

AMERICAN FUNDAMENTALISM

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LECTURE I

FROM THE BURNING BUSH TO GEORGE W BUSH¹

This title is more serious than it sounds. Moses as a figure – a type – is crucial to understanding American religious and political history, perhaps more than Jesus. All Presidents have hearkened to this name. The crossing of the Atlantic, or the ‘Red Sea’, from England, ‘Egypt’ and ‘Pharaoh’ George III were all instrumental in early America. Abraham Lincoln, Harriet Tubman, John Brown, ML King Jr, and even Ronald Reagan and GW Bush have all been ‘Mosaicized.’ America is *God’s New Israel*. But were Moses and GW Bush fundies?

WHAT IS FUNDAMENTALISM?

There are many definitions and differences. I will list the ones that I think are important, but please be aware of many other ones too. We got to start somewhere.

The University of Chicago project on fundamentalism that comprises 6 volumes to date, started in the early 1990’s, said this [OHP]:

¹ To Europeans the US is a most difficult country to understand ... but nothing confuses them as much as the role of religion ... For a society in which there is no established church, and where no single faith commands more than a fraction of the population, the voices of religious advocates often appear to dominate the public discourse. Never has this been truer than with the rise of the New Christian Right in the last decade. *The Rise of the New Christian Right p ix 1996*

‘Fundamentalism’ . . . refers to a discernible pattern of religious militance by which self-styled ‘true believers’ attempt to arrest the erosion of religious identity, fortify the borders of the religious community, and create viable alternatives to secular institutions and behaviors.²

The name itself originated in America from a 1920 edition of the *Watchman-Examiner* (and I remember seeing this as a young boy in my grandfather’s Sunday reading) which is from the Northern Baptist USA denomination, in which I was brought up. The editor claimed that he and other evangelical Protestants as militants were willing to do ‘battle royal’ to preserve the ‘fundamentals’ of the Christian faith from the evolutionists and biblical critics infecting mainline seminaries and colleges. But it developed a history so that it includes other aspects of exclusion and a number of political features. There are aspects of cultural battles too.

We need to distinguish **form and content**. The themes [content] changes over time. Though there are variations, there are overriding themes. American Christian religious fundamentalism **content** stresses the **inerrancy** of the Bible and the **literal belief** in Christ’s virgin birth, miracles, deity, substitutionary atonement, resurrection, the second coming and the immanent End Times. They dislike secularity. ‘Puritan’ piety remains strong. Fundamentalists are mostly supportive of strong church and state links, heterosexual manliness, patriarchal nuclear family values, Israel, Ten C’s, creationism, work ethic, free-for-all market, globalization, obeying authorities, low taxes, reduced welfare, and are anti-feminist, anti-abortion, anti-single mothers, anti-divorce, anti-gay,

² Gabriel A. Almond, R. Scott Appleby, Emmanuel Sivan, *Strong Religion – The Rise of Fundamentalisms around the World*, University of Chicago Press, 2003, p 17

anti-intellectual, anti-Catholic, anti-ecumenicist, anti-UN, and anti-Muslim. This is to be enforced on the nation under the spiritual rule of the ‘chosen’ who are ‘sent’ by God.

Another way to see and examine **form. Texts without contexts** is a way most fundies proceed taking ancient texts and applying them to the present. These can be religious or secular. An example in religion is the second Creation Story in Genesis – the story of Adam and Eve. Most Jews would take this as story-telling with a lesson or moral and tried to understand themselves in their relation with God through tales. In Hebrew *Adam* means ‘man’, and *Eve* means ‘woman’. It is story, it is not biology, it is not history, and it should be understood why it was written. To take it literally, as well as the 6 days of Creation in Genesis 1, led to the **content** of the famous Scopes, or ‘Monkey’ Trial in Tennessee when William Jennings Bryan and others wanted creationism taught in the schools.

Further **forms** include: Exclusivism, certainty, and close watch of the boundaries are common features along with the use of special inerrant texts that are applicable at all times and places. Most of what I want to call fundamentalism would have these points.

David Domke in *God Willing?* [2004] claims the Bush Administration has taken over **forms** of fundamentalism applicable to politics, irrespective of their religious **content**. Thus they stress **binary reality**, an **obsession with time**, belief in a **universal gospel**, and an **intolerance of dissent**.

Regarding **content**, fundamentalism has some political features peculiar to America.

Often America is cast as a ‘light unto the nations’ and interventions by the American military and her allies are urged. The notion that the United States has an exemplary

national mission has always been central to American fundamentalist thought. In Woodrow Wilson's view (and that of many in the US today) this mission was divine in origin. Wilson ... held that the hand of God "has led us in this way," and that we are the mortal instruments of His will – a view that has repeatedly found an echo in the discourse of George W. Bush. This sense of mission informs the claim of American exceptionalism. Disagreements are not diplomatic but defensive. Unlike Wilson, Bush and the neo-cons say Europe and the UN can 'shove it.'³

Another feature that is part of the tradition but extends beyond American Fundamentalism to evangelicalism is the notion of '**born again**.' It is a necessity for all Presidents since Jimmy Carter. Even Joe Lieberman is a born again Jew so he says. It is from the Gospel of John mainly, and now and then often refers to a strong sense of personal sin and the wonders of God's forgiveness. Championing it in New England was Increase Mather, minister of Old North and President of Harvard. It was picked up and run for a touchdown by the Great Awakening in the 18th century, with Jonathan Edwards of Northampton and President of Princeton along with John Wesley who was in Savannah until he was wrong sided in the Revolution, but his colleague George Whitefield, friend of Benjamin Franklin and greatest preacher of the age, pushed it hard

³ There can be other types of fundamentalism. There is a high Anglican kind that treats the Sacraments both in form and content as inerrant and not open to change. There is a low church Prayer Book fundamentalism. There is a Catholic version that claims wheat free communion wafers are invalid. There is a liberal variety that says Jesus gave the Great Commandment of loving God and neighbor, and this is good for all time and in all places. There is a Lutheran version – justification by faith through grace; and a Calvinist version that asserts the Bible as inerrant in matters of faith if not science. There are of course Muslim and Hindu versions, and other secular examples. The American Dream has its fundamentalists. The immigrant but popular Governor of California is a beefy proponent – 'One thing I learned about America is that if you work hard and play by the rules, this country is truly open to you. **You can achieve anything.**' He hasn't read *Death of a Salesman*. Someday he should play the part of Willy Loman.

for all America and it has become a major feature in all fundamentalists and for most, well all that I know, evangelicals. They were a major East Coast Team.

A further aspect of American fundamentalism is the concept of **manliness and the work ethic**. Billy Sunday said in 1916:

Jesus Christ intended his church to be militant as well as persuasive. It must fight as well as pray ... The prophets all carried the Big Stick ... Strong men resist, weaklings compromise ... Lord save us from off-handed, flabby-cheeked, brittle-boned, weak-kneed, thin-skinned, pliable, plastic, spineless, effeminate, sissified, three-caret Christianity.

Have a look at the cartoon figure [OHP] of the new Jesus shown as THE MAN.⁴ They much admire the hunter and gun owner, the Hummer fanatic, the *shoot first but forget what the question is* person, a steroid body that works out, a guy who brings home the bacon and doesn't complain about low wages and being taken advantage of by the rich. They deplore the fat slobs that sit around belching after Sunday lunch and snoring during the football; not a computer nerd with greasy hair, one thinking Thanksgiving is all about food and the other that Christmas is all about a new whiz bang gadget that will integrate, differentiate, and show porn at the same time.

No, what fundamentalists want today are tough, dedicated, smart religious people who bless the Lord God for freedoms we have, who will work hard and strive for success. We want women and men willing to fight in Afghanistan, Ira[q][n] and Syria to sort out the Mid-East for freedom – 'God's gift to all mankind' according to the President.

⁴ The cartoon shows a preacher from the *All-American Church of the Religious Right* saying 'We decided we needed a portrait of Jesus more in tune with our politics!' showing a redneck Arnold haloed hulk with rifle; arm tattoo of *I love Tax Cuts*; *GOP* on his buckle; AM Radio in background with Rush; Wal-Mart displaying *Low prices – Low Wages*; a cherub with a sign *The Rich get Richer*.

The right sort of fundies asks us to sacrifice for justice and help as role models for the poor and dispossessed of the USA. They want industries and financial centers to contribute to the general good by inventing new gismos that will sell to Japan and Asia. Just keep the junk away from our jerks. This is the Jesus for the 21st century, not the syrupy Christ of 19th century piety or the sappy liberal Lord sympathizing with the *ner'do'well* unruliness of the 20th century. They do produce characters and charlatans. Fundamentalists call us to a tougher, sturdier version of manliness that will help to arrest USA decline and keep the Chinese from being #1 in the world. It also helps explain the warrior cult in America and the love of guns, parades, and uniforms.

[from Aziz and Berlet] **Apocalyptic thinking** has greatly influenced Pat Robertson and most other Christian evangelicals. This explains both their activist interest in U.S. foreign policy generally and their particular focus on the Middle East.

After 9/11 Jerry Falwell said on nationwide TV, with Pat Robertson nodding agreement:

What we saw on Tuesday, as terrible as it is, could be minuscule if, in fact, God continues to lift the curtain and allow the enemies of America to give us what we probably deserve ... The abortionists have got to bear some responsibility for this because God will not be mocked. And when we destroy 40 million innocent little babies, we make God mad. I really believe that the pagans, and the abortionists, and the feminists, and the gays and lesbians who are actively trying to make than an alternative lifestyle, the ACLU, People for the American Way, all of them have tried to secularize America. I point the finger in their face and say 'you helped this happen.' Also - God has withdrawn his protection from America.

Pat Robertson: **Well, I totally concur, and the problem is that we have adopted that agenda at the highest levels of our government. [9/13/01; 700 Club program]**

The impact of such thinking is especially evident in their unqualified support for Israel and their Islamophobic opposition to Palestinian self-determination. The result of this

politico-dual-religion amalgam is a movement called **Christian Zionism**, a source of Christian Right support for the U.S. wars against Afghanistan and Iraq and for a general U.S. presence in the Middle East. However, Christian Right support for Israel does not mean an unequivocal embrace of Jews. Anti-Jewish as well as anti-Islamic and anti-Arab themes have long formed a common stream running through Christian Right ideology and activism.

Christian Right support for Israel comes in many forms, such as lobbying Congress and the administration to adopt pro-Israel policies, intervening in the foreign policy debate on the Palestine-Israel issue, and funding the migration of Eastern European Jews to Israel. The immigration funding is in keeping with a **Christian evangelical/fundamentalist belief that the second coming of Christ is preceded by the Aliyah [Ingathering] and the rebuilding of the third temple in Jerusalem. This is also why most Christian rightists oppose Palestinian statehood and the removal of Jewish settlements from the West Bank and Gaza Strip--**because God promised all of the Biblical land of Canaan to the Israelites. Tom DeLay – 2d most powerful gent in Washington after Dick Cheney or is it now Donald Rumsfeld? – is an example of this sort of believer who actually went to Israel to undercut the President’s road map for a Palestinian state.

Holly Sklar, in *Reagan, Trilateralism, and the Neoliberals* (1986) writes, “For many rollbackers, Armageddon is the pre-ordained preface to the Second Coming and its theocracy of Christian believers. Ronald Reagan is the Believer-in-Chief.” Sklar quotes Governor Reagan’s remarks in 1971:

In the 38th chapter of Ezekiel, it says that the land of Israel will come under attack by the armies of the ungodly nations and it says that Libya will be among them. Do you understand the significance of that? Libya has now gone communist, and that's a sign that the day of Armageddon isn't that far off...Everything is falling into place...Ezekiel tells us that Gog, the nation that will lead all of the other powers of darkness against Israel, will come out of the north...now that Russia has become communist and atheistic, now that Russia has set itself against God. Now it fits the description of Gog perfectly.

Reagan continued to believe these prophecies into his presidency. In 1983, President Reagan told *People* magazine, "theologians...have said that never...has there ever been a time in which so many of the prophecies are coming together. There have been times in the past when people thought the end of the world was coming and so forth, but never anything like this" (quoted in Sklar, 1986). (Reagan's Nostradamus-like predictions did not raise much public concern back then. Neither did Nancy's consultations of astrology charts to determine the direction of Reagan's foreign policy trouble many people.)

Reagan foreshadowed thing to come. The belief in rapture—the certainty that the end-time is near—has become widespread in the United States. Consider the current rage on the Christian right, the "Left Behind" series. The upcoming book in the series is titled *Armageddon*. The publisher's blurb reads, "No one will escape Armageddon and few will live through the battle to see the Glorious Appearing." These publications are targeting children. The Left Behind industry has a "Kids Series." A blurb from the publisher: "With over ten million copies sold, Left Behind: The Kids Series is a favorite for all ages. Following a group of teens that were 'left behind.' They are determined to stand up for God no matter what the costs, they are tested at every turn." At the Left Behind web site (www.leftbehind.com), they have a video promotion for *Armageddon* replete with footage of American troops in Kuwait.

Linking war with Iraq to an eschatological view of history intersects with the problem of ignorance of just war principles among evangelicals. Neither the President nor his supporters concern themselves with the justness of war, nor do they worry much about the consequences of war. Providence, according to Lears, “sanitizes the messy actualities of war and its aftermath. Like the strategists’ faith in smart bombs, faith in Providence frees one from having to consider the role of chance in armed conflict, the least predictable of human affairs. Between divine will and American know-how, we have everything under control.” Providence greatly simplifies things. God has given Winthrop’s “city upon the hill” this war, and Americans should put their trust in the Lord (and Bush).

Though American fundamentalism formally began in the 20th century, its background can be traced to Spanish expansionism, the Reformation, English Revolution, and aspects of American theology and history. Yet it is a complex history, and there are scholarly arguments about what constitutes major influences. I am taking a wide sweep in my analysis, realizing that it is a treacherous area. Part of the fun of scholarship is here.

What about the President?

We are not this story’s author, who fills time and eternity with His purpose. Yet His purpose is achieved in our duty.... This work continues. This story goes on. And an angel still rides in the whirlwind and directs this storm. *George W. Bush, 1/20/01 [note pre 9/11]*

“Events aren’t moved by blind change and chance,” Lears quotes Bush as saying; rather, events are determined by “the hand of a just and faithful God.” Bush uttered these words at the fifty-first National Prayer Breakfast, held February 2003 in Washington DC. In his remarks, Bush assured Americans that they can “be confident in the ways of Providence, even when they are far from our understanding,” History, according to Bush, is the unfolding of God’s will. “Behind all of life and all of history, there’s a dedication and

purpose.” When asked who his favorite philosopher was, he said “Jesus, because he changed my heart.” That resonated profoundly with the evangelicals and fundamentalists! It attaches validity to an existential stance that philosophy is not just about thinking but about changing the world, as Marx said long ago.

‘There is only one reason I am in the Oval Office and not on a barstool. I found God.’ But he is not a biblical literalist, as he pointed out at the Rep Convention. In Washington he goes to an Episcopal church that welcomes gays. In Texas to a Methodist church that is pro-choice. He prays with people of all faiths, and says they have paths to God too. Few evos would say this. He famously turns to his ‘higher Father’ strength [*not ideas*] for the Gulf War, not to Dad. ‘He is the most supremely confident man I have ever met. Like a Christian holding four aces.’ [Pat Robertson]. But he might have that way before he met Christ. He admits to no mistakes. But he does pray for forgiveness, so that must be a contradiction. He is big on Honesty – said he was going to restore trust and honor to the White House. But he lies – ‘I don’t have the war plans on my desk.’ He did! He does not rubber stamp conservatives on abortion, and doesn’t say he would reverse *Roe v. Wade*. He is for a Constitutional amendment on gay marriage but doesn’t seem to get this from biblical principals, rather he rails against doesn’t like ‘activist courts’. Is being gay a choice – ‘I don’t know.’ Describes help for AIDS as part of his faith. But \$of the 15 billion, 1/3 is for abstinence education. He is wary of stem cell research, and seems to be suspicious of environmental science. Nation building reversal from original promises but 9/11 changed much – though not yet done much in Afghanistan. Is there a ‘Left Behind’ apocalyptic? He doesn’t use that language. Cheney and neo-cons pushed the war in Iraq, and Bush was reluctant. But believes in evil v freedom. God has blessed America. He sees it as a beacon of hope for the rest of the world. ‘Our calling, as a blessed country, is to make the world better ... Once again, we are called to defend the safety of our people and the hopes of all mankind. And we accept this responsibility ... and we go forward with confidence, because this call of history has come to the right country.’ When he appeared in a flight suit aboard the carrier *Abraham Lincoln*, he said to the troops: ‘And wherever you go, you carry a message of hope – a message that is ancient and ever new.

In the words of the prophet Isaiah, “To the captives, come out! To those who are in darkness, be free!” He has produced a ‘liberation theology.’ At his Second Inaugural, he said: ‘When the Declaration of Independence was first read in public and the Liberty Bell was sounded in celebration, a witness said, “It rang as if it meant something.” In our time it means something still. America, in this young century, proclaims liberty throughout all the world, and to all the inhabitants thereof. [Lev 25.10] Renewed in our strength – tested, but not weary – we are ready for the greatest achievements in the history of freedom. May God bless you, and may He watch over the United States of America.’

In a worldview that rests upon providence, the attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon are interpreted by many, including members of the Bush administration, as signs from God that Bush is ordained to lead a crusade against evil. “It is a theme which is beginning to emerge from the Bush administration,” writes Julian Borger in *The Guardian* (1-28-03). “While most people saw the extraordinary circumstances of the 2000 election as a fluke, Bush and his closest supporters saw it as yet another sign he was chosen to lead. Later, September 11 ‘revealed’ what he was there for.”

Members of Bush’s staff believe that God chose their boss to lead the nation through these times. In an editorial published in *The Times Union* (Albany, NY), on 2-16-03, Deborah Caldwell notes that, after his speech to Congress on September 20, 2001, Bush received a phone call from speechwriter Mike Gerson, who said, “Mr. President, when I saw you on television, I thought—God wanted you there.” Joel Rosenberg, writing for *World* magazine (10-6-01), quotes Tim Goeglein (deputy director of the White House public liaison) saying, “I think President Bush is God’s man at this hour.”

Bush agrees, seeing his presidency as willed by God. Lears reports that as governor of Texas (just after his second inauguration), he told a friend; “I believe God wants me to run for president.” A *Time* magazine article that reported that “Privately,

Bush even talked of being chosen by the grace of God.” According to Bush, this calling occurred during a 1999 sermon by Mark Craig, the preacher at Bush’s church in Dallas. Craig spoke of Moses’ reluctance to heed the calling of the Lord. In that sermon, Bush heard God calling him to become the President of the United States.

Other presidents have spiked their speeches with religious references. However, Bush’s religious rhetoric goes beyond using a common language to help citizens identify with executive policy. It is becoming increasingly clear that Bush forms his policies around extremist interpretations of Christian doctrine. A particular understanding of Christian eschatology directs his political decisions.

One might think that the vast majority of Americans would find Bush’s extremist worldview disturbing. So far, no such majority has spoken up. Part of this has to do with overwhelming media support of this president, which has led the media to gloss over the President’s religious views. Moreover, the warmongering of major media outlets aligns them with the Bush Administration. Fearing that diplomacy and global resistance may cheat them out of the thrill and ratings of war, they have been uncritical of President Bush’s fanaticism. However, the media should not absorb all the blame. Bush’s major speeches have been nationally televised, unmediated by pundits, and still there is minimal concern over his apocalyptic rhetoric.

In a *New York Times* editorial, “God, Satan and the Media” (3-4-03) Nicholas Kristof thinks he knows why Bush’s religious messages have mesmerized so many people and failed to disturb others. According to Kristof, 46 percent of Americans are evangelical or born-again Christians. (According to recent polls, 45 percent of Americans believe that Saddam Hussein was “personally involved” in 9-11. Kristof’s figures may

seem high, but they are typical of public opinion surveys. The most recent Gallup poll puts the number of born-again Christians at 41%. Eighteen percent of Americans describe themselves as religious right. Among born-again Christians, Bush's popularity stands at 74%. For all others, it is 50%. (Still, few are prepared to protest his policies.) Gallup's analysis (from their web site): "The fact that this conservative and deeply religious president is a Republican, is directly in line with the overall pattern of religious beliefs in American politics. Most scholars agree that there is a substantial relationship between strong religious faith, particularly within conservative, evangelical Protestant denominations, and identification with the Republican Party."

Any explanation for public support for a war in Iraq must account for the degree and character of religiosity in the United States. This includes Bush's religious views. "It's impossible to understand President Bush without acknowledging the centrality of his faith," writes Kristof. Bush's war efforts reflect a "messianic vision" in which his administration will "'remake' the Middle East." This vision resonates with Bush's followers, because the faithful agree with the President that he has been chosen by God to democratize—Christianize?—the Islamic world. There is a sense in which the road to the New righteous Jerusalem is through the creation of a New powerhouse Rome.

An intense focus on the Middle East is natural for an evangelical Christian. If the Middle East has tremendous significance for all Christians (this is where Jesus was born and crucified), it has extra-special significance for the born-again. Jerusalem is the alpha and omega of history—the center of the Christian universe. Reagan tapped into these sentiments when he spoke about Armageddon and the existence of a godless Evil Empire. Now Bush is tapping into these same sentiments.

There is no need to speculate about the degree to which religious sentiment guides US foreign policy. Insiders have revealed that state and war planners, focused on the Middle East, bring their strategies and tactics to the President, and he and members of his administration pray over their vision and translate the text into articles of faith. (I suspect that administration officials have been focusing on *Revelation* big-time in their daily Bible studies.) Once stated, they do not turn back.

The depth of religion in the Bush administration is the subject of a book by one of Bush's key speechwriters, David Frum, the man who coined the phrase "axis of evil." According to his book, *The Right Man*, Frum, Bush, and others who worked on the notorious Axis of Evil speech, desired very much to create an enemy the equivalent of Reagan's Evil Empire. Julian Borger, a journalist for *The Guardian*, discussed these matters with Frum in an article published January 28, 2003. In the interview, Frum "talks about the disconcerting grip evangelical Christianity has on the White House."

How did the "axis of evil" line come about? According to Frum (through Borger), during the weeks leading up to Bush's 2002 State of the Union Address, Gerson came to Frum with this challenge: "Can you sum up in a sentence or two our best case for going after Iraq?" This was in late December 2001. Frum came up with "axis of hatred." He felt, according to Borger, that the phrase "described the ominous but ill-defined links between Iraq and terrorism." Gerson replaced the word "hatred" with "evil" because the latter sounded more "theological." Frum really liked the phrase. He says, "It was the sort of language President Bush used."

On Frum's first day in the White House, one of Bush's aides chastised his mentor Gerson for missing Bible study. "Attendance at such sessions was 'if not compulsory, not quite uncompulsory either,'" Frum is quoted as saying. That Frum is Jewish, but was nevertheless expected to wade through the New Testament with the President and his advisors, speaks volumes about the extent and degree to which the Bible organizes Bush's foreign and domestic policies. Frum, who worked with the President for 13 months, says that Bush "believes that the future is in 'stronger hands than his own.'"

The parallels with conservative politics of the 1980s are quite striking. Grace Halsell, in *Prophecy and Politics: Militant Evangelists on the Road to Nuclear War* (published in 1986), quotes TV evangelist James Robison: "There'll be no peace until Jesus comes. Any preaching of peace prior to this return is heresy; it's against the word of God; it's Anti-Christ." Ronald Reagan invited Robison to deliver the opening prayer at the 1984 Republican National Convention. Reagan believed, as early as 1971, that "everything is in place for the battle of Armageddon and the Second Coming of Christ." Under Reagan, Jerry Falwell was permitted to attend National Security Council briefings. Armageddonist Hal Lindsey met with Pentagon strategists to discuss nuclear war with the Soviet Union. The President loves the military, and the picture in his air force uniform or board the ship with the sign MISSION ACCOMPLISHED sticks in the memory.

But is he a religious fundamentalist? No, more a *secular* one in that he and his staff have taken over *forms* of religious fundamentalism in major ways - Domke again:

David Domke in *God Willing?* [2004] claims the Bush Administration has taken over **forms** of fundamentalism applicable to politics, irrespective of their religious **content**. Thus they stress **binary reality**, an **obsession with time**, belief in a **universal gospel**, and an **intolerance of dissent**. Though the Administration is mainly Christian, they need not be to believe and to act upon these principles.

This can easily refer to ‘they are for us or against us’, ‘getting the job done’ irrespective of the UN & Allies marginalizes Hans Blick, Arab nations, Old Europe; ‘Freedom is God’s gift to all’ is the universal gospel; and the clean out of the Cabinet to introduce Bush clones gets rid of dissent when they so badly need internal criticism. So in this sense Bush is a fundie – political forms taken from religion.

Optional

American Football has close parallels to fundamentalism. This is now the sport of choice among the Red States and Friday night football fans who inhabit the Bible Belt in particular. A recent book and film that has caught the charts in the States is *Friday Night Lights*. It is about a high school team trying for the Texas state championship. It shows the violence of the game without moralizing, the star who got his knee knocked out for good, the family pressure to succeed as football is the only way ‘up and out’ for some of the poor, the Lord’s Prayer recited before they go in to smash each other to smithereens, the pressure on the coach by the town, the need for perfect team work and precision plays, the glory of victory v. the humiliation of losing, and finally the crushing and bone-crunching blows each team gives each other, with fans cheering wildly. They are dressed like combat soldiers with full body protective covering looking much like soldiers in Iraq. They are not interested in diplomacy. It is all about winning, not losing. It is about crushing your opponents. This is not dissimilar to Domke’s thesis above and shows binary thinking - *we win, you lose* as the nature of the game rather than, say, old fashioned virtues such as sportsmanship or gamesmanship, there is an obsession with time, and no dissent is allowed. True football fanatics also try to universalize their gospel and can’t understand why everybody wouldn’t want to play or watch the brutalities.

In summary: Moses at the Burning Bush may have laid the groundwork for fundamentalism in general, and Bush has some but not all of its characteristics. We aren't sure of his views on atonement, miracles, inerrancy, or second coming. But he exhibits **binary thinking** 'you are for us or against us', appears to put **faith above science**, certainly '**born again**', poses as a Texan **manly** swaggerer who shoots first but asks questions about WMD afterwards, **dissent** is not tolerated – goodbye Colin Powell, Tom Ridge, Paul O'Neil - and he has a strong sense of **national mission** that follows the Winthrop, Jefferson, Franklin, Wilson, and Reagan line which states that America is **God's New Israel**. W/Winthrop & Reagan, he's for a godly center for American society. And he believes now he has the mandate to pull it off.

[Can be taken as Freudian, Marxist, liberal, or sick joke] Cartoon shows Bush as the 10 gallon hat Air Force general going down with his missile saying '**Look at how big my mandate is.**'

Summary Lecture I - American Fundamentalism

We distinguish between form and content. For **form** in general:

‘Fundamentalism’ . . . refers to a discernible pattern of religious militance by which self-styled ‘true believers’ attempt to arrest the erosion of religious identity, fortify the borders of the religious community, and create viable alternatives to secular institutions and behaviors.

Though American fundamentalism formally began in the 20th century, its background can be traced to Spanish expansionism, the Reformation, English Revolution, and aspects of American theology and history. Exclusivism, certainty, and close watch of the boundaries are common features along with the use of special inerrant texts that are applicable at all times and places. Generally its organizations are authoritarian. Faith trumps science. There are binary structures of reality and practice: e.g. ‘those not for us are against us.’ Believers are against secularity. Dissent is not tolerated. End Times are close at hand. Beliefs are universalized and apply to all and sundry.

American Christian fundamentalist **content** stresses inerrancy of the Bible and the literal belief in Christ’s virgin birth, miracles, deity, substitutionary atonement, resurrection, the second coming. ‘Puritan’ piety remains strong. Fundamentalists are mostly supportive of strong church and state links, heterosexual manliness, patriarchal family values, Israel, Ten Commandments, creationism, work ethic, free-for-all market, globalization, low taxes, reduced welfare, obey authorities, and are anti-intellectual, anti-feminist, anti-abortion, anti-single parents, anti-divorce, anti-gay, anti-Catholic, and anti-Muslim. Enforcement is under Congress, the Executive, and the Courts who are ‘sent’ by God. The United States has an exemplary divine national mission which replicates its founding as ‘New Israel.’ Defense trumps UN diplomacy and Bush influenced by the neo-cons say Europe and the UN can ‘shove it.’ The President’s views are further explored.

Partial Book List

Ruthven, Malise	<i>Fundamentalism</i>	OUP, 2004
Zeiden, David	<i>The Resurgence of Religion</i>	Brill, 2003
Armstrong, Karen	<i>The Battle for God</i>	Ballantine, 2000
Straub, Gerard Thomas	<i>Salvation for Sale – [Pat Robertson],</i>	Prometheus, 1986
Wald, Kenneth D	<i>Religion and Politics in the US, 4th ed.</i>	Rowan & Littlefield, 2003
Hutchison, William R	<i>Religious Pluralism in America</i>	Yale 2004
Morone, James A	<i>Hellfire Nation</i>	Yale, 2004
Ahlstrom, Sydney E	<i>A Religions History of the American People</i>	Yale, 2004
Tuveson, Ernest Lee	<i>Redeemer Nation – The Idea of America’s Millennial Role,</i> Midway Reprint, U of Chicago, 1968	
Buchanan, Patrick J	<i>The Death of the West</i>	Dunn, 2002
Hardt & Negri	<i>Empire</i>	Harvard, 2000
Hamburger, Philip	<i>Separation of Church & State</i>	Harvard, 2002
Tillich, Paul	<i>Systematic Theology I, Introduction</i>	Chicago, 1951
Barr, James	<i>Fundamentalism</i>	Phila, 1977
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