

Local News

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News-Press photo by Len Wood

RELIGIOUS RIGHT leader Paul Weyrich isn't very enthusiastic about President Reagan's re-election.

'Religious right' won't be as excited about Reagan campaign in 1984

By Jerry Rankin
News-Press Staff Writer

A top leader of the religious right, which provided major help in electing Ronald Reagan in 1980, said he is more concerned in 1984 with re-electing arch-conservative U.S. Sen. Jesse Helms than returning Reagan to the White House.

And the members of the religious-oriented New Right won't take to Reagan's campaign this year with the fervor they did four years ago — and may eventually form a new political party, Paul Weyrich said in an appearance at UCSB Monday afternoon.

Weyrich's comments came in a speech to an occasionally hissing audience attending Walter Capps' class on religion and politics at Campbell Hall, and in an interview afterward.

Behind the scenes

While hardly a household name, Weyrich is regarded by some as the chief political strategist for the New Right, and every Friday morning hosts a gathering of some of the most conservative figures in American life to consider strategy on issues such as prayer in schools and abortion.

Weyrich, who's worked in Washington almost two decades, is a co-founder of the Moral Majority, first president of the Heritage Foundation — which has substantial influence in the Reagan administration — and is president of the Free Congress Research and Education Foundation. His skills helped defeat six liberal Democratic senators in 1980 and give Republicans control of the Senate.

Weyrich's comments indicated how sluggish Reagan's once-fervent support in the ranks of the New Right has become. Many of its leaders accuse Reagan of saying all the right words but producing

no major achievement in their joint efforts to end abortion, restore prayers in public schools and get tax credits for those sending children to private schools, among other goals.

In his talk, Weyrich told the audience of several hundred students and a scattering of townspeople that it is a mistake to assume those in the religious right or New Right will labor as ardently for Reagan this time out:

"Many of them who were quite enthused about the Reagan presidency in 1980 have become un-enthused. I suspect a good many of them will end up voting for President Reagan for re-election, but the kind of fervor that was active in his particular campaign in 1980 I do not think will be present again in 1984.

New agenda

"Rather, I think these people are looking at a different agenda, at electing people more at the local level, at electing members of Congress."

Later, asked if he personally is more concerned with re-electing the New Right's chief spokesman in the U.S. Senate, North Carolina's Sen. Jesse Helms, than with re-electing Reagan, Weyrich replied, "To be perfectly honest, yes."

Helms is locked in a tight race with Democratic Gov. James Hunt, and Weyrich admitted to a major problem faced by the religious right:

"If he loses, it's a failure on our part. The sentiment that we are able to generate is not always translatable into victories at the polls. Some of Jesse Helms' strongest supporters are not registered to vote and will not vote on election day.

"If you think you are going to be raptured out (to heaven) tomorrow," he said, "why does the election of Jesse Helms mean all that much? It is a

phenomenon we find very difficult to handle."

Still, Weyrich told the students, reports that the religious right has lost steam since Reagan's inaugural aren't borne out by the facts.

He said, for example, that the Rev. Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority is more than twice as big now as in 1980. (Some estimates put it at 4.5 million members.)

In addition he cited a new, \$250,000 nationwide professional poll for the Republican Party which included some questions about the religious right. The poll, not yet released publicly, found that 45 percent of the American public now acknowledges watching one of the television evangelists ... at least once a week."

That drew moans of disbelief from the student audience, but Weyrich emphasized both in his talk to students and remarks to reporters that technology and the TV preachers play the central role in efforts by the religious right to achieve influence.

He noted that Falwell soon will convene a meeting of 12,000 ministers, and that 1,000 Pentecostal churches now are linked by satellite. The plans, he said, are to employ such resources for a series of nationwide training sessions to show those on the religious right how to work within the system to change it to their liking.

Few years away

But, he said, real influence is a few years away:

"I think it is a three- to five-year period between the time that many of (the religious right) are now coming on line with these television evangelists and a time when they will begin to be active politically."

California, he agreed, is not a stronghold of his forces: "I think we are three to five years away

See Page B-2, Col. 1

City says 5 years OK to fix Gibraltar

By Ted McKown
News-Press Staff Writer

Although one describes it as a "real tight time schedule," city officials say the five-year period granted by the state should be enough to strengthen Gibraltar Dam against possible earthquake damage.

The state also has indicated that it would consider an extension of the five-year deadline if the city can

take the position that the dam doesn't need to be repaired," he said. "The state made it very clear that if we took that position, it would require the water level of the lake to be lowered."

The city-owned reservoir in the Santa Ynez Mountains is the city's main water supply. The city also gets some water from wells and has a share of the water from the larger Lake Cachuma, which is downstream from Gibraltar.



end of the year, I'm told
So maybe there's a trend away from fast food. Speaking of food, I passed some young guys outside the Harbor Restaurant, badmouthing the food and the price of drinks, which perhaps they

ple got mad and screamed about City Council debates on such burning issues.

But because we care the town looks the way it does and not like Anywhere, U.S.A. Vive la difference!

A 20-year-old Goleta man was arrested Monday after he allegedly broke into a home owned by his father and robbed a 77-year-old resident who was partially blind and deaf, police reported.

New Right growing cooler to Reagan

Continued from Page B-1
from any manifestations of the religious right's impact in California. It will take that long before the new viewers of a lot of these television programs begin to ... want to do something political."

When they do, Weyrich added, they may find a new political party. He and others in Washington have been discussing formation of a new party, and Weyrich explained:

"Nothing will come about this year," he said, but "in the long term, probably some new party movement will end up emerging — but probably not at the presidential level. After the '84 election, you will see some effort to form a limited new party which will have as its purpose to field conservative candidates in areas where neither major party is now doing so.

"I don't expect that this movement will have a substantial impact for two to three years."

Weyrich told the students that it may surprise them, but the religious right movement sometimes has more in common with

liberals than it does with what he called the "secular conservatives" — those not guided by religion in politics. And he had hard words for the elder statesman of the Republican Party, Arizona Sen. Barry Goldwater:

"We are not of the same mentality as the secular conservatives, who in many cases have a fundamental disregard for the welfare of people who are less fortunate than themselves and who view every question in economic terms ... I have been in meetings with Barry Goldwater — and he would be the prime political example of that kind of secular conservative — where he has said, 'screw the poor.'"

In fact, Weyrich said, the religious right shares liberals' concern for the poor, minorities, the handicapped and other groups. They just disagree on how to help them.

He also sought to debunk the notion that the religious right seeks to take over the country and impose its beliefs on others:

"Please disabuse yourself of the idea that the religious right is some sort of

modern version of the Crusades where we are all going to acquire weapons and come marching into town one day in a new M-1 tank and line everybody up against the wall and make them conform.

"They are absolutely not of the mind-which would make them a dominant political power in the country. If you know the you can't possibly take seriously the idea that they are all going to work together and form some kind of a threatening operation which will destroy the Constitution."

Instead, he said, the religious right was formed by previously apolitical America. "The great differences between Protestants and Catholics, between Jews and Catholics, between Mormons and the rest of Christianity ... have been put aside in a political context in order to work for retention of certain values and government institutions which we feel would enable us to practice our faith without any kind of government interference."

Weyrich, a Greek Catholic, declared that "these people want to be left alone."

Resident prevents blaze

A container being used to siphon gasoline from a truck parked in an Eastside carport ignited this morning, but a resident of the adjoining home was able to throw the can into the street before any structures were threatened, city firefighters said.

Dennis Felsko, 226 E. Micheltorena St., discovered

WHAT'S DOING

TODAY

BINGO, El Camino School, 6 p.m.
MUSIC, Flute concert by Jean-Pierre Rampal, presented by Masterseries, The Arlington Theater, 8 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

WOMEN'S HISTORY WEEK, ...

Durham, Museum of Art, 5:30 p.m.

SIERRA CLUB hike, vigorous, meet at Old Mission, 6:30 p.m.

LECTURE, "Introductory to Macrobiotics," 1:30 Bath St., 7:30 p.m.

BINGO, Goleta Boy's Club, 7:30 p.m.

LECTURE, "Architecture as Art," ...