

Moral Majority called 'primarily political'

By Jerry Rankin
News-Press Staff Writer

"The Moral Majority is primarily political and not religious" and expects its issues to draw hundreds of thousands or millions of otherwise non-political voters to the polls in 1982's congressional elections, its vice president declared here last night.

Cal Thomas told a UCSB audience that it was no accident the organization, headed by fundamentalist preacher Jerry Falwell, surfaced to play an important role in the 1980 election. Events that angered liberals and conservatives alike inevitably gave life to Falwell's group, said Thomas, who gave the students this outline of its membership:

"Our people, the so-called New Right, had not been involved in politics prior to the 1980 election. Many had not even bothered to vote . . . but a series of events blasted them from their chairs of apathy — Vietnam, Watergate, abortion on demand, discrimination against persons whose world view is based on transcendent religious principles.

"These are the people who have seen the values and traditions that are dear

to them trampled underfoot by, yes, secular humanists . . . and arrogant liberals who believe that their degree from Harvard and Princeton . . . have gifted them with a singular view of what is right and best for America.

"Such liberals have turned freedom into license and a tolerance for diversity into a green light for anything.

"(In 1982) we will be able to motivate hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of Americans to register to vote by asking them to consider a list of moral issues. We neither endorsed candidates (in 1980) nor established hit lists and will not this year.

"We did not suggest that these are the only moral issues or that if anyone disagreed with us they were by definition a member of the 'immoral minority' or would be relegated to political or literal purgatory or hell. That was a Frankenstein created by the Igors of the liberal press."

Thomas spoke as part of a class on religion and politics. A week earlier, the several hundred persons enrolled heard former Democratic Sen. George McGovern, who lost his seat in 1980 in part because of opposition from religious-oriented groups, contend the religious right doesn't represent many peo-

ple and won't enjoy similar success in 1982's key congressional elections because its targets are fighting back.

And while Falwell's group may have endorsed or targeted politicians as an organization, liberals maintain that many of its members did so and operated unfairly. McGovern noted he was labeled immoral by one group for voting in favor of a secular issue, the Panama Canal treaty.

Thomas, a former NBC reporter, employed a well-honed sense of humor to disarm initial scepticism in the audience, which almost filled 900-seat Campbell Hall. He told them at the start, "I know I'm not what you expect. The cleaners lied to me, they didn't get my sheet back from the last Klan rally in time. And I must leave 20 minutes early for a Hitler Youth meeting."

Thomas said the liberal news media distorts what Moral Majority stands for, and listed four specific positions it favors:

—"We are pro-life. The burden of proof is on the abortionist to show that human life does not begin at conception. Only since the advent of sociological law, law by Gallup Poll . . . and sociological medicine has another view been advanced."

During the question period, he was asked what he would tell a college sophomore considering abortion after a rape. He declared, "You don't solve one brutality by creating another" and indicated he would require her to have the baby, then put it up for adoption if that was her desire.

However, he added, those who oppose abortion carry an obligation to help those caught in such a dilemma

and said Falwell will announce on his televised gospel hour this Sunday a program to do that.

Thomas also said Moral Majority accepts abortion in one case — to save the life of a mother.

—"We favor and support the traditional family, the husband-wife relationship. It does not mean we are against working mothers or day-care centers."

He said while the organization opposes homosexuality, "I would be opposed — as would Jerry Falwell — to any witch hunt, police breaking down doors, trying to interrupt what consenting adults are doing in private. However, we do believe in standing against laws that would grant (homosexuals) special civil rights."

He added that Moral Majority supports the right of homosexuals to teach in public schools, as long as they don't flaunt their sexual preference.

—"We are pro-moral. Out of this umbrella comes our opposition to the attempt to legalize illegal drugs and our opposition to the spread of pornography. Community standards are the best basis for determining what is acceptable and what is unacceptable in a community."

—"We are pro-American. Not chauvinistically so, not blindly so. (But) in order to preserve our freedoms and way of life we favor a strong national defense. We must be stronger, or at least as strong, as those who would eliminate our freedoms. We also support the nation of Israel . . . and Jewish people everywhere."

Thomas said he and Falwell have no apology to make for raising moral issues and fighting for them in the

political world:

"All law is the imposition of someone's morality over someone else's. The question is not whether morality will be imposed; the question is whose morality. The answer is whichever has the best track record and likelihood for success. We believe, as do millions of Americans, that the morality that comes from — as all law comes from — the Judeo-Christian value base has the best track record and provides the best foundation for an orderly society which will include persons that even do not agree.

"The problem today is not that we have exchanged the Judeo-Christian ethic for another ethic. The problem is that we have left the Judeo-Christian ethic for no ethic, and we are adrift on a sea of moral relativity."

Thomas denied that Moral Majority opposes sex education in public schools, but said it must be taught from a perspective of right and wrong and not in a moral vacuum where "we are in a supermarket and we're pushing our carts down the aisles of morality: Over here we select a can of bisexuality and over there a bottle of pre-marital sex and over there a jar of extra-marital sex."

Those comments didn't set well with the youthful audience.

ON AGENDA FOR LOMPOC TRUSTEES

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Hospital Administrator William Diebner said he hopes to complete formal application for the expansion to the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development prior to the board meeting at 7:30 p.m. in the hospital conference room.

The \$1.1 million addition was approved by voters in November and officials hope to begin building by the end of 1982.

In other business, Diebner will report on an unusually high hospital occupancy rate during December, one of the highest in years during a normally slow month.

Nutrition talks

LOMPOC — Two speakers on nutrition have been scheduled tomorrow by Ups and Downs, a self-help group for those with depression, at its meeting at 7:30 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church, 1600 Berkeley Drive.

17 in Santa Maria area killed in '81 crashes

SANTA MARIA — Seventeen persons were killed in a dozen collisions in 1981 in the Santa Maria-Guadalupe-Los Alamos-Casmalia area, said Lt. S. C. Wilkins, head of the California High

way Patrol. The number of injured persons last month — 18 — was less than half the 37 recorded in December of 1980. Wilkins

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