
Profile: Pat Robertson

1988: the year of born-again paganism?

by Kathleen Klenetsky

Back in 1980, the London *Economist*, commenting on the growth of fundamentalism in the United States, gloatingly predicted that Britain's former colonies would soon be overrun by an American version of Khomeinism, which would finally wipe out the last remnants of America's commitment to an increasing standard of living, and return a chastened population to "spiritual values."

It may be becoming true. With two of the most visible of the new generation of Billy Sundays, Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell, throwing themselves into presidential politics with a vengeance, 1988 is shaping up as the year when the much-touted "born-again" fundamentalist movement in the United States starts to really flex its muscle.

Falwell has just formed a new political action group, the Liberty Federation. The group's main purpose, he says, is to build a grass-roots movement that will back more than 200 candidates for federal and local office, and will bring "20 million religious conservatives to the polls nationally in the presidential election."

Given that Falwell has enthusiastically lined up behind George Bush's presidential candidacy, and given that Bush will be the featured speaker at the Liberty Federation's leadership seminar at the end of January, it doesn't require an excess of political cynicism to realize that the real aim of the new organization is to line up anti-Establishment voters behind the oh-so-blueblood Bush.

While Falwell's operation has created the biggest media splash, it is Robertson's that should cause real concern, though certainly not from the standpoint of the ACLU's hysterical complaints about bringing religion into politics. Religion—if defined on the basis of natural law and the moral ordering of the state—most emphatically does belong in politics. But what Robertson, and to a lesser extent, Falwell, are peddling as "religion" would make the Whore of Babylon blush.

The root problem with Robertson, Falwell, and other less celebrated figures, is that the American fundamentalist movement is controlled—as it has been historically—by oligarchical Swiss-based interests, who see "religious" fanaticism and irrationalism as a battering ram against nation-state republics.

Although claiming to be a red-blooded conservative, Pat Robertson has allied himself with the Club-of-Rome-inspired "steady-state" economics promulgated by Jeremy Rifkin, a frequent guest on Robertson's national cable television show, the "700 Club." A radical left-winger, Rifkin authored a book in 1979 predicting that the emerging evangelical movement would grow into a "fourth great awakening" which would enforce a paradigm shift in the American consciousness, away from the traditional belief in technology-vectored progress, which stems from God's injunction to man to have dominion over the rest of creation, and into a zero-growth, pagan nature worship, in which man is seen as no more important than algae.

Robertson's message fits Rifkin's prescriptions to a tee. He has bemoaned the population explosion and the excessive use of energy by industrial companies, and has insisted that U.S. basic industry is a dinosaur.

More recently, Robertson proclaimed: "The federal deficit is the symptom of a deeper moral problem which says, 'I want it now,' instead of deferring gratification until funds are available to pay for it" (UPI interview). Where does Robertson propose to get the funds, if he's against basic industry? Does he care about the millions who will suffer needlessly as the government imposes cutbacks in medical care, social services, and defense, in insane pursuit of a balanced budget? Or does he think that faith-healing, which he practices regularly, will take care of all problems, including a Soviet first-strike?

Falwell is equally immoral on the economic issue. At a recent press conference, he told an *EIR* reporter that he and his candidates would back Gramm-Rudman, even while admitting this contradicts his claimed "pro-life" outlook.

Robertson is no old-time camp preacher, but scion of one of Virginia's most prominent, patrician "first families," making him more of an Establishment figure than Bush. His father, Willis, served in Congress for over 30 years, rising to head the powerful Senate Banking and Currency Committee.

Educated at Yale Law School, the younger Robertson underwent a "conversion experience" during the 1950s while working as a troubleshooter in South America for W.R. Grace, which has extensive ties to Soviet-sponsored narco-terrorism.

With this background, it is not surprising that Robertson has been able to build a multimillion-dollar media empire capable of transmitting his anti-Christian message far and wide. Robertson's Christian Broadcasting Network takes in \$230 million annually in donations and advertising—more than double any other television evangelist. The A.C. Nielsen Co. reports that the "700 Club" has a monthly audience of 29 million. In addition to a university and media center in Virginia, Robertson's far-flung propaganda machine also includes operations in Ibero-America and the Mideast—not surprising, since Robertson purveys an Israel-centered Armageddon scenario which has, unfortunately, become the hallmark of most American fundamentalists.