

# The Giuliani-Driven Christians

Prioritizing foreign policy over cultural concerns, evangelicals testify for America's liberal mayor.

By Paul Gottfried

SUPPORT FOR FORMER New York City mayor Rudolph Giuliani among the Religious Right and particularly among evangelicals is a surprising development in American political culture. According to Quinnipiac polls, Giuliani is the Republican presidential candidate who enjoys the most popularity among evangelical Protestants, and the lead in polls that he commands in certain swing states, especially Florida, is attributed to “white Evangelical voters.” On April 30, the *Baptist Standard* announced that “Giuliani leads among Evangelicals; Clinton leads among Catholics.” Although the report about Clinton's support may have been news, the information about Giuliani was, by the end of April, old hat. Already in February the *Washington Post* had him “surging among white Evangelicals.”

At the beginning of May, among this group, which is essential for large Republican turnouts on election day, Giuliani ran 11 points ahead of his closest competitor, Sen. John McCain, whose positions on abortion and other social issues would suggest closer agreement with evangelical values. For a while it seemed that Giuliani's social positions—which are generally garden-variety leftist on abortion, gay marriage, and amnesty for illegal immigrants—plus his publicized dalliances, two failed marriages, and the attacks on his lack of paternal sense of responsibility made by his son would end the Religious Right's love affair with the candidate. But this has not been the case.

A number of Giuliani's fans in the Fourth Estate, such as Cal Thomas,

Richard Brookhiser, and the editorial writers for the neoconservative *New York Post*, have revealed some of the reasons for the Religious Right's attachment. Religious Protestants have come to view the issues that Giuliani has emphasized, “national security” and “fighting terror,” as more crucial than those family issues they stressed in the past. Thomas, who is himself a professing Christian but with a neoconservative, Zionist twist, stated the opinion on March 13 that such prioritizing indicates a definite “maturing” among his coreligionists. This seems to be the general view of the establishment conservative press in the U.S., which remains agog over Giuliani's candidacy and his stand on terrorism.

The problem is that nothing in Giuliani's past, except for rhetorical posturing, would suggest that he is especially equipped to deal with international terrorists. Although violent crime in New York City declined under his administration, the same general trend could be observed in other American cities, and that trend might be related to demographic factors and to the building and use of prisons as much as to Giuliani's vaunted toughness. And there is not necessarily a connection between getting criminals and derelicts off the streets in the Big Apple and apprehending international terrorists. The two would seem to involve different skills.

Additionally, Rudy's recent assurance to evangelicals that as president he would nominate “strict-constructionist judges to the federal courts” tells more

about the credulity of his audience than Giuliani's likely course as chief executive. While mayor, his appointments to New York's lower courts came consistently from the left wing of the Democratic Party. These appointees reflected the mayor's pro-choice positions rather than the “strict constructionist” perspective that is now associated with critics of abortion.

As for Giuliani's spirited presence in New York City during the crisis of 9/11, clearly that disaster was a veritable windfall for him. It allowed the mayor to regain his plummeting popularity by posing against dramatic backdrops and giving pep talks to firefighters. Since then, the media coverage of his comings and goings has been overwhelmingly favorable, and contrary to what is dutifully reported by FOX News, Giuliani is made to appear far more appetizing on network news than Republican *bête noire* Hillary Clinton.

When a Republican friend announced that the Democratic media have already arranged for Hillary's coronation, my wife's annoyed response was “that's all nonsense. They hate Hillary. It's Rudy they love.” I would have to agree. On television, Hillary is made to look inept and shrewish. Rudy, by contrast, comes across as bold, decisive, and virile. And this may have to do with how the candidates are presented at least as much as with what they say. Whatever sexual and family baggage is attached to Rudy is not something that the media has recently chosen to highlight. One exasperated right-of-center columnist, Cliff

Kincaid, has complained, “Fox news has already crowned Giuliani” even before the primaries have begun.

And the Religious Right is leading the parade. To some extent it reflects the views of the American conservative media, which is almost without exception dominated by neoconservative spokespersons. Giuliani is well-liked in this group because of his strong identification with the Israeli hard right and because he tried to throw Yassir Arafat, then head of the PLO, out of New York City. He has also zealously endorsed the war in Iraq, an undertaking in which the neoconservatives have a deep and obvious investment. Last year in *The Weekly Standard*, Bill Kristol called for a presidential ticket consisting of Giuliani and Joe Lieberman, praising both for their commitment to the struggle to bring democracy to the Middle East. Although Kristol for the moment backs McCain, perhaps for leverage, one cannot doubt that he and his staff would be delighted if Giuliani became president.

Since the younger generation of neo-conservatives tends to be either on the Left on social issues or totally indifferent to them, and, like Giuliani, makes no secret of welcoming illegal immigrants into the country, Giuliani’s domestic stands pose no problem for them. The Religious Right is going with the conservative media flow by rallying around Giuliani, playing its long-established role as supplier of Republican foot soldiers and movement-conservative groupies.

But it must be stressed that the issue that has come to trump all other evangelical concerns is fighting the war on terror. Cal Thomas has extolled his fellow evangelicals to recognize the big picture: “Character is seen as less important than who can face the multiple challenges facing the nation”—specifically, the struggle against international terror. From the evangelical perspective, this confrontation with terror is so intertwined with

other issues that it serves as a kind of shorthand. Israel, Zionism, and the glorification of American democracy as a world model are all at least implicit in the evangelical conception of the struggle against terror—one that Giuliani is imagined to be able to lead better than any other presidential contender. During a visit to New York by a Saudi Arabian prince soon after 9/11, Giuliani took the occasion to speak out against the visitor’s attempt to link the lack of goodwill for the U.S. among Arabs to American indifference to the Palestinian cause. His tirade was directed against those who suggest “moral equivalency between liberal democracies, like Israel and the United States” and their current enemies. This broadside has continued to come up on evangelical websites pushing Giuliani’s candidacy.

Another related factor here, which the *New York Times* underscored in an April 30 feature story, is that evangelicals have moved away from divisive issues like abortion to stress an apparently less controversial “human rights” agenda. The movement’s leaders have worked overtime to sway the White House to pursue democratization worldwide, and publications like *Christian Century* have moved away from the Moral Majority kind of politics characteristic of evangelicals in the past to affirming the need for exporting American political practices. Significantly, the “Letter of Support for Democracy” that was sent to President Bush on Feb. 25, 2003, calling for regime change in Iraq, was signed by World Evangelical Alliance dignitaries as well as prominent neoconservatives. This exhortation was fully consistent with the stated political views of the National Alliance of Evangelicals and the World Alliance of Evangelicals. Despite the erosion of support among evangelicals for the Iraq War from its onetime high of almost 80 percent, it is, according to polls, still well over 50 percent.

Unlike the more Biblically literalist and apocalyptic fundamentalists, with whom they are regularly confused in the media, evangelicals are usually upwardly mobile professionals, and for at least a decade, they have begun to split on family and environmental issues. On abortion and gay rights, evangelicals, who now number in the tens of millions, are hardly as united as they once were. But they do continue to show loyalty to the idea of the U.S. as a special kind of political entity that is meant to enlighten other, still benighted societies. Critical scholars such as Richard Gamble, James Kurth, and George Marsden have examined the progress of American cultural Protestantism and particularly the substitution of certain patriotic themes for older religious teachings. Gamble and Kurth in particular have accentuated the way in which “American democracy” has become an object of American Protestant adoration. It is essential, however, not to confuse such adulation and the foreign policy it favors with traditional religious enthusiasm.

Contrary to our obsessively secularist press, evangelicals are not trying to unleash an apocalypse by promoting American military adventures. It would also be an exaggeration to claim that evangelicals are pushing the war on terror because it is being waged against infidel Muslims. The Bush administration has done everything humanly possible to depict the present conflict as one featuring “democratic” Muslims aided by “democratic” America standing against “undemocratic” extremists.

Evangelicals believe in exactly the kind of war that the Bush administration has described in its idealistic moments. It is also the one that Giuliani, as the protector of our “security” and the denier of “moral equivalency,” represents more than any other presidential candidate. Bush’s favorite speechwriter, Michael J.

Gerson, who crafted both his sweeping Second Inaugural and his 2002 State of the Union Address delivered just before the Iraq War began, is a self-proclaimed evangelical. It was Gerson who, as the *Washington Post* explained on the occasion of his June 2006 departure, “was the formulator of the Bush doctrine making the spread of democracy the fundamental goal of American foreign policy”—a goal he stressed in every foreign-policy speech that he drafted for Bush. It was not the neoconservatives who scripted these globalist revolutionary hallucinations but a born-again Christian.

This should give pause to those who identify with the small-government, mind-your-own-business Right. It is not just neoconservatives but their evangelical allies who are the foreign-policy activists. They have taken this stand because of their ardent democratist and pro-Israeli sentiments and not because they are fixated on a particular view of the apocalypse.

Now that powerful segment of the American electorate has concluded that this social liberal from New York will continue a missionizing venture that they understand as an extension of Wilson’s “war to end all wars” and “make the world safe for democracy.” Giuliani’s evangelical supporters do not view him in the same way the liberal media does—that is, as a social liberal who will push his party leftward. Given the erosion of the evangelical consensus on once hard-core moral issues, a tendency that religious sociologist Mark Shibley has studied in depth, Giuliani’s stands on abortion or gay marriage may matter less and less to many evangelical voters. Like Mike Gerson, these Republicans are focused on foreign-policy goals—and they seem to have found their candidate in the maritally challenged former mayor. ■

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# Divide & Rule

The Republican insiders’ guide to ethnic manipulation.

By James P. Pinkerton

HIDDEN AWAY, secreted in the dusty stacks of the Machiavellian Library, is the definitive how-to guide, *Winning Through Ethnic Manipulation*. Observing the immigration and affirmative-action policies favored by the current administration, it’s one book that I am sure George W. Bush—or at least Karl Rove—has read.

Start with the chapter entitled “Divide and Conquer,” which instructs power-practitioners to dream up racial hierarchies aimed at keeping potentially powerful groups divided—too busy fighting over crumbs on the floor to notice those enjoying the lavish feast at the big table. An example is found in the history of the New World, where white slaveowners pitted light-skinned blacks against dark-skinned blacks. The house slave vs. field slave distinction, cruelly internalized by African Americans themselves, has ever since hobbled black political power. Score one for white Machiavels.

In other places, the racial Machiavellians found themselves in such a minority that they had to import new ethnicities to help control the restive majority. That was the situation in South Africa, where the British brought in Indians to bolster their own power. One cog in the imperial machine was Mohandas Gandhi. The young barrister, arriving in 1893, was eager to begin work as a colonizing functionary. Yet the Hindu, mistreated by white racists in his new land, soon began to think less than favorably about British rule over India. He evinced no sympathy for Africans, however, telling

an audience of Indians in 1896, “Ours is one continual struggle against a degradation sought to be inflicted upon us by the Europeans, who desire to degrade us to the level of the raw Kaffir.” Demonstrating the racist disdain of a brown for a black, Gandhi characterized the Kaffir as one “whose sole ambition is to collect a certain number of cattle to buy a wife with and, then, pass his life in indolence and nakedness.” To be fair, Gandhi’s views changed as he grew older—and after he left South Africa to return home.

So back to Bush and his crew. American blacks don’t vote Republican? The “Divide and Conquer” chapter provides a solution: bring in 10 or 20 million Hispanics and suddenly blacks are no longer the biggest racial minority. When those Hispanics arrive, praise their “strong family values” and get as many as possible into jobs that displace blacks. (As a side benefit, get those macho men into the military because Uncle Sam needs more *forraje de canon*—for wars such as Iraq—than native-stock mothers are willing to offer up.) Bush & Co. can hope that the *Nuevos Americanos* become Republicans—surely these proud working folk will shun Democrats as the party of lower-down blacks.

Which leads us to the next chapter, “Overwhelm and Defeat,” detailing techniques for routing one’s enemies by manipulating the immigration spigot. The 2002 movie “Gangs of New York,” set in the mid-19th century, ably recaptures the ethnic dynamics of that