

George McGovern
Lecture #1
1-18-82

NB: VERY POOR TAPE
MUSIC ON TAPE
DURING INTRO

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CAPPS: --as soon as we have this information for sure, we will put an article in the Daily Nexus so _____ by tomorrow noon. I don't want to take any more time with these preliminaries from the time allotted to our featured speaker. I just want to explain, however, that we will follow the format that we, that I had last time, that is, he will, Senator McGovern will open with a paper, a lecture, and then following that we will take a brief break, where _____ you can exercise for _____ And then following whatever we do at _____, following that we will have a question and answer period, so that if you have responses you would like to make to the remarks _____ to do that. I know we have visitors in the room tonight. In order to _____ taking the course for credit, during the question and answer period I am hoping that those of you who are taking the course for credit are, we want to ask the questions, because that's one of the purposes of the class. _____ anything _____ to say about George McGovern. I'll say a few of those. It has literally been one of the high points of _____ that he has consented to be part of this class. We put this together a year ago when he was here speaking on the future of liberalism. And I am most delighted he has come back to talk to us on the topic, religion and politics _____. All of you know him very well. He is from South Dakota, and he has a Ph.D. in American history and government from Northwestern University. He is professor of history at Dakota(?) Western University. In 1963, he became the _____ of

the Democratic Party in the State of South Dakota. He was elected to the House of Representatives in 1956, again in 1958. In 1960, President John F. Kennedy appointed him the first director of the U.S. Food for Peace Program, as special assistant to the President. He was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1962, again in 1968, again in 1974. In 1972, he was the Democratic candidate for President of the United States. He was defeated for re-election to the Senate in 1980. And he currently heads a group called Americans for Common Sense. Americans for Common Sense is one of the _____ groups we will be studying for the _____ studies in this class. (INTERFERENCE HERE FROM OTHER MATERIAL RECORDED ON TAPE). _____ introduction. I have said as much as I need to say factually, but I will simply add that it gives me a great deal of pleasure to be able to present Dr. George McGovern to this distinguished _____ this evening.

McGOVERN: Thank you, Walter. Well, thank you very much, Dr. Capps, students and faculty of the University of California. When I heard that we were going to be meeting in a gymnasium tonight, I asked Walter Capps if this was to give us a chance, a pep rally for the Forty-niners. But he said if we did that, we'd not only have to give equal time to the Moral Majority, to compensate for me, but we'd have to give equal time to the Cincinnati Bengals, so, and I also think we've got enough competition here as it is. If you get tired of listening to me, you can always watch the dancing class over here on the other

side of the auditorium.

Many years ago, Hilaire Belloc, the great English writer, went to a distinguished club meeting in the City of London, to hear a speaker who failed to show up. And the chairman of the meeting, after a twenty or thirty-minute wait, finally decided to ask Professor Belloc if he would speak. He came to the platform, and asked the chairman of the meeting what he should talk about, and the chairman said, well, in this club you can speak about anything you wish, except religion or politics. Whereupon said Belloc, having been prevented from speaking on either of the subjects that most concern mankind, I turned on my heel and left the meeting.

Well, tonight I have been invited to speak on both of those forbidden things, religion and politics in our contemporary life. And what I would like to do, since this is the first of two sessions of this kind in which I'll be involved with this university, is to talk tonight about the phenomenon associated with the rise of a quasi-religious political movement, sometimes identified with the Moral Majority, which is simply the more celebrated of a number of these right-wing religious groups that have surfaced in American politics. This is not entirely new in American politics. From the very beginning, we have dealt with this problem of what is the proper and what is the improper role of religious activities in American politics. But tonight I would like to ask us to look at certain aspects of what has happened in recent years, associated with the political

activism of the fundamentalist or evangelical movements that we have seen in recent campaigns.

The premise of modern religious fundamentalism, as I understand it, is that you cannot believe in both God and the scientific method, at the same time. If people seek, on the basis of their own scientific inquiry, and by means of their own human experience, to improve their earthly condition, and that of their fellow humans, then according to the fundamentalists, God is rejected along with all standards of absolute right and wrong. Some of the more dogmatic humanists, I must say, may have an equally rigid outlook, holding that if human experience is the proper basis for defining moral standards, then there can't be any God, there can't be any divine force moving in human affairs.

Now, having grown up in a religious household, my father being a Methodist clergyman, I myself tend to adhere to the view that one can be both a humanist and a religious believer without any philosophical contradiction. It strikes me as possible that the Lord may deliberately have given humans a certain latitude to find their own way in the world, and it also seems to me quite conceivable that the force that we refer to as Providence may have arranged such things as evolution and the possibility of scientific inquiry, that there is nothing irreligious about either evolution or other aspects of scientific theory and scientific inquiry.

Now that, all of this is to stray into the realm of theology, which is really not my purpose here tonight.

My purpose here, rather, is to make the case for modern knowledge and freedom of thought, whatever form it might take, and to point out what I think are some of the dangers of efforts from whatever source to suppress freedom of inquiry in science, in politics, and in religion. We have been witnessing of late, as I think all in this auditorium know, a kind of replay of the famous Scopes trial, the so-called monkey trial, of the nineteen-twenties. That trial pitted the great Clarence Darrow against William Jennings Bryan, who, through most of his life, incidentally, was a very courageous and eloquent, and usually intelligent American statesman. But these two men squared off against each other in a seminal debate that Americans have been pondering ever since over evolution and the origin of the human species.

In the play, "Inherit the Wind," which was a fictionalized account of this great Scopes trial, and the nineteen-twenties battle over the doctrine of evolution versus the Book of Genesis, there is a scene in which the humanist lawyer, strongly resembling Clarence Darrow, quotes some geneology. He cites a list of progeny from the Bible of who begat whom, you know, those verses about so and so begat so and so, and so and so begat so and so. And he then asked rhetorically, how do you suppose all that begatting took place?

Well, the issue in the nineteen-twenties was the inclusion of evolution in the academic curriculum. Now, the issue today is just the reverse of that, the re-

introduction of the concept of creationism, the Genesis story of how we all got here, in seven days, with the creation of all living things approximately in the year 4004 BC. Earlier this year, the State of Arkansas became the first state to adopt a law requiring the schools to teach the doctrine of creationism, the Biblical version of human creation, along with evolution. And to teach it, not as a course in religion, but to teach it in the science classrooms as a theory with equal claim on respectability with the scientific theory of evolution. Now Louisiana has followed Arkansas in that effort. And other states are considering the same requirements.

The Reverend Falwell has been encouraging this movement as a spearhead of his televised "Old-fashioned Gospel Hour," and also as one of the political points of the Moral Majority. He has also encouraged, and indeed arranged, at least one televised debate that's already taken place, between a so-called creationist and an evolutionist. The head of a California organization that you may be familiar with, called the Creation Science Research Center, has been quoted on this issue as follows: "The naturalist, atheist, humanists are running things in this country. If you teach that man is an animal the way these evolutionists do, then there is no right and wrong, and people will act like animals."

That, he said, is what happens when you divorce the curriculum from religion. "We cannot," he said, "live with such chaotic values." End of quote.

Now, one problem the creationists have is the First Amendment to the Constitution, an amendment that mandates the separation of church and state. People are free to hold whatever religious doctrine they wish, but they can't advance that particular doctrine through the instrumentality of the state. Now, the creationists are attempting to bypass that particular constitutional barrier, by arguing that creationism is a science, that you are not, in effect, introducing religion into the classroom when you teach the concept of creation as spelled out in the Book of Genesis, but that you are introducing a valid scientific theory, as spelled out in the inspired Word of God.

The creationist movement, I might observe, under that technique, has been spreading in my own state of South Dakota. The state superintendent for public instruction in our state, the chief educational official in the state, has said recently that virtually all high schools in South Dakota now make it a practice to include some discussion of creationism whenever the concept of evolution is discussed in the science classroom. It's more and more being treated as an equal, as far as scientific validity, with the Darwinian theory of evolution.

An educator in Georgia has been quoted recently as saying, and I quote, "There is no way a politician can any longer vote against this kind of thing, because to do so is a vote against God. If you don't go along," he said, "you are considered an atheist and a humanist."

And to many people those two things are interchangeable.

The anthropologist and author, Ashleigh Montague,^{ey?} has commented on this phenomenon from a somewhat different perspective, when he says, "Absolute truth belongs only to one class of humans, the class of absolute fools." He said that the difference between science and creationism, and I quote again, "is that science has proof without certainty; creationists have certainty without any proof."

Creationism and all the other causes of the religious evangelists, and I cite that simply as one example of what they are proposing, has now become big business in the United States. The number of people, for example, who actually watch Reverend Falwell's "Old-time Gospel Hour" is in dispute. He claims some twenty-five million that see him every week. If that figure is anywhere near close, it's quite clear that you have to make an awful lot of appearances at places like the University of California to offset the impact of a man who is speaking to twenty-five million Americans in their living rooms week after week after week. Regardless of the exact size of that, Reverend Falwell claims that more people now watch him on television than see Johnny Carson, which is a very bold claim indeed.

The program also brings in, in contributions, and I think those of you who have watched it know how effectively those appeals are done, it nets about sixty million dollars a year, in contributions through the televised fund appeals.

I might just say here parenthetically that I

got some idea myself, some fifteen years ago, as how powerful that television fund appeal technique can be, when a group of senators, under my leadership, bought a half-hour of time on the NBC network to make an appeal against the war in Vietnam. That would have been 1967, I think. And we didn't know how to get fifty thousand dollars, which it what it would then cost for a half-hour on the network. I suppose it would be three or four times that much today. But anyway we finally persuaded some of our friends to loan us fifty thousand dollars. We bought a half-hour of time. We used the last twenty seconds to make an appeal for funds to help pay for that broadcast, and five hundred thousand dollars came in the mail. So that was my introduction to the power of television.

Now, imagine having that kind of an audience, twenty-five to thirty million people, week after week, that you can cultivate as faithful followers, who would send you even a dollar a week. It's a lot of money, if ten per cent of them respond. In the nineteen-fifties and sixties, most of these religious broadcasts were the main line religious leaders. I can remember as a young boy growing up out in South Dakota, my father listening to Harry Emerson Fosdick, a prominent Baptist clergyman, I guess, rather nondenominational, actually. He preached in a very broad-based way. But up until the nineteen-seventies, I think it's fair to say most of these religious broadcasts were dominated by a prominent

Protestant, or a prominent Catholic, or a Jewish religious leader, or someone out of the main line religious tradition. And they were using free public service time. The networks balanced off the various major religious groupings, by providing as a public service a certain amount of time to each of these major groups. But in the nineteen-seventies, you have the emergence of a whole range of new evangelical television preachers who purchased the time that used to be given away, and that movement accelerated to the point until Reverend Falwell and the Reverend Pat Robertson and James Robeson and others, just to name the most conspicuous, came to dominate the Sunday morning period that earlier had been reserved for the main line religious groups. They literally put the other religious programs off the air.

Annual expenditures of these television ministers for the purchase of such air time are now estimated at six hundred million dollars annually. That's a lot of air time. Six hundred million dollars of purchased time. And by 1980, there were actually thirty religiously owned television stations operating in the United States. And various religious groups owned and operated a thousand radio stations in the United States. All of this by 1980, all of them supported by audience contributions. Cable stations now, picking up the religious broadcast, have expanded that broadcast, that reach even further. In addition, computer technologies have enabled these evangelists to develop a feedback system through telephone banks and direct mail, and you've probably seen these

enormous banks of telephones, with thirty or forty or fifty people, answering telephones from all over the country, receiving contributions while the program is in progress. And it's through that feedback system that contributions are solicited and used to sustain these religious broadcasts, now reaching undoubtedly tens of millions of American viewers.

Now, for millions of people that are troubled by the complexity of modern life, frustrated by inflation, disturbed about the change in life-styles of their children, worried about the growth of drugs, angry about the seeming setbacks to American power and prestige overseas, the message of the electronic church has a kind of a simplicity and consoling appeal that is very seductive, to say the least. It offers salvation for the believer, along with the assurance of God's benevolent intervention in the believer's life. Besides denouncing such things as sexual, homosexuality and abortion, decrying the absence of prayer in the public schools, and all the rest of the familiar litany of evils, the television preachers celebrate such things as miraculous cures from cancer and arthritis, and other illnesses that they claim can be cured by divine intervention.

Frances Fitzgerald, who has written rather extensively on this subject in the New Yorker of last May 18--

FROM AUDIENCE: --book, I believe it is--

McGOVERN: No, it's in the New Yorker of May 18, 1981.

And Ms. Fitzgerald had this to say: "The message that

comes through clearest from all these television shows is that God pays particular attention to the health and financial prosperity of those who send in contributions to religious television shows."

Jerry Falwell, through his organization, called the Moral Majority, has of course emerged as the most conspicuous of these television preachers and healers. And he is the one who has most actively gone into politics. He has publicly disavowed the old church doctrine of separation from the world, and now argues that he has a religious duty to advance his cause in the political arena.

According to Ms. Fitzgerald again, the "Old-time Gospel Hour" raised approximately \$115 million in 1977, and in 1978. That program has become the fund-raising arm of the Falwell national movement. Just to take the year 1979, for example. "Old-time Gospel Hour" spent eleven million dollars for direct mail, and for promotional purposes. What you are talking about here are figures that compare with the dimensions of a Presidential campaign. Just to cite my own campaign that I know something about, some ten years ago, in the two-year bid for the nomination, that included winning some ten primary elections, including the two biggest states, California and New York, then the subsequent national convention, and then the losing bid in the general election in the fall to Mr. Nixon, we raised and spent some thirty million dollars, in that national campaign. The other side spent some sixty-five million dollars in the same election. But those two campaigns together, national campaigns for the Presidency

of the United States, of fifty states, cost around a hundred million dollars. We are talking about just one religious program on television that generates sixty million dollars under the control of a single individual. Through his various outlets, starting with the Thomas Rhode(?) Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Virginia, Jerry Falwell preaches his new fundamentalist religion and political philosophy. He opposes the idea of the individual gathering evidence and drawing his own conclusions about the nature of life and the nature of society.

He once told his congregation that it was a waste of time for anyone to read anything except the Bible, and certain approved works by thoughtful theologians on the Bible. The purpose of education, he said, is not only to teach Biblical right and wrong to young people, but to protect our young people from any information that might raise questions about fundamental religious doctrine. Education in that view consists as much of what is withheld, the disturbing information that is withheld, as in what is offered. Which is by any definition a profoundly anti-intellectual approach. Nor is the issue in any way seen as a civilized debate between individuals of honest convictions and good will. There is no tolerance in the Falwell version of fundamentalism. He has said to his congregation, and I quote, "The war in this country is not between fundamentals and liberals. It is very simply between those who love Jesus Christ and those who hate Him." Everything reduced to that one simple concept. Where this leaves non-Christians is not explained.

But Fitzgerald notes that Falwell makes frequent use of military metaphors. It is not only that he sees religious and political conflict as a war, but those metaphors creep out in his discussion, week after week. The contest between religious fundamentalism and secular humanism is not an intellectual dispute, but it's a war, involving the most serious commitment of all of us in his view.

He has made, for example, such statements as the following, and I quote: "The local church is an organized army. It must be equipped for battle. It must be ready to charge the enemy." And then he said, "The Sunday School is the attacking squad." Another statement: "The church must be a disciplined, charging army, ready for battle. Christians, like slaves and soldiers, must ask no questions."

In keeping with those military metaphors, the Reverend Falwell attributes super-masculine qualities to Jesus Christ. In one sermon that I happen to have heard, he assailed the tradition of portraying Jesus as a thin man with long hair and a flowing robe. "Christ," he said, "was not effeminate. The man who lived on this earth two thousand years ago was a man with real muscle. Jesus Christ," he said, "was a genuine he-man."

Now, one of the striking attributes of evangelical preachers is their repudiation of the doctrine of separation of church and state. In the past, I think it's fair to say that many people in this fundamentalist tradition have adhered for the most part to this view,

that the spiritual mission of the church should not be carried into the political arena. That was certainly the view of my own father. However, there have been exceptions. Fundamentalist preachers as far back as 1928, campaigned openly from the pulpit against Al Smith, in the Presidential election of 1928, on the ground that the election of a Catholic would mean that the Vatican was running the public affairs of the United States. The most popular of all these evangelists in the nineteen-fifties and nineteen-sixties and on into the seventies, the Reverend Billy Graham, came out publicly with endorsements for candidate Richard Nixon in 1960, against he endorsed him again in 1968 against Hubert Humphrey, and needless to say, endorsed him in 1972 in his choice over George McGovern. He also expressed himself forcefully on other political issues. But I am happy to say, in more recent days, Dr. Graham has had second thoughts about all of this, and most recently has rebuked the Moral Majority for its arrogance, its self-righteousness, and as he says, for becoming so hung up on people's personal sex lives that they lose sight of the great issues of war and peace, and the issues of world hunger. I think that's great progress on the part of Dr. Graham. And I was glad to hear him say of the Moral Majority, "These people sound like I used to sound twenty years ago." He added, for whatever worth it is to you students, that he wishes as a young man he had read more books and done less preaching.

The political program of the evangelists on the right consists of opposition to just about every cause associated in recent years with liberalism. These groups on the religious right for the most part strongly supported the war in Vietnam right up until the bitter end. They opposed bitterly the Panama Canal treaty, notwithstanding the fact that it had the endorsement of President Nixon and President Ford, President Johnson, President Carter, all of the joint chiefs of staff, and sixty-eight United States senators. They opposed the SALT treaty and still do, as a betrayal of the American national interest to the Soviet Union. They have supported virtually every increase in military spending and supported virtually every cut in support for the social programs. They are passionately anti-communist, hostile to labor unions, and deeply opposed to almost all forms of government assistance to the poor, such as food stamps and assistance to poor families with dependent children. These, they would argue, are the responsibilities of the church and of the good Christian charitable programs, not the responsibility of the state.

The forming of the Moral Majority in the year 1979, just a little over two and a half years ago, marked in many ways the formalization of the alliance between the religious Right and the right-wing political operators in the country. Falwell himself came into direct association with the more established, hard-line political right-wing operators, including Richard Vigory, the

direct-mail king, Howard Phillips, of the conservative caucus, a coordinating right-wing political mechanism, Paul Wyrick(?), who is the chairman of a group called the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress.

One of the things I have noticed about these groups, and I think I made this point when I spoke here a year ago, is that the worse they are, the loftier the title they have. So when you look at a group that calls itself the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress, don't swallow the label until you look at their program. And what it means is that the Congress is not free at all, but one that will jump through the hoop to the tune of the narrow, rigid partisan formulas spelled out by these right-wing political operators.

Now, these individuals and the various groups they head, became active collaborators, that is, the political groups, with Jerry Falwell, with Pat Robertson, with James Robeson, and other evangelists, as the 1980 election approached. And it was that collaboration that resulted in the creation of the Moral Majority, as well as several other religious organizations that became active in direct political participation. Under the Moral Majority, Falwell proceeded to set up a series of state organizations to advance his group's political objectives. I heard the Reverend Falwell being interrogated the other day on the activities of some of these state Moral Majority chapters. And I sympathize to a certain extent with some of the problems he has had, because anybody that's been in

politics very long knows that sometimes things are done in your name at the local level that the national office isn't entirely enthusiastic about.

Recently, for example, in the State of Maryland, the Moral Majority chapter in that state, right next door to where I now live in Washington, D. C., filed a lawsuit against a bakery in Baltimore that had been cooking gingerbread cookies in the form of boys and girls. And they suggested that there might be some small difference between the two sexes, and it came out in the gingerbread cookies. The Moral Majority filed an action in court to get a restraining order against this bakery for corrupting the morals of children. Now, understandably the judge, who was a sober old Republican judge, quickly threw the case out of court as ridiculous, with some kind of gruff comment not to waste his time with frivolous matters about gingerbread cookies. Whereupon the Moral Majority promptly took their case to the state legislature at Annapolis, Maryland, and two senators introduced a bill known as the pornographic cooky control act of 1980. It is still pending in the legislature.

Now, whereas in earlier years the Christian evangelist tended to emphasize the direct threat of the international communist conspiracy, and I have heard many a sermon on that threat in the nineteen-fifties, particularly back in the era of the late Senator Joe McCarthy, the emphasis now is more on a threat arising here at home, in our

own society. In other words, the threat is not perceived as directed so much from Moscow, but from sinful, wicked men and women right here in our own midst. Such evils as feminism, the equal rights amendment, with all the horrible evils that will bring, pornography, divorce, homosexuality, all of these are presented as corrupting influences that will destroy the American family and in due course, so weaken the nation as to weaken us for communist takeover. In other words, it isn't so much what the Russians are doing to us, it's the fact that we are destroying ourselves by things like uncontrolled feminism and these other things that are destroying the American family. The so-called permissiveness that you hear so much about from the new Right, that allows these evils to run rampant, is more than a mere license for sin. It is exposing the nation to conquest and eventual takeover by our enemies.

Now, as the late H.L. Mencken used to say, there may be some truth in that argument, but not much.

It would be difficult to assess how significant a role the evangelists on the political Right played in influencing the outcome of the 1980 election. I don't want to assert here today that they were a decisive factor, although I think nonetheless they were an important and damaging influence in a number of campaigns, including my own. But Falwell himself has described the defeat of President Carter as, quote, "my finest hour." He also took ostentatious credit for the Moral Majority's role

in electing a number of Republicans in congressional and senatorial races. Some of the people that he claims to have elected are taking strong exception to that claim. But at the very least it must be said that the bridge between religion and politics has been crossed with uncertain results for the future.

Now, having been a prime target for both the political Right and the religious Right, and I think it's fair to say that no one was more directly and massively targeted than, in 1980, than I was, it's possible that I am somewhat less objective about this matter than some of you. But I have tried, and I will continue to try, to marshal the facts and not let my own emotions dominate my conclusion. I will try to be as fair and as scientific as I can in the manner of a true-blood secular humanist. I would also add as a personal observation that in addition to my fear for certain constitutional principles, freedom of speech, the spirit of tolerance, the spirit of open inquiry, that I think are right at the heart of our democracy, I also have a visceral dislike of crusading self-righteousness. I am suspicious of people who are more fascinated with their enemies than they are with their friends, who are more obsessed with the sins that they profess to detest than they are with the virtues that they claim to espouse. I am really more impressed with people who believe in something than I am those who hate and hear somebody else's beliefs.

I think it can fairly be said that what I am talking about here is one of the marks of the new Right, this

self-righteous, absolutist view of public and religious affairs. I believe I said at this university a year ago that in addition to the Moral Majority, we had a group very active in the last campaign called the Christian Voice. Have you heard of that organization? Well, this was the group that attempted to rate the members of the House and Senate on a moral scale of zero to one hundred. And at a crucial period, during the last campaign, they publicly released the score on everybody.

END OF SIDE I OF TAPE

SIDE II OF TAPE

McGOVERN (CONTINUES): Now, let me make clear my own feeling about this. I don't object at all to people trying to get some reading of the moral integrity of men and women who are seeking high office. I really think it's important that, to know something about the character and the moral fiber of people that you are going to put in high positions of public trust. In fact, I wish we had had a little more of that, in recent years. But what I object to is the easy labeling of people as moral or immoral, based on somebody's very narrow criteria. And if you look at what the Christian Voice did, they took fourteen issues on which senators had voted, senators and congressmen had voted, in the last couple of years, and they said those were the test of whether you were moral or not. I think you will be astounded when you look at the way this thing worked. For example, among those fourteen issues was the Equal Rights Amendment. If you voted for the Equal Rights

Amendment, affirming what was practically a statement of equal rights for women, basically, although the amendment provided equal rights for everybody, you lost ten points on the moral scale in the Christian Voice index. If you voted against any increase in military spending, they docked you another ten points. Now, what part of the Bible they got that out of, I don't know. I don't know any religion anywhere in the world that claims it's immoral to vote for reductions in armaments. If you voted for the creation of a separate department of education, you lost ten points, morally. Now, you can argue about whether we ought to have a separate department of education or whether you ought to leave it back in what we used to call Health, Education, and Welfare, as the Office of Education, but that's not a moral question. It's an organization debate as to how best to organize the administration of the federal education program. I am not going to go through the fourteen tests of morality. You probably already guessed that I got a zero on the chart.

Now, as I have observed many times, I thought maybe they had an anti-Methodist bias until I discovered that Father Drinan, the only Jesuit priest in the United States Congress also got a zero on morals. And Congressman Kelly of Florida, the Abscam guy, the fellow that you saw in television stuffing the money into his coat pocket, he got a hundred per cent on the, so the, that point of all of this is that, and I think this illustrates it, I don't

want anyone here to say that George McGovern came to Santa Barbara and said there's no place for morality in politics. There's no reason to try to get a reading on the moral strength of public officials. That's important, but what I stress is that you have to be careful not to apply such a narrow doctrine that it becomes a farce. And what the Christian Voice is doing, in my judgment, is making a laughing-stock out of both religion and the political process.

The movement that we have been talking about here tonight, and I don't want to belabor these points too long, has also found a very significant base of support in the Congress of the United States. A number of senators elected in 1978, by the help of these radical right-wing groups, and again in 1980, happen to be of strong evangelical disposition, but unquestionably the leader and patriarch of that group that I am talking about, the allies of the religious Right, inside the Congress, is Senator Jesse Helms of the State of North Carolina. He is the big king-pin. In the same sense that Falwell symbolizes what's going on in the electronic church, as far as religion and politics are concerned, Jesse Helms is the guy that you ought to look at if you want a symbol to study inside the Congress, in the skillful use of religious doctrine to advance one's political career in what I think is a very questionable way. Senator Helms works not only in the Senate, where he is probably the most active single senator in Senate debate and in tying up

the Senate in procedural moves, but he also works through a network of organizations in all fifty states, that he and his associates have created over the years. Now, those groups that he controls includes very well-financed, tax-exempt foundations, it includes the so-called Congressional Club, which is Senator Helms' own personal political action committee, and incidentally was second only to NICPAC in 1980 as a raiser and spender of independent political funds in that 1980 campaign. Do you all know what NICPAC is? That's the National Conservative Political Action Congress, Committee that^{'s} headed up by a young man by the name of Terry Dolan. Besides, and the reason I mention that is that that was the number one political spender in these right-wing political organizations. But Senator Helms' Congressional Club was just barely behind it. They were both up close to ten million dollars in political expenditures. Besides being a force in the Senate, Senator Helms is now chairman of the Senate Agriculture and Nutrition Committee, the job I was in line for if I had been re-elected in 1980. But he's one of the most successful political fund-raisers in the nation. He's also a very devout member of the right-wing of the Baptist Church, and is closely allied politically with these fundamentalist television electronic preachers. And like many of the other most successful people on the new Right, Jesse Helms has had extensive experience in using the media effectively. He was for many years a television and radio commentator in the State of North Carolina, operating

his own programs, on his own station, as a private businessman, and broadcaster, in that state, long before he became a candidate for office. And I must say, to his credit, he is very skillful in the way he makes his presentations. He would be a formidable debate antagonist if he were here tonight giving the other side to the argument of what I am presenting to you. I have debated Senator Helms many times, and I find him a formidable antagonist, although one that it's possible to defeat in a debate. His commentaries over the years, before he came to the Senate, centered for many years on radio and television attacks on civil rights, on civil rights legislation, on the civil rights movements, on the attacks on the late Dr. Martin Luther King and others.

And then he moved into the familiar moral issues of the new Right, moving away from the civil rights battle into his war, during the last few years, against pre-marital sex, against so-called family issues such as abortion and prayer in the schools, against the United Nations, constantly lobbied to get the United States to withdraw from the UN, constant attacks on the Peace Corps, on the food stamp program, and on the League of Women Voters and other evil agencies of that kind. In collaboration with Richard Vigary, whom I identified earlier as the direct mail king, and I would say here tonight he is easily the most successful practitioner of direct mail fund-raising in the United States, Senator Helms works closely with Vigory and with a man by the name of Tom Allen, a North Carolina lawyer, who is his close political

Ellis?

confidant. And these men together, Helms, Vigory, and Ellis, have built this congressional club, which is a direct mail fund-raising, political action committee, that has had phenomenal success in the raising of funds, now approaching seven, eight, nine million dollars a year.

Helms himself, when he was up for election the last time in 1978, if you can believe this, raised and spent seven million dollars in his own Senate race in a state that is not one of the larger states. By comparison, in the last election in 1980, the highest expenditure by a senatorial candidate was understandably here in California. This, after all, is the biggest state in the Union, and in that state, 2.7 million dollars was spent. But think of it. In North Carolina, seven million. How do you beat a guy with seven million dollars to spend? The second highest was California. Last year was New York, where 2.1 million dollars was spent in a Senate race.

Now, Senator Helms has kept his home base secure not only by looking after the moral and religious well-being of his constituents, but by making sure that the tobacco price support program was kept flourishing, and that there was no weakening of the price support program for peanuts or for textiles. Those are the things that he has very correctly recognized as fundamental economic interests that he has merged with his moral considerations. His wife, for example, is one of the tobacco growers in North Carolina who receives a very large federal subsidy

for her tobacco program. And at the same time that Senator Helms is campaigning against what he calls the parasites who have infested the food stamp program, he is perfectly willing to draw much larger per capita federal payments for the growing of tobacco in the State of North Carolina.

Over the years, Senator Helms has discomfited his colleagues in the Senate by repeatedly offering amendments on social or moral questions, forcing senators to vote a yes or no on amendments that they have difficulty explaining back home. I don't know how many times he made us vote on the abortion issue when I was in the Senate. We'd be debating a bill to provide funds for the Defense Department. And you'd think that we were going to go to the floor and debate whether we needed X number of airplanes or X number of soldiers in Europe, or X number of new ships, but as often as not, you'd go to the floor and find Senator Helms leading a debate for an amendment that says none of the funds in this Defense Department appropriation bill may be used to finance abortion. And so we'd have another vote on whether abortion is a federal crime. It takes a page and a half letter to explain why, because Jesse offers the kind of amendments that makes your mother call you up. And his amendments, although seldom enacted, have notably improved the prospects of a good many of the right-wing colleagues of his in the Senate that he has been trying

to strengthen. And they have also given him the publicity by which he can direct his activities in the congressional club.

Dr. Capps, I am still not at the end of this lecture, but it's eight-fifteen, and I think I have made the point essentially that I want to make here tonight, that, which is simply that we are confronted in this country with a very well-financed group on the religious right side of the spectrum, operating with the aid of television and the mass media and direct mail, in such a way that they have vastly more power and influence over public affairs than has been true at an earlier day, and that this group, symbolized by the Reverend Jerry Falwell, although he is only one of many in that tradition, have formed a working alliance with the political operators on the new Right side, symbolized by Jesse Helms and others. One has to draw a distinction in all of this between the old line, old-fashioned conservatives, and the new radical Right. Some of you may have been puzzled, for example, to discover that Senator Barry Goldwater, of the State of Arizona, has been the harshest critic of the radical Right. He says these people aren't conservatives at all, that they are radicals who are out to upset the present tolerant relationship that exists between major political and religious groupings in this country, and he has said that they constitute a menace to both conservatives and liberals, in that they destroy any basis for free and open debate by claiming that their particular positions

have a divine sanction, that what you are up against is not a debate with another mortal, but you are up against the voice of God. And that, of course, ends all debate. If in fact what you are doing when you challenge Jesse Helms or challenge Reverend Falwell, is to challenge God's word, that puts you at a great disadvantage in trying to make the case.

One of the things that has most distressed me about the activities of the religious Right, as well as the political right wing, this so-called coalition that passes under the title, the New Right, is that they have pre-empted the most attractive and sacred symbols and institutions in American life. During the debate over the Vietnam war, many of these people on the right wing took up the practice of wearing the American flag in their lapel. The stronger they were in support of American involvement in Vietnam, the bigger the flag in their lapel. Those of us who, on patriotic grounds, felt that it was not in the interest of this country to continue our involvement in Vietnam, we ended up wearing a dove, or an olive branch, or something of that kind. Now, there's nothing wrong with those symbols, but why should those who supported that mistaken and tragic American involvement in Vietnam that damaged this country more than anything we have perhaps done in our national history, why should the supporters of that tragedy be allowed to pre-empt the American flag in the name of patriotism? Yet that is what happened. And you saw

these right-wing people with their bumper stickers saying America-- Love It or Leave It, and all that business, as though any criticism of American policy was unpatriotic. We know that the thing that has made this country great to the extent that it is great is the spirit of criticism and freedom of expression, freedom to make the country better than it might otherwise be. But in the nineteen-sixties, I regret to say, and perhaps people like myself are partly to blame for not fighting back harder, we permitted these right-wing groups to pre-empt something that belonged to all Americans, and that's the flag of the United States.

Then in the nineteen-seventies, they began to very cleverly take over the family. They became the champions of the American family. Now there's nothing wrong with that, if it's done in a fundamental, serious way, a thoughtful way. But when the family is equated with opposing equal rights for women, when the family and support for the family is equated with making abortion a federal constitutional crime, no matter what the circumstances, then it seems to me that we have surrendered that symbol too easily to the right wing.

Nonetheless, I think one could argue that in the nineteen-seventies, the right wing came to be identified in the public mind as the pro-family movement in this country. Now in the nineteen-eighties, we see them trying to take over God. So what you end up with is the new Right saying, we'll take the flag, we'll take the family,

we'll take God, and you liberals can have the abortion and the Panama Canal treaty. Now, under those circumstances it's very hard to win an election, if you're a liberal. So I think it's important in a class like this, and in an academic community to look very critically at what is going on in American politics, to look at the symbolism of the religious Right and the political Right, and to try to make an honest judgment whether or not many people have not been misled by these simplistic claims of the new Right to be the voice of God and to be the voice of America. These are the kind of concerns that I have wanted to raise here tonight. I think I have gone on perhaps too long. As Dr. Capps said at the beginning, you'll have an opportunity to interrogate me now, and to have your day in court. But thank you very much for hearing me out. I hope that wasn't too long. I didn't quite get through, but I got down to page 13, and I had 17. But it would have taken another fifteen minutes, and I thought it was better to--

CAPPS: We are going to take about a ten-minute break, and then we are going to come back here for question and answer.

McGOVERN: Thank you for coming.

Q: I would have voted for you if I had been eighteen.

McGOVERN: I wish you had of been, I needed you.

BREAK

NO MORE SOUND ON TAPE: Q AND A PERIOD NOT RECORDED?