighty and our obligation as a people . . . Entrusted with the holy gift of freedom and allowed to prosper in its great light, we have a responsibility . . . to use our strength and resources to help those suffering in the darkness of tyranny and repression.[42]

Here the customary "one nation under God" phrase, added to the Pledge of Allegiance during the Cold War years of the 1950s, is set forth as the fundamental premise of civil religious faith. Because Americans are chosen by God, in the spirit of a covenant they must uphold its obligations. What they must respect above all else is the "holy gift of freedom." Because freedom arose out of the natural order, it is the state of being that was originally intended by the Creator, an entitlement deriving from the laws of nature and of nature's God. For Bush, as for Reagan before him, freedom is prized not just for its own sake but because it yields valuable rewards—most notably, economic prosperity. Hence the free enterprise system is not an arbitrarily constructed economic system, but instead one that springs out of freedom as the natural condition of mankind. Not surprisingly, then, there would be a "timeless yearning to be free," as President Bush asserted when speaking to the troops in Saudi Arabia in 1990. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, it had been

the immigrant masses entering the United States that had yearned to be free, according to popular myth. But with the collapse of the Soviet Union such yearning now extended to those in the world who were suffering from the "darkness of tyranny and repression," and presumably wanted to be liberated. America's experience of being free and making freedom possible for others thus was a plan for the entire world.

This rhetoric about a yearning for freedom reflected both the changing world conditions at the end of the Cold War and renewed American hopes. It was believed that dictators and state-dominated economics, people were now free to pursue their dreams—or so the American myth would have it. Commentators and politicians alike predicted the embrace of democracy and capitalism on the part of countries that had once been in the Soviet orbit. Yet George Herbert Walker Bush could now point more concretely to its realization. "Today," he proclaimed in 1991, "a transformed Europe stands closer than ever before to its free and democratic destiny." The new world order was not only emerging, it had America's powerful stamp upon it. He elaborated:

> This order gains its mission and shape not just from shared interests, but from shared ideals. And the ideals that have spawned new freedoms throughout the world have received their boldest and clearest expression in our great country, the United States. Never before has the world looked more to the American example. Never before have so many millions drawn hope from the American idea.[43]

Given that freedom and prosperity are rooted in the natural order and should be yearned for by all mankind, it is but a short leap to the millennial vision in its strongest expression: America had a divine mission to take the lead in bringing these ideals to quick fruition. At times, the rationale expressed was that the United States had a role to help those suffering in the darkness of tyranny and repression, the assumption being that people would naturally respond favorably to a more democratic order; at other times, the argument was that freedom and prosperity would inevitably follow because people elsewhere greatly admired, or would soon come to admire, America as an example of democracy.

Bush took office during an era in which the presidential image had deteriorated in the eyes of the American public, which was now less deferential and more cynical. Even Bush himself was occasionally portrayed as a president with little ability to shape global affairs .[44] American public was experiencing a "malaise." Yale Historian Paul Kennedy's 1987 book *The rise and fall of great powers* contributed to this perception by concluding that America was experiencing grave and irreversible economic and military decline. *Time* magazine noted that Americans had been haunted by the ghosts of the Vietnam era: self-doubt, fear of power, divisiveness, and a fundamental uncertainty about America's purpose in the world. [45] President Bush used the "just war" and "New World Order" in explaining the motivations and justifications for using force against Iraq. Yet was the New World Order a realistic foreign policy tenet or simply another idealistic approach in the Wilsonian tradition. It is hard though to justify U.S. involvement in the Persian Gulf War without clear national interests.

II- GEORGE . W. BUSH'S EXCEPTIONALIST RHETORIC ON THE WAR ON TERROR

1- GEORGE .W BUSH'S EVANGELICAL FAITH

G.W. Bush is highly evangelical and appears to share characteristics that constitute an evangelical political style.[1] He is, part of what Carl Henry called self-confessed "spiritually regenerated sinners" and "people of the Bible" who have privately and publicly affirmed the salvific role of Christ in transforming their personal lives, renewing their sense of purpose, and encouraging them to bring the "good news" into the world of politics.[2]

George W. Bush has been described as the most religious president in recent American history.[3] While this is maybe an overstatement, he certainly is among the most religious presidents in the sense of blurring the lines between religion and politics. Bush claims that his faith forms his general "frame of mind, and attitude and outlook," and that his "compassionate conservative" approach to domestic issues is inspired and informed by faith .[4] He has cultivated strong ties with a diverse group of clergy, white and black evangelical preachers, and Catholic bishops. He won his party's nomination and received his strongest support in the2000election from religious conservatives. Election 2004 shaped up in similar ways. Bush won again with the strong support and turnout of white evangelicals, churchgoers, and those who cited Bush's personal character and moral values as paramount to their decision to reelect him.[5] Bush voters also thought it important for presidents to be religious and for religion to guide their presidential behavior, that the United States is a religious nation, and that President Bush is a strong man of faith.

As president, Bush transformed the White House into a place of faith—a place of evangelical faith. Bush not only chose several persons with a strong religious background or devotional habits to serve in his administration, he "opened every cabinet meeting with prayer and insisted on a high moral tone" for everyone in the White House. [6]

Though Bush had an active church life, he, like others who were born again, came to realize that his faith was incomplete, that he was "a lowly sinner" and in

need of "redemption" .[7] He drank too much, lacked focus and seriousness, was failing in his business ventures, and, presumably, his marriage was under stress too. Political defeat and despair, the experiences of losing a congressional election in 1978, his business failures, and feelings of spiritual emptiness led Bush to make a life-transforming decision for Christ. Bush was thirty-nine years old when he recommitted his life for Christ and began a new walk of faith—a walk that has made "my life better and easier to understand, and clearer" .[8]

After his rededication to Christ, Bush began reading the Bible more regularly, turned more to prayer, and joined a men's Bible study group. The following year, Bush gave up drinking, later, smoking and chewing tobacco. He attributes his healthier lifestyle and subsequent political successes directly to his decision for Christ. "There is only one reason that I am in the Oval Office and not in a bar. I found faith. I found God. I am here because of the power of prayer" .[9] George W. more freely discusses his faith than his father; he is quite comfortable sharing his faith with others and sharing his previous moral failings. This was evident during one of the 1999 Republican presidential debates. When it was his turn to answer a question as to who was his favorite political philosopher, Bush quickly said, "Christ, because he changed my heart." "When you turn your heart and your life over to Christ, when you accept Christ as the Savior, it changes your heart. It changes your life. And that's what happened to me" .[10]

George W. Bush was quite at home before evangelical audiences. He counted many evangelical preachers as close friends and often surrounded himself, whether personally, in business, or in politics, with fellow believers. He was fluent in the "Biblical and political language of the evangelicals", and he admited that growing up in the South, instead of New England, has made him a more able communicator of this faith than his father.[11] Recognizing this, during the 1988 campaign, George W. Bush became his father's personal representative to the evangelical community.

Unlike most presidents, Bush does not largely separate his faith from his politics. In his examination of the impact of religion on George W. Bush, Fineman contends:

> [T]his president—this presidency—is the most resolutely 'faith-based' in modern times, an enterprise founded, supported and guided by trust in the temporal and spiritual power of God…But the Bush administration is dedicated to the idea thatthere is an answer to societal problems here and to terrorism abroad; give everyone, everywhere, the freedom to find God, too.[12]

According to this view, then, Bush's religious perspective not only guides his policies but also defines his understanding of religion as a central means to political and social change Others decry themes in the president's religious rhetoric that link government policy to divine providence. To his most vocal critics, both the language itself and the fervency with which it is delivered suggest a man on a mission from God who will not bow to reason or careful judgment. Written less than two weeks after the events of September 11, a polemic editorial in London's *Observer* captures this sentiment well

> Presumably the President's Prayer, unlike the Lord's, wastes no breath on forgiveness, but urges the faithful to bomb the hell out of those towel-heads, amen! Coming in the wake of his talk about launching a 'crusade,' the President's message was clear: God is on our side. Beware the infidel – i.e., anyone who does not subscribe to our belief in America the beautiful. [13]

From this perspective, Bush is an arrogant leader who never admits mistakes and acts as if following divine command.

Perhaps no example demonstrates this perspective more than the use of the term "evil." Categorizing policy in the language of "us" versus "them," Bush quickly discovered the term "evil." His former speechwriter David Frum explained the process:

> The language of good and evil—central to the war on terrorism—came about naturally, From the first, he said, the president used the term "evildoers" to describe the terrorists because some commentators were wondering aloud whether the United States in some way deserved the attack visited upon it on September 11, 2001. He wanted to cut that off right way, and make it clear that he saw absolutely no moral equivalence. So he reached right into the Psalms for that word.[14]

We do not presume to know the mind of George W. Bush, but ample evidence does suggest that his use of religious rhetoric, at least on some levels, flows out of his personal religious convictions. Opponents and supporters alike agree that the president appears to be a "true believer"; the two sides disagree, however, on the political implications of his faith perspective. Those who share his religious and political views may find strength in knowing that the president is a man of committed faith; whereas, those who disagree with the president on religion or policy typically find his religiosity disconcerting.

Anecdotal remarks from on-the-record interviews with the president affirm the view that President Bush's religious speech is, in large part, a reflection of his personal beliefs. A committed believer who is devoted to prayer, Bush readily admits his faith plays a role in his decision-making. In an interview, for example, the president explained his thought process concerning the War with Iraq, "I was praying for strength to do the Lord's will. . .I'm surely not going to justify war based on God. Understand that. Nevertheless, in my case I pray that I be as good a messenger of His will as possible".[15] When asked if he sought advice from former President Bush, the younger Bush explained that "he is the wrong father to appeal to in terms of strength. . . There is a higher father that I appeal to".[16]

We may now examine what impact this evangelical style had on the Bush administration—particularly in the area of foreign policy, which came to occupy such a predominant place in his respective presidency especially through his doctrine.

2-THE BUSH DOCTRINE : LEGETIMIZING DEMOCRACY PROMOTION

The 9/11 gave the Bush administration a clear focus for defining America's national interest after the demise of the Soviet Union. The War on Terror has become the legitimating standard against which to defend US foreign policy in the same way that the Soviet threat played this role in justifying the containment .[17]

The neoconservative vision of American foreign policy provided the theoretical and policy content of the Bush Doctrine, which in turn underpinned the decision to invade Iraq in 2003 and depose the leadership of Saddam Hussein.

Within the Bush administration, the neoconservative vision, which relates to the missionary strand and an internationalist foreign policy that are reflected in the Bush Doctrine. Neo-conservatism focuses on American hegemony, unilateralism, military power, and exporting democracy.[18] There is no consensus amongst scholars, but President Bush and Vice President Cheney most closely represent the neoconservative thought in the higher ranks of the administration. Secretary of State Powell is not considered a neoconservative since he is often viewed as a realist, concentrating on national interests and other elements of power, such as diplomatic, economic, and political power. Realism considers military power as an option of last resort.[19]

Charles Krauthammer's declaration that "the Bush doctrine is, essentially, a synonym for neoconservative foreign policy" is one that commands widespread assent across the political spectrum.[20] This shows how the core elements of the neoconservative Bush Doctrine stands in direct contrast to many of the fundamental tenets of realism.

The Bush Doctrine begins by embracing the notion that the United States is now the sole super power in the world and seeks to preserve its hegemonic position for the indefinite future. In President Bush's graduation speech at West Point in June 2002, he stated that "America has, and intends to keep, military strengths beyond challenge—thereby making the destabilizing arms races of other eras pointless, and limiting rivalries to trade and other pursuits of peace."[21] In his 17 September 2002 report on "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America," Bush declared that "we [the United States] must build and maintain our defenses beyond challenge." He continued "our forces will be strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military build-up in hopes of surpassing, or equaling, the power of the United States."[22] Neoconservatives view American omnipotence and leadership as a prerequisite for an orderly and peaceful world. William Kristol and Robert Kagan declare that "American hegemony is the

only reliable defense against a breakdown of peace and international order."[23] as Robert Jervis argues, the commitment by the United States to establish American hegemony, primacy, or empire is the element of the Bush Doctrine that ties all of the others together.

In their advocacy of American hegemony, neoconservatives express their theoretical antipathy to traditional balance-of-power politics. A hegemonic order led by the United States is viewed as clearly superior to a balance-of power order. Rather than a prescription for peace, as most realists maintain, neoconservatives view balance-of power politics as both unnecessary and a hindrance to achieving American national interests, while America's preeminent position in the world obviates the need for traditional balance-of-power diplomacy. Seeing American power as essentially benign, they argue that it is unnecessary for other countries to be concerned about the global imbalance of power and conclude that a return to a multipolar balance-of-power would be a direct threat to both American security interests and international order.

In rejecting balance-of-power politics, John Mearsheimer argues that neoconservatives instead "believe that international politics operate according to 'bandwagoning' logic."[24] According to this logic, rather than attempting to check the power of a more powerful state, weaker states actually join forces with it. As Mearsheimer explains, the underlying assumption of bandwagoning "is that if a state is badly outgunned by a rival, it makes no sense to resist its demands, because the adversary will take what it wants by force anyway and inflict considerable punishment in the process."[25] Thus rather than challenging the United States, neoconservatives believe that threatened states and smaller powers will join forces with, and jump on, the American bandwagon. In advocating the war, for instance, Robert Kagan and William Kristol concluded that "once Iraq and Turkey—two of the three most important Middle Eastern powers—are both in the pro-western camp, there is a reasonable chance that smaller powers might decide to jump on the bandwagon."[26]

The second element of the Bush Doctrine is the commitment, when the circumstances warrant, to the preemeptive use of military force.[27] The policy of

preemption is perhaps the most controversial element of the Bush Doctrine and, because of the profound implications of the policy, it has received the lion's share of attention.[28] In light of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the Bush administration depicted a threat environment radically different from that which existed during the Cold War. The most worrisome threats were deemed to be rogue states and terrorists armed with weapons of mass destruction (WMD). 9/11 had dramatically shown the willingness of terrorists to inflict large-scale destruction and death on American soil. In the climate of fear that existed after 9/11, and intentionally inflamed by neoconservative pundits appearing on MSNBC and Fox News, scenarios of rogue states or terrorists armed with WMD were deemed unacceptable by Bush administration officials.[29] The 2002 National Security Strategy declares "we must be prepared to stop rogue states and their terrorist clients before they are able to threaten or use weapons of mass destruction against the United States and our allies and friends. . . .We must deter and defend against the threat before it is unleashed."[30] The National Security Strategy claims the doctrine of preemptive war is not unprecedented, and the United States has always maintained the option of using force to prevent threats to its national security. To forestall new and emerging threats, Bush announced that the United States would not remain idle, but rather would, "if necessary, act preemptively."

The third element of the Bush Doctrine is a unilateralism that follows logically from the previous two elements. A commitment to the maintenance of a unipolar international system and to the doctrine of preemption is unilateralist to the core. As evidenced by the inability of the United States to attain a Security Council resolution authorizing the use of force against Iraq, it is extremely difficult a get a consensus on the preemptive use of force. Yet the behavior of the Bush administration indicates that they did not perceive this to be a significant obstacle or problem. In addition to the neoconservatives' criticism of President Clinton's failure to remove Saddam Hussein from power, they were also highly critical of his multilateral approach to foreign policy.[31] A key reason for the neoconservatives' confidence in pursuing a go-it-alone strategy in Iraq was their steadfast faith in the power of the American military. Like many others, they were captivated by the

United States' massive display of military prowess in the 1991 Persian Gulf War. When Bush entered the oval office, the United States unquestionably possessed the most powerful military in the world.[32] Neoconservatives argued that the United States should use its military power to reorder the international system to suit America's own national interests, and as Halper and Clarke have argued, "from its early beginnings, a proclivity toward the use of force has been an identifying badge of the neoconservative ideology."[33]

The final element of the Bush Doctrine, and one that is deeply embedded in the history of American foreign policy, is democracy promotion. Mearsheimer characterizes the neoconservative Bush Doctrine as "Wilsonianism with teeth." He explains that "the theory has an idealist strand and a power strand: Wilsonianism provides the idealism, an emphasis on military power provides the teeth."[34]As many observers of American foreign policy have noted, there is a widespread conviction among policy makers that the United States economic and security interests are advanced by the spread of liberal values and democratic institutions abroad.[35]The neoconservatives fully embody this belief and strongly support the notion that American foreign policy should actively, and at times forcefully, work to spread democracy. According to Charles Krauthammer, for example, "with the decline of communism, the advancement of democracy should become the touchstone of a new ideological American foreign policy."[36] By embracing democracy as the universally best form of government, and by committing themselves to spreading democracy across the globe, neoconservatives are in important respects the heirs of Wilsonian liberalism. While some, like Francis Fukuyama, assume a steady and irreversible march toward democracy, other neoconservatives advocate a much more proactive program.

Indeed, Iraq was intended to be merely the first step in the eventual regional democratization of the entire Middle East. After years of supporting authoritarian, monarchical governments, the Bush administration abruptly determined that democracy was the remedy to all of the ills, especially the rise of terrorism, plaguing the Middle East. One of the justifications for invading Iraq rested on the claim that by removing the dictator Saddam Hussein, democracy would bloom in

Iraq. In the case of Iraq, the task was not judged to be overly difficult. Just as democracy flourished in Eastern Europe after one dictator after another was removed from power following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the same result was predicted for Iraq. Informed by a liberal view of international relations, democracy promotion in Iraq was deemed to be a valid goal of American foreign policy. Moreover, democracy in Iraq, according to the neoconservatives, would have a transformative effect on the entire Middle East. In President Bush's 2003 speech to the National Endowment for Democracy, he declared "Iraqi democracy will succeed—and that success will send forth news, from Damascus to Tehran—that freedom can be the future of every nation." [37] Promoting democracy and freedom in the Islamic world, by force if necessary, was viewed as a crucial element of the overall strategy of countering radical extremism and terror. Not only would a campaign for democracy help to eliminate the terrorist threat to the United States, but it would also help to transform the Middle East into a democratic zone of peace that would be beneficial to the region in general and America's strategic ally, Israel, in particular.

Collectively, these four elements of the Bush Doctrine provided a powerful rationale for invading Iraq. When viewed along with the Bush Doctrine, the administration's argument that the invasion of Iraq was a key element of its global war on terror was accepted by a large segment of the American public, including the United States Congress.

As we shall see in the coming point, President G. W. Bush pushed the exceptionalism idea till its extreme limits highlighting the unilateral war against terror. On his Address to the Nation the evening of the attacks, he clearly recalled that "Today, our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom came under attack". And "America was targeted for attack because we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world. And no one will keep that light from shining." [38] Exceptionalism strategy became Bush's dominant response to these attacks. It is more accurate when Bush speaks about a "crusade [to lead] against terrorism" . The religious reference is used in order to justify any military action as a means to protect what exceptionalism held most precious.

3- AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM AND THE WAR ON TERROR : BATTLING THE FORCES OF EVIL

By all accounts, the monopoly of the War on Terror and the logic of democracy promotion from the early days of the Bush administration represented the epitome of American exceptionalist thinking. The rhetoric of "Axis of Evil," in keeping with the pedigree of "Evil Empire," was the stepping stone for embarking on a global fight in the struggle of good vs. evil. As this section attempts to stress Bush's speeches on terrorism typically featured a number of common points. He unfailingly outlined what some would label exceptionalist rhetoric.

From these beginnings, Bush's war on terror discourse would ultimately come to be defined by two basic trajectories. The first was that Bush consistently depicted the war on terror as a massive "ideological" struggle between good and evil. The reader knows from the previous chapter on Bush's father that the battle between good and evil is one of the most prominent and well recognized Biblical themes. The prominence of this Manichean vision would be heightened by the media, which tended to respond favorably to Bush's rhetorical cues and echo some of his religious themes in their reporting.[39] Although this motif would be a constant in Bush's discourse, it would be most visible in the first year after 9/11.

The second theme marking Bush's rhetoric on terrorism would be the idea that America was fighting not just for its own safety, but for the preservation of freedom as well. Freedom, Bush always said, was God's "gift" to humanity. America was therefore fighting for "God given" rights. This religious theme would first emerge only as Bush moved to expand the war on terror beyond Afghanistan in late 2002. Again, traces of this theme would remain visible in Bush's remarks until the very last days of his administration. I will consider each point in turn.

Bush spoke of good and evil to a degree that is fairly unprecedented among modern U.S. presidents. The word evil or a word taking evil as its base (i.e. "evildoers") appears in 711 Bush public documents between 2001 and 2008. The terrorist attacks made this mode of religious rhetoric intuitive. The attacks were not just aimed against representations of America's political and military power, they were attacks on its moral, cultural and religious identity as well. The events of 9/11

therefore made some question America's place as a "chosen" nation. Why had this happened to us? Bush moved to reassert traditional beliefs by focusing on the evil of America's enemies as contrasted with the U.S.' own inherent goodness .[40]

In remarks he made to the FBI just two weeks after 9/11, Bush clearly expressed his understanding of the attacks:

> I see things this way: The people who did this act on America and who may be planning further acts are evil people. They don't represent an ideology; they don't represent a legitimate political group of people. They're flat evil. That's all they can think about, is evil. And as a nation of good folks, we're going to hunt them down, and we're going to find them, and we will bring them to justice. Ours is a nation that does not seek revenge, but we do seek justice. And I don't care how long it takes to rout out terrorism, we're going to do it. We will take the time and effort and spend the resources necessary to … find these… evildoers who did what they did to America on September the 11th…[41]

The terrorists are "evil people" and "flat evil," the U.S., on the other hand, is a "nation of good folks." In the months immediately after the attacks, a similar version of these sentiments can be found in almost every single Bush transcript.

At times, Bush's fixation on good and evil could be nearly overwhelming. For example, in a short, off the cuff speech he made to the State Department in late 2001, Bush used the word "evil" or one of its variants nine separate times. Bush told the audience that the country intended to make it "clear to the evildoers that we reject you," that the upcoming fight would be "a war between good and evil" and he reminded them that "in order to overcome evil, the great goodness of America must come forth and shine forth." Bush would occasionally even call the military campaign a "war on evil" rather than his more common designation of a war on terror . [42]

At the same time, Bush was careful to specify exactly *who* was evil. As it happens, Bush quite often defended Islam as a great and peaceful religion, in the process earning himself worldwide praise then and now. The teachings of Islam, Bush once said, are the "exact opposite of the teachings of the Al Qaida organization, which is based upon evil and hate and destruction".[43] Instead, it was bin Laden who was evil- and not a true Muslim, either, for that matter. When asked

whether bin Laden was a religious or a political leader, Bush gave the following response:

Q. Granted the extremism, do you- and I'd like to ask the imam the same question- do you consider bin Laden a religious leader or a political leader?

> *The President.* I consider bin Laden an evil man. And I don't think there's any religious justification for what he has in mind. Islam is a religion of love, not hate. This is a man who hates. This is a man who's declared war on innocent people. This is a man who doesn't mind destroying women and children. This is man who hates freedom. This is an evil man.
>
> *Q.* But does he have political goals?
>
> *The President.* He has got evil goals. And it's hard to think in conventional terms about a man so dominated by evil that he's willing to do what he thinks he's going to get away with. But he's not going to get away with it [44]

Clearly, then, no one could accuse Bush of failing to offer a moral vision of what was at stake. At the national prayer breakfast in 2002, Bush explained how his own personal faith had led him to see the world in such absolutes: "At the same time, faith shows us the reality of good and the reality of evil. Some acts and choices in this world have eternal consequences. It is always and everywhere wrong to target and kill the innocent. It is always and everywhere wrong to be cruel and hateful, to enslave and oppress. It is always and everywhere right to be kind and just, to protect the lives of others, and to lay down your life for a friend."[45]

Similarly, in a commencement address at West Point, Bush explained that the United States had a long history of facing down evil in the world. The war on terror, to Bush, was no different from the previous fight against international communism. Bush believed that there were universal moral truths in each contest and he implored the graduates to see things his way. By calling certain individuals or organizations "evil," Bush maintained that he did not create any additional problems, rather he was only calling attention to problems that already existed:

> Because the war on terror will require resolve and patience, it will also require firm moral purpose. In this way our struggle is similar to the cold war. Now, as then, our enemies are totalitarians, holding a creed of power with no place for human dignity. Now, as then, they

> seek to impose a joyless conformity, to control every life and all of life. America confronted imperial communism in many different ways, diplomatic, economic, and military. Yet, moral clarity was essential to our victory in the cold war. When leaders like John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan refused to gloss over the brutality of tyrants, they gave hope to prisoners and dissidents and exiles and rallied free nations to a great cause. [46]

At the same time, it was precisely because the U.S. stood for good against evil that the country could be confident of an eventual victory in the war on terror.

In this classical representation of the fight between "good" and "evil", language is employed to trace a clear line between the American "Self" and the terrorist "Other". The representation of Americans as essentially "pure", "innocent", "benevolent" and "altruists" necessarily transforms the terrorists into "corrupted", "villains", "bad" and "selfish". The strategy produces the signification that all the Americans and America do is morally good and right, while, because of the opposition to what is "good", all the terrorists and terrorism do is wrong and evil. As a consequence, we have a reality that does not allow for alternative explanations for the terrorists" behavior other than their "evil" nature.

In effect, the "War on Terror" created the conditions of possibility for its violence practices. Already feeding from the "Manifest Destiny", the "White Man's Burden" narrative, the frontier and the call of History's symbolism, the "War on Terror" discourse finally added the final element to its equation: the theological predestination. In a certain way mixing itself with the exceptionality myth, it finds resonance in the imaginary of a society that believes itself blessed and chosen by God to act under his name.

In terms of implications for the political-strategic sphere of North American foreign affairs since 2001, what first calls our attention is the way through which the "War on Terror" dislocated the sense of strategic action from the field of calculus and adequacy between means and ends for the theological field of intersection between monotheistic faith and monolithic truth. The use of a language rich in religious references, metaphors and symbols – essentially from the Judeo-Christian tradition – signals the ideological content reproduced by that discourse:

the inscription of the United States as a nation elected by God. According Der Derian's observation, this identification makes the strategy recur to inspiration and revelation instead of reason and analysis.[47]

As suggested by Laclau , the identity is constituted based in difference relations toward an "Other", that, in its turn, establishes the borders of the "Self" under construction. The "Other" must, necessarily, become a signifier for threat, chaos, instability and negativity in order to allow the articulation of the "Self" as a signifier for security, order, stability and positivity.[48] In this sense, the "War on Terror" strategy is to construct a reality based in representations and meanings ruled by dichotomous relationships, whose positive poles are attributed to America and the Americans. Their identities, interests and behaviors are presented as self-evident when put in relation to their necessary opposites articulated by discourse as being terrorists, tyrants, dictators, barbarians and evil. We see, therefore, a discourse that is basically self-referential: a discourse articulated by Americans about America and Americans in opposition to non-America and non-Americans.

As pointed out by Passavant and Dean, the discourse on American exceptionalism (re)produced by the "War on Terror" attempts to build borders, to inscribe as permanent a contingent identity and to claim for the state an exclusive and privileged role in overcoming of the 9/11 crisis. The discourse draws a borderline in the world, putting the United States and, consequently, the American society in the positive pole in relation to the "Other" which then functions as the negative pole that gives content to the American "Self". [49]

As correctly observed by Nabers , the process of (re)construction of the senses broken by 9/11 was only possible with the consolidation of a discourse able to agglutinate the multiple and varied elements dispersed on the social field around a unique chain of equivalences that is constituted in opposition to what is external to it.[50] The "War on Terror", as it constructs the "Other" as an antagonistic force, assures and legitimizes the meaning of national identity based on strategies of dissemination of fear and anxiety towards this same "Other". In a way, the American "Self", to be restored, demanded the construction of a non-American "Other". Here we remember Schmitt, to whom the opposition between friend and

foe constitutes the essence of politics; reason why, we understand, the discourse constructs its truth in opposition to the enemy's truth.[51]

The fact is that immediately after 9/11, the "War on Terror" was already taking over the language and symbolism proper of the representation of war: the description of the attacks as "acts of war", the designation of the area around the towers‟ wreckages as a "battlefield", the almost immediate classification of the dead as "war casualties", the issuance of war medals to the military killed on the Pentagon attack etc. The normalization of the North American response to the 2001 acts was already under preparation with language, opening space for the policy of terrorism militarization to be accepted as the only one possible, converting the W. Bush government in a "war cabinet".

Still about the discursive articulation between terrorism and war, Lawler reminds how all wars involving the participation of the United States always sought justification and legitimation in "just war" narratives. In fact, promoting a war demands a high degree of social and political consensus, and a language able to articulate the "War on Terror" to the "just war" narrative allows the construction of a degree of consensus.[52] For this reason, the "War on Terror" discourse sought to lose its meaning as a "war of aggression" and to construct for itself a "self-defense war" representation and, therefore, of a "just war". We can identify such a strategy in the form of a discourse that sought legitimation in international law through the articulation of "preemptive action" as according to the right of self-defense.

In another level of analysis, the representation of the terrorist acts as "acts of war" and the "War on Terror" as a "just war" refers to the symbolism of the American frontier myth.[53] The connection may be observed in the distribution of pamphlets of "Wanted dead or alive" type.[54] Added to the representation of terrorists as dirty men who live hidden in holes in hostile and faraway lands, [55] besides the image of President W. Bush in cowboy boots and with a strong Texan accent, this set of representations easily evoked the rich American foundational mythology of the Wild West and the potential of its redeeming violence.[56]

The certainty about America's mission becomes especially visible in the form with which the "War on Terror" is predicated with certain victory: it might take long, but it will come for sure. It is illustrative how the use of unconditional future marks the impossibility of another result other than victory. Thus, the use of an unequivocal language of the "we shall prevail", "we shall be successful", "terror shall be defeated", "we shall prevail over evil" type doesn't leave space for doubts or dissidence over the final result, despite the uncertain chronogram. The certainty of victory overlaps the uncertainty over the war's duration.

In the field of the difference conversion into "Otherness", it is necessary to highlight how rhetoric constructs a representation of America as an inherently benevolent subject in a world that is essentially evil. For Hughes ,[57] it is the "cult of innocence" characteristic of North American discourse. In fact, the history of North American foreign policy is full of enunciations representing the United States as a young, pure and innocent nation, untouched by the selfish power and self-destructive power relations that ruled the behavior of European potencies. In this sense, from the "George Washington's Farewell Pronouncement" of 1796 to the Bush Doctrine, the resource to a language construction of an innocent, benevolent and noble-minded America, seeking to survive and serve as an example in a malevolent, damned, perverted and amoral world is visible.

Another implication resides in the form through which the "War on Terror" feeds from articulations and the self-attribution of ethical, technological and military superiority towards the rest of the world. Repeated articulations about the United States" leading role in the production of the international order, its role as agent of superior and irresistible forces, the self-celebrating language of its military power, besides the representations of America as a "force of good in battle against evil", "cradle of freedom", "defender of principles and values valid for all individuals" etc, build up the image of an extremely benevolent foreign policy, that is just, ethically superior and, therefore, infallible and immune to criticism.

Bush would often admit in his speeches that he saw a "purpose" behind history and that God was not, as Bush said in that September 20 address, neutral. Bush

offered another example of this stream of thinking in his first address to the United Nations in November 2001

> But the outcome of this conflict is certain: There is a current in history, and it runs toward freedom. Our enemies resent it and dismiss it. But the dreams of mankind are defined by liberty: the natural right to create and build and worship and live in dignity. When men and women are released from oppression and isolation, they find fulfillment and hope, and they leave poverty by the millions.[58]

Freedom was especially important, Bush felt, in the Mideast. He often took his listeners inside the head of an Islamic radical and asked them how they would react if they had no opportunity, no rights, and no prospect of improving their circumstances. Sometimes, he could explain the rationale of a terrorist in the starkest of terms: "Our security depends on there to be a alternative to the ideology of hate. Because if there's resentment and hate, it's easier to recruit 19 kids to get on an airplane and kill 3,000 people" .[59]

So there is little evidence to suggest that Bush's God and freedom rhetoric was anything other than a strategic choice. Bush's top speech-writer, Michael Gerson, has admitted that the Administration gave ample consideration to the questions of when and how to use religion in the President's speeches. Gerson told a seminar of journalists in 2004 that Bush made so many religious references because these ideas were "our culture. They are literary allusions understood by millions of Americans."[60]

The first major example of Bush attempting to link the pursuit of freedom to God's intentions was his national address to the country on the first anniversary of September 11.[61] Bush spoke to the country from Ellis Island with the Statute of Liberty towering in the background. Under normal circumstances, this address could have been expected to be an example of the comforting and calming variant of presidential religious rhetoric. He said, "We are joined by a great coalition of nations to rid the world of terror. And we will not allow any terrorist or tyrant to threaten civilization with weapons of mass murder. Now and in the future, Americans will live as free people, not in fear and never at the mercy of any foreign

plot or power." The "tyrant" threatening civilization with "weapons of mass murder" was undoubtedly Saddam Hussein:

> Our deepest national conviction is that every life is precious, because every life is the gift of a Creator who intended us to live in liberty and equality. More than anything else, this separates us from the enemy we fight. We value every life. Our enemies value none, not even the innocent, not even their own. And we seek the freedom and opportunity that give meaning and value to life.
> There is a line in our time and in every time between those who believe that all men are created equal and those who believe that some men and women and children are expendable in the pursuit of power. There is a line in our time and in every time between the defenders of human liberty and those who seek to master the minds and souls of others. Our generation has now heard history's call, and we will answer it.[62]

Clearly Bush was expanding the aims of the war on terror by calling attention to the "line" between those who believe in "a Creator who intended us to live in liberty" and those who do not. In a way, this language is merely another iteration of the good vs. evil contrast. But Bush would not stop there, calling the defense of freedom the U.S.' "sacred promise," Bush announced that it was also God who had assigned the country this task.

This section has documented that Bush's terrorism rhetoric featured two specific exceptionalist themes, a representation of the war on terror as a struggle between good and evil and an identification of the U.S.'s practical interest in the expansion of freedom with God's own designs. Within each theme, multiple subsidiary religious elements have also been explored, such as the use of light/dark imagery and the expressions of confidence in the eventual outcome of the U.S.'s efforts due to their agreement with God's will. As we have said repeatedly, Bush continued to employ these two basic motifs until his very last day in office. In fact, Bush dedicated his farewell address to some final ruminations about these topics. Bush, for a last time, tried to connect freedom to God, remarking, "The battles waged by our troops are part of a broader struggle between two dramatically different systems. Under one, a small band of fanatics demands total obedience to an oppressive ideology, condemns women to subservience, and marks unbelievers

for murder. The other system is based on the conviction that freedom is the universal gift of Almighty God, and that liberty and justice light the path to peace. This is the belief that "gave birth to our Nation. And in the long run, advancing this belief is the only practical way to protect our citizens." And, for one last time, Bush returned to his depiction of the war on terror as an epic struggle between good and evil. "As we address these challenges and others we cannot foresee tonight, America must maintain our moral clarity. I've often spoken to you about good and evil, and this has made some uncomfortable," Bush admitted. "But good and evil are present in this world, and between the two there can be no compromise. Murdering the innocent to advance an ideology is wrong every time, everywhere. Freeing people from oppression and despair is eternally right. This Nation must continue to speak out for justice and truth. We must always be willing to act in their defense and to advance the cause of peace." Perhaps no better evidence of Bush's commitment to message discipline can be found than his last address, seven long, hard years after the attacks of 9/11.

In the aftermath of September 11, the Bush administration insisted that the exceptional nature of the USA had not changed infact it has increased. Indeed, President Bush merged a Christian world-view with political language to create a new exclusive strain of US exceptionalism imbued with a fundamentalist moral purpose. It was almost as if Bush was saying that to spread American values in a troubled world was to be on the side of God and to resist them was to oppose God. President Bush promised 'to whip' terrorism and confidently predicted that the USA would 'lead the world to victory' in the new war on terror. He said the new 'war' against terrorism 'is the calling of the USA, the most free nation in the world'.

This increase coincided with the non-discovery of WMD in Iraq, which caused the original justification for war to become invalid. As a result, the Bush administration increasingly utilized American exceptionalism as a tool to justify and defend the American presence in Iraq to the American public and the international community. The United States, the administration maintained, was a force for good that would make the world a better and a safer place by transforming Iraq into a

democracy, thereby setting an example to the rest of the Middle East and providing an opportunity to spread American values across the globe.

Clearly, as this chapter aimed to show the ideology behind American exceptionalist rhetoric. All of Wilson, G.H Bush and G. W Bush have operated more in the priestly style; blessing America as a chosen nation with a special mission to fulfill and legitimate its actions. It is the dominant chord in the exceptionalist rhetoric chorus historically within the United States speaking of the nation's duties to carry freedom and democracy abroad, stressing the leadership qualities of the United States, and frequently invoking the banner of the Almighty in support of these causes. President George H.W. Bush acted priestly during the Gulf War, His candid acknowledgement that American interests were the reason for prayer was unusually explicit.

On the ideological dimension, these presidents held similar views that war was good for not only the United States, but for the global community. Bush thought that the costs of not restoring Kuwaiti sovereignty and checking Iraqi aggression were much higher than pursuing an alternative, less effective strategy. The same logic applies to his son, who, traumatized by 9/11, believed that his country could no absorb a first strike before going to war. A first strike by a foe armed with WMD, especially nuclear weapons, was simply unacceptable. Thus, like his father, George W. Bush thought that not acting against Iraq in 2003would prove more costly than ignoring what he considered a growing threat in the short term.

ENDONTES

I

[1] Kaplan, Amy. *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005.

[2] The term " Manifest Destiny" is generally attributed to John L. O'Sullivan, a Democratic newspaper editor from New York. O'Sullivan's conception of manifest destiny came to national attention through an editorial in the *New York Morning News* on 27 December 1845, claiming the right of the United States to Oregon territory disputed by the British: "And that claim is by the right of our manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of Liberty and federated self-government entrusted to us." John L. O'Sullivan, Democratic Review 3 [1838]: 262.

[3] George Bancroft, *History of the United States*, New York: D .Appleton and Company,1888.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Democratic Review 3 [1838]: 262

[6] Ibid.

[7] Democratic Review 3 [1838]: 262.

[8] Ibid

[9] George Bancroft, *History of the United States*.

[10] Ibid.

[11]Democratic Review 8 [September 1840]: 361; Democratic Review 6 [September 1839]:216.

[12] Madsen, Deborah L. 1998. *American Exceptionalism*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998 ,p. 93.

[13] Bellah, 1975, p.38;

[14] Democratic Review 1839 #1082

[15] Bellah, Robert Neely. 1992.*The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in a Time of Trial*. Second edition. Chicago and London, p.41.

[16] Hansen, L. *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*. London: Routledge, 2006, *xvi*.

[17] Butler, J. *Gender Trouble*: *Feminism And The Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990.

[18] Hansen, L. *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*. London: Routledge, 2006,p.21

[19] Campbell, D. *Writing Security. United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998,p.2

[20] Ibid.

[21] Campbell, D. "Time is Broken: The Return of the Past in the Response to September 11". *Theory & Event*, v. 5, n. 4, 2002.

II

[1] Ambrosius, Lloyd E. "Woodrow Wilson and George W. Bush: Historical Comparisons of Presbyterianism traces its history to the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century led by John Calvin and practice a presbytariann form of church government led by representative Ends and Means in Their Foreign Policies," *Diplomatic History 30:3* (June 2006): 509-543.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Calvinist elders (presbyters).

[4] Historicism was invented, as the tools of rational scientific analysis were applied to the Bible in late eighteenth-century Germany.

[5] The Social Gospel: a movement in America chiefly in the early part of the20th century, stressing the social teachings of Jesus and their applicability to public life.

[6] "Hard Tasks Ahead of the Nation July 4, 1913." In *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson,* edited by Ray Stannard Baker and William Edward Dodd, 3:41-44. New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1970.

[7] Wilson, "Hard Tasks," p, 42.

[8] Wilson, "Hard Tasks," pp,43-44.

[9] Matthew 19:14

[10] Wilson, "Hard Tasks," p, 42.

[11] Ibid.

[12] He used both words in his Eighth Annual Message to Congress, 7 December 1920, *PWW,* 66: 485.

[13] "An Address on Tariff Reform to a Joint Session of Congress," 8 April 1913,*PWW*, 27: 269-72.

[14] "The First Inaugural Address," 4 March 1913, *PWW*, 27: 150.

[15] "Address at Brooklyn Navy Yard," 11 May 1914, *PWW*, 30: 14.

[16] "Address at Arlington," 4 June 1914, *PWW*, 30: 142.

[17] Anders, Stephanson.1995.*Manifest Destiny: American Exceptionalism and Empire of Right*.p,26.

[18] Wilson, "European War—'Valor Strikes Only When it is Right to Strike' February 26, 1916," 125.

[19] Wilson, "European War—'Valor Strikes Only When it is Right to Strike' February 26, 1916," 125.

[20] Luke 6:43-49, Matthew 7:24-27

[21] Wilson ran for a second term in the White House on the slogan, "He kept us out of war."

[23] Wilson, "European War—'Valor Strikes Only When it is Right to Strike' February 26, 1916," 127.

[24] Wilson, "European War—'Valor Strikes Only When it is Right to Strike' February 26, 1916," 128.

[25] Wilson, "For Declaration of War Against Germany, April 2, 1917," 6-7.

[26] Postmillennialism is the theological orientation that considers the coming of Jesus to be predicated on the ability of humans to perfect the social world.

[27] Wilson, "Second Inaugural Address March 5, 1917,"

[28] Isaiah 38:1

[29] Although early non-intervention by Wilson is attributed to practical reasons like "distance, friendship, and duty," Wilson's rhetoric of home missions suggests an alternative reading. Wilson's home mission shows a history of keeping the U.S. out of other countries (like Mexico) on the grounds that intervention might compromise U.S. morality. Flanagan, "Woodrow Wilson's 'Rhetorical Restructuring'," 117.

[30] Wilson, "Second Inaugural Address March 5, 1917," 4.

[31] That Wilson shifted U.S. foreign policy from representation to intervention is described by James R. Andrews: "Wilson's rhetorical restructuring had transformed the long-held vision of America as a shining example.
[32] Wilson, "'America Was Born to Serve Mankind' May 30, 1917."
[33] Wilson, "Second Inaugural Address March 5, 1917," 1.
[34] Ibid., 5
[35] Wilson, "From William Jennings Bryan June 9, 1915," 375.
[36] Wilson, "Second Inaugural Address March 5, 1917,"

III

[1] Episcopalian belongs to Episcopal Church in the United States.. It is the official organization of the Anglican Communion in the United States. The word Episcopal comes from the Greek word that is usually translated "bishop" and points to the church's understanding that a bishop is the primary ruler of the church.
[2] Bush, "Remarks at the Catholic University of America Anniversary Dinner," December 12, 1989, Presidency database, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/

[3] GHW Bush, "Remarks at the Annual National Prayer Breakfast," May 4, 1989, Presidency database, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/

[4] Ibid.
[5] GHW Bush, "Remarks at the Annual Southern Baptist Convention," June 6, 1991, Presidency database, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/
[6] GHW Bush, "Remarks to the National Association of Evangelicals in Chicago," March 3, 1992, Presidency database, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/

[7] GHW Bush, "Proclamation 6029—Religious Freedom Week, 1989," September 27, 1989, Presidency database, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/

[8] GHW Bush, "Remarks to Members of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith," March 14, 1989, Presidency database, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/

[9] Ibid.
[10] GHW Bush, "Proclamation 6508—Thanksgiving Day, 1992," November 20, 1992, Presidency database, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=72486.

[11] GHW Bush, "Remarks to Members of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith," March 14, 1989, Presidency database, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/

[12] George Bush, "Remarks at the University of South Carolina Commencement," May 12, 1990, Presidency database, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/w

[13] Doug Wead, "George Bush: Where Does He Stand?" *Christian* Herald, June 1986, 17. See also GHW Bush, *All the Best: George Bush: My Life in Letters* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999), 324.

[14] Ibid.
[15] GHW Bush, "Catholic University."

[16] GHW Bush, "Remarks at the Annual Convention of the National Religious Broadcasters," January 27, 1992, Presidency database, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/

[17] GHW Bush, "Remarks to Religious and Ethnic Groups in Garfield, New Jersey," July 21, 1992, Presidency database, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/
[18] GHW Bush, "Remarks at the Annual Convention of the National Religious Broadcasters," January 29, 1990; http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/

[19] GHW Bush, "Remarks at the Annual Convention of the National Religious Broadcasters," January 28 1991, Presidency database, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/

[20] GHW Bush, "Remarks at the Arrival Ceremony in Kiev, Soviet Union," August 1, 1991, Presidency database, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/

[21] **The Gulf War** (2 August 1990 – 28 February 1991), codenamed Operation Desert Shield (2 August 1990 – 17 January 1991), for operations leading to the buildup of troops and defense of Saudi Arabia and Operation Desert Storm (17 January 1991 – 28 February 1991) in its combat phase, was a war waged by coalition forces from 34 nations led by the United States against Iraq in response to Iraq's invasion and annexation of Kuwait. The war is also known under other names, such as the **Persian Gulf War**, **First Gulf War**, **Gulf War I**, **Kuwait War**, **First Iraq War**, or **Iraq War.**
[22] Bush, George. 1991. "Remarks at the Annual Convention of the National Religious Broadcasters."January28.http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.
[23] Ibid

[24] Ibid

[25] Bush, G. 1990. *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* 26(31-52):1181-2072 Washington, D.C: U.S. Government Printing Office.
[26] Bush, G. 1991. *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* 27 {1-9):1 -242. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.
[27] Bush, George.1991. "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union."January29.http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.
[28] Ibid

[29] Ibid

[30] Ibid

[31] Bush, George. 1991."Remarks at the National Prayer Breakfast." January 31. http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.
[32] Ibid

[33] George Bush, "Address to the Nation Announcing Allied Military Action in the Persian Gulf, January 16, 1991," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush—1991 Book I—January 1 to June 30, 1991* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1993), 44.

[34] Bush, G. 1990. *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* 26(31-52):1181-2072 Washington, D.C: U.S. Government Printing Office. P,1410.
[35] Ibid,p,1390

[36] Ibid.
[37] George Bush. 1990 . "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the Persian Gulf Crisis and the Federal Budget Deficit." September 11.
[38] George Bush. 1990 . "Remarks and an Exchange with Reporters on the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait."August2.http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.
[39] George Bush.1990. "Remarks and an Exchange with Reporters on the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait."August3.http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.
[40] George Bush 1990 "Remarks to Officers and Troops at Hickam Air Force Base in Pearl Harbor,Hawaii.October28http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.
[41] George Bush 1990. "Proclamation 6221 – For a National Day of Prayer, November 2, 1990."November2.http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.
[42] George Bush .1991. "Proclamation 6243- For a National Day of Prayer, February 3, 1991." Februaryhttp://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.
[43] George Bush 1991. "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union."January29.http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.
[44] Rose, R. 1991. *The postmodem president: George Bush meets the world*. Second Edition. Chatham, NJ: Chatham House.
[45] Cloud, S. W. Exorcising an old demon. *Time* . (March 11, 1991):52-3.

IV

[1] Though most likely to be Baptist or Methodist, evangelicals can be found within nearly every Protestant denomination in the United States. the commonly cited evangelical traits are:

1. Protestant; evangelicalism is a broad, transdenominational movement within Protestant
Christianity that can be traced back to the Protestant Reformation;
2. an evangelical self-identification; claiming to have had a personal conversion, or "bornagain," experience;
3. sola fide; salvation through Christ by faith alone;
4. sola Scriptura; viewing the Bible as the sole authority for faith and morals;
5. Christocentricism; the centrality of Jesus Christ in faith discourse and the personal experience of salvation;
6. personalism; a direct experience with God through Christ, greater focus on individual religious experience, one-on-one encounters;
7. pietism; a quest for personal holy living (e.g., frequent prayer, Bible reading, church attendance, and abstinence from alcohol and tobacco);
8. evangelism; a sense of mission (the conversion of others, reforming the world); "winning the world for Christ."

[2] Henry, Carl F. H. 1990. Who are the evangelicals? In *Evangelical affirmations*, edited by Kenneth S. Kantzer and Carl F. H. Henry, 69-94. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House..p, 94
[3]Mansfield, Stephen. 2003. *The faith of George W. Bush*. New York: Tarcher/Penguin Books. Pp, xvii-xviii; Fineman, Howard. 2003. Bush and God. *Newsweek*, March 10, pp. 22-30.p, 25

[4] Bush, 2000. Interview with Steve Waldman. *Beliefnet*. Available from http://beliefnet.com/story/Remarks by the president to the National Catholic Educational

Association. The White House. Available from http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/01/20040109- 10.html.
[5] Jones, Jeffrey M. 2004. How Americans voted. Gallup Poll News Service, November 5.
[6]Mansfield, Stephen. 2003. *The faith of George W. Bush*. New York: Tarcher/Penguin Books.p,118)
[7]G.W Bush. Interview with Steve Waldman. *Beliefnet*. Available from http://beliefnet.com/story/47/story_4703.html.
[8]Ibid.

[9]Frum, David. 2003. *The right man: An inside account of the Bush White House*. New York: Random House.p,283.
[10]Aikman, David. 2004. *A man of faith: The spiritual journey of George W. Bush*. Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group.p,1.
[11]Ivins, Molly, and Lou Dubose. 2000. *Shrub: The short but happy political life of George.W. Bush*. New York: Random House.p,36
[12]Fineman, Howard. 2003. "Bush and God. "*Newsweek*, March 10, pp. 22-30.
[13]Odone, Cristina. "Leave God Out of It: Bin Laden Invokes Allah, Bush talks of a Christian Crusade, Bad Religion Hides Dirty Politics." *Observer*, 23 September 2001.
[14]Frum, David. 2003. *The right man: An inside account of the Bush White House*. New York: Random House.p,283.
[15] Ibid.

[16] Fineman, Howard. 2003. "Bush and God. "*Newsweek*, March 10.
[17] War on terror, also known as the Global War on Terrorism, is an international military campaign that was launched by the US government after the September 11 attacks in the US in 2001.
[18] Dolan, C.J and Cohen,D.B.2006. "The War about the War: Iraq and the Politics of National Security Advising in the G.W Bush Administration's First Term." *Politics and Policy* 34 (1).pp. 37-38.
[19] Ibid, pp. 37-39.
[20] Charles Krauthammer, "The Neoconservative Convergence," *Commentary* (July–August 2005), 22.
[21] George W. Bush, "Remarks at the 2002 Graduation Exercise of the United States Military Academy," West Point, New York, 1 June 2002, http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/ 2002/06/20020601-3.html.
[22] *The National Security Strategy of the United States*, Washington, DC, September 2002, http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html.
[23] William Kristol and Robert Kagan, "Toward a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* 75 (July/August 1996), 23.
[24] John J. Mearsheimer, "Hans Morgenthau and the Iraq War: Realism versus Neo-Conservatism," www.openDemocracy.net, posted 19 May 2005, 2.
[25] John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), 163.
[26] Robert Kagan and William Kristol, "What To Do About Iraq," in *The Iraq War Reader*, eds. Micah L. Sifry and Christopher Cerf (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2003), 247.
[27] While the Bush administration has articulated a doctrine of preemption and attempted to cast the invasion of Iraq in terms of a preemptive war, perhaps in the vain attempt to acquire legal legitimacy as some international lawyers argue that the right to self-defense allows states to strike first if they are facing an imminent threat, in actuality the United States launched a preventive war as the threat that Iraq posed was a distant one at best. For a good general discussion of the differences between preventive and preemptive war, see

Dale C. Copeland, *The Origins of Major War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000); and Jack S. Levy, "Preventive War and the Bush Doctrine: Theoretical Logic and Historical Roots," in Stanley A. Renshon and Peter Suedfeld, eds. *Understanding the Bush Doctrine: Psychology and Strategy in an Age of Terrorism* (London: Routledge, 2007).

[28] See, for example, Richard Falk, "The New Bush Doctrine," *The Nation* (15 July 2002).

[29] For an interesting account of how the neoconservatives used the media to help create a general climate of fear and inflame public opinion, see Halper and Clarke, *America Alone*, 182–200; Douglas Kellner, *From 9/11 to Terror War: The Dangers of the Bush Legacy* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003.

[30] See *The National Security Strategy of the United States*, Washington, DC, September 2002,
http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html.

[31] Jeane Kirkpatrick, "Where Is Our Foreign Policy?" *Washington Post*, 30 July 1993; and Paul D. Wolfowitz, "Clinton's First Year," *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 1994): 28–43.

[32] The impressive extent of American military capabilities are discussed in Barry R. Posen, "Command of the Commons: The Military Foundation of U.S. Hegemony," *International Security* 28, no. 1 (Summer 2003).

[33] Halper and Clarke, *America Alone*, 26.

[34]Mearsheimer, "Hans Morgenthau and the Iraq War," 1.

[35] Michael Cox, G. John Ikenberry, and Takashi Inoguchi, eds., *American Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies, and Impacts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); C. Layne, *The Peace of Illusions*, and Jonathan Monten, "The Roots of the Bush Doctrine: Power, Nationalism, and Democracy Promotion in U.S. Strategy," *International Security* 29, no. 4 (Spring 2005).

[36] Charles Krauthammer, "Universal Dominion: Toward a Unipolar World," *National Interest* (Winter1989/90), 47.

[37] See President George W. Bush, remarks at the celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy United States Chamber of Commerce, Washington, DC,
http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/11/20031106-2.html.

[38] G. W. Bush

[39] Domke, David. 2004. *God Willing? Political Fundamentalism in the White House, the "War on Terror," and the Echoing Press*. London: Pluto Press.

[40] Roof, Wade Clark. 2010. "From Ronald Reagan to George W. Bush: What Happened to American Civil Religion?" In *America and the Misshaping of a New World Order*, eds. Giles Gunn and Carl Gutierrez-Jones. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

[41] G.W Bush. "Remarks to Federal Bureau of Investigation Employees." September 25.http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.

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[55] The TV show *America's Most Wanted*", broadcast weekly by the Fox network, adapted its format for a special edition titled *Most Wanted Terrorists*". Equally worth of note is the list of terrorists wanted by the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI): Most Wanted Terrorists". Available at: http://www.fbi.gov/wanted/terrorists/fugitives.htm.
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CONCLUSION

My concern throughout this dissertation has been to uncover the ground upon which the claims to American exceptionalism might be found in the religious rhetoric of American presidential speeches in relation to history, myth then ideology. Yet it is only when one understands how American exceptionalism became imprinted with civil religion that legacy is able to make sense of a unique pattern in American political discourse. From Plato, to Rousseau, to the contemporary efforts of Robert Bellah ; scholars have long sought to better understand the discursive relationship between religion and politics. This dissertation is certainly not the final word on the subject. Nevertheless, it does offer an alternative approach to understanding this dynamic nexus that is very much a part of American political culture. This conclusion discusses the normative considerations inherent to this topic, outlines the major findings of the dissertation, and cautiously considers the future political and scholarly prospects about American exceptionalism .

We have seen in chapter one that the concept of American exceptionalism involved heavy religious meaning. We have traced the popular tradition of American exceptionalism to its European Protestant roots . Infact it dates back to the early Puritan conception of themselves as God's elect and their representation of America as the chosen nation destined by providence to fulfil the process of history and redeem the world. In William Bradford's text , the Pilgrims having endured a transatlantic exodus saw themselves as participants with God in creating a millenarian Kingdom of God on earth . From the moment Winthrop wrote that sermon to encourage the Puritans setting off in the Arbella ten years after the Mayflower with its Pilgrim Fathers, it was inevitable that what became the United States should see itself as 'exceptional' , a nation beyond and above any other, in its moral righteousness, and beyond the laws and sanctions that govern all other people.

In chapter two, we have stressed the secularization of American exceptionalism from providential history to civil religion. We have approached Civil Religion as applied in the American context by sociologist Robert N. Bellah. This idea has

become the dominant theoretical conceptualization of American political tradition throughout this dissertation. In this chapter we have reinforced Eisenhower's and Reagan's vision of providential exceptionalism by recapturing all the ebullient optimism of the Founding Fathers and the messianic idealism of American exceptionalism. Both presidents rhetoric has focused on a familiar and accessible theme: the contrast between a free, virtuous, religious America and a communist, evil, atheist Soviet Union. This Calvinist approach to American exceptionalism was clear in the presidents messianic calls for a crusade for freedom. Beliefs in American uniqueness and moral superiority were also evident in many of their speeches. Civil religious references have been made in everything from casual event toasts to campaigning events to State of the Union Addresses.

The role of religious rhetoric in American politics has received ever-increasing attention mainly during times of crisis. This was the core concern of the third chapter in which we have highlighted American exceptionalism as myth. We have pointed at the American jeremiad as a powerful rhetorical argument through which the myth of American exceptionalism was conveyed. Lincoln and Johnson appropriated and shaped the American jeremiad. No longer was America the New Israel. It had become Egypt. Although America had become a fallen nation, they both sought, within the American tradition itself, resources for moral regeneration. Like Jeremiah, Lincoln and Johnson warned the nation of its broken covenant, called for a return to the Declaration, and led the nation through a war that he interpreted through the lens of redemptive tribulation. That tribulation was meant to restore and fulfill America's birthright promise.

The Civil War and the civil rights brought a new testament in American history. They explained the war and the passage of America's most important civil rights law- the Voting Rights Act of 1965- as a test of whether a government conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal, "can long endure." Lincoln as Johnson called for "a new birth of freedom" and increased devotion "that this government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."[1] They have provided US. civil religion the martyred redeemer of freedom as Washington provided it its Moses. The

preternatural purpose of the nation, enshrined in its civil religion, is the continual fight for liberation and the preservation of liberty. The blessings and costs of this struggle are commemorated annually in two unique American holidays-holy days of civil religion Memorial Day, and Civil Rights Day respectively.

Yet the power of the American jeremiad argument is also seductive as an absolution for past wrongs because any action that is construed to reaffirm or reestablish the greatness of the nation becomes part of the fated plan for the country to achieve its destiny. The last chapter in this dissertation proved that the discourse behind American exceptionalism was indeed ideological. As Madsen reminds readers, belief in American exceptionalism or the utilization of the power of exceptionalist rhetoric is neither inherently good nor bad, having been used to justify both the abolition of slavery and the policy of Manifest Destiny. [2]

Indeed violence has been religiously motivated and religiously justified in U.S. political discourse through civil religion. American presidents have appealed often to divine providence to justify violence against those deemed to be outside the fold. American Christian violence has typically fallen hardest on marginalized peoples. [3] Christianity also provides a wealth of resources for resisting, re-imagining, and redeeming violent events, however, and this collection points toward some of those possibilities pacifism, just war theory, and critiques of practices like torture.

These exceptionalist ideas profoundly influenced American foreign policy. The ideas associated with American exceptionalism were clearly the driving ideological force behind a new explanation of imperial exceptionalism that emerged: Manifest Destiny. While such a concept of America's Manifest Destiny was broader and more all encompassing than the original exceptionalist idea identified by John Winthrop, it nonetheless referenced certain ideas from Winthrop's early sermon..

At the heart of expansionism lies an aggressive, messianic, and oftentimes imprudent version of exceptionalism. The central problem of expansionism is a belief that Americans regard themselves as a chosen people who are obligated to fulfill the divine mission of propagating democracy throughout the world. This

extension of Manifest Destiny is present in America's current foreign policy incarnations. For one thing, as James Ceaser warned, a religious and dichotomous worldview is dangerous in this day and age because it worsens and intensifies a mortal struggle between jihads and crusades, thereby forfeiting the hope of true peace. The track record in the enterprise of exporting democracy is well below par.[4]

In brief, the mission is understood to derive from a religiously inspired errand to promote liberty or liberal democracy in the world. A line runs from seventeenth century Puritan thought, to the Revolution, to the midnineteenth- century doctrine of manifest destiny, to late nineteenth-century American imperialism, to Wilsonian idealism, to cold war anticommunism, and finally to George W. Bush's unilateralism as deeply discussed to in chapter four. These are manifestations of a common theme; given its religious source—namely, the belief that God provides a warrant for America's mission.

Now we can easily guess why the American culture has made of American exceptionalism the most significant belief of all its history and why should such a belief remain so powerful for generations. The myth became the American version of the larger myth-ideological system generated by the social conflicts that aimed at the emergence of a powerful America. Yet such a myth was able to speak symbolically to the ideological needs of America and was able to offer a vision reflective of powerful and a dominant America over the rest of the world. By the same token, Slotkin points out that one of the myths evoked since September 11 is that of Pearl Harbor—the ultimate justification of the "good war." [5]

Such a rhetoric of calling for support of the wars was largely used during the Wilson, the H. Bush, and the G. W. Bush administrations . They all appealed for American exceptionalism to rally support for their foreign policy.This Civil religion appeal used to sell the wars harkened back to message "World-salvation" was needed to stave off the forces that beset the nation. Most if not all American presidents appealed to American exceptionalism in their rhetoric. They routinely invoked exceptional themes and used exceptional language, although they used them in different ways and with different policy goals. This suggests that in the framework of American politics, it does not matter whether the president comes

from the Republican or the Democratic party, he or she will use exceptional rhetoric to his or her advantage.

Since America is at war it is, in a way, not surprising that some of its leaders should be portraying America as being on the side of good and those not eager to follow America's lead as aiding and abetting evil. Stark rhetoric has been used before to get Americans to support or sustain war, but the war aims spoken in the discourse of American presidents are derived from a consciously universalistic and imperialistic ideology. Therein lies an important difference, and a great danger.

The belief in American moral superiority knows no party lines. In an article critical of the George W. Bush administration's way of preparing for war against Iraq, Richard C. Holbrooke, ambassador to the UN under President Clinton, expressed a view ubiquitous in the American foreign policy establishment: ''Over the past 60 years, the United States has consistently combined its military superiority with moral and political leadership.''[6] The word ''consistently'' is telling. The notion that, unlike other nations, America is above moral suspicion, provides the best possible justification for the desire to exercise American power.

It seems to the proponents of the ideology of American exceptionalism that, surely, America the virtuous is entitled to dominate the world. Some of them have worked long and hard to make this point of view dominant in American foreign policy. President Bush was merely echoing what others had been saying when he stated: ''There is a value system that cannot be compromised, and that is the values we praise. And if the values are good enough for our people, they ought to be good enough for others.''[7]

We have seen in the course of this dissertation that the justification for American empire on the basis of American exceptionalism was a long time in the making. Understanding the role that American political history has played in the development of the idea of American exceptionalism has required a deep engagement both with various presidents throughout American history and with some of the numerous scholarly works that have either clarified or obscured our view of the question. Here I want to consider the significance of what has been found.

One of the major findings in this dissertation is the dramatic increase in the use of American exceptionalism in US political discourse. One of the plausible reasons would be the intensifying polarized political infighting between liberals and conservatives over the current status of American exceptionalism. Conservatives argue that "American exceptionalism is in grave jeopardy under the Obama administration, while liberals dismiss the allegation as another ploy to score political points."[8] In all fairness, this controversy seems to imply that Americans are now starting to take a long and hard look at the concept of exceptionalism in its traditional meaning. Truthfully speaking, American exceptionalism has been taken for granted, at least up until now. At the same time, however, it is also true that many peoples and countries believe in the exceptionalness of their own history: Romans, Greeks, Russians, Koreans, Chinese, Anglo-Saxons.

Yet the fact that other nations have their own forms of exceptionalism, however, does not diminish the effects that the belief in American exceptionalism has on the making of U.S. policy. As the United States remains arguably the most powerful nation in the world, it is important to recognize the consequences that the belief in American exceptionalism has on U.S. foreign policy. Political, economic, and strategic interests are the major determinants of U.S. foreign policy. But no matter what the root reasons for a foreign policy decision are, that policy is usually couched in terms consistent with American exceptionalism. Use of this rhetoric assures substantial public support for policy and has proved very effective throughout U.S. history.

Another major finding of this diseertation is the change in the narrative of American exceptionalism in political discourse .Infact it has evolved over time from a shining "City upon a Hill" to Manifest Destiny to Wilsonian idealism . This exceptionalist narratives can be categorized into three groups: **exemplarism** ("City upon on a Hill"), **expansionism** (Manifest Destiny, Wilsonian idealism, Reagan's version of "shining city on a hill") and **exemptionalism** (most US administrations, but exemplified most strongly in the Bush Doctrine).

As with any study, this analysis has its limitations. First, its findings are somewhat limited by the scope of presidential speeches it explores. Future explorations of civil religious form in American politics could expand upon the present study by looking to other presidential speeches outside the ones discussed in this dissertation. This study is also somewhat limited by its orientation toward rhetorical form. Although part of my objective was to explore the degree to which civil religion operates within the American political tradition by way of religious rhetorical form, it is important to note that civil religion is not the only way in which it does so. Narratives, metaphors, prayers and the like are also ways in which religious rhetoric manifests within the American presidency and other forms of political rhetoric.

It is impossible to know precisely what role civil religion will have in future presidential elections or administrations. Yet, in light of the findings of this dissertation it is safe to project that the use of religious rhetorical forms as political strategy will continue for the foreseeable future. Although I have offered some normative judgments of the phenomenon in this concluding chapter, I am generally reluctant to claim that such discourse is either inherently good or bad. Like any other form of communication, the morality of such rhetoric is dependent upon the intentions of the orator, the characteristics of the discourse, and the ultimate results of the message. My primary aim has been to show that civil religious form exists as an important component of American exceptionalist discourse and has witnessed crucial changes through historical, mythical , and ideological interpretations. With this premise established, there is now much scholarly work to be done. Scholars of American exceptionalism should explore the rhetorical forms (religious and otherwise) which exist within American politics. They should also consider why they appear to speak to so many Americans at the mythological level.

Explorations of how American political discourse is informed by rhetorical forms (religious and secular) and the implications of these forms upon not only the presidency but all other components of American government and society will present scholars with daunting tasks for years to come. The present dissertation, while it has shown the problem at hand and the path ahead, can only be the start.

NOTES

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[3] John Carlson and Jonathan Ebel’s *From Jeremiad to Jihad: Religion, Violence, and America* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2012.

[4] James Ceaser, The Origins and Character of American Exceptionalism, American Political Thought 1,no.1(Spring 2012):3-28.pp.9-10.

[5] Slotkin, Richard. 2001. "Our myths of choice." Chronicle of Higher Education 48(5):

[6] Richard C. Hoolbrooke, ‘‘It Did Not Have to Be This Way,’’ Washington Post, Feb. 23, 2003.

[7] Remarks by President George W. Bush, in taped interview with Bob Woodward, Washington Post, Nov. 19, 2002; excerpted from Woodward, Bush at War (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002)

[8] American exceptionalism was at the heart of Donald Trump’s election. His slogan, “Making America Great Again,” captures the theme of American exceptionalism with decidedly racist overtones. Many of the 81% of Evangelical voters who supported Trump apparently hoped he would renew America’s divine entitlement as Redeemer Nation, restoring the country’s faith foundation in Christian orthodoxy and morality. Franklin Graham, a son of the great evangelist, touted Trump’s election as evidence of a “Divine hand” in American political affairs; while Dallas pastor Robert Jeffress compared Trump to Nehemiah who built a wall to protect Jerusalem. Others, like North Carolina pastor William Barber challenge that vision, warning against those who “deny the God-given humanity and the human rights of individuals and then stack the courts to protect themselves and their power and then put pornographic sums of money into the political structure in order to dominate it.” Barber concluded, “I can tell you, Caesar still lives.”

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APPENDIX

APPENDICE I: Summary of Major Religious Rhetorical Themes*

PRESIDENTS	RELIGIOUS THEMES
D.EISENHOWER	➢ Cold War as a battle between atheism and religion ➢ Christian brotherhood
R.REAGAN	➢ Cold War as a battle between atheism and religion ➢ Biblical support found in the Psalms, Gospel of Luke ➢ General spiritual descriptions of purposes of defense spending
A.LINCOLN	➢ Civil War victims as martyrs ➢ Warnings of eternal judgment ➢ General moral statements about importance of union ➢ Slavery as a sin
L.JOHNSON	➢ Kennedy as a martyr figure ➢ Warnings of eternal judgment ➢ General moral statements about importance of civil rights
W.WILSON	➢ War as a crusade ➢ God supports the U.S. mission ➢ U.S. is fighting for freedom/God's purpose
G.H.W.BUSH	➢ Conflict as an example of good vs. evil ➢ War meets criteria of just war theory ➢ God supports the U.S. mission
G.W. BUSH	➢ Conflict as an example of good vs. evil ➢ U.S. is fighting for freedom/God's purpose

*This table identifies three unique kinds of religious rhetoric, each of which must be seen as distinctive. First, presidents use ***ceremonial*** religious rhetoric when religion suits the occasion. Examples of ceremonial religious rhetoric included holiday addresses, funeral eulogies and even speeches that were delivered from church pulpits. Second, presidents use ***comforting*** and ***calming*** religious rhetoric (***Jeremiads***)in the aftermath of events like terrorist attacks, hurricanes or domestic riots. At these moments, the president employs religious rhetoric in an attempt to solace a wounded people or pacify an angry country. George W. Bush was shown to have extensive experience with this second, equally noncontroversial, type of religious rhetoric. Finally, every president has used ***instrumental*** religious rhetoric to try to convince interested parties to support a personal or political objective, such as passing a piece of legislation, ending a scandal or declaring war.

APPENDICE II: List of Presidents by religious affiliation

Name	Religion	Branch	Denomination	Years in Office	Notes
Thomas Jefferson	Christian Deist/Deist			1801–1809	Although raised as an Anglican, Jefferson later in life rejected the idea of the divinity of Jesus and became a deist
Warren Harding	Christian	Baptist	Northern Baptist	1921–1923	
Harry Truman	Christian	Baptist	Northern Baptist	1945–1953	
Jimmy Carter	Christian	Baptist		1977–1981	Former Southern Baptist
Bill Clinton	Christian	Baptist		1993-2001	Former Southern Baptist
Calvin Coolidge	Christian	Congregationalist		1923–1929	
James Garfield	Christian	Congregationalist	Disciples of Christ	1881–1881	
Lyndon Johnson	Christian	Congregationalist	Disciples of Christ	1963–1969	
Martin Van Buren	Christian	Dutch Reformed		1837–1841	
Theodore Roosevelt	Christian	Dutch Reformed		1901–1909	
George Washington	Christian	Episcopalian		1789–1797	
James Madison	Christian	Episcopalian		1809–1817	
James Monroe	Christian	Episcopalian		1817–1825	
William Henry Harrison	Christian	Episcopalian		1841–1841	
John Tyler	Christian	Episcopalian		1841–1845	
Zachary Taylor	Christian	Episcopalian		1849–1850	
Franklin Pierce	Christian	Episcopalian		1853–1857	

Name	Religion	Branch	Denomination	Years in Office	Notes
Chester A. Arthur	Christian	Episcopalian		1881–1885	
Franklin D. Roosevelt	Christian	Episcopalian		1933–1945	
Gerald Ford	Christian	Episcopalian		1974–1977	
George H. W. Bush	Christian	Episcopalian		1989–1993	
James Polk	Christian	Methodist		1845–1849	Former Presbyterian
William McKinley	Christian	Methodist		1897–1901	
George W. Bush	Christian	Methodist		2001-2009	Former Episcopalian
Andrew Jackson	Christian	Presbyterian		1829–1837	
James Buchanan	Christian	Presbyterian		1857–1861	
Grover Cleveland	Christian	Presbyterian		1885–1889	
Benjamin Harrison	Christian	Presbyterian		1889–1893	
Woodrow Wilson	Christian	Presbyterian		1913–1921	
Dwight D. Eisenhower	Christian	Presbyterian		1953–1961	
Ronald Reagan	Christian	Presbyterian	Disciples of Christ	1981–1989	Former Congregationalist
Donald Trump	Christian	Presbyterian	no definitive one	2017	
John F. Kennedy	Christian	Roman Catholic		1961–1963	Only Roman Catholic President to date.
Herbert Hoover	Christian	Quaker		1929–1933	
Richard Nixon	Christian	Quaker		1969–1974	
John Adams	Christian	Unitarian		1797–1801	Former Congregationalist
John Quincy Adams	Christian	Unitarian		1825–1829	
Millard	Christian	Unitarian		1850–	

Name	Religion	Branch	Denomination	Years in Office	Notes
Fillmore				1853	
William Howard Taft	Christian	Unitarian		1909–1913	
Barack Obama	Christian	Unspecified Protestant		2009–Present	
Ulysses Grant	Christian	Unspecified Protestant		1869–1877	
Rutherford Hayes	Christian	Unspecified Protestant		1877–1881	
Andrew Johnson	None specified			1865–1869	Many historians consider Johnson the least religious, and the president who was least affiliated with any religious group or identifiable religious philosophy.
Abraham Lincoln	None specified			1861–1865	• Scholars and various sources have contradicting opinions as to whether or not Lincoln was a Christian. • Although Lincoln never made an unambiguous public profession of Christian belief, several people who knew him personally, such as Chaplain of the Senate Phineas Gurley and his wife Mary Todd Lincoln, claimed that he believed in

Name	Religion	Branch	Denomination	Years in Office	Notes
					Christ in the religious sense. • However, close friends who had known Lincoln for years, such as Ward Hill Lamon and William Herndon, rejected the idea that he was a believing Christian

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ABSTRACT IN ARABIC

الملخص

بالرغم من تعدد وجهات النضر حول المفاهيم السائدة بان أمريكا بلدا مستثنى إلا أن معظم المؤرخين يتفقون على أن هذا الاعتقاد يحمل مكانة لا يستهان بها في التاريخ السياسي للولا يات المتحدة الأمريكية.

منذ نشأة الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية كدولة مستقلة تأثر معظم الرؤساء الامركيين في خطبهم السياسية بهذا الاعتقاد الذي يحمل في طياته بعدا دينيا عميقا.

تهدف هذه الأطروحة إلى دراسة البعد التاريخي' الأسطوري 'و كذا الأيديولوجي لمفهوم الاستثنائية الأمريكية – أي الاعتقاد السائد أن أمريكا هي شعب الله المختار و الأمة الموعودة كما ذكر في كتاب الإنجيل. في هذا السياق قمنا بمناقشة أهمية الخطاب الديني في السياسة الأمريكية من خلال دراسة خطابات لأهم الرؤساء –جمهوريين و ديمقراطيين – الذين ناثرو بالديانة المسيحية في خطبهم السياسية.كما ركزنا في هذه الأطروحة على نظرية Bellah في كتابه American Civil Religion لإبراز العلاقة بين الديانة المسيحية وتطور مفهوم الاستثنائية الأمريكية من جهة و مدى تأثر السياسة الأمريكية بالديانة المسيحية من جهة اخرى.

لتحليل البعد التاريخي سلطنا الضوء على خطاب كل من الرئيسين رونالد ريقن و ايسنهاور في محاولتهم صياغة تاريخ أمريكا من وجهة نظر دينية. فجعلوا من الحرب الباردة صراعا دينيا حيث شبهت أمريكا بالبلد المستثنى لاعتصامه بالديانة المسيحية على عكس الاتحاد السوفياتى الذي اشتبه با لبلد الملحد.

كما قمنا بتقييم البعد الأسطوري بتحصيل خطاب كل من الرئيسين أبراهام لنكولن و ليندون جونسون و ذلك لتأكيد أهمية الجرمايد او أسلوب الوعظ الديني في تقوية و تثبيت إيمان الشعب بترسيخ الاعتقاد بكونهم شعب الله المصطفى خاصة في الأوقات العصيبة التي مرت بها البلاد مثل الحرب الأهلية و حركة الحقوق المدنية.

تعتبر الاديولوجية وراء مفهوم الاستثنائية الأمريكية البعد الأخير في هذه الأطروحة. أين ركزنا على خطاب الرؤساء ولسون' بوش ' و والكر بوش لإبراز النوايا الخفية وراء اعتبار أمريكا البلد المستثنى -و هي الاستعمار و الهيمنة الاقتصادية لإثبات نفوذ الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية.

وفقا لذلك كان من نتائج هذه الأطروحة استمرار التأثيرات الدينية في تاريخ و سياسة الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية خلال القرن التاسع عشر وكذلك في العشرين والقرن الحادي والعشرين .

قمنا بدراسة تحليلية للخطاب السياسي لمعرفة مدى تأثير الحقائق التاريخية التي عرفتها السياسة الأمريكية- مثل الحرب الأهلية' الحروب العالمية'الحرب الباردة ' الحرب على الإرهاب – على السياسة الخارجية للولايات المتحدة الأمريكية.