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FUNDAMENTALISM AND MODERNITY:

A CRITIQUE OF THE "ANTI-MODERN" CONCEPTION OF FUNDAMENTALISM

by

Andrew Charles Hoffmeister

Under the Direction of Christopher White

ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the conception that fundamentalisms are "anti-modern." I propose that this view is a mischaracterization of fundamentalisms. I argue that an understanding of fundamentalisms would be better served by forgoing this "anti-modern" characterization and instead approaching fundamentalisms from the perspective that they are wholly modern phenomenon. In my analysis I use the writings and speeches of Pat Robertson as examples of the modern nature of America Fundamentalism in four areas. The first area examines how the Enlightenment influenced Fundamentalism's development of inerrantism. The second area examines Fundamentalism's prophetic interpretation. The third area examines the political nature of Fundamentalism. The fourth area examines Pat Robertson's rhetoric to reveal that he reflects *philosophically* modern thought and rejects *post*modernism.

INDEX WORDS: Fundamentalism, Fundamentalist, Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell, Scottish Common Sense Realism, Martin Marty, R. Scott Appleby, Anti-modern, Antimodern, Modernity, Christian Coalition, Second Coming

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by

ANDREW CHARLES HOFFMEISTER

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2006

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by

Andrew Charles Hoffmeister

Major Professor: Christopher White
Committee: Jon Herman
John Iskander

Electronic Version Approved:

Office of Graduate Studies
College of Arts and Sciences
Georgia State University
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Fundamentalism and Modernity:
A Critique of the "Anti-modern" Conception of Fundamentalism

Introduction

This thesis is a critique of the conception that fundamentalism is anti-modern. I argue that fundamentalist movements are modern, and the conception that they are anti-modern is a mischaracterization. In order to support my contention that fundamentalism is modern I analyze American Fundamentalists[1] with a focus on the speeches, writings, and organizations of Pat Robertson. Robertson has had a significant influence on Fundamentalism through his program *The 700 Club* as well as his legal organization (The American Center for Law and Justice), his university (Regent University), and the politically oriented Christian Coalition founded by Robertson. This thesis examines four aspects of Fundamentalism in order to reveal Fundamentalism's modern nature. In *Section A* I examine "inerrantism," the interpretive method Fundamentalists use to interpret the Bible. Inerrantism is directly derived from Scottish Common Sense Realism and Baconian scientific induction which influenced America during what Henry May calls the Didactic Enlightenment. In *Section B* I examine the Fundamentalist interpretation of biblical prophesy. Fundamentalist interpretation is dependant on inerrantism which claims that the Bible contains facts. This interpretation of prophesy means that world events are full of prophetic significance; because the Bible is incapable

[1] Throughout this thesis the capitalized "Fundamentalist" or "Fundamentalism" refers to American Protestant Fundamentalism, and the lowercase "fundamentalism" refers to the broader conception of the worldwide phenomenon.

of error all prophesy *will* come true. The manner in which Fundamentalists interpret biblical prophesy also influences their position on American foreign policy. Fundamentalism's political engagement is examined in *Section C*, where I argue that the political effectiveness Fundamentalism is evidence of a group very much at home in modernity. In *Section D* I examine Robertson's rhetoric and argue that he displays *philosophically* modern thought, and it is *post*modernism that poses a threat to Robertson.

The conception that fundamentalism is anti-modern can be seen in works by Bruce Lawrence, Martin Marty, and R. Scott Appleby. Lawrence's *Defenders of God: The Fundamentalists Revolt Against the Modern Age*, and Marty and Appleby's *The Fundamentalism Project*, are central texts in the scholarly understanding of fundamentalism. These three scholars have similar sentiments regarding the relationship of fundamentalism and modernity; fundamentalism is dependent on and appropriates utilitarian aspects of modernity, while "fighting back" against it. Marty, Appleby, and Lawrence see fundamentalisms as reactions to the effects of the Enlightenment, which manifests itself as modernism and modernist thinking. Fundamentalists are in "opposition to all those individuals or institutions that advocate Enlightenment values and wave the banner of secularism or modernism."[2] Lawrence, Marty and Appleby, and the contributors to the volume all recognize that fundamentalisms are modern in the sense that they are recently developing movements whose origins depend on modernity, both as a reaction to perceived threats, and also in their appropriation of modern tools and ideologies. But these thinkers also maintain that fundamentalisms resist modernity and fight back against modernism. The Enlightenment is the "declared enemy" of the

[2] Lawrence, Bruce. Defenders of God: The Fundamentalist Revolt Against the Modern Age. University of South Carolina Press. Columbia, South Carolina. 1995. p. 6

fundamentalists.[3] But is this the case? Does this conception of fundamentalisms as anti-modern hold up under scrutiny?

I argue that thinking of fundamentalism as anti-modern is inaccurate; it obfuscates the nature of fundamentalism and insinuates that it is an illegitimate worldview for the "modern" world. In the constant qualifications of the relationship of fundamentalism to modernity little is gained. As Pauline Westerman writes, "to explain fundamentalism as a reaction to modernity or modernist culture is to explain a vague term by referring to an ever vaguer term."[4] Pauline Westerman's review of *Fundamentalisms Observed* gives us a starting point for analysis. In her review she raises several questions concerning the characterization of fundamentalism being anti-modern. "At first glance it is perfectly plausible to argue that fundamentalisms of all sorts react, in one way or another, against the prevailing modernist culture. Yet, reading all the different accounts of the various religious movements, one cannot but be utterly confused by that statement."[5]

As the editors of *Fundamentalism Observed* admit, the term *modern* "resists easy definition."[6] Within the volume the working definition of "modern" acts as "a code word for the set of forces which fundamentalists perceive as the threat which inspires their reaction. Modern cultures include at least three dimensions uncongenial to fundamentalists: a preference for secular rationality; the adoption of religious tolerance with accompanying tendencies toward relativism; and individualism."[7] Certainly there are aspects of the modern secular world that threaten fundamentalists, threats which all

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[3] Ibid p. 10
[4] Westerman, Pauline. "The Modernity of Fundamentalism." *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 74, No. 1 (Jan., 1994), pp. 77-85
[5] Westerman p. 80
[6] "Introduction: The Fundamentalism Project: A User's Guide." *Fundamentalisms Observed.* Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby. The University of Chicago Press. Chicago. 1991. p. vii
[7] Ibid.

religions must reconcile. But does this "code word" benefit us in the understanding of fundamentalism? It certainly appears that American Fundamentalists reflect "a preference for secular rationality" in their use of scientific induction and in their political pragmatism. And their coalition building of political interest groups reflects some amount of "religious tolerance" as they accept Catholics and Mormons into the fold. Westerman responds to Marty and Appleby's "code word" by asking, what "for example is 'modernism' in twentieth-century Protestant America? What is modern in a society where 72 percent of Americans believe that the Bible is the world of God and 44 percent are creationists?"[8] These statistics do not seem to reflect a "preference for secular rationality"; but would we call the majority of American's "anti-modern" or fundamentalist?

In regards to characterizing modernity as "secular, tolerant, and individualist," Westerman writes, "we are still in the dark as to what exactly fundamentalists react to."[9] John Voll, in his essay on Sunni fundamentalisms, notes that far from being ignorant of the modern Western influence, or rejecting it outright, "it is clear that the Islamic resurgence is not primarily the accomplishment of those with little experience with, or knowledge of, the modern West. Indeed, those who constitute the hard core of this broad-based Islamic revolution have had the greatest exposure to modern technologies, educational systems, political processes, cultural values, and lifestyles."[10] Gideon Aran notes the same influence of modernity in his essay on Jewish Zionist fundamentalism:

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[8] Westerman p. 80. Westerman is referencing Nancy Ammerman's chapter, "North American Protestant Fundamentalism," where Ammerman cites a 1983 Gallup poll. Recent polls show similar numbers, with about half of American's rejecting evolution theories.
[9] Ibid p.82
[10] Voll, John. "Fundamentalism in the Sunni Arab World." *Fundamentalisms Observed*. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago. 1991. p. 346

> Fundamentalism thrives in the modern world not only because of the many frustrations that accompany modernity, or because modernity is not yet pervasive in contemporary society. There remain protected niches here and there that provide fertile soil for the growth of traditionalism. Yet contemporary religious revivalism also flourishes by drinking directly from the fruitful springs of modernity.[11]

These modern elements have shaped fundamentalisms into their identifiable familial grouping, not simply as a utilitarian appropriation of certain elements. It is the combination, the synthesis of religion and modern values that facilitate fundamentalisms' growth, not simply an appropriation of modern values by an otherwise religious group. This is a contemporary phenomenon in a world already saturated with modern values. For Aran, this is essential to understanding groups like the Gush Emunim.

> Advanced technologies and even advanced political patterns are not the only feature which radical religion borrows from modernity. Rather, modernity actually nurtures religious experience and thought. One consequence of such nurturing is fundamentalism. Activist-believers have internalized modern content, including secular values and norms. Their immersion and investment in modern national political life has created their intensified religiosity, a genuine and original religiosity. Thus, the point of departure for comprehending GE and similar radical movements is their obsession with modernity.[12]

While I would question the phrase "obsession with modernity," I find much to agree with in Voll's and Aran's essays. Part of the fundamentalist identity is being saturated in modernity, having, even if unconsciously, absorbed the elements of the modern world. These are technologically and politically savvy groups that engage in modern discourses, and compete so efficiently in the political realm that their influence is taken seriously. To call them anti-modern is absurd. It is true they reject certain modern values, but this is not sufficient to label them anti-modern.

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[11] Aran, Gideon. "Jewish Zionist Fundamentalism: The Bloc of the Faithful in Israel (Gush Emunium). *Fundamentalisms Observed*. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago. 1991. p. 331

[12] Ibid

A: Inerrantism

A key element of American Fundamentalism is inerrantism. This is the belief, often called literalism, that the Bible is the Word of God and is incapable of containing error. Inerrantism is a late-developing idea, dependent on the influence of Enlightenment thought in America. Specifically, inerrantism is dependent on Scottish Common Sense realism, a philosophy that heavily influenced America in the 1800s, and one that asserted truths could be known through human faculties such as reason.

Of the several Enlightenments in America, one or two are critical for the development of American Fundamentalists. Henry May, in his book, *The Enlightenment in America*, identifies four different Enlightenments in America. These are: the Moderate Enlightenment (1688-1787), influenced by thinkers like Newton and Locke and characterized by balance, order, and compromise; the Skeptical Enlightenment (1750-1789), influenced by Voltaire and Hume, and tending to be scientific, pragmatic, skeptical, and materialistic; the Revolutionary Enlightenment (1776-1800), linked to the American Revolution and thinkers such as Rousseau, Paine, and Godwin, who believed that modern thinkers could bring about an enlightened secular age; and the Didactic Enlightenment (1800-1815), influenced by Scottish Common Sense Realism and its prime advocator, Thomas Reid, and characterized by belief in the reality of an intelligible universe, certain moral judgments, and optimism about human progress.[13] The Didactic Enlightenment, according to May, was "the principle mode in which the Enlightenment was assimilated by the American official culture of the nineteenth century."[14] The

[13] Summary of May's periods of Enlightenments in America from Drew McCoy's review in "The William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Ser., Vol. 34. Nov 2. pp. 314-316
[14] May, Henry F. *The Enlightenment in America*. Oxford University Press. New York. NY. 1976. p. 358

Didactic Enlightenment and Common Sense was also central to Fundamentalism's development.

Common Sense and Baconian scientific induction had a strong influence on American thought. Common Sense was a reaction to the skepticism of Hume, which Reid criticized, saying that "only philosophers would take this skeptical doctrine seriously with its absurd implications."[15] Reid reacted to skepticism and asserted that "everyone in his senses believes such truths as the existence of the real world, cause and effect, and the continuity of the self. The ability to know such things [is] as natural as the ability to breathe air. The common sense of mankind, whether of the man behind the plow or behind the desk, [is] the surest guide to truth." [16] Reid influenced many American thinkers by advocating Francis Bacon's scientific induction. Baconian induction "was the one sure way to build on this common sense foundation. Bacon's name inspired in America an almost reverential respect for the certainty of the knowledge achieved by careful and objective observation of the facts known to common sense. Whether the subject was theology or geology, the scientist need only classify these certainties, avoiding speculative hypothesis."[17] Common Sense became *the* American philosophy, and was the dominant philosophy taught in American colleges.[18] "This philosophy was above all democratic or anti-elitist. Common Sense said that the human mind was so constructed that we can know the real world directly."[19] Everyone has access to the truth through common sense, using their reason and senses to reach these truths. Thus the

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[15] Marsden, George. *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelicalism 1870-1925*. Oxford University Press, London. 1980. p. 14
[16] Ibid p. 15
[17] Ibid p. 15
[18] Ibid p. 14
[19] Ibid p. 14

common man has as much access to the truth as an elite official. “The democratic implications are obvious. In anti-elitist eighteenth century America ‘common sense’ became a revolutionary watchword. As Thomas Jefferson recognized, it provided one basis for a new democratic and republican order for the ages.”[20]

Evangelical leaders embraced this foundation of scientific induction as well, and they along with liberal Enlightenment figures “assumed that the universe was governed by a rational system of laws guaranteed by an all-wise and benevolent creator. The function of science was to discover such laws, something like Newton’s laws of physics, which were assumed to exist in all areas.”[21] Moral laws could also be grounded in this rational system, and “Common sense and empiricism provided the new nation with a basis for establishing a national moral order.”[22] Evangelical leaders, of course, had the Bible as a basis for moral law; but with Common Sense a universal standard could be established. Through Common Sense, revealed biblical truths could be verified, and this ensured that new scientific ideologies buttressed the Bible and grounded it in an accepted empiricism. “According to Common Sense philosophy, one can intuitively know the first principles of morality as certainly as one can apprehend other essential aspects of reality.”[23] To evangelical leaders, biblical morality could be deduced through reason and established as universal; rational deduction corresponded with biblical truth. Using the foundation provided by Common Sense and Bacon, hierarchical political, moral, and economic laws could be reached, or revealed as truth, by means of a rational mind capable of perceiving reality.

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[20] Ibid p. 15
[21] Ibid p. 15
[22] Ibid p. 15
[23] Ibid p. 15

For evangelicals, the Scottish Common Sense that was so much a part of American culture and development allowed them to confirm biblical truths using this popular ideology. "This Common Sense account of reality was considered to provide a sure base for the rational and scientific confirmation of the truths of the Bible and the Christian faith."[24] This rational and scientific basis was important during this time of the development of the rational foundation in America. Empiricism had to be utilized, and Common Sense confirmed for many religious leaders the truths in the Bible. According to Marsden, "in an age that reverenced science, it was essential that this confidence in Scripture not be based on blind faith alone. God's truth was unified, so it was inevitable that science would confirm Scripture."[25] It was important for evangelicals to teach this empiricism in their colleges and ground Scripture and biblical study in scientific induction. For evangelical leaders and educators, like the majority of American cultural leaders, scientific rationality was central to understanding the world in politics, morality, and theology.

Under the influence of Baconian science and Common Sense, the conservative evangelicals—soon to be Fundamentalists—developed an "inerrant" view of the Bible. "Inerrantism" is the term used to describe the position that the Bible cannot contain error. Charles Hodge, using the principles of Common Sense Realism and Baconian induction, asserted that Scripture was a "storehouse of facts."[26] Common Sense asserted that these facts were apprehended directly through the words in Scripture. "One should not look for the ideas behind the words; truth is contained in the words themselves, words whose

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[24] Ibid p. 16
[25] Ibid p. 16
[26] Ammerman, Nancy. "North American Protestant Fundamentalism." *Fundamentalisms Observed*. University of Chicago Press. Chicago, Il. 1991. p. 15

meanings are true and changeless."[27] Hodge's son, Archibald Alexander Hodge, and his colleague Benjamin Warfield, sought to address the issues of higher criticism by looking for proof of the Bible's truths in the Bible itself.

A.A. Hodge asserted that in order to prove that a passage in the Bible was in error, it must be proved that the passage:

> (a) was in the "original autographs" (the original texts untainted by copying and transmission errors- long ago lost and thus unavailable for inspection); (b) was intended to mean what the critic says it means; and, (c) was really in conflict with a proven fact of science.[28]

These "original autographs," since the Bible was an inspired book, had to be inerrant. This meant that any errors were caused by misinterpretations or errors in copying by human subjects. Warfield believed that "human reason could bring the texts into line with 'true' science…He maintained his confidence that human reason would in the end triumph, with science and true faith ultimately pointing toward salvation and the kingdom."[29] Inerrantism is central to the identity of Fundamentalists, and while they may censure the Enlightenment (as we will see in the last section), the Enlightenment in America was crucial to the development of Fundamentalism. The Didactic Enlightenment, and especially Thomas Reid, instilled the ideologies of Common Sense and Bacon's scientific induction in the minds of evangelical leaders. Through these ideologies the evangelicals-turned-Fundamentalists established their interpretation of the Bible, as well as their empirical criteria based on Bacon's scientific induction that continues to be a part of their thinking.

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[27] Ibid p. 15
[28] Ibid p. 16
[29] Ibid p. 16

The Scottish Common Sense inductive view of the Bible separated Fundamentalists from other evangelicals when Darwin challenged their views of the Bible. In 1873 at the Evangelical Alliance, evangelical leaders debated the compatibility of Darwinism and the Bible.[30] One group sought to reconcile science and the Bible, adopting a more metaphoric and liberal interpretation of the Bible. The other group, which would become the self-identified Fundamentalists, found Darwinism and the Bible irreconcilable. Charles Hodge of Princeton Theological Seminary responded by asking the rhetorical question, "is development an intellectual process guided by God, or is it a blind process of an unintelligible, unconscious force, which knows no end and adopts no means?"[31] Some evangelicals criticized evolution from the standpoint of the Baconian method of scientific induction. M.B. Anderson, the President of the University of Rochester responded to evolution by saying it was "not a 'verified law,' but an 'unverified working hypothesis.'"[32] This response that evolution is "only a theory" is still the main defense used by American Fundamentalists. And while part of the resistance is due to the conflict with Scripture, it is important to understand that it is also Darwinism's conflict with Baconian scientific induction that Fundamentalists base their criticism.

Inerrantism is still the presiding interpretive theory of the Bible, making the Bible a vessel of factual information, and Baconian scientific induction is still the litmus for empirical fact. Pat Robertson's criticism of evolution is based on the same conflict with scientific induction as in 1873. In answer to the question, "does the Bible teach evolution?" Robertson first gives a definition of evolution:

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[30] Ibid pp. 17-21
[31] Ibid p. 19
[32] Marsden, George. *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelicalism 1870-1925*. Oxford University Press, London. 1980. p.19

> To the scientist the theory of evolution customarily means a process by which the whole universe came about through a progression of interrelated phenomena. In biology or zoology the theory of evolution supposes that existing animals and plants have their origins in simpler forms that have been progressively modified through successive generations over extended periods of time. Scientific evolution eliminates belief in God or special creation and ascribes the origins of life to the action of random chemical and physical forces.[33]

What the Bible does teach, according to Robertson, is "creation in an ascending order."[34] First God created the universe out of a formless void, then all the myriad creatures in ascending order of complexity until he created human beings. This is of course Scripture, but also "the ascending order of living creatures is an observable fact," whereas "scientific speculation about their origin can only be theory—never fact."[35] Here Robertson is reflecting those same Baconian scientific ideals used to criticize evolution at the Evangelical Alliance. Robertson also criticizes evolution on a specifically empirical foundation:

> However, one major empirical fact negates the theory of scientific evolution. There has never been one observable case of any creature shifting (or evolving) from one biological class to another or from one phylum to another. There is no case where we have remains or fossils of an animal that died during the evolutionary process.[36]

This lack of empirical evidence relegates evolution to a purely theoretical status. For Robertson, if evolution is not an observable fact it remains conjecture, and has less legitimacy than biblical accounts of creation.

Robertson again points to empirical facts that he believes are evidence against evolution. The fact that even very closely related animal species cannot produce offspring

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[33] Robertson, Pat. "Does the Bible Teach Evolution?" *Answers To 200 of Life's Most Probing Questions*. < http://www.cbnindia.org/200Questions/article.php?topic=4#38 > (2001)
[34] Ibid
[35] Ibid
[36] Ibid

that are able to breed shows Robertson that God made each animal in a special act of creation:

> I think the greatest example of this truth is the mule. The mule is a cross between a donkey and a horse. Mules are born sterile. They are unable to reproduce themselves. In other words, the horse and the donkey were close enough in the biological ladder to interbreed with each other, but their offspring could not continue the breeding process. Even that close link could not reproduce. Certainly nobody has ever bred a bird with a snake or an ape with a man. There is no reproductive evidence to support evolution.[37]

Again, because there is no empirical evidence apparent to Robertson, evolution remains "just a theory." According to Baconian empiricism, without observable facts there can be no claim to a natural or universal law and evolution remains, as M.B. Anderson said in 1873, an "unverified working hypothesis." The influence of the Didactic Enlightenment is working in another way here, too. As well as providing a basis for empirical criticism regarding evolution, the Didactic Enlightenment also provided the means for the construction of an inerrant Bible. Evolution is doubly at fault then; it conflicts with the Bible, which contains fact; and it fails to satisfy the standards of scientific induction.

In response to a question about the reality of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, Robertson writes:

> I believe it is real. It is as good an explanation of what happened as there could be. The word Adam means "red" or "of the Earth." It also is a generic term for man. It does not offend my reason to think there was one original couple that God made, and that from this couple came all the other people on the earth. Nor would my faith be shattered if one day I learned that this story was an allegorical description of God's creation of man.[38]

This last sentence is interesting. First we see Robertson claiming creation "as good an explanation" as any, and that "it does not offend" his reason. The last sentence seems to

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[37] Ibid

[38] Robertson, Pat. "Were Adam and Eve Real, or is the Story of the Garden of Eden Just a Fairy Tale?" *Answers To 200 of Life's Most Probing Questions*.
< http://www.cbnindia.org/200Questions/article.php?topic=3#25 > (2001)

suggest that Robertson would leave room for a contrary explanation of humanity's origins. This seems doubtful however, as with his next passage he writes: "these original humans were not subhuman or Neanderthal creatures. They were beautiful human beings, created in the image of God, with tremendous intelligence and ability."[39] Robertson also reflects the inerrant view of the Bible when he suggests the location of the Garden of Eden:

> The Bible says that it was to the east (of Israel) and mentions four rivers relative to it: The Pishon, the Gihon, the Tigris, and the Euphrates (see Genesis 2:10-14). These meager references would place the garden somewhere around modern Iraq or possibly northern Syria;[40]

Robertson never provides us with an "allegorical" interpretation he would find acceptable, but instead strongly reflects the inerrant view of the Bible, as his view of an historical Eden suggests. He also reflects the scientific induction standards of Fundamentalism; Genesis is as good an explanation of human origins as any, since theories of evolution lack hard empirical data that would satisfy the demands of Baconian scientific induction.

Robertson also criticizes science for its multiplicity of theories regarding the creation of the universe, and even claims that to *not* believe in God takes more faith than believing in God:

> People who say there is no God must realize that atheism takes a great deal more faith than does belief in God. Faith in God simply makes more sense! When you consider scientific theories regarding the beginning of the cosmos, you are struck with the fact that there have been at least ten major 'cosmogonies' during the last two hundred years. Man is continuously changing his theory of how it all came to be. As our knowledge expands, we shift and shift and shift. But so far, no one has

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[39] Ibid

[40] Robertson, Pat. "Where Did All the Races Come From?" *Answers To 200 of Life's Most Probing Questions*. < http://www.cbnindia.org/200Questions /article.php?topic=3#25 >(2001)

> ever come up with anything better than the biblical account that there is a creator God who, in the beginning, made all that is.[41]

Since Robertson and other Fundamentalists consider the Bible inerrant, they conveniently have an account of creation that has remained unchanged since its account in the Bible, while scientific theories lack this historical consistency.

The Didactic Enlightenment's influence of Common Sense Realism and Baconian scientific induction gave Fundamentalists the tools to construct an inerrant view of the Bible, and allowed the Fundamentalists to assert that the Bible was a "storehouse" of facts. That the Bible is a "storehouse" of facts means different things. It means biblical history and prophecy are factual, but also anything else the Bible suggests-- education, societal foundations, moral norms, or any discernable psychology-- is a reality as well. Robertson claims that "the Bible is accurate. Educationally, psychologically, sociologically, in every way."[42] The Bible is prescriptive as well as being a historical record. For Robertson and other Fundamentalists the Bible has the answers. In a speech given in 1986, Robertson described the current state of America family as being broken. Millions of children live with a single parent, and without proper family guidance the incidence of teenage drug and alcohol abuse and crimes with deadly weapons has increased to the point that schools have "become an absolute zoo."[43]

Robertson cites a mental health study on children put out by the World Health Organization. The study found that in the absence of a father children often display the characteristics of:

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[41] Ibid
[42] Robertson, Pat. "Citizens of Character Must Get Involved." *National Religious Broadcasters, 1986*.< http://patrobertson.com/speeches/CitizensofCharacter.asp >(2001).
[43] Ibid

> Low motivation for achievement, lack of ability to defer immediate gratification for later rewards, low self-esteem, susceptibility to group influence and to juvenile delinquency. The absent father tends to have passive, effeminate, dependent sons, lacking in achievement, motivation and independence.[44]

The characteristics the sons of absent fathers lack—the drive for achievement, motivation, independence, masculinity—are typical American male archetypes in the conservative vein; John Wayne and Ronald Reagan types. And because Fundamentalists see Christianity as inextricably intertwined with America, as I will discuss in the next sections, it makes sense that Robertson would see these traits grounded in Christianity.

The Bible, since it is "accurate," contains the solution to this problem of broken families, that being the structure of Christian family values. Marriage, the union of a man and a woman, is the proper way to raise children. Following this biblical prescription would prevent delinquency, and the "zoo" state of schools:

> Now the Bible says very clearly. God says, and I quote from Malachi, "I hate divorce." God says adultery is one of the things forbidden by the Ten Commandments. But we are laughed at these days as "blue noses" if we tell people that. "Oh, come on, you're old-fashioned. You're a fuddy-duddy." And we find in our schools an inculcation of values that is totally contrary to our Judeo-Christian tradition.[45]

Here Robertson is pointing to the Bible for sociological answers. The Bible contains the proper psychology for raising a child to solve the current delinquency problem. The study Robertson cites, from a presumed authority,[46] though some decades out of date, is presented so that the Bible (prescribing no divorce, no adultery) may then be shown to correspond with the scientific study.

The kind of reasoning Robertson uses reflects the influence of the Enlightenment in America, particularly the Didactic. Common Sense and Baconian empiricism are the

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[44] Ibid
[45] Ibid
[46] The study was done by Dr. Armond Nicoli, professor of psychology at Harvard, from 1943-1946.

two factors from the Enlightenment that shape his thinking. From these factors comes the idea of an inerrant Bible. The idea of inerrancy gives the Bible a factual status, which leads Robertson to answer questions such as "what does the Bible say about how long people should live on earth?" by responding with Bible citations:

> If you go back to the days of the patriarchs in Israel, one hundred thirty, one hundred forty or one hundred fifty years was not uncommon. If you go all the way back to the days just following creation, men lived nine hundred years or more. I wonder if, when the Millennium comes and there is no more sin on earth, people will once again live two hundred or three hundred years, or even longer.[47]

This last sentence, Robertson's musings on the Millennium, reflects another central feature of Fundamentalism that is a result of Common Sense and inerrantism: the reality of Jesus' Second Coming. This is discussed in the next section.

It should be understood that Robertson and other Fundamentalists have no aversion to science. What they maintain, however, is a model of scientific induction that has much more demanding criteria for empirical data. At least, this is the Fundamentalist defense against scientific theories such as Darwinism which threaten their religious identity. Nevertheless, Fundamentalists have embraced science. The Christian Broadcasting Network's web page (CBN founded in 1960 by Pat Robertson) even has a "Science and Health" section where you can read articles about the latest DNA research and also archeological investigations into the possible finding of Noah's ark. CBN's web page also has a special section set up to answer question's regarding "The DaVinci Code," with comparative columns titled "The DaVinci Code says" and "History says." And at Regent University, founded by Robertson in 1977 (as CBN University) students

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[47] Robertson, Pat. " What Does the Bible Say About How Long People Should Live on Earth?" *Answers To 200 of Life's Most Probing Questions*.
< http://www.cbnindia.org/200Questions/article.php?topic=4#35 > (2001)

within the Education major will take a course entitled "Introduction to Integrated Science," which has the following description in the catalogue:

> This course will present the knowledge, skills, and processes for physical science instruction in the elementary grades. The competences and skills necessary for a solid foundation in the areas of scientific investigation; reasoning and logic; force, matter and energy; interrelationships in Earth/space systems; Earth patterns such as cycles and change will be explained. The course will also address the perspectives of creation and evolution.

Like democracy and technological advancements, Fundamentalism is a product of this Enlightenment thinking. Fundamentalism is as much an heir of this thinking as the other elements of American intellectual life. The influences of the successive Enlightenments in America, particularly the Didactic, are central in characterizing the American Fundamentalists. Regarding the Bible as "inerrant" is derived from the Enlightenment, from Common Sense and "scientific" induction. Fundamentalists are not "anti-scientific;" they appeal to an older scientific model with a more demanding empiricism. Nor are they "anti-Enlightenment," even when in their own words they claim they are; Fundamentalists reject the secularization of the Enlightenment, but are still influenced, even defined, by many aspects of the Enlightenment.

B: Biblical Prophesy

The Enlightenment in America provided Fundamentalists with the tools for a conservative defense of their faith. The Didactic Enlightenment had a defining influence on Fundamentalism with its infusion of Common Sense into Fundamentalist thought. Common Sense allowed the Fundamentalists to assert the factual reality of the Bible and claim that reason would ultimately bring scripture and science into harmony. The consequence of the influence of Common Sense was that the Bible was considered to be factual in history, sociology, education, and morality; it was "inerrant." Another

significant consequence was that prophetic scriptures could be interpreted, asserted, and predicted as a factual reality, which engendered the Fundamentalist world with prophetic significance. Since the Bible is considered inerrant, containing absolutely true and timeless information, it means that prophetic passages written in 300 B.C.E. are still applicable today; it's only a matter of the human mind deciphering the meaning of these prophetic passages.

The assertion of prophetic fact by utilizing Common Sense shaped the way Fundamentalists interpreted the Bible. John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) interpreted a passage in Thessalonians literally, in which Jesus descends and the dead rise to meet him in the air, thus starting the central Fundamentalist idea of the "Rapture." D.L. Moody (d. 1899) was a significant influence on the development of Fundamentalism, teaching the infallibility of the Bible, and also founding the Moody Bible Institute and influencing such men as C.I. Scofield, who published the influential *Scofield Reference Bible*, which gives a passage by passage interpretation of the Bible, including prophetic glosses.

Because inerrantism dictates that the Bible contains facts and no errors, it means that any prophesies in the Bible, if they have no yet, *will* come true. And since they are all true, and all correspond with reality (ensured by Common Sense), it means different prophetic scriptures may be combined; we just must use our rational minds to combine and systematize these facts. This leads to a constant anticipation of prophetic fulfillment, particularly the Second Coming of Christ. The world is thus engendered with prophetic significance, and world events are interpreted through this prophetic lens. Pat Robertson

believes these are the last days and he "firmly expect[s] to be alive when Jesus Christ comes back to earth."[48] Why does he believe this? Because of the signs of the times:

> We can see certain signs, or clues (see Matthew 24:3, Luke 21:7), that His coming is approaching. Jesus said there would be wars and rumors of wars, revolutions, widespread famine, disease, and earthquakes in many different places (see Matthew 24:6-7, Luke 21:10-11). There would be an increase of lawlessness and anarchy. The apostle Paul said, "That day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God" (II Thessalonians 2:3-4). Along with the "man of sin" will come what is called an apostasy, or a falling away. Many of the believing people will grow cold in their faith (see Matthew 24:12). There will be persecution of Christians and a time of general trouble.[49]

Robertson thinks "all these things are happening with increasing frequency."[50] Many of the "signs" Robertson cites are of course common enough to be seen at virtually any time. Wars, earthquakes, disease, and revolutions can be found in some part of the world at frequent intervals; frequent enough, at least, that those looking for the "signs" will have relative ease finding them.

Robertson's view of the Antichrist illustrates how he uses Scottish Common Sense Realism to interpret the Bible. The term, "antichrist" appears in 1 John, but the characteristics of the beast that appears in Revelation is how the Antichrist is described, which illustrates how Fundamentalists combine prophetic passages. He (always male) will be very popular, imbued with the powers of Satan to perform false miracles. He will have dictatorial power and be worshiped like a God.

> The man will appear as a great leader, speaking great words of wisdom, and draw all of the non-Christian people to worship him. To them he will be the sum of wisdom, with the answers to all their problems (see Revelation 13:18).[51]

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[48] Robertson, Pat. "Are these the Last Days?" *Answers To 200 of Life's Most Probing Questions*. < http://www.cbnindia.org/200Questions/article.php?topic=11#91 > (2001)
[49] Robertson, Pat. "When is Jesus Christ Coming Again?" *Answers To 200 of Life's Most Probing Questions*. < http://www.cbnindia.org/200Questions/article.php?topic=11#91 > (2001)
[50] Ibid
[51] Robertson, Pat. "Who or What is the Antichrist?" *Answers To 200 of Life's Most Probing Questions.* < http://www.cbnindia.org/200Questions/article.php?topic=11 > (2001)

The Antichrist will appear with the "answers" in a time right after a disaster, when people are crying out for someone to help them. He will then be able to garner the popularity to put him in a dictatorial role. Robertson claims the way for the Antichrist has been paved already, by those who venerate human beings over God:

> Remember that the antichrist spirit is in anybody who tries to draw people away from Jesus, saying, "Worship me." The antichrist spirit is present now in the worship and veneration we give to governments, dictators, military leasers, and various other human figures. The humanism that is being taught in our schools, media, and intellectual circles will ultimately lead people to the Antichrist, because he will be the consummate figure of humanism.[52]

This idea of the Antichrist coming and gaining power before the "last days" is derived from the inerrant reading of the Bible; since the Bible contains facts, one can read the signs in Revelation as being in the present. This means the Antichrist is a real figure, and "there is always the possibility that the Antichrist is already in the world."[53] There is even a web page, www.theraptureindex.com[54], which lists likely Antichrist candidates, including Bill Gates and Kofi Annan.

Here it is interesting to note that inherent in Fundamentalism is a tension regarding inerrantism. Central to their belief is the idea that the Bible contains facts, and so Fundamentalists try to be as literal as they can in their interpretation. It is impossible to be completely literal all the time, but Fundamentalists must make sense of the Bible. Prophetic passages are often cryptic and Fundamentalists are forced to interpret them as best they can, oscillating between a literal and analogical meaning depending on the context. Much of Revelation contains symbolic meaning which Robertson interprets, such as the mark of the beast:

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[52] Ibid
[53] Ibid
[54] Not related to Robertson.

> Revelation tells us that the number 666, or the mark of the Antichrist, is going to be stamped upon the hand and the forehead of every person in the world during the reign of the Antichrist.
>
> The forehead represents our wills, our volition; while the hand represents our activities. Somehow the Antichrist will get his imprint on people everywhere, causing them, through their wills and their actions, to serve him.[55]

But, since Revelation seems to describe an actual mark on the forehead or right hand, "so that no one can buy or sell who does not have the mark" (Rev. 13:17), the reality of the mark must be considered and anticipated:

> We already have techniques whereby an imprint can be made on the hands and foreheads of human beings. This imprint can be read by lasers and can contain all the credit information on an individual, and his blood types, his city of residence, and other vital information.
>
> Computer technology can be used to control population, credit, and the movement of people. So-called "smart cards," which have tiny microchips in them that contain biographical data and revisable credit information, can be implanted under the skin. Every time a person makes a purchase, the "smart card" can deduct the amount from a credit balance. Everyone's record can then be stored in a giant interconnected computer system.
>
> It is not too far-fetched to think that the Antichrist could impose population control by the same kind of a mark.[56]

Hence Bill Gates's candidacy for the Antichrist. Credit cards and technology that allow bank transactions by computer reveal, for Robertson, the potential reality of a microchip being implanted in people's hands, controlling transactions and thus fulfilling the prophecy in Revelation.

Because the end *is* coming, according to the inerrant prophecies of the Bible read by the Fundamentalists, world events and places are engendered with prophetic significance. One of the most significant signs of the "last days" is the establishment of the state of Israel. The post-World War II creation of the state of Israel and the

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[55] Ibid
[56] Ibid

occupation of Jerusalem by Israelis after the Arab-Israeli conflict in 1967 are significant prophetic fulfillments, as Robertson explains:

> In 1948 a new state of Israel was established. The regathering of Jews to Israel is a clear sign, in both the Old and New Testaments, that our age is just about over. Jesus said, "Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (Luke 21:24). On June 6, 1967, the Jews, for the first time since Jerusalem was captured by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C., took over control of the entire city of Jerusalem, thus signaling the approaching end of Gentile world power.[57]

Fundamentalists believe America has a privileged position in the eyes of God. And because all prophesy is inerrant in the Bible, it means that America has an analogous counter-part in the Bible, and its relations with Israel carry a significant prophetic weight. This is significant because it influences Fundamentalism's position on America's foreign policy. Since part of fulfilling the prophecy of Jesus' return is the end of Jerusalem being "trampled on by the Gentiles," it is essential that Jerusalem remaining a wholly Jewish city. This means Robertson and other Fundamentalists are strictly against any Muslim occupation of Jerusalem.

Robertson finds America's role in prophecy regarding Jerusalem in his reading of Daniel. Robertson reasons that America is the new Babylon, the head Empire in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Rome is the last Empire to rule in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and Robertson says that "we [America] are the heirs, in my opinion, of Rome. We have a lot of the Roman culture. Britain was taken over by Rome. Our people have come from Rome."[58] This means, to Robertson, that "we have just closed the circle on Nebuchadnezzar's dream."[59] And, 1967 marked the end of the time of Gentiles trampling

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[57] Ibid
[58] Robertson, Pat. "On Prophecy and Babylon." *Answers To 200 of Life's Most Probing Questions*. < http://www.patrobertson.com/Teaching/TeachingonBabylon.asp > (2001)
[59] Ibid

on Jerusalem and "at this point of time, a clock began to tick. A generation is 40 years, and a clock began to tick that said there's 40 years from 1967. He said this is the generation of the end of the Gentiles."[60] Here Robertson is reflecting the prophetic timetables that Fundamentalists derive through their inerrant reading of the Bible; Robertson asserts that these times are real, and the calculation of these times point to prophetic fulfillment.

Robertson warns that by negotiating with the U.N. and Palestine, America threatens to fulfill another prophecy, found in Zechariah: "For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem. The city shall be taken, the houses and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city." (Zechariah 14:1-2, as Robertson recites it). To Robertson, "half of the city shall go into captivity," would be fulfilled if the Palestinians got half of Jerusalem, and "I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem" reflects the U.S. working with the U.N., who Robertson claims, "hates Israel," because "most of the leadership is Arab."[61] All the nations acting against Israel is for Robertson "the final battle:"

> That's going to be the final battle. There is no battle of Armageddon, ladies and gentleman. There is none. The Bible does not tell us there's a battle of Armageddon. The final battle is going to be Jerusalem. And all of the nations--UN, EU-- the European Union, Russian and the USA-- the so called quartet—are going to be moving in power against the Jews to force them into an untenable peace.

Robertson believes America must protect Israel and return the Jews to Jerusalem. Prophecy is close to being fulfilled, but America "has just joined this bunch of thieves to go against the nation of Israel to frustrate the promise and the prophecy of Jesus

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[60] Ibid
[61] Ibid

Christ."[62] All of these events are not to be taken lightly. Robertson warns, "We're looking at some serious prophetic significance. Watch the year 2007, because that's 40 years after the Jews took over Jerusalem…I pray, I pray we won't get crosswise with the prophecy of God."[63]

Prophetic dates are usually left relatively obscure as to avoid the embarrassment when the dates pass. Robertson alerts us to "watch the year 2007," because of its prophetic significance which he has deciphered using information from the Bible, combining Daniel with some New Testament scripture. This combination is perfectly fine for prophetic deciphering; since the Bible contains fact, all prophetic passages are in harmony with one another and with reality. This prophetic timekeeping is a consequence of Fundamentalism's engagement with the Enlightenment. The Didactic Enlightenment and its influence of Scottish Common Sense Realism and Baconian scientific induction on American culture provided the Fundamentalists with the methods to defend their faith and present the Bible as a "storehouse of facts." This idea of an inerrant Bible is at the core of Fundamentalism's identity; it is not the conflict of religion and modernity which forms Fundamentalism, but the assimilation of the two.

The eschatology of Robertson has political consequences, as I've suggested. Fundamentalists are engaged politically in other ways too.

C: Political Engagement

Another modern characteristic of Fundamentalists is their social organization in politically-oriented groups. These groups engage the political realm to push their agendas, effectively using modern political techniques and technology toward this end.

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[62] Ibid
[63] Ibid

Instead of resisting the political system, these groups have become proficient at working within the system using lobbying and organization to influence the government. Robertson's involvement in politics has been significant in terms of Fundamentalism's engagement in modern politics. He created the Christian Coalition, a movement similar to Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority; ran for President of the United States in the 1988 election; founded the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ), a legal organization for the protection of spiritual rights; and founded Regent University to provide the government with Christian leaders. Far from reflecting an anti-modern trend, Robertson's Christian Coalition's transformation into a religious interest group is an example of Matthew Moen's thesis that "the Christian Right has gradually reconciled and adjusted itself to the secular norms and practices of American Politics."[64] The Christian Right transformed itself from the social movement of the 1980s into "an influential interest group striving for the political mainstream."[65]

Starting at the end of the 1970s and early 1980s, Fundamentalists have become heavily involved in politics. Prior to this time Fundamentalists were not unified and many were apolitical, refraining from participating in politics since they saw it as outside the religious realm. But this changed under the influence of Jerry Falwell, who worked to unify the Fundamentalists and bring them into the political realm.[66] Though after the infamous Scopes "Monkey" Trial, Fundamentalists seemed to disappear from the public

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[64] Rozell, Mark J. and Clyde Wilcox. "Second Coming: The Strategies of the New Christian Right." *Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 111, No. 2 (Summer, 1996).* p. 273
[65] Ibid p. 273
[66] Harding writes at length of Falwell's influence on unifying fundamentalism and making it politically engaged. See also: Nancy Ammerman's essay, "North American Protestant Fundamentalism" in *Fundamentalisms Observed* (pp. 43-47);Marty and Appleby's *The Glory and The Power* (pp. 68-73)

sphere, they were flourishing underground. As Susan Harding points out in *The Book of Jerry Falwell: Fundamentalist Language and Politics*:

> We know now that strict Bible belief in America did not diminish but rather flourished during the middle half of the twentieth century; also that it was more heterogeneous, more urban, more middle class, more educated, and more nationally engaged than it was represented to be in popular and academic discourses…The whole period after the Scopes trial has been revisited and opened up in new ways, revealing a history of steady institutional growth and diversification- of pastoral networks, parachurch organizations and superchurches, schools and colleges, book and magazine publishing industries, radio, television and direct-mail operations- yielding a dense, sophisticated, multicentered national cultural infrastructure.[67]

The Fundamentalist Baptist denominations in particular experienced rapid transformation in this period of relative obscurity from national view. "Between the 1930s and 1980, Baptist churches repeatedly withdrew from national denominations for their 'alleged liberalism' and formed or joined 'independent' networks of churches with their own, 'separated' seminaries and mission bodies."[68] From the secular point of view, the influence and participation of Fundamentalists in the national life was minimal. Up to the 1980s these groups either withdrew purposefully from modern secular life, or were forced back into the margins by the secular world. Separatist Fundamentalists, like Bob Jones III, formed private colleges where students learned Scripture (properly understood as the inerrant word of God), creationism, and correct moral behavior in line with Scripture. This strain of thought emphasized that there was no "social gospel" and no compromising when it comes to Scripture; "Progressives, modernists, promoters of a

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[67] Harding, Susan F. *The Book of Jerry Falwell: Fundamentalist Language and Politics.* Princeton University Press. Princeton, NJ. 2000. pp. 75-76
[68] Ibid p. 76

'social gospel,' were distorting the biblical message that it was necessary to be rescued *from* the world and were making people too much at home *in* the world."[69]

While Fundamentalist groups continued to develop, they remained relatively separate from one another. Often Fundamentalist church leaders would criticize other Fundamentalists, declaring that they had strayed from the true Christian path, while each declared that they truly followed the infinitely enduring word of God. Even Jerry Falwell, founder of the Moral Majority and the person most responsible for bringing Fundamentalism to its current political status, resisted and discouraged political involvement. In one of the few surviving sermons from his early ministry in the 1960s, "Ministers and Marchers," Falwell criticized other preachers who engaged in politics.[70]

In the 1980s, "Bible-believing, white Protestant Christianity in America broke though the array of cultural barriers that had quarantined them from other Americans for half a century. Suddenly, their old-fashioned kind of Christianity-- Fundamentalism-- seemed to be everywhere."[71] Mainstream secular Americans are familiar with the televangelists, with dedicated religious television channels on cable TV, and with widely released movies with Fundamentalist themes, such as *Left Behind*, based on the best-selling series of books of the same name. Pat Robertson got national attention every few months because of his comments on his television broadcast, *The 700 Club*. In the past the marginalization of the Fundamentalists would have kept these movies, books, and public figures relegated to a particular stratum of society. Now, however, we are familiar with their values in the political arena; the Christian Right is a massive movement that

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[69] Marty, Martin E. and R. Scott Appleby. *The Glory and the Power: The Fundamentalist Challenge to the Modern World*. Beacon Press. Boston, MA. 1992. p. 49
[70] Harding p. 112; Steve Bruce's essay, "Modernity and Fundamentalism: The New Christian Right in America." In *The British Journal Of Sociology*, Vol. 41, No. 4 (Dec., 1990). p. 479
[71] Harding p. 79

supports much of a broadly conservative political agenda. We even witness court cases debating the right of schools to teach that evolution is "only a theory," and provide "intelligent design" as an alternative and equally valid theory. Abortion has been pushed to center stage, "family values" are often those espoused by the religious leaders, and prayer in courtrooms, classrooms, and even in the White House are topics of debate.

Harding traces this transformation of a fractured, marginalized group—as the Fundamentalists were between the Scopes trial and the 1980s—to the collective political powerhouse they now are. This transformation is due to the efforts of the founder of the Thomas Road Baptist Church, and the focus of Harding's book, Jerry Falwell. As a result of his unifying efforts the various Fundamentalist groups stopped internal criticism and engaged in the politicking of the 1980s through today. Perhaps the most telling sign of this transformation is the 1988 bid for Presidency by Pat Robertson. Robertson was part of this new movement that had, instead of playing itself out as a temporary explosion of religiosity, established itself as "a major realignment of public religiosity in America. The realignment was not a changing of the guard- conservative Protestants did not come to dominate public life- but they reentered public life. They returned from exile."[72]

Falwell declared that America had become a corrupt nation, and as good Bible-believing servants of God, they had an obligation to return America to its Christian roots. In his sermon "A Day of Many Solomons" he declared,

> We have to rebuild a nation. For too long, we have sat back and said politics are for the people in Washington, business is for those on Wall Street, and religion is our business. We need to train men of God in our schools who can go to Congress, can go on to be directors in the largest corporations, who can become the lawyers and the businessmen and those important people in tomorrow's

[72] Ibid p. 79

> United States. If we are going to turn this country around, we have to get God's people mobilized in the right direction and we must do it quickly.[73]

Falwell called for a generation of new Solomons to be taught, to rebuild the nation. Here Falwell calls for political mobilization to engage, compete, and take part in the political arena which had previously been outside the devout religious man's concerns.

The Moral Majority's purpose was to "engage with the *political processes and the social life of our country*."[74] The motivation for this, of course, was to evangelize-- to bring America back to its Christian roots. This active political engagement was far different from the political refrainment Fundamentalism had preached. Falwell also broke down the lines of separation from other non-Fundamentalist (and other Fundamentalist) groups. He claimed the Moral Majority had Catholic, Jewish, and Mormon members.[75] And beyond the formation of the Moral Majority, Falwell transformed his Liberty Baptist College into Liberty University in 1984; "in the process, the college curriculum added courses and programs never before seen at a self-declared [F]undamentalist institution. The university was now preparing students to enter graduate and professional programs, and ultimately professions, such as the law, communications, government, and public school teaching."[76]

In his speech, "Citizens of Character Must Get Involved," Robertson addressed the same issues Falwell cited as reasons for Christian involvement in politics. America has lost site of its Christian foundations, and so has seen moral decay. In order to save America, and restore its Christian foundations, Christians must act;

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[73] Ibid p. 127
[74] Ibid p. 150
[75] Ibid p. 145
[76] Ibid pp. 145-6

> The Bible says that when the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice. And I think we should dedicate ourselves in this nation that we are not any longer going to sit idly by and see this great land that was given us by our forefathers destroyed by those who are out for selfish gains and who are motivated by outmoded concepts and ideas which are proven false and failures.[77]

These "false" ideas and "outmoded concepts" Robertson refers to are presumably "liberal" values—homosexual rights, abortion, women's rights—which he sees as harming society. The educational system, Robertson claims, is suffering because children are not being taught absolutes, not even the multiplication tables are definitive. Educators aren't teaching the correct answers to multiplication tables "because they despise absolutes and the multiplication table sticks in their throats because they don't believe in any absolutes. They're cultural, moral relativists. And they're destroying our education system because of it." In closing he stated, "I believe as we leave this place, we do have, as President Reagan said, a date with destiny. We are going to see a change in this nation, and you're going to be a part of it. And who knows, that God has called you to the Kingdom for such a time as this."[78]

Like Falwell, Robertson uses religious rhetoric-- revivalist rhetoric-- in order to mobilize a Christian constituency to fight a political battle. Robertson called for a spiritual revival, one that he saw as already in the air. America is plagued with problems—abortion, the Supreme Court, prayer legislated out of schools and the government—and the Christians of the nation realize these problems and understand that they must get involved in politics.

> Suddenly, many of us who never thought too much of "politics," we were concerned about the Kingdom of Heaven, we are realizing that the Kingdom of Heaven also encompasses the secular system we live in and it's an intolerable

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[77] Robertson, Pat. "Citizens of Character Must Get Involved." *National Religious Broadcasters. 1986*. < http://patrobertson.com/speeches/CitizensofCharacter.asp >
[78] Ibid

> thing to have our cherished values trampled on and millions and billions of tax dollars going to fight the thing we believe are destroying our families. It isn't coincidental.[79]

Since the formation of the Moral Majority and the political strategies of the 1980s, the Christian Right has emerged as a more experienced organization. Falwell eventually disbanded the Moral Majority at the end of the 1980s, and Robertson's election campaign failed. But in their place arose a more diverse set of conservative Christian organizations, commonly labeled the "Christian Right," which fought for the same values as Falwell's Moral Majority. "In the 1990s, the Christian Right built far more effective organizational structures, far larger and more inclusive coalitions, and began to adopt more pragmatic strategies."[80] The Christian Right of the 1980s and the Christian Right that emerged in the 1990s differed in several ways. "First, the organizations of the 1990s abandoned the language of moral crusade in favor of appeals based on the 'rights talk' of liberalism. Second, the groups emphasized politics over moral reform and attempted to build political coalitions." And finally they "were much more sophisticated that those that went before, primarily because of the influx of a new cadre of skilled leaders."[81] The groups have learned the strategies of "mainstreaming issue appeals, broadening the coalition, and compromising when necessary."[82] In short, they have become more like a secular political organization, even downplaying the religious emphasis to certain audiences when it is strategically necessary.

The Christian Coalition was founded in 1989 by Pat Robertson and directed by Ralph Reed. Headquartered in Virginia, it boasted a membership in 1996 of "350,000

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[79] Ibid
[80] Rozell, Mark J. "Second Coming: The Strategies of the New Christian Right." *Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 111, No. 2 (Summer, 1996).* p. 273
[81] Ibid pp. 272-3
[82] Ibid p. 273

with 750 local chapters. It has lobbyists in several states and in Washington DC and has an annual budget of $8-10 million."[83] It has over "fifty independently incorporated state organizations." The Christian Coalition distributes voting guides for every election (downloadable from their website), indicating which candidates support the Christian Coalition's agenda. It also "sponsors conferences, get-out-the-vote drives, and conservative Christian voter registration."[84] The organization also distributes a training manual addressing various skills that "Christian activists can employ to gain political influence and hold power. These include instructions on precinct organization, building alliances, working with the news media, organizing local committees, influencing public officials, recruiting candidates, using effective rhetoric, and setting up phone bank operations."[85]

Robertson[86] also founded the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ) in 1990 to "counteract the insidious advances of groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union, People for the American Way, and other left-wing organizations that were successfully attacking and dismantling the nation's heritage of faith."[87] The ACLJ is a public-interest law firm established to protect the religious rights of citizens. According to the ACLJ mission,

> The American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ) is committed to insuring the ongoing viability of constitutional freedoms.
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> By specializing in constitutional law, the ACLJ is dedicated to the concept that freedom and democracy are God-given inalienable rights that must be protected.

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[83] Ibid p. 272
[84] Ibid p. 275
[85] Ibid p. 275
[86] It is interesting to note that Robertson earned a law degree from Yale, and his father served 34 years in the House and Senate.
[87] Robertson, Pat. *Courting Disaster : How the Supreme Court is Usurping the Power of Congress and the People.* Integrity Publishers. Nashville, TN. 2004. p. 53

> The ACLJ engages in litigation, provides legal services, renders advice, counsels clients, provides education, and supports attorneys who are involved in defending the religious and civil liberties of Americans.
>
> As a non-profit organization, the ACLJ does not charge for its services and is dependent upon God and the resources He provides through the time, talent, and gifts of people who share our concerns and desire to protect our religious and constitutional freedoms.[88]

The ACLJ engages in litigation to establish or protect the "spiritual rights" of citizens. For instance, in one case, *Lamb's Chapel v. Center Moriches School District* (1993), the ACLJ successfully won a case in which a school board would not rent its facilities to a church. The ruling was in favor of the ACLJ, guaranteeing "equal access" to public facilities.[89]

These political trends and organizations show a proficiency for political engagement and a utilization of modern political techniques. But I resist the notion that Fundamentalists are merely utilizing practical aspects of modernity. To say they are appropriating elements of modernity is to say modernity belongs to someone else. Fundamentalists are using these techniques in no less a legitimate way than any other organization. Campaigning, voter registration, building alliances, using the media, and using effective rhetoric are all part of today's political world and part of America's democratic process. Fundamentalism's political mobilization and engagement reveals their very modern nature.

D: Robertson's Metanarrative

Sections *A* and *B* of this paper dealt directly with the effects of Common Sense on the development of Fundamentalism. Those sections show the dependence of Fundamentalism on the Enlightenment in America, particularly the Didactic

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[88] http://www.aclj.org/About/default.aspx?Section=9
[89] Robertson, *Courting Disaster*, p. 53

Enlightenment, through which Common Sense and scientific induction greatly affected America and Fundamentalism. Both inerrantism and Fundamentalist prophetic interpretation are dependent on this Enlightenment. *Section C* showed how politically involved Fundamentalists are; they changed from an apolitical group to a proclaimed Christian Right, which quickly adapted to the demands of politicking.

In this section I will examine Robertson's rhetoric regarding the Supreme Court and the American government. I argue that Robertson's orientation is a *philosophically* modern one, and what he resists and criticizes is *post*modernism. I am interested in a constellation of related ideas Robertson exhibits that are characteristics of modernism. These are: a) the use of metanarrative; b) the idea of "original intent" of an author, in this case, the writers of the Constitution; and c) the idea of moral absolutes.

First I wish to make myself clear regarding the use of the term postmodernism, and, by extension, modernism. Often postmodernism is said to be an arbitrary term, referring to an arbitrary philosophy. For my purposes it refers to the self-conscious critique of the Enlightenment. Postmodernism is:

> The name for a rather diffuse family of ideas and trends that in significant respects reject, challenge, or aim to supercede "modernity": the convictions, aspirations, and pretension (as they are now seen to be) of modern Western thought and culture since the Enlightenment….Postmodernism has come to mean… a rejection of the modern mind's confidence in rationality, including, for instance, its pretensions to the attainment of universally valid and objective truth and its confidence in the achievability of progress.[90]

Postmodernism has eroded the confidence in certainty and absolutes that modernism sought to establish. Common Sense is an example of this kind of modernist thought; the world is understandable and through our reason we may decipher reality. Through reason,

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[90] Bynagle, Hans. "Introduction: A Map of Twentieth-Century Philosophy," *Twentieth-Century Philosophy*, ed. Forrest E. Baird. Prentice Hall. Inc. Upper Saddle River, NJ. 2000. p. xv

one may discover universals in ethics, science, and economics. For the Fundamentalists, modernist thought is central to their identity and their assertion of what the Bible is and what America stands for. It is because Common Sense declares discernable absolutes that Fundamentalists claim the inerrantism of the Bible and its harmony with scientific fact. Though Robertson's intellectual heritage is very much from the Enlightenment, he ironically bemoans the damage the Enlightenment caused in Europe. Also ironic is that many of the Enlightenment ideals Robertson holds in esteem-- personal value, independence, and liberty-- he attributes to Christianity.

Robertson's method of reasoning, which is modern in the sense explained above, leads him to criticize "activist" Supreme Court Judges who adjudicate, according to Robertson, without acknowledging certain absolutes that should be apparent to any reasonable person. Robertson's modernist thought allows him to posit the original intent of the founders of the nation with certainty; though Robertson would not claim to be positing anything, but only observing the actual reality of the founder's intentions. Robertson's view can be described as a "metanarrative," to use Jean-Francois Lyotard's term. Metanarratives are "grand narratives or theories purporting to disclose the overall meaning of history and to assign particular events and phenomena, and to deny others, a place in the grand scheme of things."[91] Metanarratives are part of modernist thought, and are viewed with suspicion and critiqued from a postmodern perspective. What can be seen in Robertson's censure of the Supreme Court is a rejection of postmodernism; for Robertson these postmodern ideas are incomprehensible.

Robertson's metanarrative is one of Christian foundations and divine providence in the history of America. Divine providence allowed America to win the Revolutionary

[91] Ibid p. xv

War and prosper and grow throughout its early history. The construction of the nation, its government and laws, were based on a biblical world-view; "in their view of honor, truth, justice, and the law, the founders were of one mind- they had a biblical world-view."[92] It was Christianity, according to Robertson, that allowed America to prosper while the Enlightenment in Europe took its toll on society. Christian faith in Europe was eroded by the European Enlightenment which elevated the status of human beings and displaced religion:

> By the end of the 19th century, Europe had already begun a long, disastrous flight from its heritage of faith. The Age of Reason and the European Enlightenment had spawned revolutionary ideas about the "rights of man" that left little room for traditional ideas of reverence and worship. Outwardly symbols of Christianity remained, but inwardly the people were changing. The influence of the Philosophers such as Rousseau, Voltaire, and Diderot in France, and Hume, Locke, and Bentham in England, helped to breed a secular spirit and radical skepticism that would have a disabling effect on religion and life in Europe.[93]

Robertson does not give any more details on Europe's "disastrous flight from its heritage of faith," nor does he consider all the violence in Europe in the name of religion. The Thirty Year War, for instance, directly preceded the Enlightenment, spurring thinkers to find ways to ground authority in reason rather than divine appointment. And Robertson is ignorant of the effects of the European Enlightenment on the founders of America, such as Locke's writings. Nor does Robertson consider his own inheritance of ideals from the Enlightenment such as democracy and personal value. Robertson's metanarrative of American's history attributes all the Enlightenment ideals, and the prosperity of America, to Christianity.

While Europe's Enlightenment was "disastrous," America was spared this fate because of its Christian foundation. Robertson quotes Tocqueville, writing that America

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[92] Robertson, *Courting Disaster*, p. 24
[93] Ibid p. 28

"is the place where the Christian religion has kept the greatest real power over men's souls; and nothing better demonstrates how useful and natural it is to man, since the country where it now has the widest sway is both the most enlightened and the freest."[94] And it was not the Enlightenment which influenced the American Revolution, but Christianity:

> Christianity reinforced the habits and character of the American people, and it taught the value of independence and self-reliance. Ultimately, it was this sense of intrinsic personal value, combined with an understanding of the Bible's teachings about liberty, that made the people begin to question the abuses they were being forced to endure.[95]

Essentially Robertson views Revolutionary America as being *spared* the Enlightenment and protected and influenced by Christianity. Christianity instilled in Americans the values of liberty, personal value, democracy, and independence. Robertson claims the colonists found biblical inspiration to assert their independence, recalling a passage where:

> Jesus, reading from the words of the prophet Isaiah, announced that He had come "to proclaim liberty to the captives and… to set at liberty those who are oppressed" (Luke 4:18). The colonists, who were beginning to feel less like respected citizens and more like captives every day, took those words to heart. Furthermore, they recalled the words of the apostle Paul, who said, "the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Corinthians 3:17). As they were beginning to chafe under the English Yoke, these settlers longed to be free.[96]

And it was divine providence that freed the colonists. From the inspiration of the colonists to the writing of the Constitution, "the spiritual nature of America's founding is only too apparent. The hand of providence was on the founders at every step. No ordinary

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[94] Ibid pp. 28-29
[95] Ibid p. 29
[96] Ibid p. 29

army could have conquered the British legions unless providence had intervened."[97] The language of the founders reflects the spiritual (i.e. Christian) nature of America as well. Robertson points out the founders' use of the terms "Creator," "divine Providence," and "God" as being Christian references and evidence of the Christian foundation the founders established. This foundation is found in the Declaration of Independence in the famous passage, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Robertson says that:

> In subsequent deliberations, other members of the Continental Congress proposed adding further recognition of the religious dimensions of their undertaking. Thus they documented that they were "appealing to the Supreme Judge of the World for the rectitude of our intentions" and acting in "firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence.[98]

There is no doubt, in Robertson's mind, that the founders of the nation and their intentions for the structure of the nation were Christian. Robertson's metanarrative of the history of the nation and the intent of the laws inherent in it is a Christian one; divine providence has protected and blessed America because it was founded on Christian principles. Anything outside this metanarrative, such as the Enlightenment, is either appropriated, if it is favorable, or censured, if it is threatening.

Robertson characterizes contemporary America as being in a spiritual struggle against corruption. From Robertson's point-of-view:

> We can hardly deny that signs of disintegration are all around us: the assault on marriage and family, the deregulation of pornography and the celebration of homosexuality, the assault on religious expression in every public place, as well as the attempt to take God out of the Pledge of Allegiance and to scrub His name and the Ten Commandments from our public buildings and monuments.[99]

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[97] Ibid p. 44
[98] Ibid p. 35
[99] Ibid p. 44

The "signs of disintegration" Robertson lists are all in contrast to the Christian foundation of the nation. The consequences of this "disintegration" are social, cultural, and moral depravity, but also always at work in Robertson's metanarrative is the threat of divine retribution, such as when he warns against America's interference with prophecy, and also the breaking of the covenant, which leads to God "lifting his veil of protection."

This "disintegration" of American culture is due, according to Robertson, largely to the Supreme Court:

> Through systematic reinterpretation and misreading of the Constitution, by disregarding the will of the people in dozens of politically charged cases and by attempting to enshrine their own liberal notions of 'social justice' through tortured readings of the law, justices have substantially changed the form and substance of our America Democracy- and have repeatedly distorted the true meaning of the Constitution.[100]

In Robertson's thinking there are absolutes. There is, of course, the absolute truth of God, and God's power and knowledge. But, as was pointed out previously, the influence of Common Sense allows for other kinds of absolutes, including moral universals, but also (since truth is contained within words, which leads to inerrantism), Robertson also believes in an absolute truth regarding the Constitution and the "original intent" of the founders. And since the original intent of the founders is grounded in Christianity, any action of the Court today to remove any elements of Christianity is wrong and contrary to the intentions of the founders, contrary to the Constitution, contrary to God's will, and contrary to the majority of the people's will whom Robertson believes are Christian.

One of the first cases Robertson points to as being destructive of the Christian foundation of the nation is *Everson v. Board of Education* (1947). In this case the Supreme Court found that a "wall of separation between church and state" must be

[100] Ibid p. 4

enforced. Judge Hugo Black wrote in the majority opinion that "the First Amendment has erected a wall between church and state. That wall must be kept high and impregnable. We could not approve the slightest breach."[101] Robertson agrees that the state may not set up a church, but disagrees with Black's interpretation. To the idea that the "wall must be kept high and impregnable" Robertson replies:

> That is certainly not true. Rather, it is a malicious mischaracterization not only of Jefferson's 1802 letter to the Danbury Baptists, in which he said that government must keep its hands off religion, but also of the original intent of the framers, who understood that the Christian religion was the surest guarantee of a virtuous nation.[102]

It is interesting to note that Robertson's Jefferson is a much more Christian character than he is usually considered to be. Instead of being the Jefferson who believed in equality because of the rationality of people, or the author of the Jefferson Bible, he is a man influenced by Christianity, for only a Christian could be so impressive a person.

In the Court's rulings to separate the government and religion (i.e. Christianity), it has lost touch with the foundation of the nation:

> The unavoidable implication of all these rulings, taken in context and with the attitude they so clearly convey, is that the Supreme Court of the United States has lost any sense of connection between the authentic religious roots of the nation and the right ordering of American society. It's as if a band of nine tenured, secular judges have decided that they're in competition with the true Lawgiver and Judge of mankind.[103]

For Robertson the "right ordering of American society" is the Christian foundation by which the founders asserted that all people are created equal and summoned the independence and strength to create the nation. Now the justices of the Supreme Court, either because they are "activist" judges or just wrong in their interpretations of the

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[101] Ibid p. 9
[102] Ibid p. 10
[103] Ibid p. 11

Constitution, have placed American law in conflict with the "true Lawgiver," who Robertson believes the founders recognized.

A disturbing trend Robertson sees is the education that law clerks are being given in law schools. "For the most part, these young people have been taught that 'original intent' and 'textualist philosophies… are hopelessly out of date."[104] These law clerks, "who are often young, liberal graduates of Eastern law schools,"[105] have great power over the decisions of the judges they serve. "Original intent" and "textualism" are conservative approaches to interpretation, and "original intent," as has been shown, is particularly important to Robertson. Teaching that these philosophies are "hopelessly out of date" is tantamount to throwing out the meaning of the Constitution and interpreting it however the Judges' "liberal agenda" demands. Textualism is a means of interpretation which goes only to the words and not beyond. Robertson conflates textualism and original intent, making textualism dependent on original intent: "As Madison and Jefferson certainly concurred, a textual interpretation of the Constitution based on the aims and beliefs of the founders is the only legitimate means of constructing law correctly."[106] Again Robertson's metanarrative of Christian foundations dominates his rhetoric.

Robertson is offended when the idea of original intent and his moral absolutism is threatened. Judge's decisions that contrast Robertson's set of moral absolutes is an illogical procedure. To Robertson these Judges are ignoring the founding principles, the Constitution, and moral universals. These Judges are relativists who ignore truth:

> To those who support moral relativism and legal realism, the ideologies that dominate most leftist thinking, the Constitution is simply whatever the judges say it is. And the law, by implication, is whatever nine unelected justices can get

[104] Ibid p. 14
[105] Ibid p. 14
[106] Ibid p. 80

> away with. For them, there is no logical connection between law and morals. Justice is based on feelings. Time-honored principles such as stare decisis, enumerated powers, and judicial restraint are merely inconvenient distractions. For these men and women, everything is "relative" and nothing is "absolute."[107]

This relativism is antithetical to Robertson's metanarrative. When the Judges rule in favor of a minority-- such as homosexual rights, women's rights, or any ruling he perceives as anti-religious—Robertson interprets it as a blow against democracy, where liberal, activist judges have elevated the rights of the minorities, "putting minority views above the values and priorities of the majority."[108]

The postmodern view of this elevation of minority rights is that these groups are being demarginalized. These groups have been dominated by the reigning metanarrative, and the elevation of minority rights is a means to protect them and establish equality. Robertson, however, rejects this. In his view it contradicts his established metanarrative; the nation is founded on spiritual principles and is a democracy where the majority rules. Robertson is especially offended by cases in which he believes the religious majority has been ignored, such as legislating Creationism out of the classroom. Robertson cites a 1982 Gallup Poll which found that

> Forty-four percent of all Americans polled believed in the account of creation as found in the Old Testament Book of Genesis. Another 38 percent believed that God was involved in the process of evolution, while 9 percent were undecided. Only the 9 percent remaining believed in a theory of evolution having no place for God.[109]

But in Robertson's view this majority has been ignored, and Robertson sees this as anti-Constitutional:

> The Bill of Rights of the United States Constitution guarantees the right to freedom of speech, freedom of the press, peaceable assembly, petitioning the

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[107] Ibid p. 68
[108] Robertson, Pat. *America's Dates With Destiny*. Thomas Nelson Publishers. New York, NY. 1986. p. 191
[109] Ibid p. 192

> government, bearing arms, security against unreasonable search and seizure, and speedy and public trial by jury. But nowhere in the Constitution is the minority given a right to silence the majority or to replace majority views with its minority opinions.[110]

Robertson believes the majority to be good Christian people who understand the necessity of Christian principles in society. What he perceives is that the minority—usually the Supreme Court, but often the ACLU as well—has a disproportionate amount of power. And the Supreme Court Justices who are "moral relativists" draw their conclusions from no established authority-- neither reason, God, nor the Constitution.

A postmodernist would of course critique and deconstruct Robertson's metanarrative. His idea of Christian foundations, original intent, and absolute rule by the majority would all be questioned, as well as pointing out the marginalized groups within his metanarrative, such as homosexuals, women, and non-Christians. Justice, for Robertson, must be connected to an absolute; he believes that our Western concepts of justice:

> Are derived from the Decalogue, Platonic religious philosophy, and the teachings of the Christ. Somewhere there must exist an authority for beliefs about justice; and the authority of merely human, and therefore fallible, courts of law is insufficient to command popular assent and obedience.[111]

For laws to have meaning they must have an origin grounded in an absolute. If our laws are not grounded in something greater than the human world, then they are fragile, hollow laws with no transcendent value; they are temporary, transient, and ultimately have no meaning. For Robertson this is unacceptable, and more than that, inconceivable.

Yet Robertson finds example after example of Justices falling into the corruption of relativism, such as Oliver Wendell Holmes, who served on the Supreme Court from

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[110] Ibid p. 193

[111] *Courting Disaster*, p. 79 (Robertson is quoting Russell Kirk, a "conservative philosopher and social critic")

1902 to 1932. "Justice Holmes said, 'I often doubt whether it would not be a gain if every word of moral significance could be banished from the law altogether, and other words adopted which should convey legal ideas uncolored by anything outside the law.'"[112] Robertson finds more danger in the precedents set by Justice Holmes's ally, Justice Louis Brandeis, who said:

> Our Constitution is not a strait-jacket. It is a living organism. As such it is capable of growth- of expansion and adaptation to new conditions. Growth implies changes, political, economic, and social. Growth which is significant manifests itself rather in intellectual and moral conceptions than in material things.[113]

Robertson objects to this idea of a "living" Constitution. For Robertson, adapting the Constitution to new situations is antithetical to the foundations laid by the constructors. Nor should moral conceptions change; there are absolute morals, the founders of the nation understood this, and under the name of God they embedded them in the Constitution.

Robertson sees the judges who deny absolutes and espouse relativism as threats to the nation. These are activist judges threatening the fabric of society. For Robertson:

> There's no doubt about what sort of Court that Brandeis and Holmes had in mind. In each of these statements, Holmes and his so-called progressive colleagues did not hesitate to roam far beyond the law and well off into the realm of social policy legislation, thus giving both precedent and sanction to the kinds of legal and moral relativism that dominate the Court today.[114]

There is no justice, Robertson believes, without the establishment, or recognition, of absolutes. He believes that most Americans believe in absolutes, that "somewhere there must exist an authority for beliefs about justice." Without this authority, there is no justice:

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[112] Ibid p. 78
[113] Ibid pp. 78-79
[114] Ibid p. 79

> For relativists…justice is simply the plaything of the courts. Or, in the words of Charles Evans Hughes, "the Constitution is what the judges say it is." Even more disturbing were the words of Chief Justice Fred Vinson, in the case of *Dennes v. US* (1951) when he offered this dictum: 'nothing is more certain in modern society than the principle that there are no absolutes.'"[115]

This rhetoric of the court reflects the observation of changing values in society. These Judges interpret their role as interpreting the Constitution as best they can to accommodate the changes in society since the Constitution's signing. To Robertson and conservatives who share his view, this approach is one step away from anarchy; it is a slippery slope to societal disintegration, one that we are witnessing, because of this *denial* of absolutes.

To Robertson this denial of absolutes is antithetical to the Constitution and justice itself; it simply doesn't make sense. There must be an absolute authority to which society must appeal to establish its order, otherwise it is impermanent and there can be no *real* law and order:

> The idea that everything is relative is anathema to law and order. If such a view were actually true, and were thrust on the nation by the highest court in the land, there could be no standards of truth of judgment whatsoever. To claim that there are *absolutely no absolutes* in not merely logically implausible, but it is the most absurd non sequitur imaginable.[116]

It is "logically implausible" to deny absolutes. Robertson finds himself confronted by postmodernism, where his system of absolutes is being critiqued, questioned, and denied. It is not that the judges Robertson censures identify themselves or their interpretation as postmodern, but postmodernism is the effect of the failure to sustain (formerly) established absolutes.

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[115] Ibid p. 80
[116] Ibid p. 80. Robertson's italics.

Postmodernism erodes Robertson's metanarrative as well. And though his metanarrative is partly mythical and interpreted through his Fundamentalist perspective, he reacts very strongly and negatively to the upsetting of the metanarrative. Fundamentalism is a modern phenomenon, sustained by modernity, which displays modernist thought. The encounter with the postmodern world is what is threatening; the upsetting of the metanarrative and the critique of absolutes. Fundamentalism is grounded in absolutes—inerrantism, scientific induction, moral universality—and the threat of postmodernism threatens Fundamentalism's identity. Perhaps characterizing Robertson and Fundamentalism as anti-postmodern would be a useful heuristic tool in understanding the phenomenon of fundamentalism. The Fundamentalist identity is built on elements of modernity and the Enlightenment, and the postmodern critique places Fundamentalism in an uncomfortable position.

Conclusion

Put broadly, this essay is a critique of the conception that fundamentalisms are anti-modern. I assert that, in at least the case of American Fundamentalism, fundamentalisms are modern movements, and the conception that they are anti-modern misleads us in understanding these movements. To support my assertion that American Fundamentalists are modern I analyzed the speeches, writings, and organizations of Pat Robertson. Robertson has not yet been analyzed in this manner, but he makes a good candidate for this study because of his prominence as a religious broadcaster, his controversial statements, and his role in founding specifically Christian political and legal organizations. I present four ways in which American Fundamentalism is modern; by modern I mean this fundamentalism exhibits Enlightenment characteristics and

foundations. In *Section A* I make the point that the inerrant view of the Bible that is central to Fundamentalist identity, which makes the claim that that Bible contains no error, is directly dependent on Scottish Common Sense Realism. Common Sense was a reaction to philosophical skepticism, and posited that truths may be discovered through reason and our senses. Common Sense and Baconian science, through the efforts of Thomas Reid, influenced America significantly in what Henry May calls the Didactic Enlightenment. The Enlightenment thought which swept through America provided the Fundamentalists with a way of defending their faith, and it laid the foundations for inerrantism. *Section B* is in many ways an extension of *Section A* since it is the development of inerrantism that allows the Fundamentalists to develop their eschatology. Since the Bible is full of facts, as inerrantism asserts, then all prophecy is true as well. And since all prophecy is true, then the various prophecies in the Bible may be combined in order to decipher the meanings of world events. Prophecy *will* come true since it is in the Bible, and so the Fundamentalist worldview is full of apocalyptic anticipation. In *Section C* I assert that the political nature of Fundamentalism is evidence of their modern nature. Jerry Falwell initiated Fundamentalism's emergence as a politically engaged movement in the late 1970s; since then we have seen the rapid growth of Fundamentalism, transforming it from a social movement into political organizations with budgets in the millions of dollars. Pat Robertson even ran for President of the United States in 1988. Robertson founded the Christian Coalition, an organization which still exists and provide voters with assessments of political candidates, determining how well they reflect Christian values. Robertson also founded the ACLJ, an organization which fights legal battles for "spiritual rights." In *Section D* I present Robertson as reflecting

philosophical modernism in his rhetoric. He does this in his use of metanarrative and moral absolutes, both of which postmodernism critiques, and for that reason I suggest that what he reacts against is postmodernism. Here again the complexity of modernity arises, for in this situation Robertson is reflecting modernist thought derived from the Enlightenment, but confronted by postmodernism which critiques modernist thought, yet both modernism and postmodernism may be considered part of modernity.

Even if one is reluctant to accept my conclusion that American Fundamentalism is a genuinely modern phenomenon, and the anti-modern conception of it should be eschewed, I think it is at least clear there is great difficulty in defining Fundamentalism as anti-modern. At the start of this essay I pointed out the difficulty in defining fundamentalism as a rejection of modernity. Westerman, in her review of *Fundamentalisms Observed*, raised many questions about the relationship between fundamentalism and modernity that some scholars have posited. To quote her again, in her wonderful summary of the difficulty of this relationship, "to explain fundamentalism as a reaction to modernity or modernist culture is to explain a vague term by referring to an ever vaguer term." The term fundamentalism carries with it its own disputes over usage, disputes which must be addressed. But, putting those disputes aside and attempting to define fundamentalism as a reaction to modernity raises new sets of questions, questions even broader because they urge us to define modernity. Westerman's point is that we lack a uniform definition of modernity, and will likely never have one.

In my essay I address the notion that fundamentalism is "anti-modern" in the sense that fundamentalism "fights back," "rejects," or "revolts against" anything that "advocate[s] Enlightenment values." Scholars such as Marty, Appleby, and Lawrence

concede that fundamentalism is dependent on modernity for its creation, yet at the same time they claim that fundamentalism resists modernity. I think there is truth in this, but these scholars have emphasized too much this rejection of modernity and have presented fundamentalists as imitators of modern movements. I reject the notion that fundamentalists are mere imitators and that they are anti-modern. Setting up the relationship of fundamentalism and modernity in this way gives modernity a specific secular value, and while secularism certainly is a value of modernity, it is only one value of modernity, and defining it in this way is a reduction of modernity. Modernity is not simply the ascendancy of secular values, but also must include cultural reactions to modern developments, such as materialism and technological and scientific achievements which affect humanity's view of itself. If we talk about modernity we must address all the elements of the post-Enlightenment world, or at least acknowledge the utter complexity involved in attempting to understand modernity. Scholars who define fundamentalism as a reaction to modernity, but maintain that fundamentalism is "anti-modern," simplify the movements as well as reducing modernity, ignoring all the complexities of modernity, including the idea that a movement critical of modernity, such as fundamentalisms seem to be, *is* a modern movement.

Donald Swearer points to this idea of fundamentalist movements being modern in his essay "Fundamentalistic Movements in Theravada Buddhism:"

> Fundamentalisms in Sri Lanka and mainland Southeast Asia have arisen from the collapse and transformation of classical religious and cultural syntheses following upon the colonial period and the introduction of Western values, technology, education, and economic and political systems. Seen from this perspective, fundamentalisms are "modern" in the sense that they are part of the dynamic of

> the disintegration of traditional, self-contained societies associated with the process of modernization.[117]

Swearer points out that this recombination of traditional religious values with Western values is a modernization of these religious movements. Rather than appropriating Western or modern values these traditional religions have synthesized these values, in effect "modernizing" themselves. What Swearer observes is that fundamentalism is not simply a tradition seeking to preserve itself—such as isolating itself or ignoring modern values—but fundamentalism is a transformed tradition whose engagement with modernity and synthesis of Western values with itself has created something new—the movement we call fundamentalist. Swearer even suggests that "Theravada 'fundamentalism' might be even characterized as postmodern in that it seems to be a direct consequence of, and formed in reaction to, the adjustments traditional Theravada Buddhism made to the challenge of modernity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries."[118] Swearer does not claim that Theravada Buddhism rejects modernity, he points out that it is only *with* modernity that this type of fundamentalism arises. It arises out of adjustments made to the challenge of modernity.

To present fundamentalisms as anti-modern, as movements that "reject" or "revolt" against modernity, is to misunderstand them. These movements are not merely appropriating modern tools, nor are they movements somehow misplaced in the modern world. Fundamentalisms are modern movements. I have used Robertson and American Fundamentalism as an example of this, but the modernity of fundamentalisms is evident in each particular movement. Scholars who have presented fundamentalisms as anti-

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[117] Swearer, Donald. "Fundamentalistic Movements in Theravada Buddhism." *Fundamentalisms Observed*. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago. 1991. p. 677
[118] Ibid p. 677

modern have presented the movements as imitators; as if the movements can somehow be self-contained and only appropriate elements of modernity which they find useful. The genesis for these movements is the relationship between religion and the modern world; it is in the synthesis of the religious and the modern. If we are to understand these movements, we must move past the idea that they are imitators of modernity. And understanding these movements is important in contemporary times when any newspaper will have an account of recent violence attributed to an Islamic movement labeled fundamentalist. There is a plethora of elements to consider in a study of fundamentalisms, and I think moving past the conception that these movements are anti-modern is an important step.